

***Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study
of
Specified Areas in Grantham
October 2013***

*Report for
South Kesteven District Council*

*by
Bayou Bluenvironment*





LANDSCAPE PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANCY

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Report by:

Anthony Brown, BA (Hons)TP, MALD, CMLI,
Chartered Landscape Architect

Checked by:

Anthony Brown

Authorised by:

Anthony Brown

Bayou Bluenvironment Limited

Cottage Lane Farm
Cottage Lane
Collingham
Newark
Nottinghamshire
NG23 7LJ

Tel. +44(0)1636 555006

anthony@bbenvironment.co.uk



**Landscape
Institute**
Registered practice

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1. Introduction

Background and Objectives of the Study

- 1.1 Bayou Bluenvironment is commissioned by South Kesteven District Council to undertake a landscape sensitivity and capacity assessment of six areas in Grantham, on the edge of the built up area. The areas assessed are shown in Figures 1 - 6:

Area A: Land north of A52 Somerby Hill

Area B: Land north of Gorse Lane

Area C: Harlaxton Close

Area D: Land south of Gorse Lane

Area E: Land west of Gonerby Hill

Area F: Land east of Gonerby Hill

- 1.2 The study provides a landscape sensitivity and capacity assessment of areas in addition to those assessed in January 2011 by David Tyldesley and Associates (DTA).¹ As requested by the Council, this study adopts the same methodology as that used in the DTA study (as described in Section 2) to provide consistency of approach and to allow comparison and the prioritisation of sites in Grantham (as provided in Section 5). This report should be read alongside the 2011 DTA report to gain a complete picture of how development might affect the landscape around the town.
- 1.3 The study has been undertaken by Anthony Brown, Chartered Landscape Architect, on behalf of Bayou Bluenvironment Limited, a landscape planning and environmental consultancy. Anthony was project leader responsible for writing the *Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study*, January 2011, whilst an Associate at David Tyldesley & Associates.
- 1.4 Area A, north of the A52 at Somerby Hill, was previously assessed as Site G6 in the DTA study. The sensitivity and capacity of Area A (and Areas B and D, not previously considered) in this study provides the Council with an updated assessment in the context of the proposed *Southern Quadrant Masterplan* on adjacent land between the A52 and B1174 Spittlegate Level, and the 'King 31' employment site between the B1174 Spittlegate Level and the A1.
- 1.5 The Council has commissioned the study in order to help determine the most appropriate directions for future residential and employment development in Grantham. The report, together with the 2011 DTA report, will be used as part of an evidence base to inform the revised *Grantham Area Action Plan (GAAP) Development Plan Document (DPD)*.
- 1.6 The Council submitted the GAAP DPD to the Secretary of State in December 2011 for examination by an independent planning inspector. In January 2013 the Council resolved to withdraw the GAAP under the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). This study will inform a revised version of the GAAP which is currently under preparation.
- 1.7 The South Kesteven Local Development Framework *Core Strategy* was adopted by the Council in July 2010. It provides the framework that will steer development and change in the district until 2026. Detailed policies within the GAAP will allow the *Core Strategy*

¹ David Tyldesley and Associates (January 2011); *Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study: Final Report*

objectives to be realised, including the Southern Quadrant urban extension (as shown in Appendix 1).

- 1.8 The *Southern Quadrant Masterplan* Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted by the Council in February 2013. It will inform the preparation of detailed development proposals for the site, which will provide up to 4,000 new homes, new schools, medical facilities, a community centre, employment opportunities, a neighbourhood centre and a range of formal and informal public open space.
- 1.9 As part of the development of the Southern Quadrant site, the section of the Grantham East-West Relief Road between the A52 and B1174 Spittlegate Level will be constructed. The section of the relief road between the B1174 Spittlegate Level and the A1 will be constructed through the development of the 'King 31' employment site which already has planning permission.
- 1.10 In accordance with established practice, landscape character assessment is used as the basis for determining landscape sensitivity and capacity. The District Council prepared the *South Kesteven Landscape Character Assessment* (SKLCA) in January 2007², which builds upon Natural England's National Character Areas (NCA) covering the whole of the country. The NCAs and local landscape character areas in and around Grantham are described in Section 3.
- 1.11 The Council has used the SKLCA to inform Core Strategy Policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Character of the District. The Core Strategy defines the aim of this policy as follows:

"The District's landscape character is not only its topography but is a blend of natural features, biodiversity and man-made structures. This policy aims to ensure that these resources are conserved and that the environment is protected and enhanced. It aims to make sure that development within the District does not compromise the variety and distinctiveness of the existing biodiversity and wider environment. It is intended to sustain an attractive, diverse, high-quality, accessible, thriving and environmentally healthy countryside in South Kesteven". (Core Strategy paragraph 4.1.2).
- 1.12 The SKLCA also provides the evidence base for establishing criteria against which the Council will assess development proposals, and to ensure that they respect the intrinsic landscape character of the area. In accordance with Core Strategy Policy EN1 development must be appropriate to the character and significant natural, historic and cultural attributes and features of the landscape within which it is situated, and contribute to its conservation, enhancement and restoration. All development proposals and site allocations will be assessed in relation to:
 1. statutory national and local designations of landscape features, including natural and historic assets
 2. local distinctiveness and sense of place
 3. historic character, patterns and attributes of the landscape
 4. the layout and scale of buildings and designed spaces
 5. the quality and character of the built fabric and their settings
 6. the condition of the landscape
 7. biodiversity and ecological networks within the landscape

² Faulks Perry Culley & Rech (January 2007), *South Kesteven Landscape Character Assessment*

8. public access to and community value of the landscape
 9. remoteness and tranquillity
 10. visual intrusion
 11. noise and light pollution
 12. Conservation Area Appraisals and Village Design Statements, where these have been adopted by the Council
 13. impact on controlled waters
 14. protection of existing open space (including allotments and public open space, and open spaces important to the character, setting and separation of built-up areas)
- 1.13 The study provides an independent, professional appraisal of the landscape sensitivity of six areas in Grantham and their landscape capacity to accommodate residential or employment development, based on recognised methodologies which have been adapted to suit local circumstances. It should be noted that this study assesses landscape and visual considerations only. A range of other environmental considerations may need to be taken into account, such as ecology and nature conservation, heritage and archaeology, water quality and flooding potential, etc. by others to determine the potential wider environmental and cumulative impacts of development on a particular site. Other site considerations, including access and drainage issues for example, will also need to be considered by decision makers but which do not form part of this assessment.

Format of the Report

- 1.14 The following Section 2 describes the approach adopted to landscape sensitivity and capacity assessment, and the methodology used in the study to assess each area. Criteria for assessing landscape sensitivity and capacity are described and clearly set out in a number of tables included within Section 2.
- 1.15 Section 3 provides a background to national, regional and local-scale landscape character assessment within South Kesteven, highlighting key characteristics of the landscapes within and surrounding Grantham and in particular around each of the Study Areas. A brief description of landscape character and setting in the wider landscape, the settlement form and pattern of the town, and visual considerations provides the landscape context of each area.
- 1.16 Section 4 provides the analysis and assessment for each of the six Study Areas A, B, C, D, E and F. The key features of the proposed Southern Quadrant urban extension and the 'King 31' employment site are described to provide context to the assessment of the Study Areas, where relevant. The local landscape character context for each of the Study Areas is described, using the *South Kesteven Landscape Character Assessment*, January 2007, which is the most appropriate scale assessment to use.
- 1.17 For each area an assessment is made of its landscape sensitivity, using the criteria described in Section 2 to assess firstly landscape character sensitivity, and secondly visual sensitivity. The scope for mitigation of each area, for example structure planting in-keeping with landscape character or to help soften an already harsh edge to the town, is discussed and taken into consideration in the assessment. Photographs are included to illustrate the landscape and visual context of each area.

- 1.18 Criteria described in Section 2 to assess landscape value are then applied to each identified area in Section 4, and conclusions made on the overall landscape capacity of each area to accommodate development. A summary table is included at the end of the assessment of each area, and figures provided at the back of the report to illustrate separately landscape sensitivity and landscape capacity of each area. The tables and figures are colour coded to enable easy cross-reference and visual comparison.
- 1.19 A table summarising the assessment of landscape sensitivity and capacity of all six Study Areas is provided at the beginning of Section 5. A further composite table compares the assessment of the Study Areas in this report with those areas considered in the 2011 DTA study, to provide the Council with an overall prioritisation for potential development of all sites considered on the edge of Grantham, in landscape and visual terms. The key factors influencing the recommendation are described, with reference to the 2011 DTA study.

2. Approach and Methodology

Approach to Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity

- 2.1 There is no definitive method for carrying out landscape sensitivity and capacity studies. Procedures continue to develop in light of experience as more and more studies of this type are carried out. This study follows current best practice methodology for judging landscape sensitivity and capacity in accordance with the techniques and criteria described in The Countryside Agency's and Scottish Natural Heritage's joint *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland*, 2002, Topic Paper 6. The study is also consistent with the impact assessment methodology advocated by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment in the recently updated "*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*", third edition 2013.
- 2.2 This body of good practice guidance has been extended to include a method developed in the 2011 DTA study for assessing sensitivity and capacity of sites in Grantham for built development and settlement expansion, drawing on experience gained in other landscape capacity projects in England and Scotland.
- 2.3 *Landscape sensitivity* refers to the extent to which a particular landscape is vulnerable to change due to effects on its character, or overall change of landscape character type. Landscape sensitivity is a professional judgement reflecting the particular landscape characteristics, features and elements of a given area, for example landscapes which are rare or unusual landscape types are likely to be more sensitive to change. Sensitivity is likely to vary according to the type and nature of change being proposed, and in this study refers to the sensitivity of the specified areas to change from residential or employment development.
- 2.4 *Visual sensitivity* refers to the extent to which visual receptors, either individuals or defined groups of people, are vulnerable to changes in the appearance of the landscape. Visual sensitivity is a professional judgement of the likely visual effects of development on views of the specified areas and from the specified areas.
- 2.5 *Landscape capacity* refers to the extent to which the specified areas are able to accommodate change without significant effects on its character, or overall change of landscape character type. Landscape capacity is a professional judgement of the amount of development possible or desirable, reflecting the particular landscape characteristics and features of a given area, and is likely to vary according to the value related to the area and the type and nature of the change being proposed. This study refers to the capacity of each area to accommodate residential or employment development.
- 2.6 The approach adopted in this study for assessing landscape sensitivity and capacity is to assume from the outset that highly sensitive areas may not automatically have no or low capacity to accept change where all or most development would be unacceptable. Similarly, areas of low or medium sensitivity will not necessarily be able to accommodate any or all types of development. Local conditions, site and development detailed design, mitigation and cumulative impacts must also be considered.
- 2.7 Essentially capacity evaluation is a systematic and chronological process through a series of steps, although it is also an iterative process where some steps are repeated as the method is refined. Typically the steps followed are:

- (i) defining the purpose of the study and the changes to be assessed;
- (ii) desk study and fieldwork to identify and record the character of the landscape, the elements, features and aesthetic and perceptual factors which contribute to it;
- (iii) desk study and fieldwork to identify and record the extent of possible visibility, including identifying views and viewpoints;
- (iv) the definition and application of appropriate criteria for the assessment of landscape and visual sensitivity;
- (v) establishing the value attached to the landscape; and
- (vi) the definition and application of appropriate criteria to enable judgements to be made on the capacity of the areas to accommodate development.

Defining the Changes to be Assessed

- 2.8 The study will help the Council determine the most appropriate locations for future residential and employment development in Grantham, as part of an evidence base to inform the *Grantham Area Action Plan (GAAP)*. For the purposes of the study, potential built development within the specified areas is assumed to be conventional, domestic-scale residential, community and business development together with conventional larger scale buildings associated with employment uses but excluding unusually high structures, or wide-span buildings, specialist buildings or uses requiring extensive areas for outside storage. It is assumed that the buildings would be well designed and would use traditional or other appropriate building techniques and materials.
- 2.9 Consideration is given to the effect of mitigation measures, such as structural landscaping including ground modelling and tree planting, in increasing capacity by enabling development to achieve a good landscape fit.

Desk Study and Field Work

- 2.10 The following documents were considered in compiling this report:
- *South Kesteven Landscape Character Assessment*, FPCR, January 2007;
 - *SKDC Adopted Core Strategy*, July 2010;
 - *Belton House and Park Setting Study and Policy Document*, January 2010;
 - *SKDC, Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study*, DTA, January 2011;
 - *Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment Report* for the Core Strategy DPD;
 - *The Southern Quadrant Masterplan* Supplementary Planning Document, February 2013;
 - *SKDC, Grantham Townscape Character Assessment*;
 - *FPCR, Summary of Landscape and Visual Assessment and Key Views Analysis Study*, August 2011;
 - Various documents and other data on the 'King 31' employment site from the Council's website
- 2.11 Field work was undertaken on various occasions during September and October 2013. The six areas were visited to establish the extent of views out and likely viewpoints from surrounding locations which were also visited. Surrounding open areas and public rights of way were walked, and roads, lanes and tracks travelled, within South Kesteven and neighbouring districts, in order to gain an understanding of the character of the

landscape and the setting and landscape context of each area. Figure 3 shows key views of the Study Areas, with photograph viewpoints shown in Figure 4.

Defining the Criteria for the Assessment

- 2.12 The most important stage in the study is defining appropriate criteria for relevant assessment so that these may be applied in a systematic, impartial and transparent manner. Sound professional judgement can then be made on the capacity of the specified areas to accommodate development. The technique adopted follows the methodology in Topic Paper 6 (see paragraph 2.1) for assessing the overall sensitivity of the landscape to a particular type of change or development, defined in terms of the interactions between the landscape itself, the way it is viewed and the particular nature of the type of change or development in question, summarised as follows:

Overall Landscape Sensitivity = Landscape Character Sensitivity + Visual Sensitivity

- 2.13 For judging the ability or capacity of the landscape to accommodate change or development, the technique adopted follows the methodology in Topic Paper 6 for judging the overall landscape sensitivity, as above, and the value attached to the landscape or to specific elements in it, summarised as follows:

Landscape Capacity (to accommodate specific type of change) = Overall Landscape Sensitivity + Landscape Value

- 2.14 The same method for assessing landscape sensitivity and capacity has been followed that was developed for use in the 2011 DTA study, which had previously been adopted in the *Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study* for Rutland County Council, May 2010, by the same consultants. These studies also considered specified areas on the edge of settlements, making recommendations to the Council as evidence base during the preparation of the Local Development Framework. This report and the 2011 DTA report will be used by South Kesteven District Council as part of an evidence base to inform the revised *Grantham Area Action Plan* (GAAP).

- 2.15 The criteria are based around four key aspects:

- (i) Landscape and settlement character sensitivity
- (ii) Settlement form and pattern
- (iii) Visual considerations
- (iv) Landscape value

- (i) Landscape and settlement character sensitivity

- 2.16 This considers impacts upon particular aspects of landscape character including landform, land cover, land use, scale, pattern, enclosure, quality and condition. During detailed fieldwork around the three areas, consideration was given as to whether a finer grain of assessment than that provided in the SKLCA was required to enable a greater level of understanding of the landscape settlement character sensitivity of each of the specified areas. In general the SKLCA is considered to be at an appropriate scale for this study without the need for further sub-division of the sites into smaller landscape character types. Local landscape character is described in the context of the areas and their immediate context in relation to the settlement edges of Grantham.

- 2.17 An assessment is made on the presence or absence of distinctive landscape elements or features, whether they could be readily replaced and whether they make a positive contribution to character and sense of place. Conclusions are made on whether development would overall have a negative effect, neutral or positive effect on landscape character.
- 2.18 Criteria have been developed to assess the function of each area in the wider setting of Grantham. The most important considerations in this respect are the function of the Study Area as actual or perceived intervening land between settlements; and as an important break between town and countryside.
- 2.19 Where the character of an area is defined by surrounding built development rather than the setting of the Study Area on the edge of the town and countryside, its function as open space affecting the setting, appearance, form and / or character of the built environment is made.

(ii) Settlement form and pattern

- 2.20 It is recognised that Grantham has a distinctive historical core. Of particular importance in relation to the assessment of built development are the historic settlement pattern and the extent to which this has been sustained or modified. Growth has occurred, or is proposed as is the case with the Southern Quadrant urban extension and the “King 31” employment site, which has or will alter settlement shape and pattern of the town, i.e. the direction of growth which often reflects natural influences or other considerations. In some locations there is a good landscape ‘fit’ where the built up area on the edge of town relates well to its landscape setting, for example a strong linear form or other shape related to topography or hydrology or historical land use or patterns of buildings or other land use. In other locations the ‘fit’ is not so good resulting in a harsh edge to the town which does not blend so well into the landscape.
- 2.21 Changes to distinctive settlement patterns and characteristics can significantly affect the overall shape of the town and its fit in the context of the wider settlement pattern in the landscape. Thus the study considers settlement pattern, settlement morphology and the design, external finish and landscape fit of buildings. An assessment is made of whether development within each specified area would represent an appropriate extension to the town, or where there may be some association with settlement form and pattern but where this is less clear, or where development would be isolated from the town. Conclusions are made on whether development would overall have a negative effect, neutral or positive effect on settlement form and pattern.

(iii) Visual considerations

- 2.22 The assessment considers the visual effects of possible development within each area, including the obstruction of key views (for example by new buildings) or intrusion into key views; how conspicuous the development may be or whether it would affect important skylines or views, for example those seen from dwellings, roads, paths and viewpoints, and to what extent this might affect the setting of the town. Some visual effects may be reduced by mitigation measures; however these may themselves have adverse effects on the landscape or may obstruct important views in the attempt to prevent views of the new development.

2.23 The following are considered to be of principle concern in the consideration of visual sensitivity:

- Views in to the area and approaches: the impact on views of and approaches to the settlements from the approach roads, public rights of way and other viewpoints;
- Outward views: the impact of development on views out of the settlement where these are strategically significant and distinctive and an important aspect of settlement character;
- Ridges and other areas of high ground: the potential effect on distinctive ridges and other areas of high ground or where the settlement avoids such elevated positions;
- Conspicuity: whether development would be located in a visually conspicuous location, such as open, flat ground or on open, high or rising ground, where this is not already a key positive landscape characteristic.

2.24 Visibility of development is not necessarily an adverse effect, even where it would be conspicuous. Thus the assessment considers whether development is likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view, and proposed views in the case of the Southern Quadrant urban extension and the “King 31” employment site.

(iv) Landscape Value

2.25 The first three key aspects considered above, namely landscape character and setting of the town; settlement form and pattern; and visual considerations, are assessed to reach conclusions on the overall landscape sensitivity of each Study Area. This process inevitably involves both objective assessment, such as recording the presence or absence of landscape features, and relative and comparative judgements, such as changes to patterns, diversity and openness.

2.26 Turning the sensitivity study into an assessment of capacity to accommodate a particular type of change requires consideration of more subjective, experiential or perceptual aspects of the landscape and of the value attached to it. Certain landscapes are valued by society for a variety of reasons and this is reflected in judgements made about capacity to accept change. Thus the capacity assessment considers the interaction between the sensitivity of the landscape, the type and amount of change, and the way that the landscape is valued.

2.27 Criteria have been adopted which consider landscape protection by designation or other protective policy, and other aspects of value, such as scenic value / interest , and public amenity value by way of views, access, biodiversity (general wildlife) interest and opportunity for quiet enjoyment (tranquillity).

2.28 With regard to protected landscapes, there are no national designations such as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty within South Kesteven. With the adoption of the Core Strategy, many of the ‘saved’ policies (in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) in the South Kesteven Local Plan have been superseded and replaced by Core Strategy Policy EN1 (as described in paragraph 1.10), including the following Environment policies of relevance to this study:

- EN5 – Prevention of Coalescence
 - EN6 – Open Areas Important to the Character and Setting of Built-Up Areas
 - EN7 – Historic Parks and Gardens
- 2.29 Policies within the South Kesteven Local Plan which were not ‘saved’ and which ‘expired’ (in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) in September 2007 included the following Environment policies of relevance to this study:
- EN3 – Area of Great Landscape Value
 - EN4 – Prominent Areas for Special Protection
- 2.30 Where an area of landscape is not designated either nationally or locally this does not mean that it does not have any value. National planning policy and advice in England now generally discourages local designations unless it can be shown that other approaches would be inadequate. The European Landscape Convention promotes the need to take account of all landscapes, with less emphasis on the ‘special’ and more recognition that ‘ordinary’ landscapes also have their value, supported by the landscape character approach.
- 2.31 The Council consider that the Core Strategy and the SKLCA provide the necessary basis for environmental protection in the district. However, where sites put forward for consideration for development allocation have previously been protected by now excluded or superseded policies in the Local Plan, the reasons why they were previously designated have been taken into consideration in the assessment of specified areas in this study. Thus, in assessing landscape value we have included consideration of whether a Study Area lies within or adjacent to an area previously designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) in accordance with Local Plan policy EN3, and whether a Study Area was previously covered by an Environment policy in the Local Plan, which could affect landscape value. This is consistent with the methodology used in the 2011 DTA report and other landscape sensitivity and capacity studies prepared by the same consultants for other authorities.
- 2.32 The AGLV in the Local Plan covered much of the district, largely reflecting variations in geological form. The landscapes protected included the whole of the *Kesteven Uplands Landscape Character Area (LCA)*, the *Southern Lincolnshire Edge LCA* and the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys LCA* as identified in the SKLCA and reproduced in part in Figure 1. Smaller areas within the *Trent and Belvoir Vale LCA*, the *Harlaxton Denton Bowl LCA* and the *Fen Margin* were also previously protected by the AGLV designation. Only *The Fens LCA* lies outside the AGLV designation. All six Study Areas A, B, C, D, E and F lie within landscapes previously protected by AGLV designation, as shown in Figure 2.
- 2.33 In considering the appropriateness of the AGLV designation to an assessment of landscape value of each of the specified areas, consideration is given to an area’s geological form and in particular to slopes and woodland which have a special attraction, in accordance with the reasoning given in the Local Plan. Whether development within a previously designated AGLV would relate to and be sensitive to the scale and character of existing settlements and their location in the landscape is also a key consideration in accordance with the Local Plan.
- 2.34 Study Areas B and C lie partly within areas previously covered by Local Plan Policy EN4 Prominent Areas for Special Protection, as shown in Figure 2. This is part of the steep

escarpment along the northern edge of the *Kesteven Uplands* where it falls to the *Harlaxton-Denton Bowl*. Clearly development in these areas is likely to affect their open character which is discussed in the consideration of landscape character and setting of the town, settlement form and pattern and visual considerations. No value judgement is given to areas previously protected by this policy.

- 2.35 Similarly, Study Areas E and F occupy land previously covered by Local Plan Policy EN5 Prevention of Coalescence, as shown in Figure 2. Development within these areas would clearly affect their open character which is discussed in the consideration of landscape character and setting of the town, settlement form and pattern and visual considerations. No value judgement is given to areas previously protected by this policy.
- 2.36 Figure 2 shows that Study Area C lies close to the Registered Historic Park and Garden at Harlaxton Manor. The impact of development within area C on the setting of Harlaxton Manor and Park has been taken into account in assessing its landscape value. Similarly the impact of development within Study Areas E and F on the setting of Belton House Registered Park and Garden has been taken into account in assessing the landscape value of these areas.

Assessment Criteria

- 2.37 Criteria for all the four key aspects (i) to (iv) above were devised as being most appropriate to the consideration of built development on the edges of Grantham (as developed in the previous January 2011 DTA study to assess landscape sensitivity and capacity of sites on the edges of Stamford and The Deepings, as well as Grantham).

To assess landscape character sensitivity the following criteria in Table 1 were used:

Table 1: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity

SENSITIVITY	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
HIGH SENSITIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinctive elements and combination of features present that could not be replaced and which make a positive contribution to character and sense of place; • Important intervening open land between settlements, or perceived as such; • Important to the setting of the town by providing a distinctive break between town and countryside; • Open space important to the appearance, form and character of the built environment; • Development would be isolated from the town or would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern; • Site may be adjacent to built limits but lies outside clear and important boundary features defining settlement extent.
MODERATE SENSITIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonplace elements and combination of features present, some of which could not be replaced and which create generally unremarkable character but some sense of place; • Part of a larger area of intervening open land between settlements, or perceived as such; • Of some importance to the setting of the town but the break between town and countryside is less distinctive; • Open space of some importance to the setting, appearance, form and character of the built environment; • Development would have some association with the town and may have some effect on settlement form and pattern.
LOW SENSITIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some elements / features are discordant, derelict or in decline, resulting in indistinct character with little or no sense of place. Few, if any, features/ elements that could not be replaced; • Is not important intervening open land between settlements; • Of little or no importance to the setting of the town as there is little or no distinctive break between town and countryside; • Open space of little or no importance to the appearance, form and character of the built environment; • Development would be an appropriate extension of the town with no adverse impact on important aspects of settlement form and pattern.

2.38 To assess visual sensitivity the following criteria in Table 2 were used:

Table 2: Visual Sensitivity

SENSITIVITY	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
HIGH SENSITIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides important views into and/or out of the town which could not be mitigated; • Important to the setting of the town where development would create unacceptable visual intrusion into the countryside that could not be mitigated; • Site is very open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are very important; • Development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous and could not be successfully mitigated.
MODERATE SENSITIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views into and/or out of the town are of some importance but there is scope for mitigating potential visual impacts; • Of some importance to the setting of the town but development could be mitigated so that visual intrusion in to the countryside is acceptable; • Site is partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are important, or is more open to views in which the countryside or open space is of less importance; • Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.
LOW SENSITIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of little or no importance to the setting of the town such that development would not lead to unacceptable visual intrusion into the countryside, with or without mitigation; • Site is well screened from public or private views; • Development would not be discernible or would enhance views or existing visual amenity.

2.39 To make a judgement on overall landscape sensitivity by considering the interactions between landscape character sensitivity and visual sensitivity, the following categories given in the matrix in Table 3 were used:

Table 3: Overall Landscape Sensitivity Categories

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity	High	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
	Moderate	MODERATE	MODERATE	HIGH
	Low	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH
		Low	Moderate	High
		Visual Sensitivity		

2.40 As described above, turning the sensitivity study into an assessment of capacity to accommodate a particular type of change requires consideration of the way that the landscape is valued. To do this the following criteria in Table 4 were used:

Table 4: Landscape Value

LANDSCAPE VALUE	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lies wholly within a previously designated landscape where localised character and scenic value is distinctive; Important to the setting of a registered Historic Park and Garden; Presents locally important landscape characteristics or scenic value; or Presents important public amenity value by way of views, access, sporting facilities, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).
MODERATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lies wholly or partially within a previously designated landscape but where localised character and scenic value is less distinctive or has become degraded; Lies adjacent to a previously designated landscape; Presents locally distinctive landscape characteristics with some scenic interest; or Presents some public amenity value by way of views, access, sporting facilities, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).
LOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not lie within or adjacent to a previously designated landscape; Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value / interest; or Does not present important public amenity value by way of views, access, sporting facilities, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

2.41 To make judgements on overall landscape capacity by considering the interactions between overall landscape sensitivity and landscape value, the following categories given in the matrix in Table 5 were used:

Table 5: Overall Landscape Capacity Categories

Overall Landscape Sensitivity	High	MEDIUM	LOW TO MEDIUM	LOW
	Moderate	MEDIUM TO HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW TO MEDIUM
	Low	HIGH	MEDIUM TO HIGH	MEDIUM
		Low	Moderate	High
		Landscape Value		

Reporting the Assessment

- 2.42 The different aspects of landscape character sensitivity, visual sensitivity, and landscape value are assessed to three categories; Low, Medium and High. However, in some cases the assessment does not fall squarely into one of these categories and a split assessment, such as Moderate to High landscape character sensitivity has been given. Overall landscape sensitivity using the matrix in Table 3 is also assessed to these three categories, colour coded as shown in the table and cross-referenced to Figure 5. Again, for some areas decisions have been made about how the individual assessments are combined where split assessments have led to more than one possible category. For example, an area with a Moderate to High landscape character sensitivity and Moderate visual sensitivity could have an overall landscape sensitivity of either Moderate or High using the matrix in Table 3. Thus a judgement has been made, by comparing the assessment of other areas, to arrive at the most appropriate category.
- 2.43 To arrive at overall landscape capacity, a five point scale has been used as shown in the matrix in Table 5; Low, Low to Medium, Medium, Medium to High and High. A five point scale allows greater differentiation between Study Areas. These five categories are also colour coded as shown in the table and cross-referenced to Figure 6.
- 2.44 When assessing overall landscape capacity, again for some areas decisions have been made about how the individual assessments are combined where split assessments have led to more than one possible category.
- 2.45 Recommendations are given in Section 5 to prioritise the areas and to guide the direction of the future growth of Grantham, taking into consideration this report and the 2011 DTA study. Where Study Areas have been assessed as having the same overall capacity to accommodate development, a judgement is made and recommendations given on the order that these areas could be brought forward for development, in landscape and visual terms.
- 2.46 Areas considered as being highly sensitive and with Low or Low to Medium capacity are not recommended for development in landscape terms. However, they have also been included in the overall table in Section 5 at the request of the Council to help identify possible future development scenarios on land beyond the prioritised areas.

3 Landscape Character

Hierarchy of Landscape Character Assessment

- 3.1 A hierarchy of landscape character assessment (LCA) exists in England, from broad national-scale assessment, through regional / county-wide assessment to smaller district-scale landscape character assessment. The higher tier national and regional-scale assessments generally provide a context and a basis for the more detailed assessments covering a district. Character assessments of local areas of land are at the most detailed scale, often undertaken to support planning applications for development and as part of environmental impact assessment.

National Scale LCA

- 3.2 Natural England is concerned with the whole of England's countryside and has produced the Landscape Character Map of England, dividing the Country into areas of similar landscape character, known as National Character Areas (NCAs). The District of South Kesteven is located within the East Midlands region and is largely covered by four NCAs which are as follows:
- Character Area 75 *Kesteven Uplands* – a large area of medium-scale, undulating, mixed farming landscape covering the central part of the District.
 - Character Area 48 *Trent and Belvoir Vales* – a gently undulating, open, arable or mixed farming landscape, with shallow ridges dropping down to broad river valleys in the northwest of the District.
 - Character Area 47 *Lincolnshire Edge* – large scale upland, open arable escarpment to the northeast of the District.
 - Character Area 46 *The Fens* - large-scale, flat, open landscape with extensive vistas to level horizons and huge skies. A hierarchy of rivers, drains and ditches provides a strong influence throughout the area to the east of the District.
- 3.3 Study Areas A, B, C and D are located along the southern edge of Grantham where National Character Areas 47, 48 and 75 meet. Study Areas E and F are located on the north side of the town within NCA 48. It is important to note that landscape character area boundaries are to some extent notional since landscape character rarely stops at abrupt boundaries but tends to change gradually across the landscape. Landscape character boundaries should be considered as transitional from one landscape type or area to another. Landscape sensitivity and capacity should therefore also be considered as transitional in the same way.

Regional Scale LCA – Forest Hills and Ridges

- 3.4 A regional scale LCA was prepared for Natural England's East Midlands Region in April 2010 to support the work of the East Midlands Landscape Partnership³. Study Areas A, B and D lie within regional landscape character type *10a Forest Hills and Ridges*, within the Woods and Forests Group 10. Key characteristics of this landscape type are identified in the report as:

³ LDA Design, April 2010, *East Midlands Regional Landscape Character Assessment*

- Broad, elevated plateaux and ridges with undulating landform;
- Till deposits overlie many parts of the Landscape Character Type, obscuring variations in the underlying bedrock geology and imparting a unity of character linked to the predominance of slowly permeable clay soils;
- Extensive areas of woodland of scenic and nature conservation value, including semi-natural and ancient woodlands, with many woodlands forming remnants of former Royal Forests;
- Where drift deposits are absent, the underlying Middle Jurassic limestones which predominate, together with sandstones and mudstones, have resulted in well drained calcareous and loamy ferruginous soils, and influenced vegetation types including woodland species;
- Woodlands on elevated ground form a backdrop to farmland with predominantly medium and large arable fields, often with low and well clipped hedges and intermittent hedgerow trees;
- Many areas of mature designed parkland and estates add to the wooded character of the landscape; and
- Sparsely populated with a quiet and tranquil character across central plateaux areas and ridges with dispersed settlement pattern of distinctive villages, many constructed in local stone, mainly located in sheltered locations along valleys.

3.5 With regard to landscape change and management of built development, the *East Midlands Regional Landscape Character Assessment* (EMRLCA) identifies forces for changes as:

'The Forest Hills and Ridges has distinctive small, nucleated settlements and inappropriate residential development can be particularly damaging, eroding the architectural and historic character, creating visual intrusion, and creating a new urban edge to the countryside. However, significant levels of growth are targeted for some parts of the landscape...'

3.6 To shape the future landscape of *The Forest Hills and Ridges* regional landscape character type, guidance within the EMRLCA states:

'The aim should be to protect the rural character of the landscape and limit the visual impact of any new development by ensuring new development is appropriate in terms of design and scale. Specific mechanisms include Design Statements for those villages and market towns most prone to infill development and the larger scale expansion of settlements lying within the Growth Points. The use of best practice innovative architectural and planning solutions that take inspiration from local distinctiveness and character should be promoted whilst utilising eco-friendly and high quality design...'

Regional Scale LCA – Clay Wolds

3.7 Study Areas C, E and F lie within regional landscape character type *8a Clay Wolds*, within the Clay Wolds Group 8. Key characteristics of this landscape type are identified in the report as:

- Broad plateaux overlain by thick mantle of till surrounded by undulating ridges and valleys, and prominent scarp slopes;
- Clay plateaux drained radially by streams occupying narrow valleys creating rolling landforms;

- Mixed farming but with mainly arable on the plateau tops and pasture on steep sloping land and along valleys; hedged fields generally medium to large scale, with some evidence of amalgamation;
- Well treed character from hedgerows, hedgerow trees, copses and small woodlands despite limited areas of large woodland;
- Sparse settlement pattern of small villages and farms with little modern development;
- Ironstone and limestone churches and vernacular buildings, but brick the most abundant and widespread building material;
- Frequent and prominent ridge and furrow close to villages;
- Quiet and remote, often empty character with extensive views contrasting with the more intimate and intricate areas close to villages;
- Damming of several valleys to create reservoirs which have localised impact on landscape character.

- 3.8 With regard to landscape change and management of built development, the EMRLCA identifies forces for change within the *Clay Wolds* as:

'Large scale modern mixed-use development is evident on the fringes of larger settlements in the south of the Clay Wolds, such as Northampton, Wellingborough and Kettering, creating visual intrusion and extending the urban fringe.... There is also pressure for residential development in the village around the towns, which are popular with commuters, eroding architectural and historic character. The impact of the new development on the setting and views of churches is particularly important, as these are distinctive local landmarks.'

- 3.9 To shape the future landscape of the *Clay Wolds* regional landscape character type, guidance within the EMRLCA states:

'The aim should be to protect the character of the countryside and consider the visual impact of any new development. Specific mechanisms include best practice innovative architectural designs and planning solutions and the planting of new trees, helping to integrate the new development into the landscape.'

In urban areas, care should also be taken to prevent coalescence; ensuring separation is maintained between the urban fringe and surrounding settlements. In rural areas, village expansion should generally be avoided in open, elevated areas where development would damage the sense of remoteness and expansive views. Many settlements would benefit from Village and Town Design Statements, guiding the design and scale of new development and ensuring the appropriate use of vernacular style and building materials. As well as Village and Town Design Statements, Conservation Area Appraisals can also be important tools.'

District Scale LCA – South Kesteven Landscape Character Assessment

- 3.10 The District Council prepared the district-wide *South Kesteven Landscape Character Assessment* (SKLCA) in January 2007 to inform the preparation of the LDF. The SKLCA builds upon the national-scale NCAs and defines areas of the District as landscape character areas (LCAs) by looking at a combination of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement. These broad geographic areas have a distinct

pattern of elements that occur consistently within the LCA and which create distinctive landscapes and places of individual character.

- 3.11 In some instances the LCA name is unchanged from the NCAs described in paragraph 3.2 above, for example the *Kesteven Uplands*, although the boundary of the area has been amended as a result of more detailed assessment. In other areas, the NCAs have been subdivided to reflect local variations in character, for example the *Harlaxton Denton Bowl* LCA, which is a new character area identified within the SKLCA within NCA 48 *Trent and Belvoir Vales*.
- 3.12 Study Areas A, B, C and D lie close to the boundaries of several LCAs identified in the SKLCA. Even at a detailed level boundaries are not easy to define as is acknowledged within the SKLCA in several places, including at paragraph 4.104 (page 44) with regard to the location of the Grantham Scarps and Valleys Character Area. At paragraph 4.5 (page 26) the SKLCA notes that at *'the boundaries between the Kesteven Uplands and the Southern Lincolnshire Edge the change in landscape is subtle and the boundaries are less distinct. No definitive line can be drawn between areas and the boundaries illustrated (in the LCA) should be considered loosely defined'*. Given that landscape character in the vicinity of the Study Areas is difficult to define, so too is the sensitivity of the landscape and its capacity to accommodate development.
- 3.13 Study Area A lies within the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* LCA, adjacent to the boundaries of the *Southern Lincolnshire Edge* LCA and the *Kesteven Uplands* LCA. Study Areas B and D also lie within the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* LCA, adjacent to the boundaries of the *Kesteven Uplands* LCA and the *Harlaxton-Denton Bowl* LCA. Study Areas E and F also lie within the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* LCA, to the north of the town. Study Area C is located within the *Harlaxton-Denton Bowl* LCA, adjacent to the *Kesteven Uplands* LCA and the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* LCA. The location of the Study Areas in relation to LCA boundaries at the district scale are shown in Figure 1. The key characteristics of the landscapes of the Study Areas are described in Section 4.
- 3.14 The SKLCA includes an assessment of landscape sensitivity of each LCA. This assesses how each LCA could accommodate change without adverse impacts on character, essentially whether or not significant characteristic elements of the landscape will be liable to loss; whether the characteristics could easily be restored; and whether important aesthetic aspects of character will be liable to change. The assessment of landscape sensitivity in the SKLCA considers three factors:

- i) The elements that contribute to landscape character, their significance and vulnerability to change;
- ii) The overall quality and condition of the landscape; and
- iii) Aesthetic aspects of landscape character.

- 3.15 For each LCA an assessment of sensitivity to new housing and employment development is made in the SKLCA, which is thus of direct relevance to landscape sensitivity of the Study Areas in this report. The SKLCA uses the following criteria for landscape sensitivity:

High – landscape areas with particularly distinctive or positive characters or with valued landscape features. These areas may be sensitive to relatively small changes.

Medium – landscape areas with reasonably positive character, but with evidence of alteration or degradation of the character or features. Potentially tolerant of some change.

Low – landscape areas with a weak character or relatively few features of value. Potentially tolerant of significant change.

- 3.16 It is important to note that the SKLCA is a landscape character assessment and not a landscape sensitivity and capacity study. The LCA considers landscape character sensitivity but not visual sensitivity other than how views impact on character. In contrast this study, and the 2011 DTA *Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study* follow best practice guidance in judging landscape and visual sensitivity and capacity, based on an understanding of landscape character which uses the SKLCA as a guide. This is discussed further in Section 4 Area Assessment and Analysis.

District Scale LCA - Grantham Townscape Character Assessment

- 3.17 The *Grantham Townscape Character Assessment* (GTCA) is one of a number of technical studies commissioned by the Council to inform the GAAP and is a significant document of relevance to the consideration of landscape sensitivity of land on the edge of Grantham. It provides an independent, professional detailed analysis of the character of Grantham, divided into 16 character areas, and includes the open countryside on the edge of town referred to as Character Area (CA) 17 '*Landscape Fringes*'. CA 17 has been sub-divided, with Study Area A lying within CA17f: '*Hall's Hill, Harrowby*', and Study Areas B and D lying within CA17d: '*Land to the north and south of Gorse Lane*'. Study Area E lies within CA17b: '*Northwest Quadrant (Poplar Farm, Boundary Farm and Rectory Farm)*', and Study Area F lies within CA 17a: '*Area to the west of Manthorpe and south of Belton Lane*'. Study Area C is not included in the townscape assessment, lying outside the study area boundary.

- 3.18 The GTCA describes the *Landscape Fringes* character area as follows:

'This character area comprises a series of generally open greenspaces given over to mostly agricultural uses and divided into fields with some hedge and tree boundaries. The topography of these spaces is very distinctive and the relationship of the town to these greenspaces throughout this character area is a crucial part of the character of both the town and the landscape fringes. These areas make up the important landscape setting to Grantham (and in particular some of its heritage assets or outstanding national significance, for example the Grade I listed Church of St. Wulfram) and are generally very sensitive to change.'

- 3.19 Importantly the GTCA acknowledges the proposed Southern Quadrant urban extension, identified as CA17e, and takes the proposed development within the SQ into consideration when describing the character of the area and its landscape context, and key design principles. This is discussed further in the assessment and analysis of landscape sensitivity and capacity of Study Areas A, B, C and D in the following Section 4.

4. Study Areas - Assessment and Analysis

Local Landscape Context of Study Areas

Grantham Scarps and Valleys Landscape Character Area

4.1 As described above, Study Areas A, B, D, E and F lie within the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys Landscape Character Area*. Key characteristics within the SKLCA are:

- Built development in Grantham is generally on the lower lying land in the valleys
- Steep scarp slopes to the east and south, with woodland or pasture cover
- Generally medium-scale arable fields, with relatively few hedgerow trees to the west and north
- Small-scale hedged pasture fields with hedgerow trees to the east and south
- Attractive parkland with attractive woodland and parkland trees at Belton
- Small villages, separated from Grantham town by narrow areas of open countryside

4.2 The SKLCA describes the physical and human influences, settlement pattern, landscape character and landscape sensitivity within the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys LCA*. The following extracts are of direct relevance to the sensitivity and capacity of Study Areas A, B, D, E and F:

“Physical Influences

Physically this character area is influenced by the surrounding areas. The higher land to the south-east is situated on the limestone and contains some free draining loams. Higher land over limestone occurs to the east and north at Great Gonerby and towards Barrowby. The valley of the River Witham and its tributaries contain river deposits and the majority of the town is developed on these.

Topography is one of the most important physical influences on the character of the area with the valley of the River Witham extending to the north towards Barkston. Other smaller watercourses extend from the east, creating tributary valleys that feed into the Witham.

The land rises quite sharply to the east at Somerby Hill, Hall’s Hill towards Harrowby and Londonthorpe. The land also rises steeply to the south towards Gorse Lane.

To the west of Grantham, construction of the A1 during the mid-20th century took the main through- traffic out of the town itself. The ‘new’ road is mostly “in cutting” as it passes the town, reducing its physical influence. Industrial and residential development now extends to the A1.

The historic Belton House and parkland lies immediately north of Grantham, and the Parkland provides an attractive edge to the town....The more recently planted parkland west of Belton, at Belton Country Club and Golf Course, extends the parkland character.

The open areas around the town have a variety of uses. The steeper slopes tend to be wooded, or under pasture, such as at Londonthorpe Wood and Halls Hill. Some of the less steep slopes are under arable cultivation, such as the land north of the A52. Across other

areas of land the topography is less dramatic, but it rises towards the A1 and Great Gonerby. The surrounding higher land characterises Grantham and has undoubtedly shaped the form of the town today.

Human Influences

Grantham developed along the Great North Road and the town centre contains a range of fine stone buildings, including coaching inns. The East Coast Main Line also passes through the town, and the good communications led to a range of industrial and commercial development. Most of the historic development in the town lies in the valley bottom.

The town saw a more rapid expansion during the twentieth century with some larger housing estates and industrial development spreading out along the valleys, and in some cases up the surrounding slopes. The town has now extended towards Great Gonerby, Belton and Barrowby, although the villages do retain their separate identities, and some relatively small areas of open landscape between the villages and Grantham town itself. Many of the 20th Century housing areas are not particularly locally distinctive.

Landscape Character

The landscape character varies around the town, with the physical and human influences. In general the character is defined by the residential and industrial development in Grantham following the base of the valleys with rising ground beyond. Built development on the rising ground is generally avoided, which gives the town an enclosed character.

In some of the older parts of town, such as at Somerby Hill, relatively low density housing with mature gardens gives a wooded feel to the valley bottom, with more open arable land in the higher slopes. Some more recent higher density development, such as at Gonerby Hill Foot, provides a stark edge to the town, and the housing contrasts with the countryside beyond. In general, however, keeping the development to the lower slopes has maintained a rural feel to the higher land, and has contained the urban influence on the wider landscape.

The parkland at Belton House and Belton Country Club is also distinctive, and a positive influence on the wider landscape.

Settlement

The town has developed in the valley of the River Witham, with the core of historic development on the lower lying ground. The town centre comprises some fine stone buildings, and St Wulframs Church, the spire of which is visible over a wide area. The good communications provided by the Great North Road and the East Coast Main Line, (formerly the Great Northern Railway) have led to more recent expansion. Some 20th Century residential areas, and employment development, have spread along the valleys and in some cases up the surrounding slopes.

To the north west of the town 20th Century development has extended up the valley slopes at Gonerby Hill Foot. A small open area of land separates Gonerby Hill Foot from the village of Great Gonerby, which is located on a crest of higher land, and retains its distinct identity with its own church and community facilities. Great Gonerby includes a core of older properties, constructed of stone and brick, with extensive surrounding areas of more recent residential development of less distinctive character. The context of the village on

the higher land contrasts with Grantham in the valley bottom and the separate identities should be maintained.

To the west of the town residential and employment development has extended towards the A1. Much of the A1 is in cutting and is enclosed by mature highway planting. This provides a firm boundary to the town. There are currently areas of open land along the western edge of town.

Some open areas are farmed, such as north of the A52, and some are unmanaged such as at Fairview Farm south of the A52. These areas of landscape are influenced by the residential areas adjacent to them and do not make a significant contribution to the setting of the town. Stubbock Hill to the north of the A52 is an area of higher land and is more important in containing the town in the valley, following the established character.

The land rises abruptly to the south and west of the town and urban development has extended to the base of the slopes. The rising land, which is partly wooded, provides a context to the residential and employment area. Some of these areas are developed to a relatively low density, with mature trees established in the gardens. This provides a soft character to the areas and helps to assimilate the urban areas with the more rural countryside on the higher land.

An area of employment land, including car showrooms is established on the higher ground south of Grantham along the B1174. The large-scale buildings in this location fit with the larger-scale flatter landscape. Whilst the buildings are visible, the relatively flat landform restricts visibility to the front buildings.

Landscape Sensitivity

The Grantham Scarps and Valleys character area is a complex area influenced by the surrounding character areas, and depending on the topography, landscape and human influences. The landscape is generally small in scale, and areas of particular sensitivity include the historic Belton Park and the wooded and parkland slopes to the east of the town. There are some areas closer to the edge of town, containing little of intrinsic landscape interest that would offer the scope for development. New development and associated landscape planting could soften some of the existing hard urban edges to the town. Other areas are of medium sensitivity because of the landscape elements, visibility or general character. These areas may offer some scope for development if sensitively designed and mitigated. Overall sensitivity would range from low to high, depending on the nature of the site, and the scale and type of the development proposal. In general terms new development should avoid the higher valley slopes, and should not establish new built development on the skyline.”

4.3 The SKLCA describes the following landscape management objectives for the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* Landscape Character Area:

- Protect and enhance woodlands and parklands
- Protect and manage field boundaries and hedgerow trees
- Protect and enhance watercourses
- Soften harsh urban edges by new woodland planting
- Avoid built development encroaching on the higher scarp slopes, or 'skylining'
- Use new development, and associated structural landscape, to soften existing harsh urban edges

- Maintain a varied urban edge with fringes of countryside extending into the town
- Consider opportunities for enhanced access to the countryside around the edge of town
- Protect gaps between Grantham and adjacent villages
- Where existing development occurs on higher ground such as at Gonerby Hill Foot, consider tree planting proposals to soften the roofscapes on the skyline.

Harlaxton Denton Bowl Landscape Character Area

4.4 Study Area C lies within the *Harlaxton Denton Bowl Landscape Character Area*. Key characteristics within the SKLCA are:

- Varied topography, hills, slopes and valleys
- Small to medium-scale landscape
- Patchwork of land use including woodlands, arable and pasture land
- Historic parkland at Harlaxton, and tree lined roads associated with other estates
- Villages with stone built or brick properties, with some distinctive properties associated with estates.

4.5 The following extracts from the SKLCA provide a local landscape character context to the assessment of Study Area C:

“The northern boundary lies north of Woolsthorpe and Barrowby, where the character area gives way to the flatter topography of the Vale. The A1 and Grantham form the eastern boundary. The District boundary forms the western edge of the character area, west of Woolsthorpe, although a similar landscape character exists to the west beyond the District boundary, encompassing Belvoir Castle, within Melton Mowbray Borough. The southern boundary is formed by the scarp of land south of Harlaxton and Denton, where the land rises to become the Kesteven Uplands Character Area.

A broad scarp of high land typically between 120 and 140m AOD extends east/west, to the south of Harlaxton and Denton, which descends to a valley or bowl of lower ground typically between 60m and 80m AOD including Harlaxton and Denton. The land then rises again to the north, reaching 115mAOD east of Woolsthorpe, and rises separately to the north-east, to reach 100m at Barrowby. These valleys, hills and slopes create a fairly small-scale landscape distinctive from the land around to the north and south.

The land use within the area follows the topography and soils that underlie it. Much of the steeper valley slopes support deciduous woodlands, which are particularly noticeable on the rising land. The areas of higher and flatter land are typically under arable cultivation, although many of the field boundaries are still maintained by hedgerows, with a good proportion of hedgerow trees. Some of the lower-lying land and small-scale fields around the villages are under pasture.

There is a nucleated settlement pattern, with the villages of Woolsthorpe, Harlaxton and Denton generally nestled within the valleys. There are no major roads crossing the area, but historic transport routes including the Grantham Canal and dismantled railway lines cross the landscape. These are frequently lined by hedges and trees, and contribute to the small-scale wooded character of the landscape, as well as providing opportunities now for walking and cycling. A number of roads have avenue planting alongside, probably

associated with the local estates. Denton reservoir, constructed to supply the Grantham Canal, now provides an area of open water and offers an opportunity for recreation.

The character of the landscape arises from the physical characteristics, including the small scale variations in topography, combined with the varied landcover and distinctive villages. The Belvoir and Welby estates also appear to have significant influence on the landscape character, through consistent management of the land and high proportion of woodland and tree cover. The area also provides a transition between the larger-scale, flatter and more open landscape of the Vale of Belvoir to the north, with its brick and tile buildings, and the Kesteven Uplands to the south, with its more wooded character and stone properties.

Within the Denton Harlaxton Bowl there are few detracting landscape features. The A607 passes through the area, and the A1 forms the eastern boundary, but the influence of these roads on overall landscape character is limited. A number of overhead power lines cross the area but are mostly sensitively sited to minimise adverse landscape impacts. There are longer-range views across the landscape to Belvoir Castle which lies west of the District.

Overall it is a landscape of high scenic value, with a variety of landscape elements including farmland, woodland, water and historic parks. There is a good network of accesses to the countryside, and the villages add to the character of the countryside, particularly with their 'historic estate character'.

- 4.6 With regard to landscape sensitivity of the Harlaxton Denton Bowl LCA, the SKLCA states the following:

“The Harlaxton Denton Bowl is a small to medium-scale landscape, with a varied topography and landcover. The landscape contains some important elements including Harlaxton Park, tree avenues and woodlands and a number of attractive villages. It is a landscape of high scenic value with important views to Belvoir Castle which lies outside the District.

Landscape sensitivity to new employment and residential proposals is likely to be high. The scale of the landscape and range of landscape elements would make it difficult to assimilate major development within most of the character area. The eastern edge of the character area adjacent to Grantham and the A1 may however provide some opportunities if new landscape planting associated with new development is used to soften the existing urban edge.”

- 4.7 The SKLCA describes the following landscape management objectives for the Harlaxton Denton Bowl Landscape Character Area:

- *Maintain the variety of land uses, with mixed farmland, woodland and parkland*
- *Protect and enhance the woodlands*
- *Resist the development of large-scale agricultural buildings, unless very carefully sited and designed*
- *Protect and enhance ditches, watercourses and the Grantham canal*
- *Maintain expansive views from the rising land.*

Southern Quadrant Urban Extension

- 4.8 As described in the introduction, the Southern Quadrant Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted by the Council in February 2013. It will inform the preparation of detailed development proposals for the site between the A52 Somerby Hill and the B1174, as shown in Figure 3. The Southern Quadrant Illustrative Masterplan is shown in Appendix 1.
- 4.9 The Southern Quadrant (SQ) development will extend the built up area of Grantham south-eastwards to Whalebone Lane and the B6403. The western half of the SQ lies on rising agricultural land on the southern edge of the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* LCA. This rises up to the elevated plateaux of the *Kesteven Uplands* LCA on which the eastern half of the SQ development will occupy. Inevitably the character of the landscape of the site will change to urban, and will extend the built up area of Grantham beyond the 120m contour for the first time. The consequences of this on the sensitivity and capacity of the Study Areas A, B and D are discussed below.

'King 31' Employment Development

- 4.10 As described in the introduction, as part of the development of the Southern Quadrant site the section of the Grantham East-West Relief Road between the A52 and B1174 Spittlegate Level will be constructed. The section of the relief road between the B1174 Spittlegate Level and the A1 will be constructed through the development of the 'King 31' employment site which already has planning permission. The site lies to the south of Gorse Lane shown in Figure 3.
- 4.11 New junctions with the A1 and the B1174 will be built as part of the development, and three commercial warehouse / distribution units with associated buildings/works including offices, built off the new section of relief road, with associated parking, landscaping, external lighting and fencing. The eastern half of the site occupies the former ironstone quarry and lies adjacent to an existing industrial estate off the B1174.
- 4.12 The site lies on the southern edge of the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* LCA, with the *Kesteven Uplands* LCA to the south and west. To the east the currently undeveloped area of the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* and the *Kesteven Uplands* LCA is the location for the proposed Southern Quadrant urban extension, which combined with the 'King 31' development will extend the southern built up edge of Grantham and thus significantly change its character. The consequences of this on the sensitivity and capacity of the Study Areas B and D are discussed below.

Study Area Assessment and Analysis

- 4.13 The following sheets record the assessment and analysis of the six Study Areas on the edge of Grantham.

STUDY AREA A: LAND NORTH OF A52 SOMERBY HILL

Site Location

This is a relatively small area on the south-eastern edge of Grantham, immediately north of the A52 at Somerby Hill, lying between a 1970's housing estate (David Eatch Estate) and the Prince William of Gloucester Barracks. Open sloping fields lie to the north and south (the Southern Quadrant urban extension will occupy land immediately to the south).

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity (see Figures 1, 2 & 3)

The western half of the Study Area comprises two small to medium scale grass fields currently use for sheep grazing, separated and bounded by low hedgerows and few trees. The eastern half is mostly developed, comprising a large detached house in well vegetated grounds adjacent to the A52, with offices, small business units and a timber yard behind, also well screened behind tall conifer trees.

Topography of Study Area A falls relatively steeply from a ridgeline at approximately 100m AOD close to the eastern boundary (the barracks sit almost on the brow of the hill) down to around 80m AOD where the Study Area abuts existing housing (thus falling 20m over a distance of approximately 300m). It forms part of the western facing scarp slope at the interface of the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys LCA*, the *Southern Lincolnshire Edge LCA* and the *Kesteven Uplands LCA* as described above. The Study Area was previously designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) in accordance with Local Plan Policy EN3 with the intention of protecting slopes and woodland considered to have a special attraction. Topography is the key landscape feature of the Study Area which is not wooded.

Landscape elements and features are generally commonplace, with generally unremarkable landscape character but some sense of place. The distinctive topography is one of the most important physical influences on the character of the town, with the open sloping fields representing a natural feature of some importance to its setting. There are urbanising influences, predominantly the busy A52, footpath, lamp columns and telephone poles and lines associated with the road, with the effect of making the break between town and countryside less distinctive.

Settlement Form and Pattern

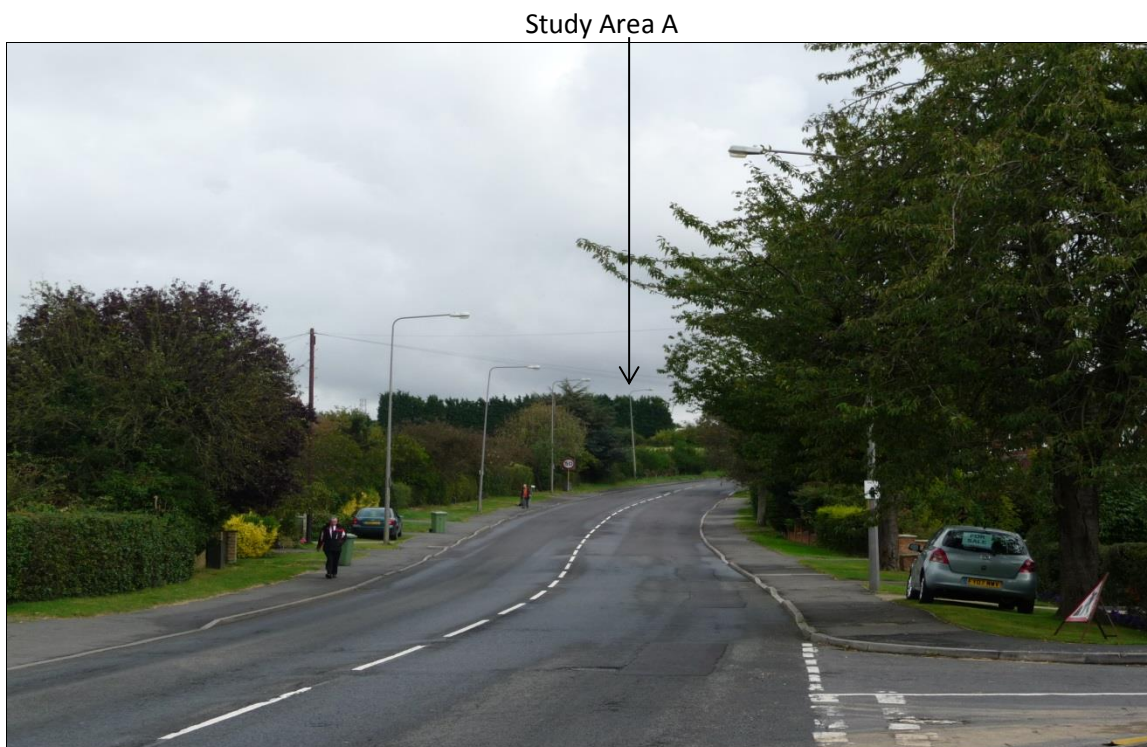
The area lies beyond the recognised boundary to built development on the south-eastern edge of Grantham, currently defined by the low density detached properties on Eastwood Drive / Hillside Drive to the west and north-west of Study Area A, which lie at between 95m – 100m AOD. Development on Area A would extend this form and pattern of settlement further up the valley side, having some association with the town but closing the current open gap between the town, development on the eastern part of Area A and the barracks, compromising their separate identities.

Visual Considerations (see Figure 3)

The area is seen as an open area when leaving the town from the west, of some importance to the setting of Grantham by comprising part of the elevated open fringe around the town (see photograph 2). It is also more widely seen in distant views from within the town, in particular from St John's Church on Station Road (the highest point in the town) as recognised in the *Grantham Townscape Character Assessment*. It is characteristic of the setting of Grantham where the green ridge surrounding the town remains undeveloped.



Photograph 1: an important strategic 'gateway' view on the approach to the town at Somerby Hill on the A52. Area A lies north of the A52 (right of the photograph) with the view towards open fields and woodland on the eastern edge of Grantham. Housing to the west of Area A is largely hidden in the dip but the church spire and other built features in the town are visible.



Photograph 2: from the A52 when leaving the town eastwards, showing Area A in the centre middle ground evident by the row of tall conifer trees.

Views across the town from Somerby Hill are recognised in the *Grantham Townscape Character Assessment* as strategically important, with views from the high ground to important heritage assets, most notably church spires and towers and cemetery chapels. The *Summary of*

Landscape and Visual Assessment and Key Views Analysis Study, 2011, states that there are two relevant 'gateways' and 'gateway views' into Grantham from the south, one of which is from the A52 at Somerby Hill where the view is expansive and dramatic (as shown in Photograph 1).

There is no public access across the Study Area. There are views into the Study Area from high ground along Cold Harbour Lane to the north and from locations within Eastwood Drive / Hillside Drive to the north-west of the Study Area.

There are more distant views towards Area A from the B1174 (see photograph 3). Here the area is seen beyond the current built up edge of the town, with the barracks lying within well wooded grounds on higher land beyond.



Photograph 3: from the B1174 where Area A is seen as a narrow open gap between the built up edge of Grantham and the barracks set in well-wooded grounds higher up the hill. The gap will remain after the Southern Quadrant urban extension on the arable fields seen in the right side of the photo.

Scope for Mitigation

The 'gateway' views from Somerby Hill across the town described above are important and should be retained. Sensitively designed housing development that responds to site topography, for example locating taller buildings on lower ground, stepping buildings into the hillside and the use of a split level layout, could limit visual intrusion into the countryside. However, development would not be completely screened and would compromise the distinctive undeveloped green ridge important to the setting of the town.

Impact of the Southern Quadrant Urban Extension

Inevitably the proposal for the Southern Quadrant urban extension, including the east-west relief road between the A1 and A52, will significantly change the character of that landscape, to urban. Development on the ridge slopes and on the higher plateau further east will require very careful design to minimise landscape and visual impacts, including impact on the landscape setting of the town.

Area A lies at the intersection of several landscape character areas. At the local scale, the A52 can be taken as the boundary between the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* LCA to the north and the *Kesteven Uplands* LCA to the south. To the north is a small to medium scale rolling landscape with irregular hedged fields of mixed arable and pasture, with steep scarp slopes falling westwards and providing a green, often tree lined ridge around the town. To the south the *Kesteven Uplands* is a medium to large scale, more gently undulating, unified, simple landscape of predominantly regularly shaped arable fields enclosed by hedges and occasional hedgerow trees and wooded copses. Area A lies within the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* LCA. The Southern Quadrant development lies predominantly within the *Kesteven Uplands*, although its higher, flatter eastern end lies at the transition with the *Southern Lincolnshire Edge* LCA where the landscape becomes larger in scale, with more open, flatter and larger arable fields with fragmented hedgerow boundaries. The *Southern Lincolnshire Edge* wraps around the town to the north.

Land within the proposed Southern Quadrant falls steeply away from the A52 and from the ridge running north-south approximately half way through the Study Area, westwards to the wooded valley floor of the River Witham. By following design principles to respond to site topography, impact on land to the north of the A52, including Study Area A, could be minimised. However, development within the Southern Quadrant will reduce landscape and settlement character sensitivity of Area A simply due to its proximity to it.

As recognised in the *Grantham Townscape Character Assessment*, a key design principle is to 'Maintain the open and green character of Hall's Hill' (referring the Character Area CA17f which includes Study Area A). Development within Area A would compromise this principle; however the main area of CA17f of most importance to the setting of the town to the east is the more steeply sloping and well wooded landscape fringe to the north of Study Area A.

With regard to visual sensitivity, the *Grantham Townscape Character Assessment* is clear that the view from Somerby Hill on the southern approach to the town (as shown in photograph 1) is highly sensitive to change even with development within the Southern Quadrant. The A52 opposite the Study Area will remain an important gateway with expansive views northwards across Grantham and the *Southern Lincolnshire Edge*, as described in the Council's 2011 *Summary of Landscape and Visual Assessment and Key Views Analysis Study*.

Existing tall vegetation along the southern side of the A52, in the extreme north-western corner of the Southern Quadrant land, will reduce the impact of the development within the Southern Quadrant in views up Somerby Hill when leaving the town eastwards (see photograph 2).

Sensitivity to Development

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity MODERATE in accordance with the following criteria from Table 1 on page 12:

- Commonplace elements and combinations of features present, some of which could not be replaced and which create generally unremarkable character but some sense of place;
- Of some importance to the setting of the town but the break between town and countryside is less distinctive;
- Development would have some association with the town and may have some effect on settlement form and pattern.

Visual Sensitivity MODERATE – HIGH in accordance with the following criteria from Table 2 on page 13:

- Provides important views into and out of the town which could not be fully mitigated;
- Of some importance to the setting of the town but development could be mitigated so that visual intrusion in to the countryside is acceptable;
- Site is partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside are important;
- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.

Overall Landscape Sensitivity MODERATE. In accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 3 on page 13 a rating of High is possible but a judgement has been made to give a lower overall landscape sensitivity rating to acknowledge the impact of the Southern Quadrant urban extension on the landscape and visual sensitivity of Study Area A (see Figure 5).

Landscape Value

Landscape Value MODERATE in accordance with the following criteria from Table 4 on page 14:

- Lies wholly within a previously designated landscape but where localised character and scenic value is less distinctive;
- Presents locally distinctive landscape characteristics with some scenic interest;
- Presents some public amenity value by way of views.

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

Overall Moderate landscape sensitivity and Moderate landscape value provide an assessment of **MEDIUM LANDSCAPE CAPACITY** of Study Area A to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 5 on page 14 (see Figure 6).

Table 6: Summary Table Area A

Area No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape capacity
A	Moderate	Moderate to High	Moderate	Moderate	Medium

STUDY AREA B: LAND NORTH OF GORSE LANE

Site Location

Study Area B lies to the north of Gorse Lane. It is bounded by the A1 to the west and the B1174 to the east. Sporadic development along Gorse Lane includes Grantham Preparatory School, Spittlegate Farm and a small number of residential properties. A water tower in the south-western corner of Study Area B, close to the A1, is a landmark feature visible in many distant views around and beyond the town.

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity (see Figures 1, 2 & 3)

Study Area B lies within the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* LCA, on the boundary with the *Kesteven Uplands*. It comprises an open arable field, at first gently falling northwards from Gorse Lane and then more steeply. Dense woodland lies on the steep scarp slope along the northern edge of Area B, providing a green backdrop to the southern edge of the town. Tree lined boundaries to the A1 to the west and around the agricultural fields and alongside a grass paddock and the B1174 to the east provide enclosure in these directions.

The Study Area was previously designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) in accordance with Local Plan Policy EN3 with the intention of protecting slopes and woodland considered to have a special attraction. Topography is the key characteristic, the steeply sloping northern edge of the area being an important part of the green open landscape fringe rising to the skyline around the town. The importance of this feature is evident by its previous designation as a 'Prominent Area for Special Protection' under Local Plan Policy EN4.



Photograph 4: looking towards the ridgeline of Area B from the railway station, showing the undeveloped landscape fringe around the southern edge of the town.

Settlement Form and Pattern

The area lies beyond the recognised boundary to built development, although sporadic development and mixed land use along Gorse Lane gives a more urban fringe character to the

northern edge of the area. Development on Area B would extend the form and pattern of settlement up the slope. Buildings on the ridge of high ground would be particularly conspicuous by breaking the skyline in sensitive views from around the town.



Photograph 5: looking towards the northern ridge of Area B from the town showing the dense woodland belt on the scarp slope and the undeveloped skyline.



Photograph 6: looking up to Area B from Stamford Street.

Visual Considerations (see Figure 3)

As shown in the photographs above, the densely wooded north-facing slope is a key feature in many views from within Grantham, where it forms an open landscape fringe important to the setting of the town. This is seen as important in the *Belton House and Park Setting Study and Policy Document* in which the setting of the historic house is seen in the context of the town with particular emphasis being placed on the slopes to the north side of Gorse Lane.

A continuous public footpath runs around the western, eastern and northern boundaries of area B, linking up with footpath routes (formal and informal) through the woodland and into the town. Popular with dog walkers, gaps in vegetation along the ridgeline provide extensive views out from the area across the town to the north and east.

Buildings and the water tower on the highest ground along Gorse Lane are not always visible, however, in views from lower ground in the north.



Photograph 7: looking eastwards from the edge of Area B towards the barracks set in well wooded grounds north of the A52 Somerby Hill.

More distant views are available from public footpaths to the south of the area, including views from routes beyond the A1 where the ridge of high ground screens views of the town.

Scope for Mitigation

Area B provides important views into and out of the town which could not be mitigated. Some development along Gorse Lane may be appropriate as long as measures are taken to avoid any encroachment on to the north facing scarp slope where development would be visible on the skyline.



Photograph 8: looking north from a public footpath off Gorse Lane in the south-eastern corner of Area B, indicating the elevated plateau of high ground in the south of the area.



Photograph 9: looking east from the north-western corner of Area B, showing the topography falling from the ridge of high ground and Gorse Lane (with Spittlegate Farm to the right of the photo) down to the well wooded northern boundary, with distant views to the Southern Lincolnshire Edge.

Impact of the Southern Quadrant Urban Extension and the 'King 31' Employment Development

The Southern Quadrant Illustrative Masterplan (See Appendix 1) indicates employment units alongside the proposed relief road to the east of the B1174, on land falling to the River Witham. This theme is continued within the 'King 31' site to the west of the B1174 where large commercial-scale units are proposed. This will continue the character of this part of the southern edge of Grantham, in keeping with existing land use alongside the road, and previous quarrying south of Gorse Lane. Commercial development in this location is also appropriate on the larger scale *Kesteven Uplands* landscape where, despite being large scale the units visibility will be limited from the town.

Such development to the south of Area B should not set a precedent for development within it, although limited, sensitively sited and designed development alongside Gorse Lane may be appropriate, subject to detailed landscape and visual impact assessment. Area B should remain an important open green landscape fringe to the town, linking with and continuing the wildlife and green infrastructure corridor alongside the railway that will be conserved within the Southern Quadrant development.



Photograph 10: from a public footpath to the south, showing the southern edge of Area B beyond the A1. The water tower, Spittlegate Farm and isolated properties lie close to the ridge of high ground along Gorse Lane which screens views of the town.

Sensitivity to Development

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity HIGH in accordance with the following criteria from Table 1 on page 12:

- Distinctive elements and combination of features present that could not be replaced and which make a positive contribution to character and sense of place;
- Important to the setting of the town by providing a distinctive break between town and countryside;
- Open space important to the appearance, form and character of the built environment;
- Development would be isolated from the town or would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern.

Visual Sensitivity HIGH in accordance with the following criteria from Table 2 on page 13:

- Provides important views into and out of the town which could not be mitigated;
- Important to the setting of the town where development would create unacceptable visual intrusion into the countryside that could not be mitigated;
- Site is very open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are very important;
- Development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous and could not be successfully mitigated.

Overall Landscape Sensitivity HIGH in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 3 on page 13.

Landscape Value

Landscape Value HIGH in accordance with the following criteria from Table 4 on page 14:

- Lies wholly within a previously designated landscape where localised character and scenic value is distinctive;
- Presents locally important landscape characteristics or scenic value; and
- Presents important public amenity value by way of views, access, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

Overall High landscape sensitivity and High landscape value provide an assessment of **LOW LANDSCAPE CAPACITY** of Study Area B to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 5 on page 14 (see Figure 6).

Table 7: Summary Table Area B

Area No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape capacity
B	High	High	High	High	Low

STUDY AREA C: HARLAXTON CLOSE

Site Location

Study Area C is a roughly triangular area of land to the west of the A1, west of the Premier Inn and restaurant at the A1 junction and housing along Westfield Avenue and Wyville Road. Area C lies immediately south of the A607. To the north lies the Grantham Canal. Open fields lie to the south and west, with an isolated property Echo Farm further west.

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity (see Figures 1, 2 & 3)

Study Area C lies within the *Harlaxton – Denton Bowl* LCA, close to the boundary with the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* to the east and the *Kesteven Uplands* to the south. It falls from approximately 100m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) southwards, steeply at first then more gradually to the A607 at approximately 70m AOD.

The eastern part of the area comprises a mostly open field enclosed by dense boundary vegetation, with occasional isolated trees. The flatter northern end is a former a playing field now apparently disused and overgrown, whilst the steeply rising southern end comprises rough grassland. Two electricity pylons are conspicuous features on the high ground at the top of the grass field (see photograph 11).



Photograph 11: looking from the A607 across the open eastern side of Area C, showing housing on Westfield Avenue encroaching up the slope.

The western part of Area C comprises the mature, well vegetated grounds of Harlaxton Close, a large detached property enclosed by trees. There are gates and wooden fencing along the frontage with the A607. Area C plays an important part in providing an attractive entrance to the town from the west along the A607 (see photograph 12).

Study Area C was previously designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) in accordance with Local Plan Policy EN3 with the intention of protecting slopes and woodland considered to have a special attraction. Topography is the key characteristic, the steeply sloping

southern edge of the area lies at the foot of the green open landscape fringe rising to the skyline around the town and extending further west towards Harlaxton Manor where the *Harlaxton – Denton Bowl* LCA meets the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys*. The importance of the steeply sloping southern edge of Study Area C is evident by its previous designation as a ‘Prominent Area for Special Protection’ under Local Plan Policy EN4.



Photograph 12: showing the mature grounds of Harlaxton Close providing a dense screen and an attractive entrance to the town from the A607.

Despite adjacent urban development immediately to the east and other urbanising features including street lighting and road signage, Area C has a predominantly rural character. Housing within Westfield Avenue and Wyville Road to the east has encroached on rising ground to the west of the A1, but it is closely associated with the A1 junction. Similar development within Area C would encroach further out into the countryside where key characteristics of the *Harlaxton – Denton Bowl* LCA, including its sparse settlement and patchwork of varied landscape elements and features, are sensitive to inappropriate development.

Settlement Form and Pattern

The area lies beyond the recognised boundary to built development on the western edge of the town, which is generally the A1 corridor but some housing has encroached on rising land west of the A1, closely associated with the A1 junction. The break between town and countryside in this location is less well defined, and development within Area C would have some association with the nearby housing but would extend the town further out into open countryside and into the sensitive landscape of the *Harlaxton – Denton Bowl* LCA. However, the existing mature grounds of Harlaxton Close could provide a natural break, screening any development in Area C on the approach to the town from the west.

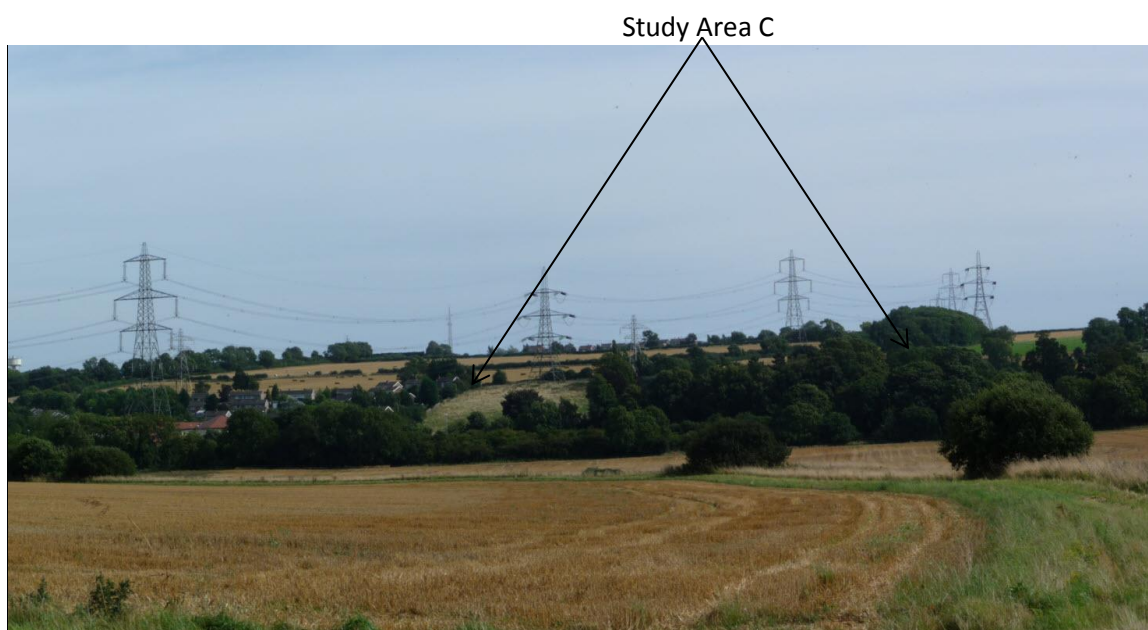
There would appear to be some potential for low density housing within the grounds of Harlaxton Close and on the relatively flat low lying field between the property and the A1 junction.

Visual Considerations (see Figure 3)

Study Area C is relatively well screened by boundary vegetation, particularly in close views. There are views from the canal towpath where it is open at its eastern end close to the A1. This is also part of National Cycle Network Route No. 15, from where Area C is seen alongside the Westfield Avenue housing on rising ground. Close views of several pylons and overhead lines, together with trunk road infrastructure and traffic on the busy A1 provide an urbanising effect.

There are elevated views across the area from a short section of the A1. There are also views from a footpath and bridleway crossing farmland to the north of Area C, to the higher ground of Area C and the fields beyond rising up to the ridge to the south. The telecommunications mast and houses near the junction of Wyville Road and Gorse Lane are visible on the ridge of high ground where they break the skyline.

Where development within Area C would be visible from surrounding viewpoints it would be seen on rising ground but with some association with existing housing, and would avoid the steeper slope and the ridge of high ground further south.



Photograph 13: view from public rights of way across farmland in the north, showing the rising grassland in Area C (centre of photograph) with adjacent housing on Westfield Avenue encroaching up the slope (to the left of Area C). The telecommunications mast and houses near the junction of Wyville Road and Gorse Lane are visible on the ridge of high ground where they break the skyline

Scope for Mitigation

Retention of boundary planting and in particular the woodland trees and other mature vegetation in the grounds of Harlaxton Close would provide a screen to further development within the grounds. It would also screen most development on the more open side of Area C, to the east, in views from the west.

Sensitively designed housing development that responds to site topography, for example locating taller buildings on lower ground, stepping buildings into the hillside and the use of a split level layout, would limit visual intrusion into the countryside. Any development should be accompanied by generous tree planting to retain an urban fringe character.

Impact of the Southern Quadrant Urban Extension and the ‘King 31’ Employment Development

Due to distance, topography and intervening vegetation, neither the Southern Quadrant urban extension nor the ‘King 31’ employment development are likely to have any effect on Study Area C.

Sensitivity to Development

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity MODERATE in accordance with the following criteria from Table 1 on page 12:

- Commonplace elements and combinations of features present, some of which could not be replaced and which create generally unremarkable character but some sense of place;
- Of some importance to the setting of the town but the break between town and countryside is less distinctive;
- Development would have some association with the town and may have some effect on settlement form and pattern.

Visual Sensitivity MODERATE in accordance with the following criteria from Table 2 on page 13:

- Views into and/or out of the town are of some importance but there is scope for mitigating potential visual impacts;
- Site is partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside are important;
- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.

Overall Landscape Sensitivity MODERATE in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 3 on page 13 (see Figure 5).

Landscape Value

Landscape Value MODERATE in accordance with the following criteria from Table 4 on page 14:

- Lies wholly within a previously designated landscape but where localised character and scenic value is less distinctive;
- Presents locally distinctive landscape characteristics with some scenic interest;
- Presents some public amenity value by way of views.

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

Overall Moderate landscape sensitivity and Moderate landscape value provide an assessment of **MEDIUM LANDSCAPE CAPACITY** of Study Area C to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 5 on page 14 (see Figure 6).

Table 8: Summary Table Area C

Area No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape capacity
C	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Medium

STUDY AREA D: LAND SOUTH OF GORSE LANE

Site Location

Study Area D lies immediately to the south of Gorse Lane which forms the northern boundary. The A1 corridor is mostly in cutting to the west. An area of mixed land use, including residential properties, a covered reservoir, a vehicle storage / dismantlers site and caravan park, lies to the east between Study Area D and the B1174. Land to the south presently comprises a disused ironstone quarry and arable farmland with extant planning permission for employment use (the 'King 31' development as described in paragraphs 4.10 – 4.12 above).

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity (see Figures 1, 2 & 3)

Study Area D lies at the transition between the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* LCA and the *Kesteven Uplands* LCA, with key upland plateau characteristics in keeping with the open agricultural landscape to the south rather than the steeper scarps and lower valleys to the north. It is rectangular in shape, relatively flat at around 117m AOD, and divided unequally into three open fields; a small grass paddock lies to the west alongside the A1, separated from the rest of the area by a public footpath running along a narrow grassed track with hedgerows and hedgerow trees either side; a bungalow and small holding lies towards the centre of the Study Area with a slightly larger arable field around it; and a further large arable field occupies the eastern half of the Study Area. Hedgerows around the bungalow and small holding are kept well-trimmed, whereas the roadside hedge along the northern boundary with Gorse Lane is generally taller.

Land to the north (Study Area B) rises gently before falling steeply towards the town. Land to the east falls at first gradually then more steeply eastwards to the River Witham valley, before rising again on to the upland plateau. The undulating plateau continues to the west.



Photograph 14: view looking south eastwards from Gorse Lane across the eastern end of Study Area D, with distant views to the Kesteven Uplands. Land uses along the B1174 within the Witham valley are largely screened in the view.

The Study Area was previously designated in the Local Plan as part of the extensive Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) surrounding the town to the south and east, with the intention of protecting slopes and woodland considered to have a special attraction. Sloping topography is not a key characteristic of the area, although woodland blocks including Warren Plantation

are prominent features amongst the larger, regular, open fields on the elevated plateau to the south.



Photograph 15: view looking southwards from Gorse Lane across the middle of Study Area D towards Warren Plantation and pylons beyond the A1. The vegetation in the middle distance will be removed as part of the 'King 31' development.

Overall the Study Area exhibits generally unremarkable character but some sense of place, being elevated on the plateau within a relatively unified, simple, medium-large scale agricultural landscape.

Settlement Form and Pattern

The area lies beyond the recognised boundary to built development, occupying the landscape fringe around the town to the south. Modern human influences exert an urban edge character to the area, particularly in the eastern half due to the former quarry and industrial estate to the south, mixed land uses to the east and to the north, where Grantham Preparatory School, Spittlegate Farm, Heath Farm and a small number of residential properties are located along Gorse Lane. Consequently the road currently provides somewhat of a transition between town and country.

The Grantham Caravans site, car showrooms and industrial estate have extended the town southwards along the western side of the B1174. Future development of the former quarry for the 'King 31' employment park will extend built form between the B1174 and the A1. The proposals include three commercial warehouse / distribution units with associated buildings/works and offices, built off the new section of relief road between the A1 and the B1174 Spittlegate Level, with associated parking, landscaping, external lighting and fencing. The relief road will continue to the east as part of the Southern Quadrant proposals which will see the area to the east of the Study Area between the B1174 and the A52 developed.

These future committed developments to the south and east of Study Area D reduce its landscape sensitivity and increase its capacity to accommodate development, where

development on the Study Area would have some association with existing land uses and the 'King 31' proposals. Appropriate development within Study Area D would be in keeping with the future settlement form and pattern to the south of the town.

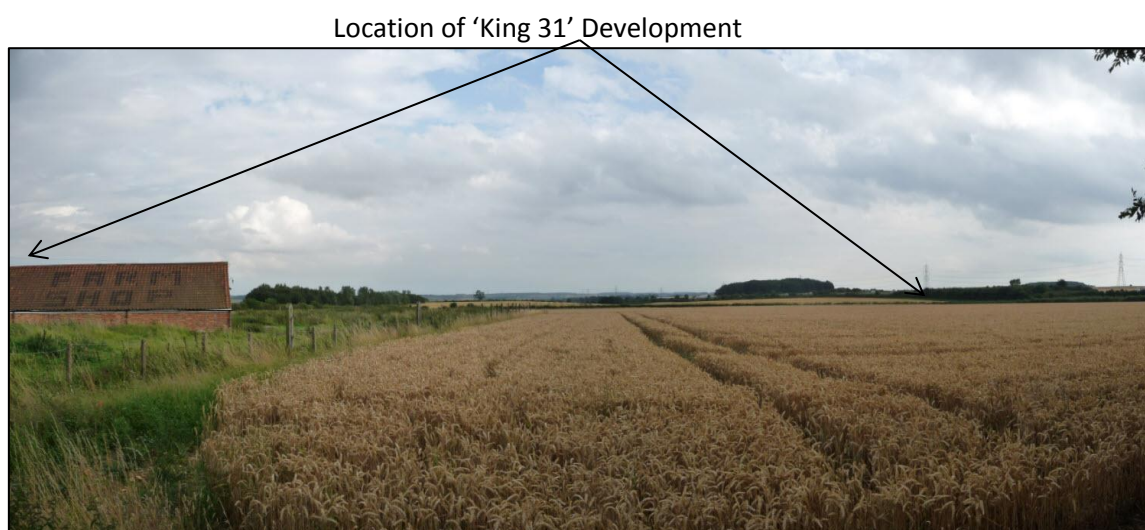
Visual Considerations (see Figure 3)

Gorse Lane alongside the Study Area provides a feeling of exposure where the perception is of being up high on the plateau with extensive views across the gently undulating agricultural landscape to the Lincolnshire edge to the east and distant hills to the south and west. Huge skies add to the perception, with views of the town being surprising limited by the ridgeline within Study Area B to the north.

A water tower on the northern side of Gorse Lane, close to the A1, is a landmark feature visible in many distant views around and beyond the town. It provides an indication of the likely visibility of further build development along Gorse Lane, including within Study Area D, in views into the area.

As indicated in Figure 3 views into the area are limited. Topography and vegetation screen most views of development along Gorse Lane from the town. As discussed in the assessment of Study Area B, to the north of Gorse Lane, the ridgeline and wooded steep scarp slope to the north is highly sensitive to development, but some development along Gorse Lane may be appropriate as long as measures are taken to avoid any encroachment on to the north facing scarp slope where development would be visible on the skyline.

There are open views across the Study Area from various locations along Gorse Lane through or over the roadside hedgerows, from where the area is perceived as a part of the open countryside, albeit with surrounding modern influences. Views from Gorse Lane southwards show Warren Plantation and the pylons to the west of the A1 in the middle distance. The Study Area is seen as part of the wider countryside of large regular fields and woodland, gently rising to the west. The 'King 31' development would be prominent in the view, breaking the skyline and screening views to distant hills further south (see photograph 16).



Photograph 16: view looking southwards from Gorse Lane across the western end of Study Area D, towards Warren Plantation and hills in the distance. The 'King 31' employment development will be in the middle distance and will dominate the view.

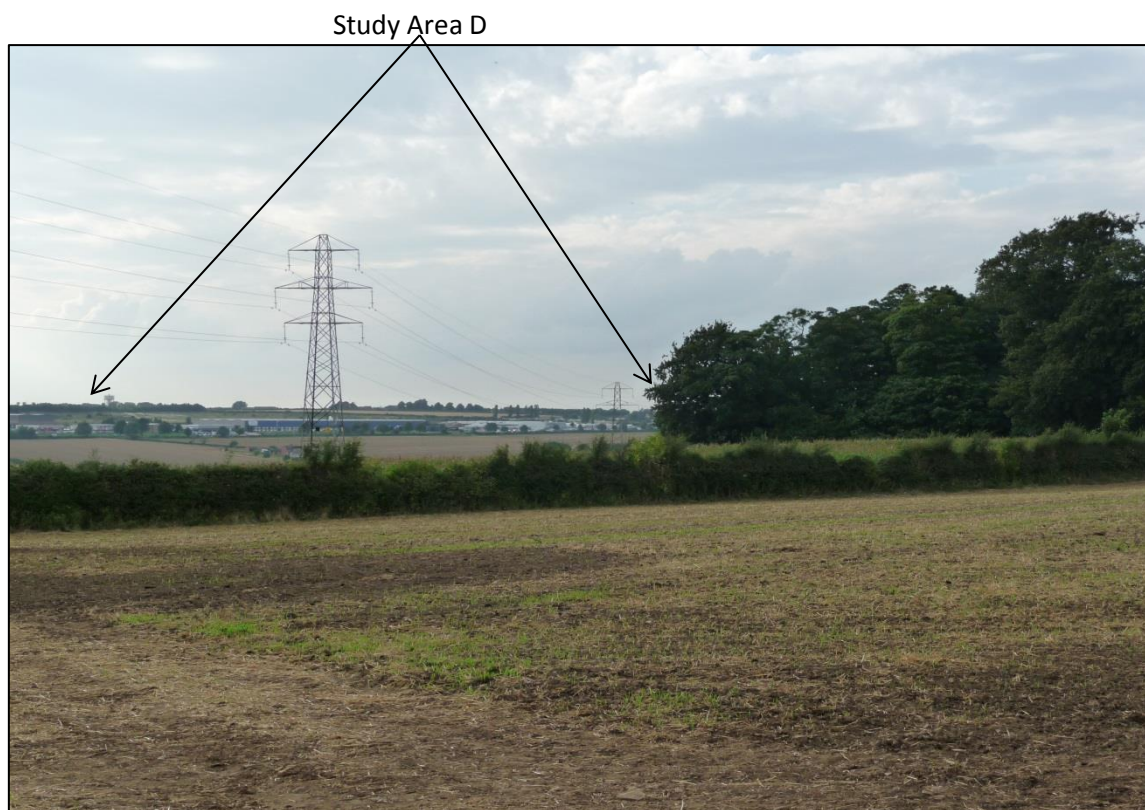
There are currently views from the A1 north eastwards into Study Area D (apart from where the densely vegetated cutting slopes screen views where the A1 corridor passes beneath Gorse

Lane) where Spittlegate Farm and Heath Farm are seen across arable fields alongside the A1. This view will become dominated by the 'King 31' employment park and the new relief road including a new junction with the A1.

There are middle distance and close views from a public footpath crossing the fields to the south, views of the Study Area becoming closer as the public right of way continues along the southern boundary past Warren Plantation, beneath the A1 via an underpass to continue along the track through the western edge of the Study Area. From here the electricity pylons are prominent, conspicuous features within the wide, open, relatively flat and exposed landscape. The properties on Gorse Lane and the telecommunications mast close to the junction with Wyville Road are also visible to the west of the Study Area. The water tower on the eastern side of the A1 is visible beyond the well-vegetated cuttings slopes of the A1 (photo A15) whilst traffic is clearly visible where the A1 is at ground level south of the Study Area (photo A16). The ridge of high ground and woodland to the east of Grantham is visible in the distance.

Although the warehouse units in the 'King 31' site would be partially cut into the ground, they would still be partially visible, together with the associated development, in views from the west of the A1.

There are also more distant views from Whalebone Lane on ground rising above the Witham valley to the east (see photograph 17). From here the Study Area and water tower beyond are visible in the distance above the existing industrial estate off the B1174. The A1 is not prominent but the 'King 31' development would be visible, appearing as an extension of the existing industrial estate.



Photograph 17: view from Whalebone Lane showing Study Area D on the plateau of high ground beyond the industrial estate. The water tower is visible centre-left. The 'King 31' employment development will occupy the entire middle distance between the existing industrial estate and Study Area D, breaking the skyline and screening the Study Area from this viewpoint.

Scope for Mitigation

The scale and elevation of the landscape and its open character would make it difficult to assimilate new development into the landscape. However, existing and proposed development to the south and east of the Study Area reduce its sensitivity and increase its capacity to accommodate development.

Detailed landscape and visual impact assessment is required and any measures necessary should be taken to avoid encroachment in views up the north facing scarp slope from the town, where development could be visible on the skyline.

Impact of the Southern Quadrant Urban Extension and the 'King 31' Employment Development

The Southern Quadrant Illustrative Masterplan (See Appendix 1) indicates employment units alongside the proposed relief road to the east of the B1174, on land falling to the River Witham. This theme is continued within the 'King 31' site to the west of the B1174 where large commercial-scale units are proposed. This will continue the character of this part of the southern edge of Grantham, in keeping with existing land use alongside the road, and previous quarrying south of Gorse Lane. Commercial development in this location is also appropriate on the larger scale *Kesteven Uplands* landscape where, despite being large scale the units visibility will be limited from the town.

Such development to the south of Study Area D will set a precedent for development within it, such that sensitively sited and designed development alongside Gorse Lane may be appropriate, subject to detailed landscape and visual impact assessment. Study Area B to the north should remain an important open green landscape fringe to the town, linking with and continuing the wildlife and green infrastructure corridor alongside the railway that will be conserved within the Southern Quadrant development.

The following assessment is made assuming that the Southern Quadrant and 'King31' developments are built:

Sensitivity to Development

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity LOW - MODERATE in accordance with the following criteria from Table 1 on page 12:

- Commonplace elements and combinations of features present which create generally unremarkable character but some sense of place;
- Development would have some association with the town and may have some effect on settlement form and pattern;
- Is not important intervening open land between settlements;
- Of little importance to the setting of the town as there is little or no distinctive break between town and countryside.

Visual Sensitivity LOW - MODERATE in accordance with the following criteria from Table 2 on page 13:

- Views into and/or out of the town are of some importance but there is scope for mitigating potential visual impacts;
- Site is partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside are important;

- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view;
- Of little or no importance to the setting of the town such that development would not lead to unacceptable visual intrusion into the countryside, with or without mitigation.

Overall Landscape Sensitivity MODERATE in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 3 on page 13 (see Figure 5). A combination of Low - Moderate landscape and settlement sensitivity and Low - Moderate visual sensitivity could give a 'score' of Low overall landscape sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 3, but on balance a slightly higher sensitivity has been recorded to reflect the elevated nature of the area and its location at the transition of the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* LCA and the *Kesteven Uplands* LCA.

Landscape Value

Landscape Value MODERATE in accordance with the following criteria from Table 4 on page 14:

- Lies wholly within a previously designated landscape but where localised character and scenic value is less distinctive;
- Presents locally distinctive landscape characteristics with some scenic interest;
- Presents some public amenity value by way of views and access.

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

Overall Moderate landscape sensitivity and Moderate landscape value provide an assessment of **MEDIUM LANDSCAPE CAPACITY** of Study Area D to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 5 on page 14 (see Figure 6).

Table 9: Summary Table Area D

Area No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape capacity
D	Low - Moderate	Low - Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Medium

STUDY AREA E: LAND WEST OF GONERBY HILL

Site Location

Study Area E lies immediately to the west of the B1174 Grantham Road at Gonerby Hill. Residential development, including properties in The Knoll on the southern edge of Great Gonerby, lie to the north. Properties in Campian Way, Brecon Close and Brendon Close off Pennine Way on the northern edge of Grantham border the Study Area to the southeast. A railway corridor forms the southern boundary. Fields lie to the west and to the northeast beyond Gonerby Hill.

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity (see Figures 1, 2 & 3)

Study Area E lies in the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* LCA. Great Gonerby immediately to the north occupies a crest of high land at around 110m AOD, the ground falling steeply in all directions. Study Area E lies on the southern edge of Great Gonerby within the scarp slope, falling from around 103m AOD to less than 80m AOD in the southern corner where the northern built up edge of Grantham meets the railway line.

Study Area E comprises a narrow, open arable field. Hedges with hedgerow trees bound the area to the north and south. Where the B1174 is in cutting alongside the Study Area to the east the cutting slopes are well vegetated. A wide belt of dense trees lies alongside the railway where the line is in cutting on the lower ground to the south.

The area was previously designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) in accordance with Local Plan Policy EN3 with the intention of protecting slopes and woodland considered to have a special attraction. Topography and its open character are the key features of the Study area, the steeply sloping ground being an important part of the green open landscape fringe framing Grantham to the north. The relationship of the town to the prominent greenspaces surrounding it is a key characteristic of both the town and the higher landscape fringes.

The area is especially prominent from the south where its open character contrasts with surrounding houses which have begun to encroach on the rising ground at Gonerby Hill Foot. It is perceived as a continuation of the prominent ridgeline and scarp slope which continues to the west and which was previously protected by Local Plan Policy EN4 Prominent Areas for Special Protection. The ridgeline and scarp slope continue to the east around Great Gonerby (and including Study Area F discussed below).

Surrounding buildings close to the Study Area give it an urban edge character, but its openness and location between Grantham and Great Gonerby increases its sensitivity to any development that would compromise their separate identities.

Settlement Form and Pattern

The Study Area has long been recognised as important open land separating Grantham and Great Gonerby. Modern housing on rising land at Gonerby Hill Foot has taken the northern built up edge of Grantham to within less than 150m of the southern edge of Great Gonerby. If the separate identities of the settlements are to remain, Study Area D should be protected from development.

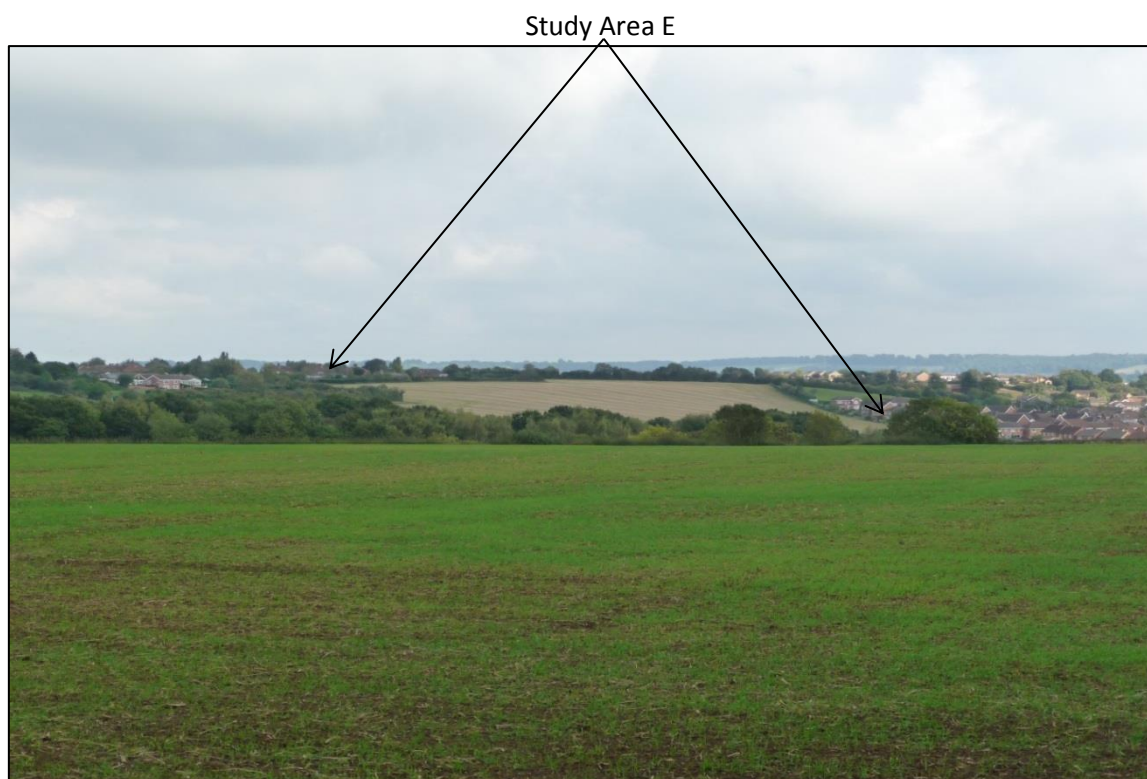
Avoiding building on the highest ground on Gonerby Hill adjacent to the eastern corner of the Study Area has limited the negative impact of development. Built development encroaching further up the scarp slope and along the ridgeline should be avoided.

Visual Considerations (see Figure 3)

The Study Area is mostly screened in views from the B1174 due to dense roadside planting. Some nearby properties on the higher ground to the south of Great Gonerby have views down across the Study Area southwards towards Grantham and the countryside beyond. Some nearby properties on the northern edge of Grantham have views up across the Study Area northwards towards Great Gonerby.

The most prominent views into the Study Area are from the west and south; from public rights of way around Stubbock Hill and Rectory Farm in the west, and from various locations within Grantham including from the A52. The spire of St. Sebastian's Church at Great Gonerby is particularly distinctive. The *Grantham Townscape Character Assessment* describes these views as of great value and strategic importance; the essential qualities being the sense of openness and the clear gap between Great Gonerby and the north-western fringes of the town.

In these views the topography of the Study Area is distinctive. It is perceived as an important open greenspace of rising ground on the northern edge of the town, rising to the ridgeline which is important to the setting of Great Gonerby perched up on the crest. Part of the land to the south between the railway and the A52 is identified for future development as the Northwest Quadrant. This will alter visibility of the Study Area from the south, with some existing views becoming screened but new views opening up.



Photograph 18: view north-eastwards from a public right of way near Rectory Farm, showing the open nature of the Study Area separating houses rising up the slope at Gonerby Hill Foot (right) and Great Gonerby (left).

Scope for Mitigation

The sensitive topography and location of the Study Area, particularly its openness which is important to maintaining the separate identities of Grantham and Great Gonerby, would make it difficult to assimilate new development into the landscape without compromising these important characteristics.

The urban edge of the town bordering the Study Area is somewhat harsh and abrupt and would benefit from a more varied, softer edge without compromising the open nature of the Study Area. This may be best achieved in time as the gardens of properties on Campian Way, Brecon Close and Brendon Close off Pennine Way mature.

Sensitivity to Development

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity HIGH in accordance with the following criteria from Table 1 on page 12:

- Distinctive elements and combination of features present that could not be replaced and which make a positive contribution to character and sense of place;
- Important intervening open land between settlements;
- Important to the setting of the town by providing a distinctive break between town and countryside;
- Open space important to the appearance, form and character of the built environment;

Visual Sensitivity HIGH in accordance with the following criteria from Table 2 on page 13:

- Provides important views into and out of the town which could not be mitigated;
- Important to the setting of the town where development would create unacceptable visual intrusion into the countryside that could not be mitigated;
- Site is very open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are very important;
- Development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous and could not be successfully mitigated.

Overall Landscape Sensitivity HIGH in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 3 on page 13.

Landscape Value

Landscape Value HIGH in accordance with the following criteria from Table 4 on page 14:

- Lies wholly within a previously designated landscape where localised character and scenic value is distinctive;
- Presents locally important landscape characteristics and scenic value; and
- Presents important public amenity value by way of views.

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

Overall High landscape sensitivity and High landscape value provide an assessment of **LOW LANDSCAPE CAPACITY** of Study Area E to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 5 on page 14 (see Figure 6).

Table 10: Summary Table Area E

Area No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape capacity
E	High	High	High	High	Low

STUDY AREA F: LAND EAST OF GONERBY HILL

Site Location

Study Area F lies immediately to the east of the B1174 Grantham Road at Gonerby Hill. Residential development, including properties on Emminson Way, Treadgold Avenue, Swadales Close and Woffindin Close, off Kelham Road on the southern edge of Great Gonerby, lie to the north. Properties in The Haverlands, Orchard Close, Arnold Avenue and Lynden Avenue on the northern edge of Grantham border the Study Area to the south. The narrow open arable field of Study Area E lies to the west, with further arable fields at Gonerby Hill Foot to the east. Belton Lane and the East Coast Main Railway Line further to the east.

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity (see Figures 1, 2 & 3)

Study Area F lies in the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* LCA. Great Gonerby immediately to the north occupies a crest of high land at around 110m AOD, the ground falling steeply to the west and more gently to the east towards the valley of the River Witham. Study Area F lies on the southern edge of Great Gonerby within the scarp slope, falling from around 103m AOD to approximately 85m AOD in the southern corner adjacent to The Haverlands cul-de-sac.

Study Area F comprises a relatively narrow, open arable field. Hedges with hedgerow trees bound the area to the north, east and south. Where the B1174 is in cutting alongside the Study Area to the west the cutting slopes are well vegetated.

The area was previously designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) in accordance with Local Plan Policy EN3 with the intention of protecting slopes and woodland considered to have a special attraction. Topography and its open character are the key features of the Study Area, the steeply sloping ground being an important part of the green open landscape fringe framing Grantham to the north. The relationship of the town to the prominent greenspaces surrounding it is a key characteristic of both the town and the higher landscape fringes.

The area is especially prominent from the east where its open character contrasts with surrounding houses which have begun to encroach on the rising ground at Gonerby Hill Foot. It is perceived as a continuation of the prominent ridgeline and scarp slope which continues to the east and which was previously protected by Local Plan Policy EN4 Prominent Areas for Special Protection. The ridgeline and scarp slope continue to the west around Great Gonerby (and including Study Area E discussed above).

Surrounding buildings close to the Study Area give it an urban edge character, but its openness and location between Grantham and Great Gonerby increases its sensitivity to any development that would compromise their separate identities.

Settlement Form and Pattern

The Study Area has long been recognised as important open land separating Grantham and Great Gonerby. Modern housing on rising land at The Haverlands has taken the northern built up edge of Grantham to within approximately 200m of the southern edge of Great Gonerby. If the separate identities of the settlements are to remain, Study Area D should be protected from development.

The highest housing at The Haverlands adjacent to the southern corner of the Study Area lies at approximately 95m AOD. The highest housing at Lynden Avenue adjacent to the eastern corner of the Study Area lies at approximately 98m AOD. There may be some potential for new residential development on the lowest ground within the extreme southern corner of the Study

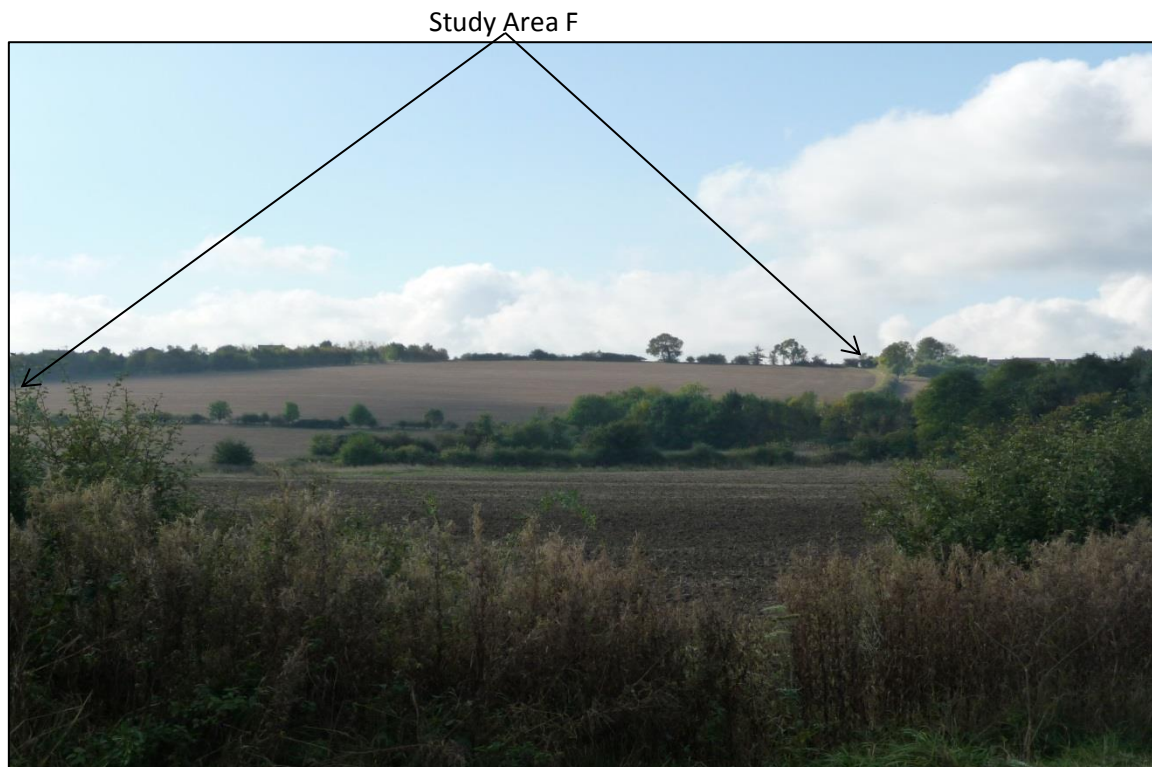
Area, on ground no higher than 95m AOD. This would represent a rounding-off of built development within the Study Area and would not result in a narrowing of the gap between the town and Great Gonerby. Built development encroaching further up the scarp slope and along the ridgeline should be avoided.

Visual Considerations (see Figure 3)

The Study Area is mostly screened in views from the B1174 due to dense roadside planting. Some nearby properties on the higher ground to the south of Great Gonerby have views down across the Study Area southwards towards Grantham and the countryside beyond. Some nearby properties on the northern edge of Grantham have views up across the Study Area northwards towards Great Gonerby.

The most prominent views into the Study Area are from the east; from public rights of way and from Belton Lane in particular, from where it forms an open landscape fringe important to the setting of the town. This is seen as important in the *Belton House and Park Setting Study and Policy Document* in which the setting of the historic house is seen in the context of the town with particular emphasis being placed on the slopes to Great Gonerby. The spire of St. Sebastian's Church at Great Gonerby is particularly distinctive in views from the east and south. The *Grantham Townscape Character Assessment* describes these views as of great value and strategic importance; the essential qualities being the sense of openness and the clear gap between Great Gonerby and the north-western fringes of the town.

In these views the topography of the eastern edge of the Study Area is distinctive. It is perceived as an important open greenspace of rising ground on the northern edge of the town, rising to the ridgeline which is important to the setting of Great Gonerby perched up on the crest.



Photograph 19: view from Belton Lane showing the ground rising up to the eastern edge of Study Area F on the ridgeline, and the important gap between houses on the northern edge of Grantham (left) and the southern edge of Great Gonerby (right).



Photograph 20: view from the northern edge of Grantham close to Arnold Avenue across Study Area F with properties on The Haverlands (left) and Great Gonerby, including St. Sebastian's Church (right).

Development within the Study Area would potentially be seen in views from public rights of way around Stubbock Hill and Rectory Farm in the west, as shown in photograph 18, where development could breach the skyline and result in the coalescence of Grantham and Great Gonerby.

Scope for Mitigation

The sensitive topography and location of the Study Area, particularly its openness which is important to maintaining the separate identities of Grantham and Great Gonerby, would make it difficult to assimilate new development into the landscape without compromising these important characteristics.

However, a limited extension to The Havarlands on the lowest ground within the extreme southern corner of the Study Area, on ground no higher than 95m AOD, could potentially be acceptable without compromising important landscape characteristics and key aspects of settlement form and pattern, as discussed above. Any development should provide a softened, varied urban edge with associated structural planting, to compliment the gardens of properties around the Study Area which will mature in time to achieve the same.

Sensitivity to Development

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity HIGH in accordance with the following criteria from Table 1 on page 12:

- Distinctive elements and combination of features present that could not be replaced and which make a positive contribution to character and sense of place;
- Important intervening open land between settlements;
- Important to the setting of the town by providing a distinctive break between town and countryside;
- Open space important to the appearance, form and character of the built environment;

Visual Sensitivity HIGH in accordance with the following criteria from Table 2 on page 13:

- Provides important views into and out of the town which could not be mitigated;

- Important to the setting of the town where development would create unacceptable visual intrusion into the countryside that could not be mitigated;
- Site is very open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are very important;
- Development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous and could not be successfully mitigated.

Overall Landscape Sensitivity HIGH in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 3 on page 13.

Landscape Value

Landscape Value HIGH in accordance with the following criteria from Table 4 on page 14:

- Lies wholly within a previously designated landscape where localised character and scenic value is distinctive;
- Important to the setting of a Registered Historic Park and Garden;
- Presents locally important landscape characteristics and scenic value; and
- Presents important public amenity value by way of views.

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

Overall High landscape sensitivity and High landscape value provide an assessment of **LOW LANDSCAPE CAPACITY** of Study Area F to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 5 on page 14 (see Figure 6).

Table 11: Summary Table Area F

Area No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape capacity
F	High	High	High	High	Low

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 Recommendations are given in Table 12 below to prioritise the six Study Areas A - F for development and to help guide the direction of the future growth of Grantham. Where areas are assessed as having the same landscape sensitivity and overall capacity to accommodate development, professional judgement is used to decide on the order that these areas could be brought forward for development, in landscape and visual terms.
- 5.2 Study Areas A, C and D have capacity to accommodate development. Study Areas B, E and F have been assessed as having High landscape sensitivity and Low capacity to accommodate development and it is considered that development within these areas would generally be inappropriate, in landscape and visual terms. However, they have been included in Table 12 at the request of the Council to help identify possible future development scenarios on land beyond the prioritised areas. Ranking of Study areas B and F is a reflection of where part of these Study Areas may have capacity to accommodate some development without affecting key landscape and visual characteristics of the wider Study Area. Detailed landscape and visual impact assessment of proposals within a sensitive landscape area would be required to assess potential impacts and the acceptability or otherwise of development. Study Area E is highly sensitive in landscape and visual terms and should be protected from development.

Table 12: Priority of Study Areas A -F

Priority	Area No.	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Capacity
1	D	Moderate	Medium
2	C	Moderate	Medium
3	A	Moderate	Medium
Low – 4=	B	High	Low
Low – 4=	F	High	Low
Low – 5	E	High	Low

- 5.3 Table 13 below compares the assessment of Study Areas A - F in this report with areas G1 – G8 (and sub-divided areas) considered in the 2011 DTA study, to provide the Council with an overall prioritisation for potential development of all sites considered on the edge of Grantham, in landscape and visual terms.
- 5.4 A number of areas in the 2011 DTA study were assessed as having High landscape sensitivity and either Low to Medium capacity or Low capacity to accommodate development. They were not prioritised for development because it was considered that development within these areas would be inappropriate, in landscape and visual terms, although the report acknowledged that there may be special circumstances or other over-riding reasons why these areas may be taken forward for development (2011 DTA study paragraph 7.3, page 133). They have been included in Table 13 at the request of the Council to help identify possible future development scenarios on land beyond the prioritised areas. As explained in paragraph 5.2 with regard to Table 12, higher priority is a reflection of where part of a Study Area may have capacity to accommodate some development without affecting key landscape and visual characteristics of the wider Study Area.

- 5.5 The key factors from both studies that influence the recommended order of priority of development in all areas are summarised after the table. In recommending an order of priority it is assumed that the Northern and Southern Quadrant Urban Extensions and the permitted 'King 31' employment park will be developed.
- 5.6 It is stressed that a range of other environmental considerations will need to be taken into account, such as ecology and nature conservation, heritage and archaeology, water quality and flooding potential, etc. by others to determine the potential wider environmental and cumulative impacts of development within a particular area. Other site considerations, including access and drainage issues for example, will also need to be considered by decision makers but which do not form part of this assessment.

Table 13: Priority of Study Areas A – G (including Areas G1 – G8 in the 2011 DTA Study)

Priority	Area No.	Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Capacity	Capacity for Development
1=	G4A	Moderate	Medium to High	Capacity for development of the Study Area
1=	G4B	Moderate	Medium to High	
1=	G7	Moderate	Medium to High	
2	G3C	Moderate	Medium to High	
3	D	Moderate	Medium	
4	C	Moderate	Medium	
5	A*	Moderate	Medium	
Low – 6	G2A	High	Low to Medium	Some capacity for partial development within the Study Area
Low – 7	G3B	High	Low to Medium	
Low – 8=	G1A	High	Low	
Low – 8=	G1B	High	Low	
Low – 8=	G8	High	Low	
Low – 8=	B	High	Low	
Low – 8=	F	High	Low	
Low – 8=	G5	High	Low	No capacity for development within the Study Area
Low – 9=	G2B	High	Low	
Low – 9=	G3A	High	Low	
Low – 9=	E	High	Low	

Note:

*Assessment of Study Area A supersedes Study Area G6 assessment in 2011 DTA study

- 5.7 Key factors influencing the priority of Study Areas for development are as follows:

Study Areas G4A G4B & G7 (from 2011 DTA study):

- The areas are surrounded by urban influences including the A1, other principal routes into / out of the town, and residential development, with an indistinct urban edge character;
- Residential development on the areas would be appropriate, although some employment use may also be suitable, as an extension of the town westwards to the A1 which is a well-defined boundary feature defining settlement extent elsewhere;

- Despite previous AGLV designation under Local Plan Policy EN3, the areas comprise commonplace elements and combinations of features which create generally unremarkable character, and are not significantly prominent either topographically (higher ground lies to the north and west) or visually;
- Despite previous environmental protection under Local Plan Policy EN5, residential development on the sites would not lead to coalescence of Grantham with Barrowby – their separate identities would remain due to remaining open land and the A1 in between;
- Development would be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.

Study Area G3C (from 2011 DTA study):

- The area is urban in character, comprising the buildings and associated land at the Prince William Barracks, thus mixed use redevelopment of the site would be in keeping with existing built form;
- The area is of little importance to the setting of Grantham lying on high ground but beyond sensitive slopes and ridges, and is isolated from it to such an extent that it has its own identity, separated from the town by open fields alongside Somerby Hill;
- Despite previous AGLV designation under Local Plan Policy EN3, the area comprises commonplace elements and combinations of features which create generally unremarkable character;
- Development would not lead to unacceptable visual intrusion into the countryside, with or without mitigation.

Study Area D:

- A number of modern human influences along Gorse Lane and the B1174 exert an urban edge character on the area, reducing its sensitivity;
- Sensitivity to development will be further reduced by the 'King 31' employment park proposals to the south;
- Development would have some association with existing and committed development in the area which is of little importance to the setting of the town;
- Despite previous AGLV designation under Local Plan Policy EN3, the area comprises commonplace elements and combinations of features which create generally unremarkable character;
- Development would be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view as long as adverse visual impact in sensitive views from the town to the upland plateau is avoided.

Study Area C:

- Distinctive landscape elements / features present within the eastern part of Study Area C are limited to a few individual trees;
- The area is well enclosed by boundary vegetation and the mature wooded grounds of Harlaxton Close;
- The mature grounds of Harlaxton Close could create a natural boundary to development, limiting encroachment into the countryside;
- Despite lying west of the A1 which is the recognised boundary to built development west of the town, sensitivity is reduced by the nearby housing and other urbanising features;
- Although previously designated AGLV, localised character and scenic value has become degraded;

- Although partly covered by previous Local Plan Policy EN4 'Prominent Areas for Special Protection' it is the higher, more steeply sloping fields rising to the ridge of high ground to the south that are prominent and more sensitive;
- Views of the area are limited and there is scope for mitigating potential visual impact.

Study Area A (Study Area G6 in the 2011 DTA Study):

- There are no distinctive landscape elements or combination of features present within Area A, although overall landscape character is locally distinctive with some scenic interest;
- Area A lies between built development to the west (housing) and east (development in the eastern part of Area A and the barracks), and the Southern Quadrant urban extension will occupy land to the south;
- Landscape sensitivity is currently reduced by urbanising influences and will be reduced further by the Southern Quadrant urban extension;
- Visual sensitivity is moderate – high but the Southern Quadrant urban extension will inevitably reduce overall landscape sensitivity such that development in Study Area A would be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the view (where there is a view of Study Area A and the Southern Quadrant urban extension together, for example from the B1174);
- Although previously designated AGLV, localised topography is less prominent than land to the north where the steep wooded slopes within the landscape fringe are important to the setting of the town and are more sensitive to development;
- Strategic 'gateway' views from Somerby Hill across Grantham are important and should be protected.

Study Area G2A (from 2011 DTA study):

- Generally sensitive to conspicuous development in the countryside, especially on higher ground;
- Development in the north of the area would be isolated from the town and would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern;
- The higher ground to the north of the area is important to the setting of Belton House and parkland;
- Lower lying ground to the south of the area is less sensitive where residential development would have some association with modern housing to the south;
- Mitigation to provide a green corridor along the stream / public right of way as a buffer to development is recommended, together with appropriate structural planting to provide a soft northern edge to assimilate any new development into the countryside.

Study Area G3B (from 2011 DTA study):

- Landscape sensitivity is reduced by the indistinct upland plateau character where despite previous designation as AGLV localised character and scenic value has become degraded and some landscape features are fragmented and in decline;
- Sensitive to development on the rising topography and on the higher plateau which would be conspicuous;
- The area is important to the setting of the town and to the setting of Belton House and parkland;
- Development would generally be isolated from the town and would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern;

- Housing has encroached up the slope adjacent to the south western corner of the Study Area, and further limited residential development in this location off Cold Harbour Lane would be in keeping with settlement form and pattern but would need to be sensitively designed to reduce adverse visual impact;
- Development along the southern edge would have some association with development of Study Area A (previously Study Area G6 in 2011 DTA study);
- Development elsewhere within the Study Area could affect important public amenity value by way of views, access, biodiversity interest and opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

Study Area G1A (from 2011 DTA study):

- Generally sensitive to conspicuous development in the countryside, especially on higher ground, which could not be successfully mitigated;
- Development in the north of the area would be isolated from the town and would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern;
- The higher ground to the west of the area is part of the important green open gap preventing coalescence of Grantham and Great Gonerby;
- The higher ground to the west of the area is important to the setting of Belton House and parkland;
- Lower lying ground to the south and east of the area is less sensitive where residential development could have some association with adjacent modern housing to the south and east beyond the railway line;
- Mitigation by way of appropriate structural planting should aim to provide a soft northern edge to assimilate any new development into the countryside.

Study Area G1B (from 2011 DTA study):

- An intimate, small scale landscape on the lower ground in the north and east of the Study Area, which is sensitive to development that adversely affects important landscape features and characteristics;
- The higher ground to the west of the Study Area is more visually prominent as it rises up to the ridgeline to the east of Great Gonerby;
- The east-facing scarp slope is important to the setting of Belton House and parkland;
- The western corner of the Study Area, despite being prominent, may have capacity to accommodate small scale housing as an extension to existing modern residential development on Holden Way, Kelham Road and Woffindin Close on the eastern edge of Great Gonerby providing it did not narrow the important green open gap preventing coalescence of Grantham and Great Gonerby;
- Mitigation by way of appropriate structural planting should aim to provide a soft edge to assimilate any new development into the countryside.

Study Area G8 (from 2011 DTA study):

- The complex topography is a key feature of the Study Area, in particular the sinuous ridgeline running around Stubbock Hill and the steep north and west-facing scarp slopes;
- The Study Area is remote from the town, serving to provide enclosure on the western side of Grantham and a distinctive break between town and countryside;
- Development would be isolated from the town and would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern;
- The flatter southern end of the Study Area is slightly less sensitive where development of the Northern Quadrant and within Study Area G4A and around the

A1 / A52 junction to the south would exert a more urban-edge character to the area.

Study Area B:

- Previously designated as AGLV under Local Plan Policy EN3 and protected under Policy EN4 Prominent Areas for Special protection;
- Generally highly sensitive to development along the prominent northern edge of the Study Area which is an important part of the green landscape fringe and thus important to the setting of the town;
- The north-facing scarp slope is important to the setting of Belton House and parkland;
- A number of modern human influences along Gorse Lane exert an urban edge character on the area, reducing its sensitivity;
- Some development along Gorse Lane may be appropriate as long as measures are taken to avoid any encroachment on to the north facing scarp slope where development would be visible on the skyline.

Study Area F:

- Forms the important narrow, green open gap between Grantham and Great Gonerby;
- Part of the steep scarp slope rising to a prominent ridgeline around Great Gonerby;
- The Study Area should be protected from development that closes the narrow open gap and leads to the coalescence of Grantham and Great Gonerby, with the loss of the separate identities of the settlements;
- There may be some potential for new residential development on the lowest ground within the extreme southern corner of the Study Area, on ground no higher than 95m AOD. This would represent a rounding-off of built development between adjacent housing at The Haverlands and Orchard Close / Arnold Avenue.

Study Area G5 (from 2011 DTA study):

- Lies to the west of the A1 which provides an important boundary feature defining the western extent of the town;
- Lies within the *Harlaxton-Denton Bowl* LCA, a generally low-lying sensitive landscape with a characteristic patchwork of varied landscape features;
- Important to the setting of Harlaxton Manor and parkland;
- The southern end of the Study Area by the canal and A1 / A607 junction is low lying and has a more urban-edge character due to surrounding land uses, where limited development around the canal corridor would be appropriate but should be prevented from encroaching northwards into open countryside.

Study Area G2B (from 2011 DTA study):

- A small scale, intimate landscape of importance at the entrance to the town from the north;
- Sensitive to development due to important landscape characteristics and built heritage features;
- Important to the setting of Belton House and parkland;
- The Study Area should be protected from development due to the high landscape and visual sensitivity and high landscape value.

Study Area G3A (from 2011 DTA study):

- Comprises the steep west-facing scarp slope important to the setting of the town;

- Important to the setting of Belton House and parkland;
- Important for public amenity by way of access and panoramic views across the town;
- Development would be prominent and conspicuous and is unlikely due to the steep topography.

Study Area E:

- Forms the important narrow, green open gap between Grantham and Great Gonerby;
- Part of the steep scarp slope rising to a prominent ridgeline around Great Gonerby;
- The Study Area should be protected from development that closes the narrow open gap and leads to the coalescence of Grantham and Great Gonerby, with the loss of the separate identities of the settlements.

APPENDIX 1: SOUTHERN QUADRANT ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN AND 'KING 31' PROPOSALS



- | | | | | | |
|-------------|--------------------|------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Residential | A Local centre | D Sports facilities | G Allotments | J Footway / cycleway crossing to the SRR | M Vehicular bridge crossing of the river |
| Employment | B Primary school | E Southern Relief Road (SRR) | H Conserved woodland and GI corridors | K River Witham GI corridor | N Footway / cycleway connections |
| | C Community school | F SRR viaduct | I Whalebone Lane retained for footway / cycleway access | L Footway / cycleway crossing of the river (beneath rail viaduct) | |

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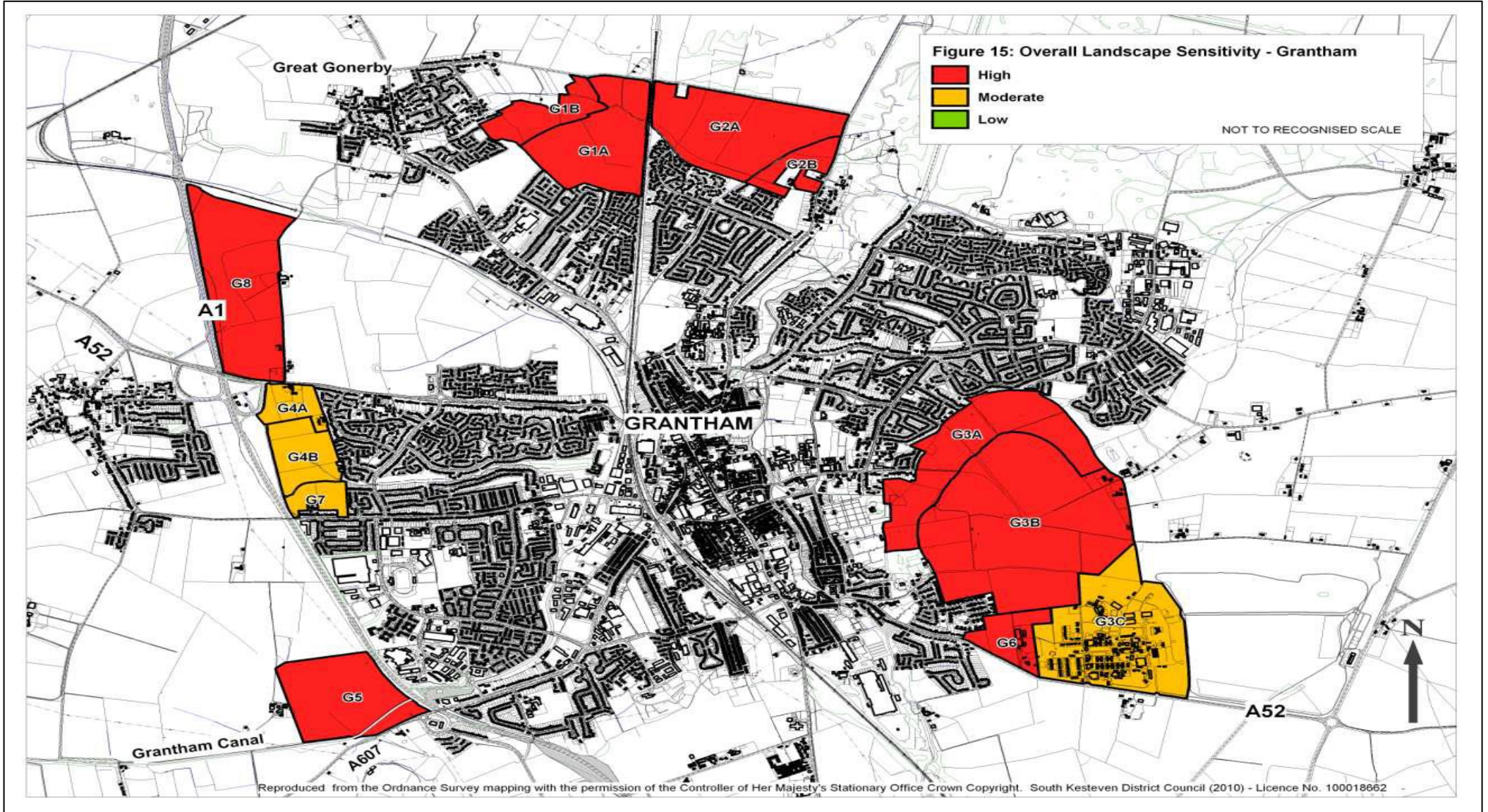
Buckminster Trust
 South Grantham
 Grantham

ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN

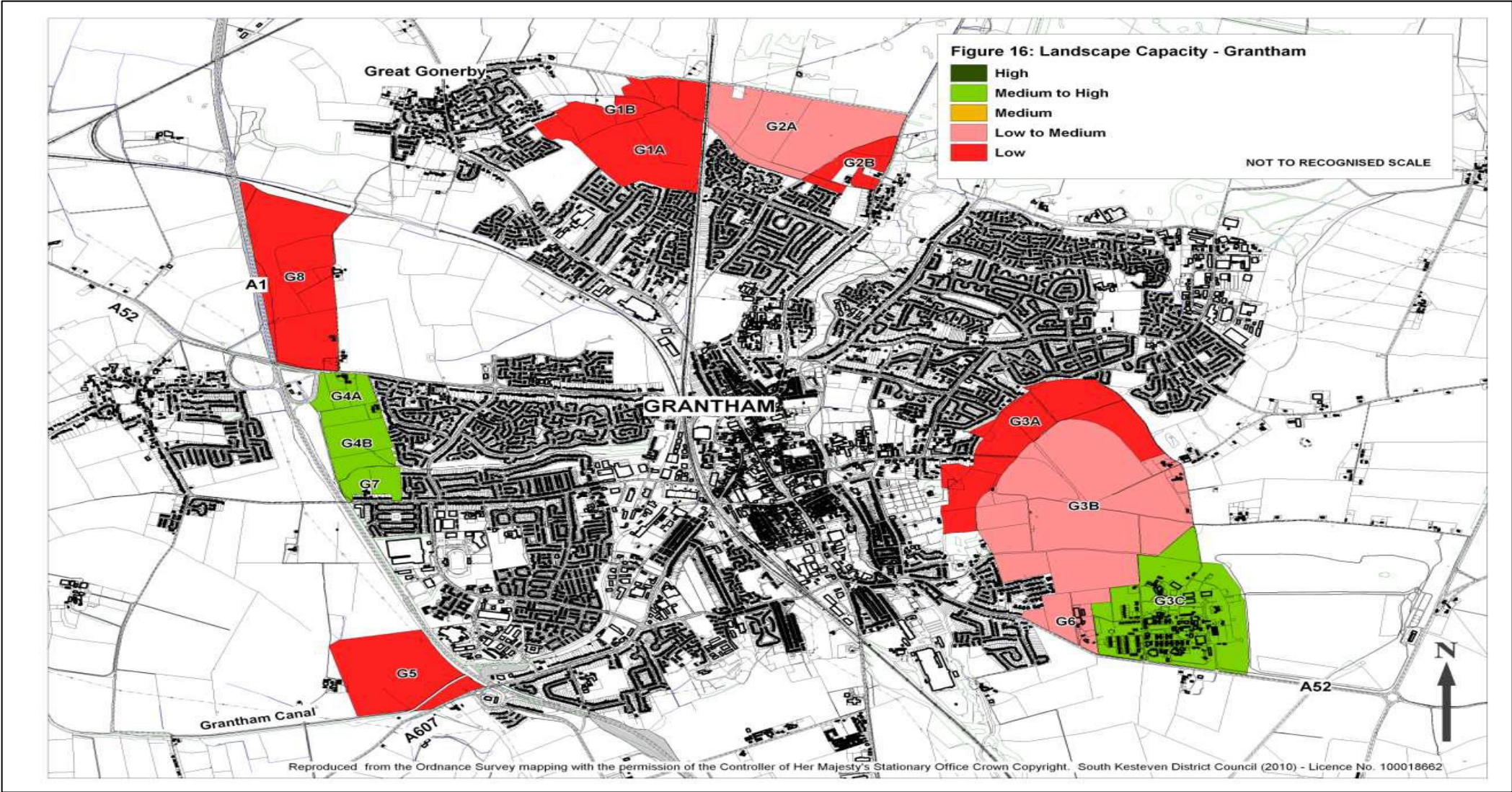
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fpcr
 fpcr Environmental and Strategic Ltd
 Lockington Hill
 Lockington
 Leicestershire LE12 7JH
 Tel: 01530 822772
 Fax: 01530 822773
 Email: info@fpcr.co.uk
 www.fpcr.co.uk

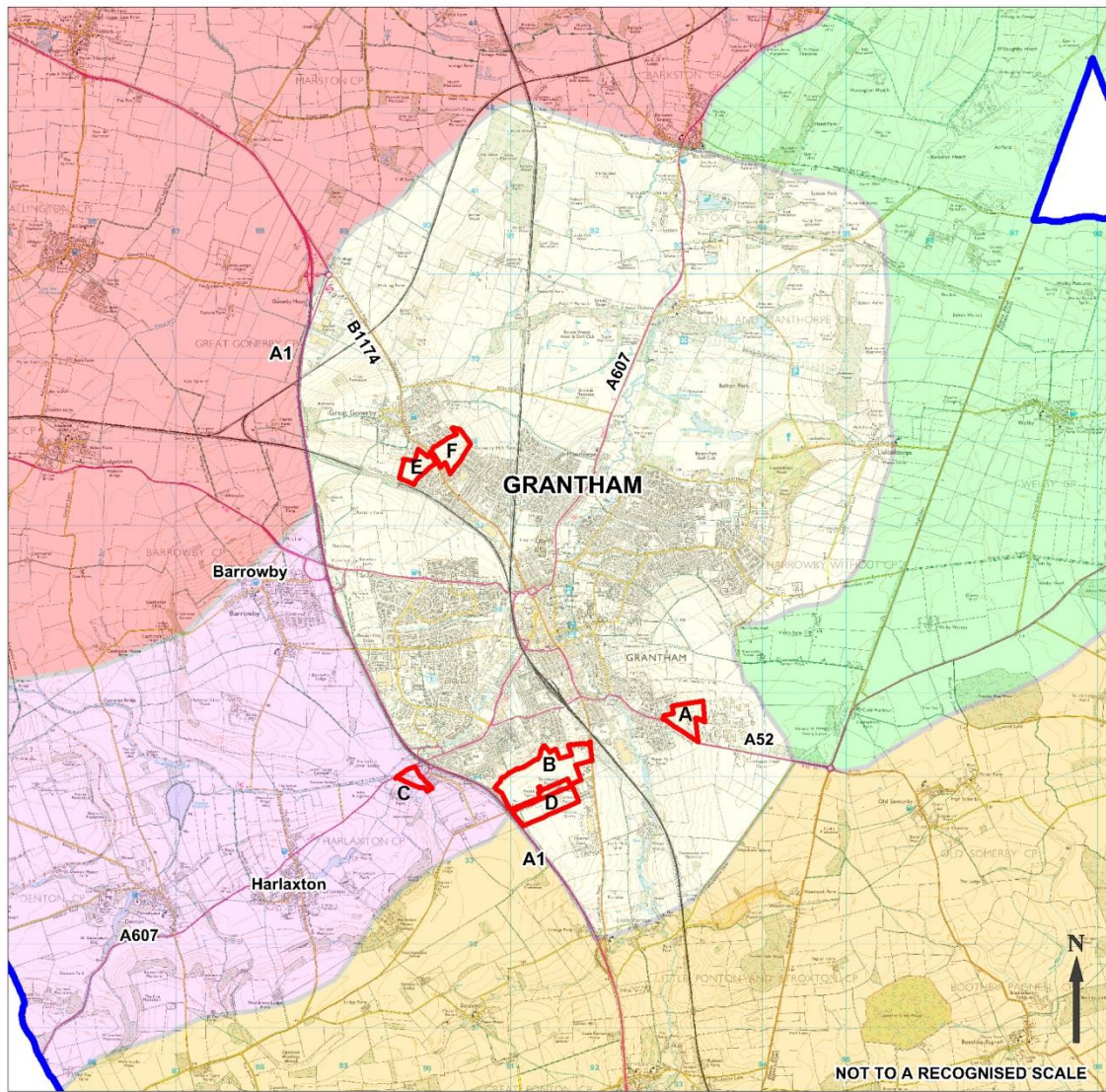
APPENDIX 2: OVERALL LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY OF SITES G1-G8 IN THE 2011 DTA STUDY



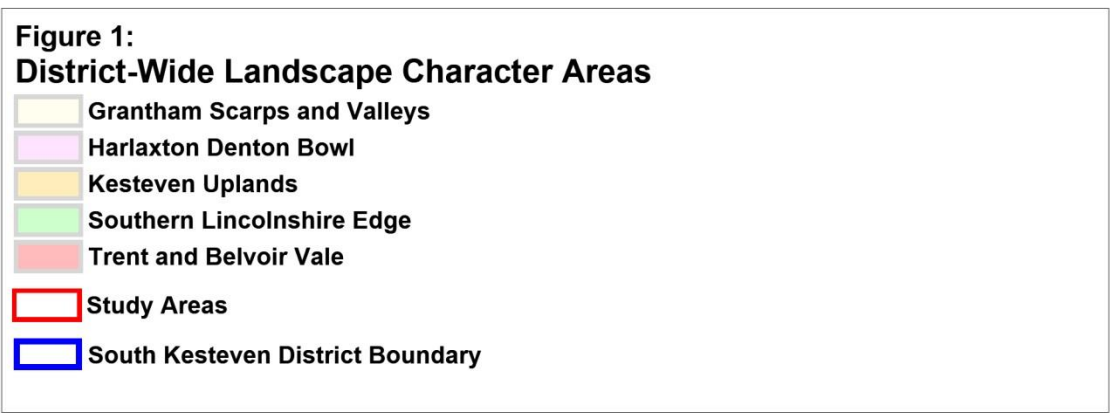
APPENDIX 3: OVERALL LANDSCAPE CAPACITY OF SITES G1-G8 IN THE 2011 DTA STUDY

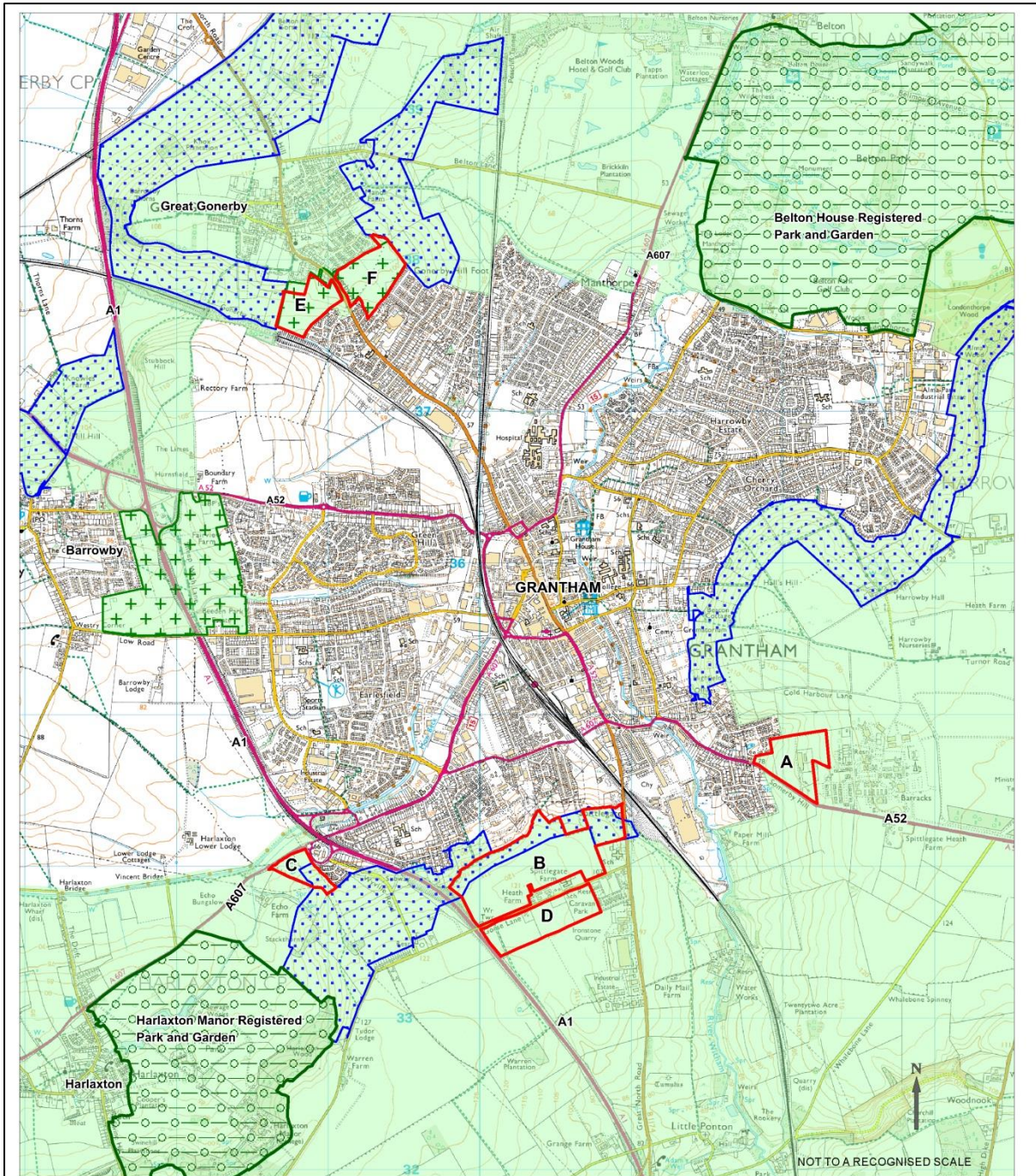


FIGURES



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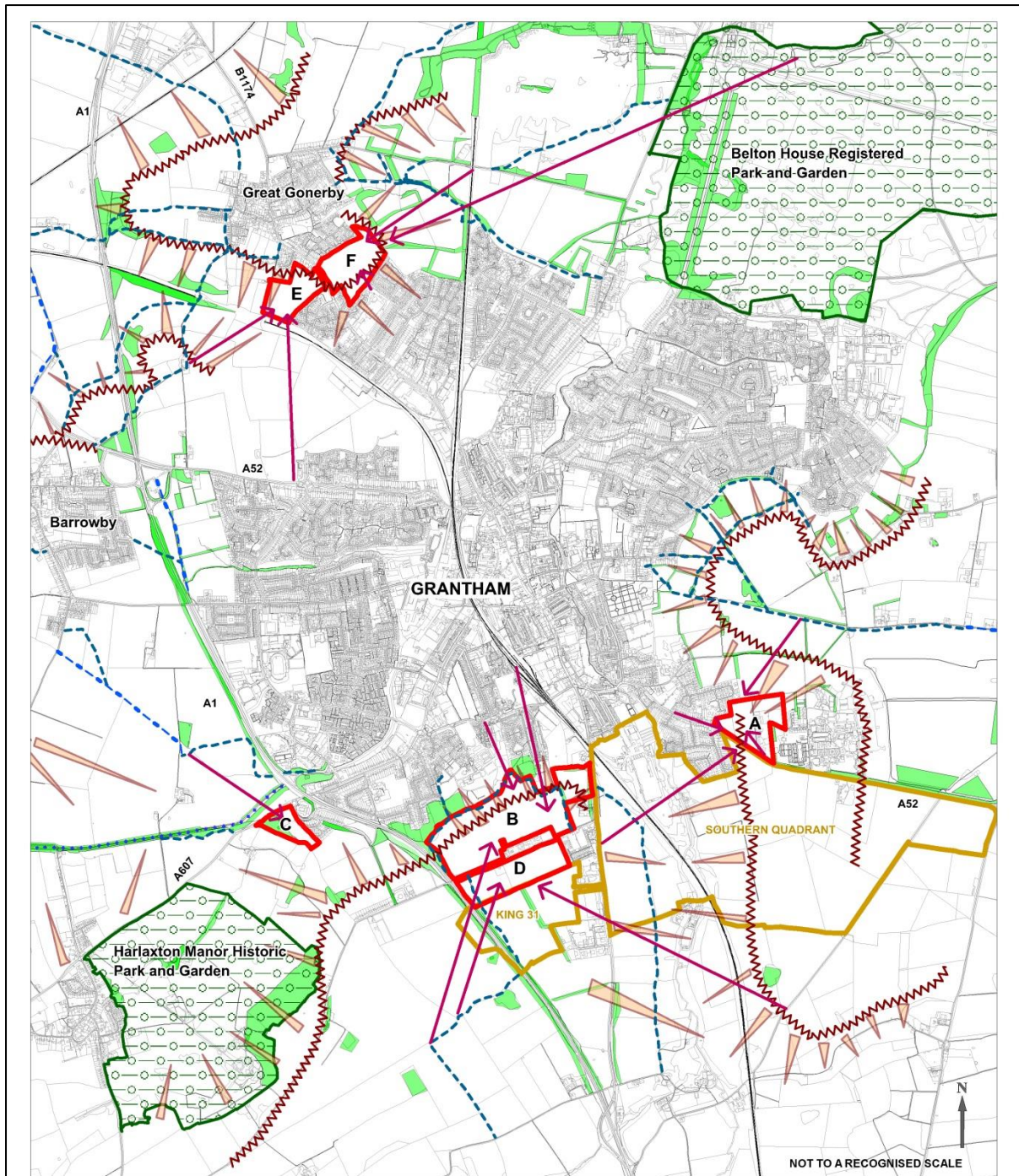




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**Figure 2:
 Local Landscape Character Setting**

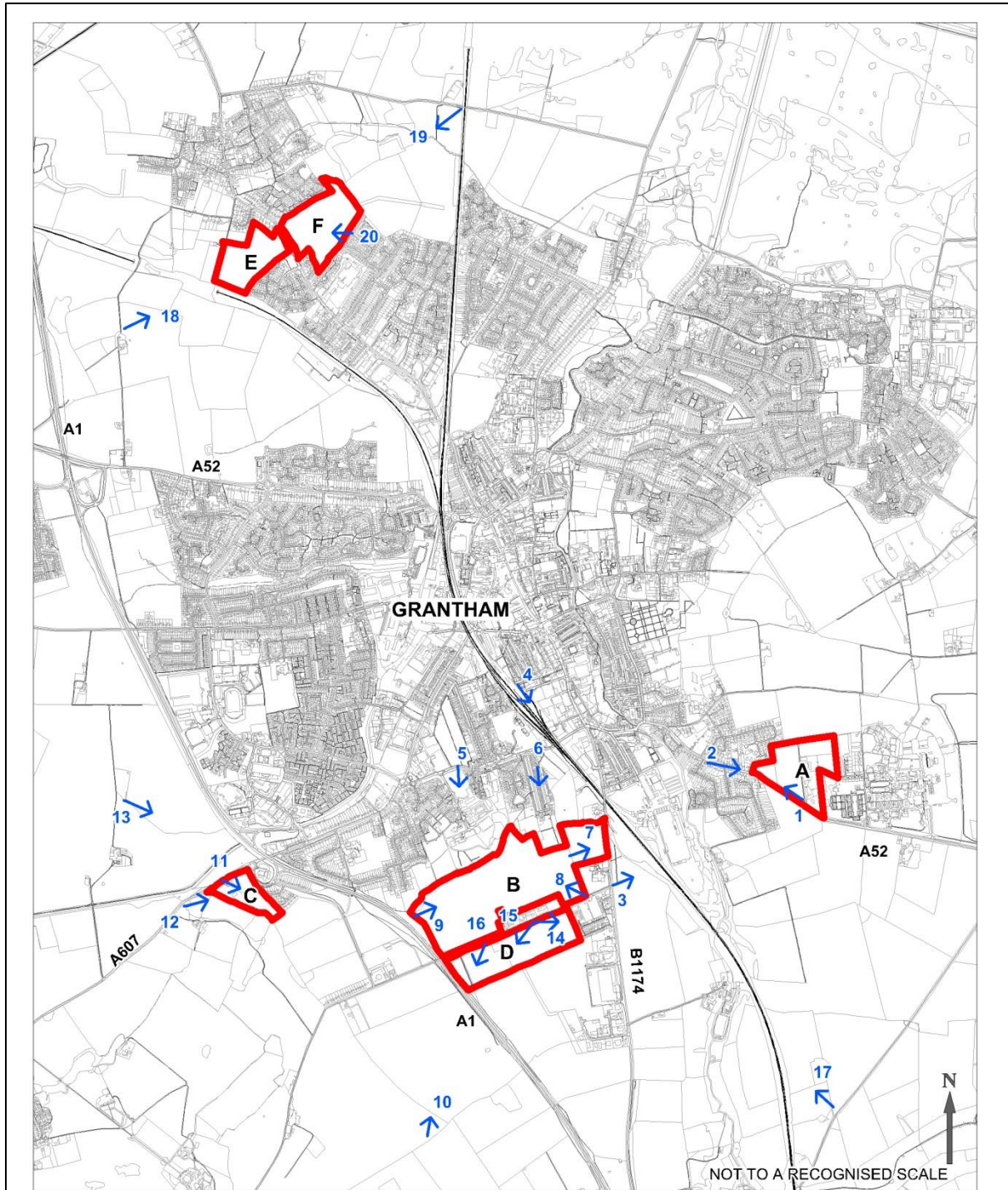
- Study Areas
- Former SKLP Policy EN3: Area of Great Landscape Value
- Former SKLP Policy EN4: Prominent Areas for Special Protection
- Former SKLP Policy EN5: Prevention of Coalescence
- Former SKLP Policy EN7 Historic Parks and Gardens



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**Figure 3:
 Landscape and Visual Context**

-  Key Views of Study Areas
-  Study Areas
-  'Southern Quadrant' and 'King 31' Developments
-  Significant Vegetation (Indicative)
-  Slope
-  Distinctive Ridgelines
-  National Cycle Network Route 15
-  RUPP/Bridleway
-  Public Footpath
-  Registered Park and Gardens

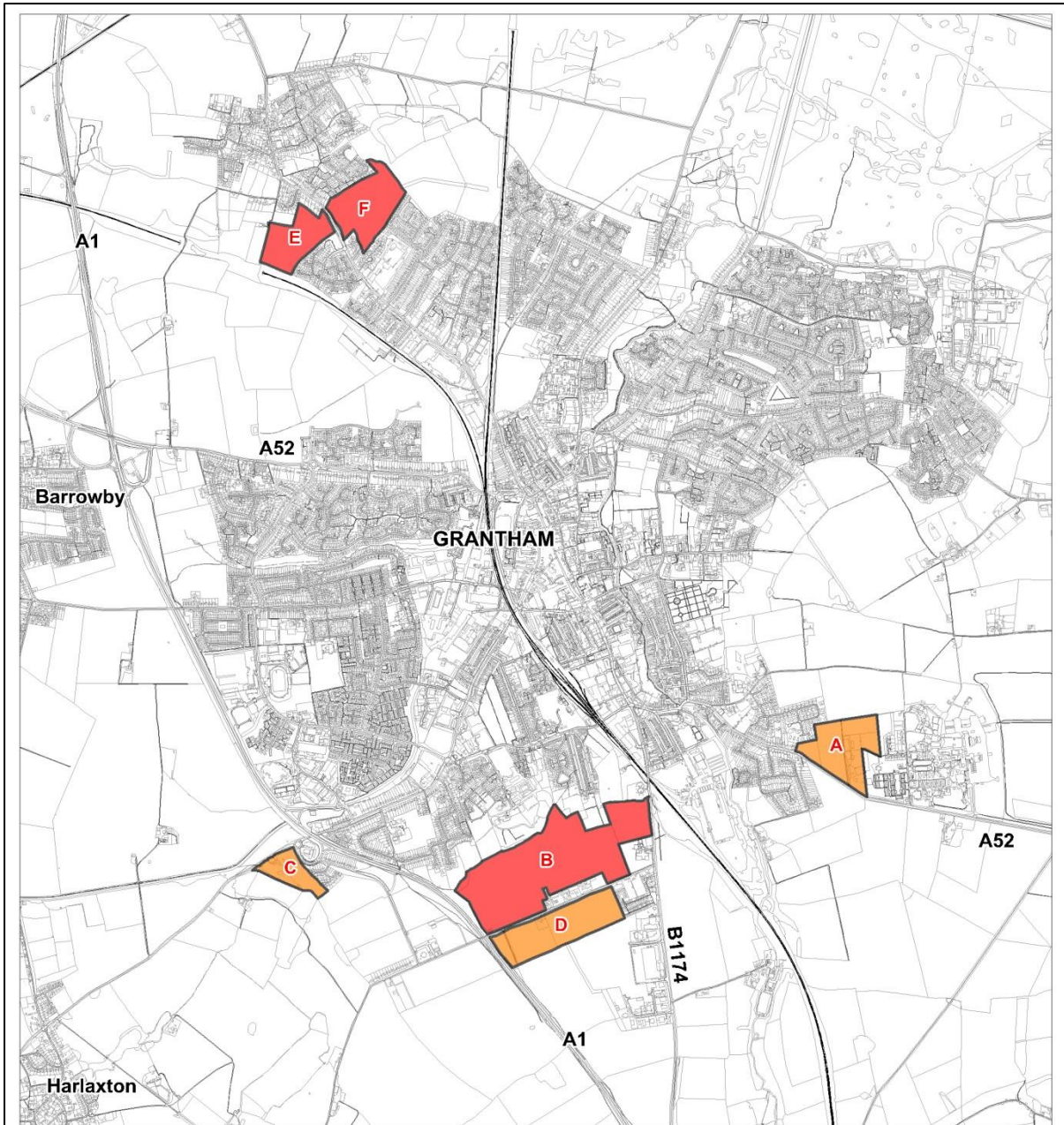


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Figure 4:
Photograph Viewpoints

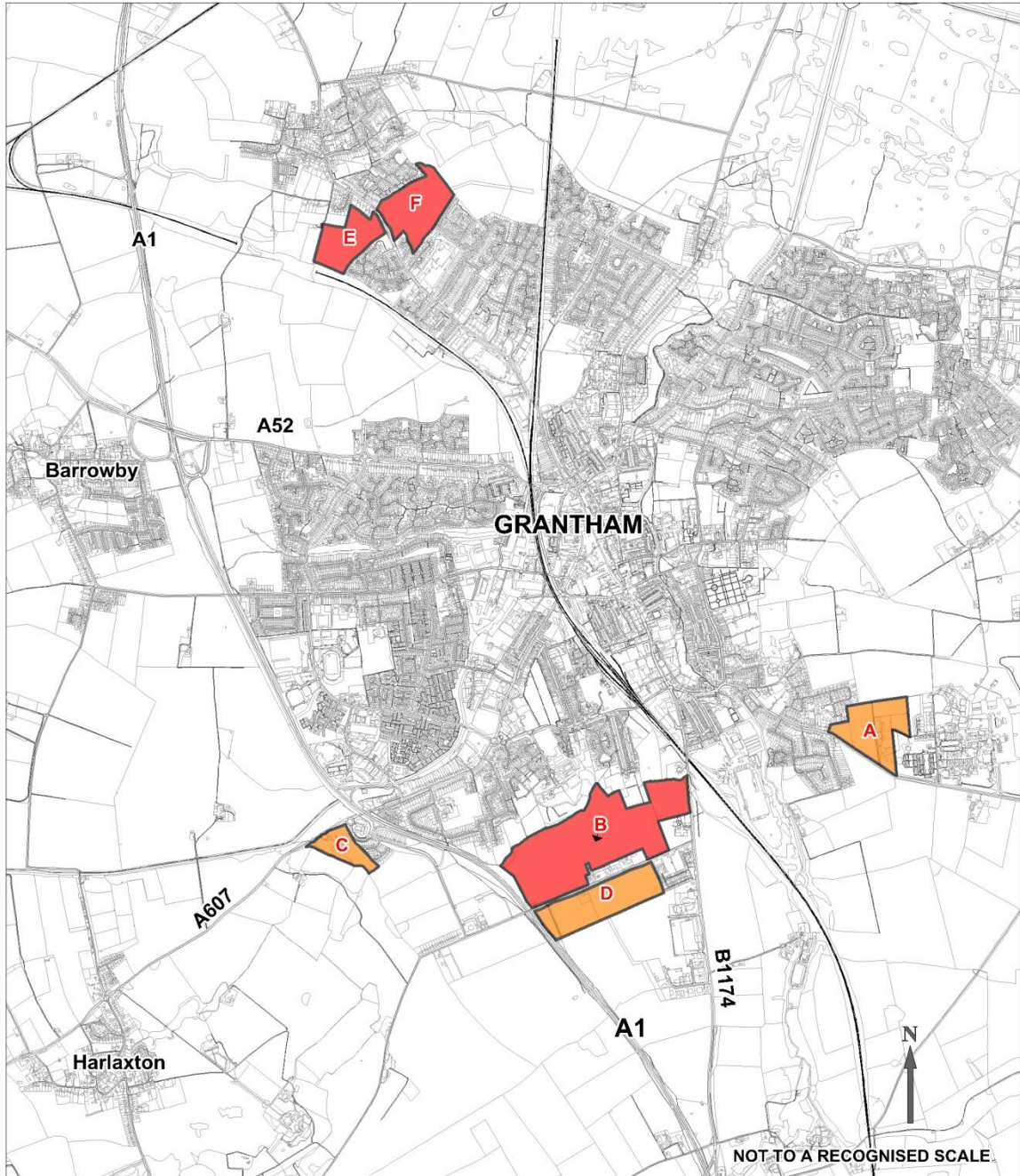
→ Photograph Viewpoints

Study Areas



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Figure 5:
Landscape Sensitivity
■ High Landscape Sensitivity
■ Moderate Landscape Sensitivity



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Figure 6:
Landscape Capacity

- Low
- Medium