



**LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY
AND CAPACITY STUDY
FINAL REPORT**

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This study relates to specified areas of land in South Kesteven on the edges of the market towns of Stamford, The Deepings (the collective name for Market Deeping and Deeping St. James) and Grantham which are being evaluated by South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) as part of its Local Development Framework (LDF). The Council has commissioned the study in order to help determine the most appropriate directions for future residential and employment development in the District, by providing an evidence base to inform two LDF Development Plan Documents (DPDs) namely the *Site Allocation and Policies* DPD and the *Grantham Area Action Plan* DPD.
- 1.2 The study follows 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.
- 1.3 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 divides the District into seven landscape character areas (LCA); broad geographic areas with a distinct pattern of landscape elements that occur consistently to create distinctive landscapes and places of individual character. Stamford lies within the *Kesteven Uplands* LCA whilst The Deepings lies within *The Fens* LCA. With regard to the sites on the edge of Grantham, three lie within the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* LCA; one falls within the *Harlaxton Denton Bowl* LCA and one site lies within the *South Lincolnshire Edge* LCA.
- 1.4 In accordance with good practice, landscape character assessment is used as the basis for determining landscape sensitivity and capacity. During detailed fieldwork around the three towns, 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 sites. In general the SKLCA is considered to be at an appropriate scale and was used as the basis for the more detailed descriptions of each site given in sections 4, 5 and 6. Consequently it was not considered necessary to sub-divide the sites into smaller landscape character types.
- 1.5 The following specified sites in Stamford were assessed and conclusions reached on their landscape sensitivity and capacity to accommodate development, summarised in Table 1 below and illustrated in Figure 5 on page 149 and Figure 6 on page 151 at the back of this report:

Site S1 North of Old Great North Road, Stamford

Site S2 Empingham Road, Stamford

Site S3 Newstead, Stamford

Site S4 Land North of Stamford between Little Casterton Road & Ryhall Road

Table 1: Summary of Specified Sites in Stamford

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
S1A	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium to High
S1B	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium
S2	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium to High
S3A	High	High	High	High	Low
S3B	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	High	Moderate	Low to Medium
S3C	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium
S3D	Low to Moderate	Low	Low	Low	High
S4	Moderate	Moderate to High	Moderate	Moderate	Medium

1.6 The following specified sites in The Deepings were assessed and conclusions reached on their landscape sensitivity and capacity to accommodate development, summarised in Table 2 below and illustrated in Figure 10 on page 159 and Figure 11 on page 161 at the back of this report:

- Site D1 West of Millfield Road, Market Deeping
- Site D2 Northfields, Market Deeping
- Site D3 Godsey Lane/Linchfield Road, Deeping St James
- Site D4 East of Linchfield Road, Deeping St James
- Site D5 South of Rycroft Avenue, Deeping St James
- Site D6 East of A15, Market Deeping

Table 2: Summary of Specified Sites in The Deepings

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
D1	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Medium
D2A	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	High	Moderate	Low to Medium
D2B	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	Low	Low	High
D3	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	Low	Low to Moderate	High
D4A	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium to High
D4B	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	High	Moderate	Low to Medium
D5	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to High	Low to Medium
D6	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Medium

1.7 The following specified sites in Grantham were assessed and conclusions reached on their landscape sensitivity and capacity to accommodate development, summarised in Table 3 below and illustrated in Figure 15 on page 169 and Figure 16 on page 171 at the back of this report:

- Site G1 South of Belton Lane, Great Gonerby
- Site G2 Manthorpe, Grantham
- Site G3 Land to the East of Grantham, incorporating Hills & Hollows and TA Barracks
- Site G4 South of Barrowby Road, Grantham
- Site G5 Harlaxton Road, Grantham
- Site G6 North of A52 Somerby Hill, Grantham
- Site G7 North of Dysart Road, Grantham
- Site G8 East of A1, North of A52 including Stubbock Hill, Grantham

Table 3: Summary of Specified Sites in Grantham

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
G1A	High	High	High	High	Low
G1B	High	High	High	High	Low
G2A	Moderate to High	High	High	Moderate to High	Low to Medium
G2B	Moderate to High	High	High	High	Low
G3A	Moderate to High	High	High	High	Low
G3B	Moderate to High	High	High	Moderate to High	Low to Medium
G3C	Low to Moderate	Low	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium to High
G4A	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium to High
G4B	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium to High
G5	High	High	High	Moderate to High	Low
G6	Moderate to High	High	High	Moderate	Low to Medium
G7	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium to High
G8	High	High	High	High	Low

1.8 Recommendations are given in section 7 of the report to prioritise sites and to help guide the direction of the future growth of Stamford, The Deepings and Grantham. Where sites have been assessed as having the same overall capacity to accommodate development, a judgement is made on the order that these sites could be brought forward for development, in landscape and visual terms. Sites considered as being highly sensitive and with low or low to medium capacity are not prioritised for development.

2. Background, Outline of the Brief and Format of the Report

Background to Landscape Character Assessment in South Kesteven

- 2.1 Landscape character assessment is widely recognised as a tool to help guide decisions about the allocation and management of land for different types of development in England and Scotland. It is being widely employed particularly within landscape sensitivity and capacity studies dealing with the ability of the landscape to accommodate new development. An effective landscape character assessment can make an important contribution to finding solutions that allow essential development to take place while at the same time helping to maintain the diverse character and valued qualities of the countryside. This section provides an overview of landscape character assessment in South Kesteven.
- 2.2 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 (Countryside Character Volume 4, 1999) 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.
- 2.3 In addition, a very small area south of Stamford extends into another National Character Area:
- Character Area 92 *Rockingham Forest* – the extreme northern tip of this NCA extends into Stamford where there are very similar characteristics to Character Area 75 *Kesteven Uplands*. In particular the undulating landform rising to prominent scarp slopes along the edge of the Welland Valley
- 2.4 Natural England has also identified 'Natural Areas' which illustrate distinctions of wildlife associations and natural features across the Country. Many of the boundaries of the Natural Areas coincide with the NCAs within South Kesteven, as follows:
- Character Area 48 coincides with Natural Area 33 *Trent Valley and Rises*;
 - Character Area 46 coincides with Natural Area 37 *The Fens*;
 - Character Areas 47 and 75 coincide with Natural Area 38 *Lincolnshire and Rutland Limestone*
- 2.5 The following paragraphs 2.6 – 2.14 provide a brief over-view of the landscape context of the District, taken from the NCA and Natural Area descriptions:
- 2.6 The District of South Kesteven is predominantly rural, with areas of open farmland, the main

town and administrative centre of Grantham, three other smaller market towns of Stamford, Bourne and The Deepings, and many smaller villages and hamlets. The geology and soils of the District broadly follow the three Natural Areas mentioned above. The northern and western part of the district comprises the *Trent and Belvoir Vales* NCA. The solid geology in this area is dominated by the Mercia mudstones. The superficial geology is complicated by extensive deposition of glacial debris, producing local clays and glacial pebbles. The central part of the district comprises almost entirely Jurassic limestone rocks, with significant areas covered by glacial boulder clay drift. Highly calcareous loams are found mainly on the steeper slopes. The eastern part of the district lies within *The Fens* NCA. The underlying geology comprises Oxford clay, overlain with river terrace deposits and alluvium which has given rise to some highly fertile soils.

- 2.7 Topography plays an important role in determining landscape character across South Kesteven. The central part of the District is characterised by higher land, typically between 100m and 140m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). This area corresponds with the *Kesteven Uplands* NCA and the *Southern Lincolnshire Edge* NCA. This upland area is dissected by three valleys which generally run in a north/south direction; the valleys of the River Witham, the East Glen River and the West Glen River. The East and West Glen Rivers extend at their southern end eastwards, opening out on to *The Fens*, a typically flat and low lying area at less than 20m AOD. To the south Stamford predominantly lies on raised ground between the River Gwash and the River Welland.
- 2.8 Land to the northwest of the District lies in the *Trent and Belvoir Vales* NCA. This area is gently undulating and generally lies between 20m and 80m AOD. The area around Grantham has a more complex topography, with a series of hills and valleys, with the majority of the town lying on the lower ground between the surrounding hills.
- 2.9 The hydrology of the District is closely related to the topography and the geology of the area. The River Witham runs north through Grantham with the East and West Glen Rivers running to the south, as mentioned above. Whilst these rivers have determined the form of the central part of the District, the rivers themselves are not so dominant on the ground. The limestone geology of the area results in these rivers being modest features in the landscape. The rivers are often bounded by hedgerows and trees, and it is sometimes difficult to discern them from other field boundaries.
- 2.10 To the southeast of the District there is an obvious change in hydrology with the east/west running drains across *The Fens*. These drains feed into the 'South Forty Foot Drain', which forms the District boundary to the east. The relatively wide floodplain valley of the River Welland, which flows eastwards into *The Fens*, follows the southern District boundary.
- 2.11 With regard to biodiversity, the central part of the District within the *Kesteven Uplands* NCA contains the highest proportion of woodlands, but also important grassland sites. There are few significant areas of importance to the north and east of the District in the Vales or Fens. Within the *Trent and Belvoir Vales* local interest is provided by the Grantham Canal, woodlands and hedgerows.
- 2.12 The settlement and communications pattern of roads and railways across the district largely follows the topography and land use, with towns and villages in the valleys, and with a more remote settlement pattern on the higher ground. Grantham and Stamford historically developed along the Great North Road (The A1 trunk road). They have an industrial / engineering heritage and comprise fine buildings including hotels and churches and where

tourism is now important to the local economies. Throughout most of the District there is a predominantly north/south and east/west communications pattern, including the A52 and A607 at Grantham, the A606 and A6121 at Stamford where the A16 passes east/west to bypass Market Deeping and Deeping St. James, whilst the A15 bypasses The Deepings in a north/south direction. Grantham is on the East Coast Main Line which runs between London and Edinburgh, with a rail link to Stamford via Peterborough.

- 2.13 The Deepings lie to the southeast of the District, the name reflecting the low lying nature of the land. The area has been inhabited since prehistoric times with the larger towns including Bourne, Langtoft and several other small villages lying along the A15 at the edge of The Fens. Elsewhere The Fens are accessed by a series of east /west tracks with virtually no settlement, with access restricted by the network of dykes and drains. The Roman Carr Dyke passes through the area of The Deepings.
- 2.14 The agricultural use of the District is closely related to the topography and soils. The central part of the District, within the *Kesteven Uplands* NCA is mostly Grade 3 agricultural land. This slightly lower quality of soil may have resulted in the survival of a greater proportion of woodland than otherwise exists across the District. To the north of the District in the *Trent and Belvoir Vales*, and on the *Southern Lincolnshire Limestone Edge*, the land is mainly Grade 2 and 3, providing high quality agricultural land. *The Fens* to the east comprise virtually all Grade 2 land reflecting the highly productive soils.
- 2.15 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 Country-wide 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.
- 2.16 In some instances the LCA name is unchanged from the NCA, for example the *Kesteven Uplands*, although the boundary of the area has been amended as a result of more detailed assessment (for example to the south of Stamford which lies within NCA 92 *Rockingham Forest*). In other areas, the NCAs have been subdivided to reflect local variations in character, for example the *Fen Margin* LCA and the *Harlaxton Denton Bowl* LCA, which are new character areas identified within the SKLCA. A total of seven LCAs have been identified in the District as follows and as shown in Figure 1:
- i) Kesteven Uplands
 - ii) Trent and Belvoir Vale
 - iii) Southern Lincolnshire Edge
 - iv) Harlaxton/Denton Bowl
 - v) Grantham Scarps and Valleys
 - vi) Fen Margin
 - vii) The Fens
- 2.17 During detailed fieldwork around the three towns, 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 sites. In general the SKLCA is considered to be at an appropriate scale and was used as the basis for the more detailed descriptions of each site given in sections 4, 5 and 6.

Consequently it was not considered necessary to sub-divide the sites into smaller landscape character types.

2.18 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.
- iii) Aesthetic aspects of landscape character.

2.19 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 this study of landscape sensitivity of specified sites. 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.

2.20 This is discussed further where relevant to each of the specified sites at the beginning of the site assessment and analysis sections of this report, in sections 4, 5 and 6.

2.21 In 2009 the East Midlands Landscape Partnership commissioned the East Midlands Regional Landscape Character Assessment (EMRLCA). This is a new tier in the landscape character assessment hierarchy in England and the first regional assessment, adding a strategic regional level of assessment to the National Character Areas identified by Natural England as described above. The aim of the EMRLCA is to provide a strategic context and framework for more detailed assessments at the county, district and local scales. Consequently the EMRLCA is not considered further in this study as the SKLCA is considered to be the more relevant scale of assessment for the consideration of the landscape sensitivity and capacity of specified sites.

Background to and Outline of the Brief

2.22 This study relates to specified areas of land in South Kesteven on the edges of Stamford, The Deepings (the collective name for Market Deeping and Deeping St. James) and Grantham which are being evaluated by South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) as part of its Local Development Framework (LDF). The Council has commissioned the study in order to help determine the most appropriate directions for future development in the District, by providing an evidence base to inform two LDF Development Plan Documents (DPDs) namely the *Site Allocation and Policies* DPD and the *Grantham Area Action Plan* DPD.

- 2.23 The Council is in the process of determining the most appropriate areas to accommodate new housing and employment development in the period to 2026 in order to meet the requirements of the Core Strategy, which was adopted in July 2010. This proposes two sustainable urban extensions totalling about 6,000 new homes to the northwest and south of Grantham. It is also necessary to identify additional sites for housing and employment development in Stamford, The Deepings and Grantham. The Council has commissioned this study to provide a detailed appraisal of landscape sensitivity and capacity of certain specified larger urban edge / extension sites to help evaluate their suitability for future development and to allow comparison between them on an objective basis.
- 2.24 In addition to Stamford, The Deepings and Grantham, South Kesteven has another market town at Bourne. Bourne is not being considered in this study because sufficient land for housing is already committed at the Elsea Park development. It is understood that land for employment does need to be allocated but this is most likely to be located on the eastern side of the town where SKDC consider that the landscape implications of all suggested sites are very similar. Similarly Local Service Centres (larger villages which will take some development) have not been considered in this study because the scale of development necessary in these settlements will be very modest.
- 2.25 The Core Strategy is an important part of the LDF, setting out the key principles that will help the Council decide where development should take place and what it should be like. It provides the framework that will steer development and change in South Kesteven until 2026. 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, 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

These have been replaced by 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).

- 2.26 The Council has used the SKLCA to inform its Core Strategy Policy EN1, to establish criteria against which development proposals can be assessed, 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
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)

2.27 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

These were local landscape designations which in accordance with national policy in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7 should be avoided. The Council consider that the adoption of the SKLCA now provides the appropriate level of cover.

2.28 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 sites in this study. This is consistent with the approach being adopted by the Council in considering sites included in the Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document.

2.29 As required by the brief, the study provides an independent, professional appraisal of the landscape sensitivity of the sites and their landscape capacity to accommodate 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

2.30 The next section, section 3 describes the methodology used in the study. Criteria for assessing landscape sensitivity and capacity are described and clearly set out in a number of tables included within section 3. The assessment is then reported for each site in turn,

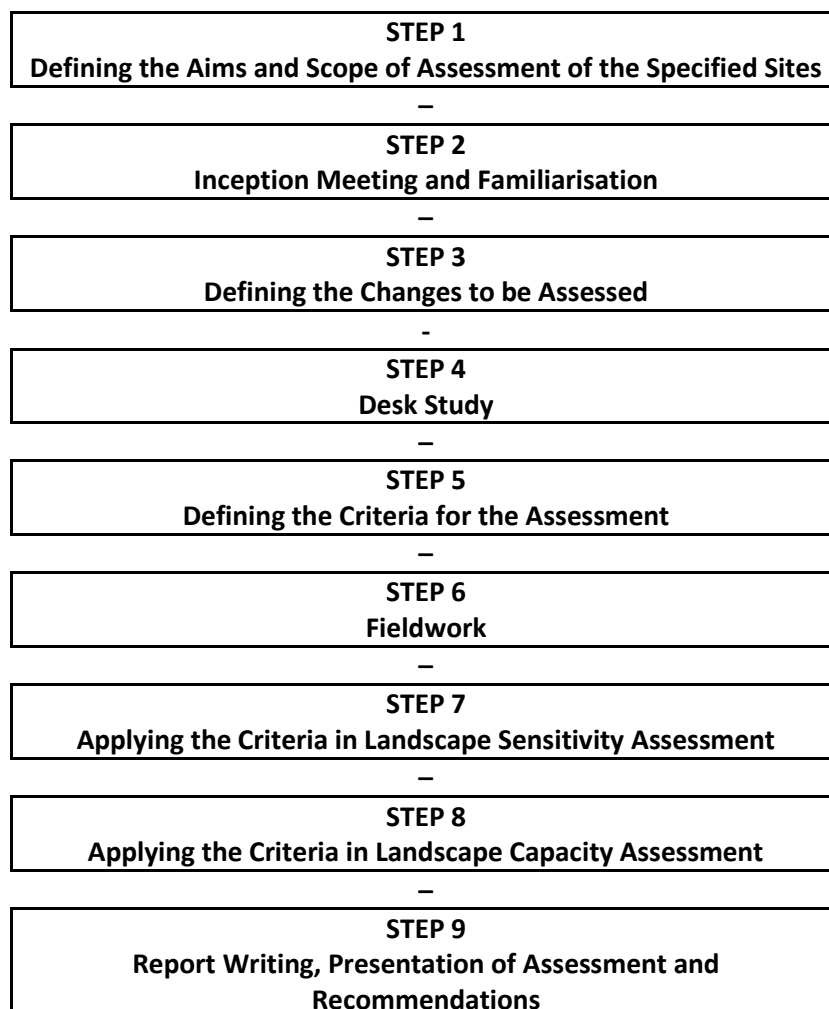
beginning with the specified sites in Stamford in section 4, specified sites in The Deepings in section 5 and specified sites in Grantham in section 6.

- 2.31 For each town, the relevant section begins by describing the location of each site and its local landscape character, highlighting any 'fine tuning' of the District-wide SKLCA undertaken in 2007. Within the local landscape context, each site is described in terms of its location, landscape character and setting of the town, settlement form and pattern, visual considerations, and scope for mitigation. These terms are described in more detail and explained in section 3. For each site an assessment is then made of its landscape sensitivity, using the criteria described in section 3 to assess firstly landscape character sensitivity, and secondly visual sensitivity. Figures and photographs are included to illustrate the landscape and visual context of each town within the vicinity of the sites being assessed.
- 2.32 Criteria described in section 3 to assess landscape value are then applied to each site, and conclusions made on the overall landscape capacity of each site to accommodate development. A summary table is included at the end of the assessment of each site, and colour-coded drawings provided to illustrate separately landscape sensitivity and landscape capacity of each site. Overall summary tables are given in the Executive Summary on pages 2 and 3 to compare the assessment of all sites for each town. These are also colour-coded to enable easy cross-referencing to the drawings.
- 2.33 In section 7 recommendations are given to prioritise sites and to guide the direction of the future growth of Stamford, The Deepings and Grantham, in terms of landscape sensitivity and capacity only. Where sites have been assessed as having the same overall landscape capacity to accommodate development, a judgement is made and recommendations given on the order that these site could be brought forward for development, in landscape and visual terms. Sites considered to have overall high landscape sensitivity and low or low to medium capacity to accommodate development are shown in the tables in section 7 as having "Low" priority. There may, however, be special circumstances or other over-riding reasons why these sites may be taken forward for development.

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3. Methodology

- 3.1 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 their "*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*", 2002.
- 3.2 This body of good practice guidance has been extended to include methods developed generally for capacity assessments and specifically for built development and settlement expansion, drawing on our experience gained in other landscape capacity projects in England and Scotland, as described below.
- 3.3 Essentially capacity evaluation is a systematic and chronological process through the steps shown below. However, it is also an iterative process and some steps were repeated in a cycle part way through the method to refined and apply the criteria:



Step 1: Defining the Aims and Scope of the Assessment of the Specified Sites

- 3.4 The aims and scope of the assessment are clearly set out in the project brief as described in section 2 above. Only those sites as specified by the Council in the brief have been assessed i.e. sites specified on the edges of Stamford, The Deepings and Grantham. As the study progressed, however, and as agreed in the inception meeting (see below), some of the specified sites were split and separate assessments undertaken of the different parts of a site where appropriate in terms of landscape character, landscape and / or visual sensitivity and landscape capacity. For example, the site in Stamford, North of Old Great North Road as specified in the brief was split into two sites, Site S1A and Site S1B for the purposes of this assessment.

Step 2: Inception Meeting and Familiarisation

- 3.5 An inception meeting was held on 22nd October 2010 at the Council offices in Grantham, attended by Margaret Parr, SKDC Planning Officer in the Planning Policy Team; and Anthony Brown, DTA Associate. Various documents were passed to DTA (see step 4 below).
- 3.6 Familiarisation of the specified sites and general landscape setting of Grantham was undertaken prior to the inception meeting. This enabled focussed discussion at the meeting.

Step 3: Defining the Changes to be Assessed

- 3.7 In accordance with the project brief, the Council is seeking a study to help it determine the most appropriate areas to accommodate new housing and employment development in the period to 2026 in order to meet the requirements of the Core Strategy, which was adopted in July 2010. This proposes two sustainable urban extensions totalling about 6,000 new homes to the northwest and south of Grantham. It is also necessary to identify additional sites for housing and employment development in Grantham, Stamford and The Deepings.
- 3.8 Discussion was held in the inception meeting about the most appropriate form of development envisaged within the specified sites. It was agreed that built development assumed for the purposes of this study is 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. It is also assumed that the development would include a strong framework of structural landscaping including ground modelling, where appropriate, and tree planting of appropriate scale, area, design and species composition to ensure that the development achieves a good fit in the landscape.

Step 4: Desk Study

- 3.9 Prior to the inception meeting a list of background information and other documents required to carry out the study was forwarded to the Council, and these were provided at the inception meeting. Other material was obtained from the Council's website. This enabled a desk study of published and unpublished material to begin immediately. The main documents consulted were:

- Manthorpe, Grantham Conservation Area Appraisal & Amendment, August 2007

- SK Landscape Character Assessment, January 2007
- SK Local Plan, Written Statement April 1995 & Proposals Map April 1995
- SK Core Strategy, Adopted 5 July 2010
- SK Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document, Suggested Sites Consultation, October 2009
- SK Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document, Additional Sites Consultation, August 2010
- Belton House and Park Setting Study and Policy Document, January 2010
- SK Green Infrastructure Strategy

3.10 Other data was provided, including information held on the Council's GIS system, such as OS base tiles, to enable study mapping to be provided in compatible electronic format (MapInfo Version 8.5) as required by the brief. Satellite mapping from Google (including Street View) was used to gain an appreciation of landscape and settlement character prior to the fieldwork.

3.11 Lincolnshire County Council's Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) Officer was contacted for information on the Lincolnshire HLC Project. This is not yet complete but GIS raw datasets were provided by the County Council and used as background information.

Step 5: Defining the Criteria for the Assessment

3.12 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 judgement and the conclusions of the assessment summarised into meaningful recommendations. The technique adopted follows the methodology in Topic Paper 6 (see paragraph 3.1 above) 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

3.13 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

3.14 The same criteria for assessing landscape sensitivity and capacity were adopted that we had developed for our recently completed Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study for Rutland County Council, May 2010. That study was very similar to the current assessment in that it considered specified sites on the edge of settlements in Rutland, including land on the northern edge of Stamford which is the same site as Site S1 in this study. Using the same criteria enabled a consistent approach to the assessment and comparison with the other sites around Stamford included in this study.

3.15 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

Landscape and settlement character sensitivity

- 3.16 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 towns, 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 sites. 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 development sites and their immediate context in relation to the edges of Stamford, The Deepings and Grantham.
- 3.17 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.
- 3.18 Criteria have been developed to assess the function of each site in the wider setting of each settlement. It is considered that the most important considerations in this respect are the function of the site as actual or perceived intervening land between settlements; and as an important break between town and countryside.
- 3.19 Where the character of a site is defined by surrounding built development rather than the setting of the site 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.

Settlement form and pattern

- 3.20 It is recognised that all three towns have distinctive historical cores. Of particular importance in relation to the assessment of built development is the historic settlement pattern and the extent to which this has been sustained or modified. Growth has occurred which has obviously altered settlement shape and to varying extent the pattern of each town, i.e. the direction of growth which often reflects natural influences or other considerations. In some areas 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 activities. In other areas the fit is not so good resulting in a harsh edge to the town which does not blend so well into the landscape.
- 3.21 Compatibility of changes to the overall shape of each town and their fit in the wider settlement pattern of the landscape is essential if new development is to sustain the appreciation of distinctive settlement patterns and characteristics. 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 a site 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.

Visual considerations

3.22 The assessment considers the visual effects of development, such as the obstruction of views (for example by new buildings) or intrusion into 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.

3.23 The elements considered to be important in the assessment of visual considerations are:

- Views in to the site 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

3.24 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, or where development would enhance views or existing visual amenity.

Landscape value

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

3.26 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 needs to be 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.

3.27 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).
- 3.28 With regard to protected landscapes, there are no national designations such as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty within South Kesteven. As mentioned in section 2, Local Plan Environment policies, EN3 Area of Great Landscape Value and EN4 Prominent Areas for Special Protection 'expired' as these were local landscape designations which in accordance with national policy in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7 should be avoided. The Council consider that the adoption of the SKLCA now provides the appropriate level of cover. Other Local Plan Environment policies were 'saved' i.e. EN5 Prevention of Coalescence, EN6 Open Areas Important to the Character and Setting of Built-Up Areas, and EN7 Historic Parks and Gardens, which have now been replaced by Core Strategy Policy EN1.
- 3.29 In considering sites put forward for development allocation in the Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document, where such sites have previously been protected by now excluded or superseded policies in the Local Plan, the reasons why they were previously designated is being taken into consideration by the Council. To be consistent, in assessing landscape value we have included consideration of whether a site 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 site was previously covered by an Environment policy in the Local Plan, which could affect landscape value.
- 3.30 The AGLV in the Local Plan covers much of the district, largely reflecting variations in geological form. The landscapes protected include the whole of the *Kesteven Uplands* LCA, the *Southern Lincolnshire Edge* LCA and the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* LCA as identified in the SKLCA. 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.
- 3.31 In considering the appropriateness of the AGLV designation to an assessment of landscape value of each of the specified sites, consideration is given to a site's geological form and in particular to areas of 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.
- 3.32 All of the four Stamford sites and two of the eight Grantham sites lie either within or adjacent to an area previously covered by Policy EN4 Prominent Areas for Special Protection. Another two of the Grantham sites lie wholly within an area covered previously by Local Plan Policy EN5 Prevention of Coalescence. Clearly development on the sites concerned 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 sites previously protected by these policies.
- 3.33 One of the remaining sites in Grantham, Site G2 lies adjacent to the registered historic park and garden at Belton House, previously covered by Policy EN7. The impact of development of this site on the setting of Belton House and Park, and any of the other specified sites on the edge of Grantham which fall within the extent of the setting of Belton House as defined in the *Belton House and Park Setting Study and Policy Development* document, January 2010, has been taken into account in assessing the landscape value of each relevant site.

- 3.34 Similarly Burghley House and Park is a registered historic park and garden located to the south of Stamford within Peterborough City Council’s administrative area. The impact of development of the specified sites in Stamford on the setting of Burghley House and Park has been taken into account in assessing their landscape value.
- 3.35 None of the six specified sites on the edge of The Deepings were previously covered by an Environment policy in the Local Plan nor do they lie either within or adjacent to an area previously designated as AGLV. This is taken into consideration in the assessment of the landscape value of these sites.

Step 6: Fieldwork

- 3.36 Surveys of the specified sites and their surroundings were undertaken in early November 2010, late December 2010 and early January 2011 by two consultants with extensive experience in landscape assessment, with at least one being a qualified Landscape Architect. Field notes and digital photographs were taken to record features and elements of relevance to the criteria adopted to assess landscape and settlement character sensitivity, settlement form and pattern, visual sensitivity and landscape value. Footpaths across the sites were walked; otherwise the assessment was carried out from surrounding paths or other routes. Photograph viewpoints are shown in Figure 4 (Stamford), Figure 9 (The Deepings) and Figure 14 (Grantham).

Step 7: Applying the Criteria in Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

- 3.37 As described in Step 5 appropriate criteria were defined and then applied in a systematic and impartial judgement of the sensitivity and capacity of each specified site. Criteria for all the four key aspects explained in Step 5 were devised as being most appropriate to the consideration of built development on the edges of Stamford, The Deepings and Grantham. To assess landscape character sensitivity the following criteria in Table 4 were used:

Table 4: Landscape and Settlement Character 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.

	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

3.38 To assess visual sensitivity the following criteria in Table 5 were used:

Table 5: Visual 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.

3.39 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 6 were used:

Table 6: 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		

Step 8: Applying the Criteria in Landscape Capacity Assessment

3.40 As described in paragraph 3.26 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 7 were used:

Table 7: Landscape Value

	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
HIGH LANDSCAPE VALUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lies wholly within a 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 LANDSCAPE VALUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lies wholly or partially within a designated landscape but where localised character and scenic value is less distinctive or has become degraded. • Lies adjacent to a 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 LANDSCAPE VALUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not lie within or adjacent to a 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).

- 3.41 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 8 were used:

Table 8: 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		

Step 9: Report Writing, Presentation of Assessment and Recommendations

- 3.42 This report presents the findings of the landscape sensitivity and capacity assessment. For each settlement the relevant section begins by describing the local landscape character around each site, using the District-wide SKLCA undertaken in 2007 as the starting point. Each site is described in terms of its location, landscape character and setting of the town, settlement form and pattern, visual considerations, and scope for mitigation, as defined above. The criteria are applied to each site in order to arrive at categories of sensitivity and capacity, and the results presented in tabular format, colour coded for ease of reading and to enable easy comparison between sites.
- 3.43 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 in to 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 6 on page 21 is also assessed to these three categories and colour coded as shown in the table. Again, for some sites decisions have been made about how the individual assessments are combined where split assessments have led to more than one possible category. For example, a site 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 on page 3. Thus a judgement has been made, by comparing the assessment of other sites, to arrive at the most appropriate category.
- 3.44 To arrive at overall landscape capacity, a five point scale has been used as shown in the matrix in Table 8 above; low, low to medium, medium, medium to high and high. A five point scale allows greater differentiation between sites and is particularly helpful where individual

sites have been split into two or more areas of different sensitivity and / or capacity. These five categories are also colour coded as shown in the table and illustrated via GIS mapping.

- 3.45 When assessing overall landscape capacity, again for some sites decisions have been made about how the individual assessments are combined where split assessments have led to more than one possible category.
- 3.46 Colour coded summary tables are presented at the end of each site assessment. For each settlement the summary tables for each site have then been combined into overall settlement summary tables to allow easy comparison between sites and for cross-reference to the coloured maps. These are provided in the Executive Summary on pages 2 and 3.
- 3.47 Recommendations are given in section 7 to prioritise sites and to guide the direction of the future growth of Stamford, The Deepings and Grantham. Where sites have been assessed as having the same overall capacity to accommodate development, a judgement is made and recommendations given on the order that these site could be brought forward for development, in landscape and visual terms. Sites considered as being highly sensitive and with low or low to medium capacity are not prioritised for development.

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4. Site Assessment & Analysis – Stamford

4.1 Local Landscape Character Context

4.1.1 **Sites S1, S2, S3** and **S4** on the northern, western and eastern edges of Stamford, lie within the *Kesteven Uplands* Landscape Character Area as defined and described in the South Kesteven LCA 2007. Key characteristics of relevance to these specified sites are:

- Undulating landform based around river valleys including the River Welland to the south
- A dispersed, nucleated settlement pattern, mostly following the river valleys
- Modern human influences include airfields and the A1 Great North Road which are locally dominant features, in particular traffic on parts of the A1 can be seen over a relatively wide area

4.1.2 The following extracts from the SKLCA provide a local landscape character context to the assessment of the specified sites in Stamford, in addition to the wider description of the landscape character of the district given in section 2:

“The town of Stamford is located to the south of the character area. Stamford was described by Pevsner as “The climax (of Lincolnshire) in terms of historical as well as architectural significance.” The town of Stamford dates back over 1000 years. It thrived under the Normans with an economy based on wool, with good communication provided by the Great North Road, and via the River Welland to the North Sea. By the 13th Century Stamford was one of the 10 largest towns in England, and many buildings still survive from this period.

The town prospered further during the Georgian period and the fabric of the town today reflects this history. The centre of the town, protected by Conservation Area status retains a strong historic character. The valley of the River Welland extends into the town and provides a valuable open space and fine views to some of the churches.

More modern development exists around the edge of the town, including residential and employment development. The settlement edges are varied, some providing a soft planted edge, and other areas that are more stark and regular. Any new development on the edge of town should present a varied settlement edge including landscape treatment. Views towards the town centre and the church towers and spires should be protected.

The landscape of the Kesteven Uplands is medium in scale with a strong landscape pattern of woodland and hedgerows. It contains areas of sensitive landscape including the historic parks and areas around the edge of picturesque villages. Away from the main transport corridors it is a relatively tranquil landscape.

Landscape sensitivity to new employment or residential proposals is likely to be medium to high, because of the high proportion of valuable landscape elements and relatively undisturbed character. The strong landscape pattern including many woodlands could, however, in places be beneficial in assimilating new development.”

4.1.3 The SKLCA describes the following landscape management objectives of relevance to the edges of Stamford:

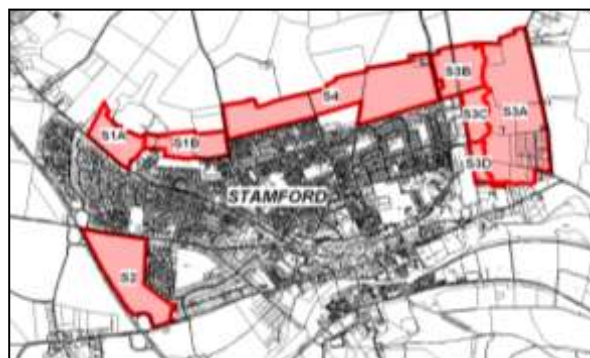
- *Pay special attention to sensitive spaces around the edge of historic towns such as*

Stamford.

- *Maintain open areas that extend into the towns and villages.*
- 4.1.4 The development of Stamford has taken place to the north and west of the historic core of the town, mainly due to the River Welland restricting growth southwards. The old town of Stamford, including the numerous distinctive 18th and 19th century buildings, many of which are listed as of architectural and historic interest, and its intricate street pattern with narrow lanes and often steep gradients, lies immediately to the north of the River Welland on land rising from around 24m AOD where the A16(T) bridges over the river, to approximately 45m AOD at the northern limit of the Conservation Area.
- 4.1.5 Just as the valley of the River Welland has largely restricted growth of the town southwards, so too the River Gwash valley and now dismantled railway have prevented development further eastwards. To the west development has occurred along the arterial roads radiating out from the town centre towards the A1(T), including Tinwell Road, Empingham Road and the Old Great North Road. Housing development has occurred between Empingham Road and the Old Great North Road, on land rising to 70m AOD, either side of Arran Road which links the two and joins the Old Great North Road at the western-most limit of the *Site S1A*. More recent housing has been built further west between the Old Great North Road and the A1(T), on land falling westwards from 70m to 60m AOD (housing estate including Primrose Way and cul-de-sacs off it).
- 4.1.6 The northern-most development of Stamford has occurred with housing on the eastern side of Little Casterton Road, on land between 60m and 64m AOD. Open fields between the houses and the Rutland / South Kesteven boundary were locally designated within the South Kesteven Local Plan as a Prominent Area for Special Protection and an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) (as an extension of the AGLV designated in the Lincolnshire Structure Plan associated with the rolling limestone uplands between Grantham, Stamford and Bourne). Further north the open fields fall more steeply to the north and east towards the River Gwash at approximately 25m.
- 4.1.7 In line with the proposed project method, fieldwork has been undertaken to ascertain whether localised landscape character shows any variation from the more generic description within the District-wide SKLCA. Any variation in local landscape character is described within the description of each site on the following pages.

4.2 Site Assessment & Analysis of Specified Sites in Stamford

- 4.2.1 The following sheets record the assessment and analysis of the four specified sites in Stamford. The sites have been sub-divided into smaller landscape character units where appropriate and for ease of description and assessment, as follows:



Site S1, 'North of Old Great North Road, Stamford', is sub-divided into *Site S1A* and *Site S1B*;

Site S2, 'Empingham Road, Stamford', has not been sub-divided;

Site S3, 'Newstead, Stamford', is sub-divided into *Site S3A*, *Site S3B*, *Site S3C* and *Site S3D*; and

Site S4, 'Land North of Stamford between Little Casterton Road & Ryhall Road', has not been sub-divided.

Site Assessment and Analysis - Stamford

Site Number: S1

Site Name: North of Old Great North Road, Stamford

S1A
S1B

Site Location

The entire Site S1 is located adjacent to the north-western built-up edge of Stamford, immediately north of the Old Great North Road and west of Little Casterton Road, within the administrative boundary of Rutland County Council. Along the western site boundary is a BP filling station, car sales area and former caravan / camping site with an open field beyond falling to Toll Bar, Great Casterton and the River Gwash.

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

The site comprises relatively flat agricultural land, lying at between 55m-60m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) in the north and east, gently rising southwards to approximately 67m-68m along the southern boundary with the Old Great North Road and the western site boundary. Quarry Farm Wood lies immediately to the north of the western half of the site. The area immediately south of the eastern area of the site is being developed for housing as part of the Welland Park development (including Mason Drive and Banks Crescent), formerly the Williamson Cliff Brick Works.

For the purposes of this assessment the site has been split into two; *Site S1A* is the western half and *Site S1B* the eastern half.

Site S1A



View A from the western site boundary.

Site S1A has an indistinctive urban edge character, derived more from its setting on the built up edge of Stamford than by its location within the *Kesteven Uplands* Landscape Character Area. There are a number of key features which combine to provide this local peri-urban characterisation: adjacent housing on high ground, including that being constructed within the Casterton Heights development off Belvoir Close to the east; the old Great North Road immediately to the south, including street lighting, footway, large direction signs and 40mph speed limit; and the BP filling station, car sales area and former caravan / camping site immediately to the west.

The site is relatively well enclosed and self contained due to the screening effect of surrounding vegetation. Quarry Farm Wood immediately to the north largely screens the site from the countryside beyond. The wood is important in landscape and visual terms in defining the character of the site and its landscape setting. A dense copse forms a natural barrier between *Site S1A* and *Site S1B* to the east. Another dense copse lies between the site and Belvoir Close. A dense tall hedge

lies alongside the site and the Old Great North Road, mirroring the belt of tall vegetation which screens much of the housing within the estate to the south of the road. Finally a line of tall trees including conifers, poplar, alder and birch lie on a ridge of high ground along the western site boundary between the site and a former caravan / camping site.

Other than the Quarry Farm Wood itself, there are no distinctive landscape elements / features typical of the *Kesteven Uplands* LCA, resulting in an indistinct character which is derived predominantly from its urban-edge location.

The site is privately owned but there is permissive access which allows people to walk around its perimeter. This extends through to the adjoining *Site S1B* to Little Casterton Road to the east, and is particularly popular with local dog walkers.

Site S1B



View B from Little Casterton Road.

Site S1B is immediately adjacent to the Welland Park housing development under construction on higher ground to the south. Its northern boundary is open, whilst a tall hedge runs alongside its eastern boundary with Little Casterton Road, and a dense copse forms a natural barrier between the site and *Site S1A* to the west.

The site includes features such as tracks and spoil heaps which are remnants from its previous land use as part of the brick works. It has an unsettled character due to its location on the edge of the built up area and close to on-going construction. For example, there is evidence of fly tipping close to Little Casterton Road. A phone mast is located just beyond the site close to Quarry Farm Wood and provides a man-made feature on the edge of the undulating countryside.

The character of *Site S1B* is generally unremarkable, being derived more from its setting on the built up edge of Stamford than by its location within the *Kesteven Uplands* LCA. Being more open to the north than *Site S1A*, it does exhibit some sense of place although its relatively flat topography contrasts with the more undulating countryside which falls steeply to the River Gwash valley to the north and east. This area, comprising regularly shaped, medium sized arable fields with well maintained hedgerow boundaries, is open and undulating, undeveloped and unspoilt. Distinctive typical elements / features of the *Kesteven Uplands* are present, which make a positive contribution to the character of the landscape. The river valley between Great Casterton, Toll Bar and Ryhall was locally designated as an Area of Local Landscape Value (ALLV) in the Rutland Local Plan. By way of contrast *Site S1B* forms a much more indistinct break between town and country.

Settlement Form and Pattern

The development of Stamford has taken place to the north and west of the historic core of the town,

and this is continuing with the housing developments under construction adjacent to *Site S1A* and *Site S1B*. Development of these sites would be a continuation of this pattern although development along the northern boundary would be an extension beyond the current limit to development within South Kesteven.

Surrounding development is modern but does not detract from important aspects of the historic settlement form and pattern.

Visual Considerations (see Figure 3)

Views from the A1:

Views from the A1 are distant, with Quarry Farm Wood and new housing between the Old Great North Road and the A1 being the most obvious features. The new housing is stark and both breaks the skyline and extends down the west-facing slope, with no apparent screening. Built development appears to continue unbroken alongside the B1081 Old Great North Road from Great Casterton, through Toll Bar and up to the petrol filling station on the ridge of high ground in front of land at Quarry Farm. The open space between Great Casterton and Toll Bar is barely visible from the A1 as it is low lying and is screened by surrounding development.

Views from Toll Bar and the road between Toll Bar and Little Casterton:

Views from properties in Toll Bar are limited to views from the first floor windows of 3 or 4 houses and from a length of approximately 500 metres along the road, looking up to *Site S1A*. Quarry Farm Wood is the most obvious feature, on high ground, with sloping arable fields falling to the north and west. Close to the woodland, trees and hedges along the ridge of high ground along the western site boundary break the skyline in some views whilst in others the roof lines of houses on high ground to the south of the Old Great North Road are visible above it. The gap between Quarry Farm Wood and tall poplar trees along the western site boundary is identified as the most open area of land within the site, and thus can be considered as more sensitive to development. The rest of *Site S1A* is less sensitive due to the housing on the edge of Stamford beyond and the buildings and vegetation in front. Furthermore, despite this housing giving the appearance that it is located within the site, the open fields between it and Toll Bar are important in visually separating the two settlements.

Development within *Site S1B* is likely to be screened by Quarry Farm Wood and other mature vegetation in views from properties on the eastern edge of Toll Bar. From further beyond the Toll Bar to Little Casterton road there may be some views of development within *Site S1B* to the east of Quarry Farm Wood from some locations along the road where the undulating topography allows. Where there are views, development would be seen against a backdrop of existing houses at a distance of approximately 1.2km. However it is likely that the ridge of high ground to the north of Quarry Farm Wood would screen probably all but the highest roof lines.

Views from Ryhall Road:

Between half a dozen and a dozen properties in Great Casterton have views across open fields and up to the development site, mostly from first floor windows. The most open views are from Ryhall Road opposite the Community College. Views are similar to those described from the Toll Bar to Little Casterton Road above, but are at a greater distance of over 1km (*Site S1A*) and almost 2km (*Site S1B*). Here the open fields can be clearly seen to separate firstly Great Casterton and Toll Bar, and secondly Toll Bar and houses on the edge of Stamford. Development of land on *Site S1A*, even if noticeable, would not compromise the separate identities of Stamford, Toll Bar and Great Casterton. It is the open fields on falling ground in front of (to the north-west of) the proposed development

site that are important in separating built development. The fields in the foreground, between Great Casterton and Toll Bar, are those previously designated as ALLV in the Rutland Local Plan, and both these fields and those between Toll Bar and Quarry Farm exhibit similar characteristics to those landscapes further north, east and west previously designated as AGLV by South Kesteven District Council.

Development within *Site S1B* is likely to be screened by Quarry Farm Wood and other mature vegetation in views from properties on the eastern edge of Great Casterton. From further beyond Ryhall Road there may be some views of development within *Site S1B* to the east of Quarry Farm Wood from some locations along the road where the undulating topography allows. Where there are views, development would be seen against a backdrop of existing houses at a distance of approximately 2km. However it is likely that the ridge of high ground to the north of Quarry Farm Wood would screen probably all but the highest roof lines.

Views from Little Casterton Road:

Little Casterton Road is a relatively narrow, winding road with predominantly well maintained hedgerows on both sides, limiting views from the road. Where there are glimpses beyond the hedgerows towards the edge of Stamford, housing can be clearly seen on high ground to the south of the Old Great North Road through a narrow gap between Quarry Farm Wood and the mature copse separating *Site S1A* & *S1B*. Development within *Site S1A* would only be visible through this narrow gap, including views from Northfields Farm.

Development of *Site S1B* would be more prominent, although it would be seen from the road and Northfields Farm against a backdrop of housing on higher ground, including new houses under construction on the former brick works.

Views from the Old Great North Road adjacent to the site:

A solid hedgerow along the boundary of the site and the Old Great North Road screens most views from travellers using the road and from pedestrians walking alongside it. Views are more open across the site from the gateway opposite Arran Road. Mature vegetation on the embankment also screens most direct views from houses on the south side of the Old Great North Road, which are predominantly aligned in an east-west direction and thus not directly over the site.

The most direct and closest views are from three houses on Arran Road close to the junction with the Old Great North Road. The main road and side roads are relatively busy and are currently lit. Development of *Site S1A* would be noticeable in views from some properties on the south side of the Old Great North Road and by the travelling public using the road and adjacent footpath, but would be appropriate on what is essentially an enclosed, well contained urban edge site. It is considered that development of *Site S1A* would not lead to unacceptable intrusion into the countryside. Quarry Farm Wood would prevent any further urban sprawl into the countryside further north.

Development of *Site S1B* would be largely screened from the Old Great North Road by existing housing, housing under construction, and mature vegetation between *Site S1A* & *B*.

Scope for Mitigation

As mentioned above, Quarry Farm Wood is important in landscape and visual terms in defining the character of *Site S1A* and its landscape setting. It would also be beneficial in assimilating new development in to the landscape, in accordance with the SKLCA (see paragraph 4.1.2 above).

However, the gap between Quarry Farm Wood and the petrol filling station / car sales site would need to be handled sensitively, but a well designed development, sensitive to the location, could provide an attractive entrance to Stamford from the west. This could be achieved by incorporating a sensitively designed landscape scheme alongside the ridge line.

Development could be set back off the Old Great North Road into *Site S1A*, leaving space for a belt of planting / mounding along the road side to mirror that on the south side of the road. This would help reduce the impact of any new development and retain the well vegetated character along this section of the road, as a transition between the town and countryside to the west.

Views into *Site S1B* from the north are limited, and no mitigation planting along the northern boundary is considered necessary other than hedgerow planting in keeping with the character of the landscape. This would mirror the built up edge within South Kesteven district to the east of Little Casterton Road, which is relatively exposed.

Sensitivity to Development

Site S1A: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- Commonplace elements and combinations of features 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 little or no importance to the setting, 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.

Site S1A: Visual Sensitivity **Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- Views into and/or out of the town are of some importance to its setting 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.
- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.

Site S1A: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21 (see Figure 5).

Site S1B: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- Commonplace elements and combination of features 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.

- Development would have some association with the town and may have some effect on settlement form and pattern.

Site S1B: Visual Sensitivity **Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- Views into and/or out of the town are of some importance to its setting 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.
- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.

Site S1B: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21 (see Figure 5).

Landscape Value

Site S1A: Low to Moderate Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on page 21:

- Does not lie within or adjacent to a designated landscape.
- Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value.
- Presents some public amenity value by way of views, access, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

Site S1B: Low to Moderate Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on page 21:

- Lies adjacent to a designated landscape.
- Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value.
- Presents some public amenity value by way of views, access, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

Site S1A: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Low to Moderate Landscape Value. A judgement has been made to allocate the category **Medium to High Capacity for Site S1A** to accommodate development (see below), in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (see Figure 6). A medium capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly higher capacity has been allocated to reflect the well enclosed nature and indistinct urban edge character of the site and in comparison with *Site S1B* (see below).

Residential development or conventional larger scale buildings associated with employment uses or similar, but not tall structures are considered appropriate on *Site S1A*. Development should be set back into the site avoiding the more sensitive western ridge, where mitigation planting would be appropriate. A dense belt of planting along the frontage with the Old Great North Road would mirror that on the south side of the road and provide a transition between town and country as well as a softened approach into Stamford from the west.

Site S1B: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Low to Moderate Landscape Value, the same as *Site S1A*. However, a judgement has been made to allocate the category **Medium Capacity for Site S1B** to accommodate the proposed development, in accordance with the categories given in the

matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (see Figure 6). A medium to high capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly lower capacity has been allocated in comparison with *Site S1A* which is considered to have a greater capacity to accommodate development. This also reflects the slightly higher landscape and settlement character sensitivity of *Site S1B* compared with *Site S1A*.

Modern housing development is considered appropriate within *Site S1B*, which would be in keeping with existing and future housing under construction on higher ground immediately to the east and south. No specific mitigation is considered necessary other than hedgerow planting on the northern site boundary in keeping with the character of the landscape.

Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
S1A	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium to High
S1B	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium

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Site Assessment and Analysis - Stamford

Site Number: S2

Site Name: Empingham Road, Stamford

S2

Site Location

The site lies on the western edge of Stamford immediately east of the A1 trunk road. The northern boundary is defined by the A606 Empingham Road and the southern boundary by the A6121 Stamford Road. To the east is a modern housing development including Lonsdale Road, Exeter Gardens and other smaller estate roads.

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

The site comprises one relatively flat arable field, bounded by hedgerows and trees including dense planting on the A1 cutting slopes. The northern half of the site lies at a little over 65m AOD, falling gradually southwards to the A1 junction with the A6121 at around 55m AOD. Site topography contrasts with the surrounding countryside to the west and south which is undulating and in parts steeply so, more in keeping with the *Kesteven Uplands* LCA. To the west the land falls towards the village of Tinwell and then rises steeply to Ketton. To the south the land falls more steeply to the River Welland before rising steeply to Easton on the Hill and Wothorpe.



View C from the A606 bridge over the A1 looking across the site towards the wooded hills of Wothorpe to the south.

Main transport corridors adjoin the site on three sides, including two junctions off the A1. Housing adjoins the site to the north and east, with open countryside to the south and west. Thus the A1 to the west and the A6121 to the south provide well defined corridors between town and country, rather than the site itself. The site thus has an indistinctive urban edge character, derived more from its setting on the built up edge of Stamford than by its location within the *Kesteven Uplands* Landscape Character Area. There are no distinctive landscape elements or features.

The site was previously designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) in accordance with Local Plan Policy EN3. As described in section 3 above, this designation was largely concerned with an area's geological form and served to protect areas of slopes and woodland considered to have a special attraction. It is considered that the localised character and scenic value of the site is less significant than surrounding areas where such landscape features are present. In our opinion development within the site previously designated AGLV would relate to and would be sensitive to the scale and character of this part of the town and to its urban edge location.



View D from the southeast corner of the site looking northwards showing housing off Lonsdale Road.

Settlement Form and Pattern

Housing lies immediately to the north and east of the site. To the north the housing extends right up to the A1. To the east housing wraps around the site including alongside the A6121 Stamford Road, where it stops short of the A1. There is thus a narrow section along the southern site boundary which is undeveloped between the A1 junction and housing along the A6121. Nevertheless, housing development on the site would represent a continuation of the growth of Stamford westwards, towards the A1, in keeping with settlement form and pattern.

Visual Considerations (see Figure 3)

The site was previously covered by Local Plan Policy EN4 Prominent Areas for Special Protection, which aimed to protect the open character of sites considered important to the setting of the town within a valley landscape where surrounding hillsides are clearly visible from within the town or major approach roads.

Due to surrounding topography and land uses the site is not considered to be particularly prominent. Housing to the north and east is at a similar level to the northern and eastern site boundaries. The site falls away to the south and west and is thus less prominent. Views of the site from within the town are very limited to locations close to the site itself.

The surrounding countryside is undulating, which limits views into the site from areas of higher ground beyond the Welland Valley. The river itself cannot be seen from the site, and the majority of the village of Tinwell is largely hidden apart from the Church tower. The Castle Cement Works at Ketton is visible to the west, whereas much of the lower lying land closer to the site is hidden.

The A1 is mostly in cutting except for a short distance alongside the centre of the site. The densely vegetated cutting slopes further screen most traffic on the trunk road (see View C) in views out of the site and also into the site, such that only the top of large goods vehicles can be seen from the minor roads to the west of the site. A strip of new planting within the site along its western boundary (see View C) will further enclose the site in time and screen traffic in views from within the site and from first floor windows in the surrounding housing.

When approaching the site from the west, along the A606 or the A6121, the site is not readily noticeable until close to it, when it is seen against the A1 as an area of relatively flat open space surrounded by housing. Similarly when travelling along the A1 the site is not visible until alongside the site itself, where there are glimpses through the roadside vegetation where the trunk road is not in a cutting.

Scope for Mitigation

The SKLCA recommends that any new development on the edge of town should present a varied settlement edge including landscape treatment. The strip of young planting along the western site

boundary will in time perform this function to provide a soft planted edge to any new development within the site. Consequently no further mitigation is considered to be necessary.

Sensitivity to Development

Site S2: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- Commonplace elements and combinations of features present which create generally unremarkable character but some sense of place.
- Is not important intervening open land between settlements.
- Of some importance to the setting of the town but the break between town and countryside is less distinctive.
- 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.

Site S2: Visual Sensitivity **Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- 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 are important.
- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.

Site S2: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21 (see Figure 5).

Landscape Value

Site S2: Low to Moderate Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on page 21:

- Lies wholly or partially within a designated landscape but where localised character and scenic value is less distinctive or has become degraded.
- Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value / interest.
- Does not present important public amenity value by way of views, access, sporting facilities, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

Site S2: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Low to Moderate Landscape Value. A judgement has been made to allocate the category **Medium to High Capacity for Site S2** to accommodate housing development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (see Figure 6). A medium capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly higher capacity has been allocated to reflect the well enclosed nature and indistinct urban edge character of the site. The slightly higher capacity for development also reflects the generally low landscape and settlement character sensitivity, and generally low landscape value which is skewed by the previous AGLV designation.

Modern housing is considered the most appropriate type of development within *Site S2*, which

would be in keeping with existing housing on ground at a similar height immediately to the north and east. Conventional larger scale buildings associated with employment uses or similar, but not tall structures may also be appropriate where there would be some association with the A1, subject to detailed assessment and design. No specific mitigation is considered necessary since the young planting along the western site boundary will provide a soft planted varied settlement edge as recommended in the SKLCA. There should be an appropriate buffer between employment development and housing.

Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
S2	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium to High

Site Assessment and Analysis - Stamford

Site Number: S3

Site Name: Newstead, Stamford

S3A
S3B
S3C
S3D

Site Location

Site S3 is a relatively large site representing an extension of the town at its extreme north-eastern corner, lying between Ryhall Road, an industrial estate and a disused railway line in the west and Newstead Road to the east. The northern site boundary follows the county boundary whilst the southern site boundary follows the current extent of development including an industrial estate, allotment gardens and the Newstead Mill development. The River Gwash runs north-south through the site and along its southern boundary.

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

Site S3 is divided into a number of medium sized arable or grassland fields, except in the south-western corner which comprises scrubland with tipping characteristic of a disused industrial site.

Topography and land use within the site varies either side of the River Gwash. Grassland to the east of the river falls relatively steeply in a series of terraces from a high point at around 50m AOD in the extreme north-eastern corner to 25m AOD alongside the river. The southern half of this part of the site flattens out where the river valley is wider. The grass fields are bounded by low trimmed hedgerows, and Grindlepits Spinney is a distinctive small broadleaved wood close to the river. A mast is an obvious feature on high ground along Newstead Road, and less conspicuous is the range of buildings and horse paddocks at the Newstead Farm and Equestrian Centre further south.

The River Gwash is a relatively small, inconspicuous river, its meandering course through the site being emphasised where there are riverside trees and shrubs. To the west of the river, the northern half of this part of the site comprises two small to medium scale arable fields, relatively flat at around 25 - 30m AOD but rising to 35m AOD at the northern-most limit of current built development along Ryhall Road. A disused railway with densely vegetated cutting sides cuts through this section of the site, and is a much more obvious feature than the river.

The middle section of the western half of the site is grassland with various minor undulations and terracing which appears to be a route of a former track, now removed. The densely vegetated disused railway does not screen the large industrial units to the immediate west, which gives this area of the site an urban edge character. The southern section of the western half of the site comprises the scrubland mentioned above. The industrial units are evident, which together with the noise generated from the industrial estate gives this area of the site an urban edge character also.

For the purposes of this assessment Site S3 has been sub-divided into four sites: *Site S3A*, *Site S3B*, *Site S3C* and *Site S3D*.

Site S3A

Site S3A comprises grassland which falls steeply from Newstead Road westwards to the river. The majority of this area, with the exception of the south-western corner, was previously designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) in accordance with Local Plan Policy EN3 due to the slopes and woodland considered to have a special attraction. This area was also covered by Local Plan Policy EN4 Prominent Areas for Special Protection, which aimed to protect the open character of sites considered important to the setting of the town within a valley landscape where surrounding hillsides are clearly visible from within the town. Although flatter and having previously been

allocated for employment development in the Local Plan, the south-western corner gently rises from the River Gwash and is considered an important part of *Site S3A* important to the setting of the town in providing an important break between town and countryside.



View E looking eastwards across Site S3C up to Site S3A which slopes down to the River Gwash in the middle distance. The south-western extent of the site, previously allocated for employment use, lie to the right of Grindlepits Spinney.

A number of landscape features combine to give *Site S3A* a distinctive sense of place and unspoilt, countryside character; the distinctive sloping topography makes the site visible from many areas to the west, including from several parts of Stamford; dense vegetation along the highest edge of the site enclose it to the east; and Grindlepits Spinney, riverside vegetation and field boundary hedgerows. These characteristics are typical of the *Kesteven Uplands LCA* and give the site a special attraction hence its previous designation as AGLV and a Prominent Areas for Special Protection. Development on the site would have a negative effect on important landscape elements and features.

The southern half of *Site S3A* around Newstead Farm is lower lying but still contains many of these features. Newstead Mill is an attractive, small scale intimate development where the low lying, listed Mill and mill race lie within the River Gwash Valley.

Site S3A lies beyond the dismantled railway which currently defines the extent of built development to the east of the town. The River Gwash also forms an important boundary feature. Thus development on *Site S3A* would be isolated from the town and would detract from settlement form and pattern.

The Macmillan Way long distance footpath runs across the site from the highest point in the extreme north-eastern corner, down across the river and through the industrial estate and into the town. From within *Site S3A* it provides important public amenity value including relative tranquillity and panoramic views across the town.



View F looking southwest along the Macmillan Way footpath through Site S3A.

Site S3B

This north-western part of the site lies between Ryhall Road and the River Gwash. It comprises two arable fields separated by the densely vegetated dismantled railway. Hedgerows form the northern and southern boundaries to *Site S3B*. It has a distinctive rural landscape character, and high scenic and amenity value enjoyed by dog walkers and others using the southern boundary and dismantled railway.



View G looking across Site S3B with the dismantled railway in the middle distance and Belmesthorpe Grange beyond the site on higher ground in the distance.

The site gently rises from the river to Ryhall Road. Beyond the road the land continues to rise gently to the west towards Little Casterton Road. The site thus forms an important part of the AGLV and Prominent Area for Special Protection formerly designated in the Local Plan to protect the northern edge of the town and its setting in the landscape, despite itself being less prominent or distinctive. Development on the site would lie beyond the current extent of built development of the town to the north, currently defined by housing and the industrial estate along the southern edge of the site. Development would be isolated from the town and would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern.

Site S3B is considered important to the setting of the town by providing a distinctive break between town and countryside and thus landscape and settlement character sensitivity is high.



View H showing the south-western corner of Site S3B alongside the industrial estate which forms the current extent of built development of Stamford to the north along Ryhall Road.

Sites S3C and S3D

The remaining areas of the western part of the site have more of an urban edge character and are considered to be less sensitive in landscape and settlement character terms than the more outlying *Site S3A* and *Site S3B*. They were not previously protected by the former AGLV and Prominent Area for Special Protection designations due to their location adjacent to the industrial estate, their flat topography and lack of distinctive landscape features. Both sites were previously allocated for employment development in the Local Plan, and *Site S3D* has the appearance of having been formerly developed. It has metal security gates and tall security fencing with barbed wire along its perimeter.

The Macmillan Way long distance footpath continues across *Site S3C*. The site also provides an important amenity for dog walkers and others using Lincolnshire County Council way- marked footpaths which run across the site and continue along the dismantled railway and the river.



View I looking northwards across Site S3C.



View J looking southwest across Site S3D.

Settlement Form and Pattern

Whilst the dismantled railway forms the current extent of development east of Ryhall Road, development continues close to the River Gwash along the southern site boundary. For the reasons given above development of *Site S3A* and *Site S3B* would form an unacceptable intrusion into open countryside, isolated from the town and with a negative effect on landscape character and settlement form and pattern.

Whilst development within *Site S3C* and *Site S3D* would be beyond the current extent of built form, with some effect on settlement form and pattern, employment development up to the River Gwash would have some association with the existing industrial estate. Overall such development on *Site S3C* is likely to have a neutral effect on landscape character and settlement form and pattern, whereas employment development on *Site S3D* could have a positive effect on landscape character.

Visual Considerations (See Figure 3)

Site S3A is visually prominent and provides important views out across the town from the Macmillan Way, including distant views southwards to Burghley House and Park. It is considered important to the setting of the town in many views up to the site from the town, where development would be conspicuous and which could not be mitigated. There are important views down from field entrances off Newstead Road across *Site S3A* and the northern extent of the town and towards Little Casterton Road and Quarry Farm Wood (see Site Assessment and Analysis for *Site S1*). Views from Carr's Lodge, Newstead Farm and properties around Newstead Mill across *Site S3A* see it as being important to the setting of the town in the landscape.

Site S3B is lower lying and thus less visually prominent than *Site S3A*. However, it is considered important in providing a visual break between town and country in views from Ryhall Road. It also provides an important setting to the town in views from high ground to the east, including views from the Macmillan Way and Belmesthorpe Grange. Development on *Site S3B* would be conspicuous and could not be successfully mitigated.

Although there are clear views across *Site S3C* from close to, in particular from nearby public rights of way, and distant views eastwards to Uffington Church, visual sensitivity is considered moderate. The site is of some importance to the setting of the town but development could be mitigated, for example by planting alongside the river, so that visual intrusion into the countryside would be acceptable. Development would be perceptible would not significantly alter the balance of features

or elements within the existing view.

Site S3D is well screened from public and private views, due to surrounding warehousing and industrial units, and a tall mound around its northern and eastern perimeter. Visual sensitivity of *Site S3D* is low.

Scope for Mitigation

Development within *Site S3A* and *Site S3B* would be conspicuous and could not be successfully mitigated.

Mitigation by way of native tree and shrub planting along the River Gwash would help mitigate impact of employment development on *Site S3C* and *Site S3D*. This would be in keeping with the SKLCA which recommends that any new development on the edge of town should present a varied settlement edge including landscape treatment. Riverside planting along the eastern site boundary would in time perform this function to provide a soft planted edge to any new development within *Site S3C* and *Site S3D*.

Sensitivity to Development

Site S3A: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- 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.
- Development would be isolated from the town or would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern.
- Site lies outside clear and important boundary features defining settlement extent.

Site S3A: Visual Sensitivity **High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- 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.

Site S3A: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21 (see Figure 5)

Site S3A: Landscape Value High in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on page 21:

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

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity of *Site S3A*

Site S3A: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and High Landscape Value provide an overall assessment of **Low Capacity for *Site S3A*** to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (see Figure 6).

Site S3B

Site S3B: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- 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.
- Important to the setting of the town by providing a distinctive break between town and countryside.
- Development would be isolated from the town or would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern.
- Site adjacent to built limits but lies outside clear and important boundary features defining settlement extent.

Site S3B: Visual Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- 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 partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside are important.
- Development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous and could not be successfully mitigated.

Site S3B: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21 (see Figure 5)

Site S3B: Moderate Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on page 21:

- Lies wholly within a 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 of Site S3B

Site S3B: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate Landscape Value provide an overall assessment of **Low to Medium Capacity for Site S3B** to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (see Figure 6).

Site S3C

Site S3C: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- 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.
- 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.

Site S3C: Visual Sensitivity **Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- 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 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.

Site S3C: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21 (see Figure 5).

Site S3C: Low to Moderate Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on page 21:

- Lies adjacent to a designated landscape.
- Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value / interest.
- Presents some public amenity value by way of views and access.

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity of Site S3C

Site S3C: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Low to Moderate Landscape Value provide an overall assessment of **Medium Capacity for Site S3C** to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (see Figure 6). A medium to high capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly lower capacity has been allocated to reflect the overall general moderate landscape sensitivity and landscape value.

Employment development as previously allocated in the Local Plan would seem more appropriate in this location than residential development. Mitigation planting by way of riverside planting along the eastern site boundary would in time provide a varied and soft planted edge to any new development in accordance with the recommendations within the SKLCA.

Site S3D

Site S3D: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- 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.
- Development would have some association with the town and may have some effect on settlement form and pattern.

Site S3D: Visual Sensitivity **Low** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- 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 enhance views or existing visual amenity.

Site S3D: Overall Low Landscape Sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21 (see Figure 5).

Site S3D: Low Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on page 21:

- Does not lie within or adjacent to a designated landscape.

- Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value / interest.
- Does not present important public amenity value by way of views, access, sporting facilities, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity of Site S3D

Site S3D: Overall Low Landscape Sensitivity and Low Landscape Value provide an overall assessment of **High Capacity for Site S3D** to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (see Figure 6).

As with the assessment of *Site S3C*, employment development as previously allocated in the Local Plan would seem more appropriate than residential development on *Site S3D*. Mitigation planting by way of riverside planting along the eastern site boundary would in time provide a varied and soft planted edge to any new development in accordance with the recommendations within the SKLCA.

Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
S3A	High	High	High	High	Low
S3B	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	High	Moderate	Low to Medium
S3C	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium
S3D	Low to Moderate	Low	Low	Low	High

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Site Assessment and Analysis - Stamford

Site Number: S4

Site Name: Land North of Stamford between Little Casterton Road & Ryhall Road

S4

Site Location

Site S4 is located on the northern edge of Stamford, between the A6121 Ryhall Road to the east and Little Casterton Road to the west. The most northerly extent of current built development in Stamford lies immediately to the south of the site, and the District boundary to the north. Built development along the southern site boundary primarily comprises residential estates, the Stamford Queen Eleanor School and school playing fields. In the extreme north-eastern corner is a property known as Borderville Farm House comprising a detached house and outbuildings lying within well vegetated grounds.

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

The site comprises three medium scale agricultural fields falling west to east and south to north, from a high point of approximately 60m AOD along the south-western boundary to around 30m AOD along the eastern boundary on Ryhall Road. The fields are separated by two hedges aligned approximately north – south; one is a low well trimmed hedge without trees, the other a double-row of two tall hedges with trees either side of a footpath running to the west of the school. Relatively tall roadside hedges with trees provide some enclosure to the east and west, but low hedges with few trees along the northern boundary provide an open aspect in this direction.

Beyond the site to the east the land continues to fall gently to the River Gwash (see the assessment of *Site S3B*). North of the site the undulating agricultural land within Rutland rolls up to Northfields Farm and beyond to a high point of 63m AOD before falling northwards to Little Casterton and the River Gwash.



View K showing the western half of the site falling northwards. Rolling fields rise towards Northfields Farm (surrounded by tall vegetation in the centre-right) beyond the site.

The residential properties and the school occupy the higher ground along the southern boundary, overlooking the site which ‘faces’ the countryside to the north as it falls in that direction. The relatively unified, simple, medium-scale, undulating landscape of the site and its agricultural setting, based around the valleys of the River Gwash, is typical of the *Kesteven Uplands* Landscape Character Area.

The site was previously part of a larger area extending to the east which was designated in the South Kesteven Local Plan as an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV), to protect areas of slopes and woodland considered to have a special attraction. There is no woodland on the site and although local topography adds to a pleasant countryside character, scenic value is less distinctive than in

some other areas on the edge of the town, for example *Site S3A* to the east.



View L showing the eastern part of the site adjacent to existing housing, gently rolling towards Borderville Farm House (surrounded by tall vegetation in the centre-left).

Two footpaths cross the site from south to north providing access to the countryside from the town. These, together with the permitted circular routes around the edge of the site make it a popular area with local dog walkers.

Settlement Form and Pattern

The growth of Stamford has occurred northwards away from the River Welland and eastwards to the River Gwash, as described earlier in section 4. The housing estates along the southern site boundary occupy gently rising land at a little above 60m AOD at its highest. Existing built development has thus continued north of Stamford up to the break of slope defined by the southern site boundary.



View M from Little Casterton Road showing the site lying adjacent to the current extent of built development on the northern edge of Stamford.

Development of the site would be a continuation of the historical pattern of growth northwards and eastwards, on lower lying ground than existing housing to the south. However, it would extend beyond the current extent of built development to the north, east and west.

Visual Considerations (see Figure 3)

The site was previously covered by Local Plan Policy EN4 Prominent Areas for Special Protection, which aimed to protect the open character of sites considered important to the setting of the town within a valley landscape, where surrounding hillsides are clearly visible from within the town or major approach roads.

Houses along the southern site boundary are prominent in some views from the north but from limited viewpoints due to the undulating topography, especially when approaching the town from Little Casterton and Ryhall. As shown in the photographs above, they provide a harsh, regular, stark

built edge to the town in contrast to the surrounding countryside, with little by way of relief other than generally low garden vegetation. Views of the site from within the town are very limited to locations close to the site itself.

The Welland Park housing development under construction to the west of Little Casterton Road adds to the harsh urban edge.

Scope for Mitigation

The SKLCA recommends that any new development on the edge of town should present a varied settlement edge including landscape treatment. Development of the site would present the opportunity to soften the existing harsh urban edge.

The site provides access to the countryside from the edge of town which should be retained by continuing the footpath routes through the site.

Sensitivity to Development

Site S4: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- Commonplace elements and combination of features 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.
- Development would have some association with the town and may have some effect on settlement form and pattern.

Site S4: Visual Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- Views into and/or out of the town are of some importance to its setting 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 very open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are important.
- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.

Site S4: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21 (see Figure 5).

Landscape Value

Site S4: Moderate Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on page 21:

- Lies wholly within a 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

Site S4: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate Landscape Value provide an overall assessment of **Medium Capacity for Site S4** to accommodate the proposed development, in

accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (see Figure 6).

Modern housing development is considered appropriate within *Site S4*, which would be in keeping with residential use immediately to the south and southwest. Mitigation should include sensitive, appropriate layout and design, including landscape treatment, to provide a varied, 'softer' settlement edge than is currently the case.

Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
S4	Moderate	Moderate to High	Moderate	Moderate	Medium

5. Site Assessment & Analysis – The Deepings

5.1 Local Landscape Character Context

5.1.1 **Sites D1 & D6, D2 & D3**, and **D4** lie on the western, northern and eastern edges of Market Deeping respectively, within *The Fens* Landscape Character Area. **Site D5** is located on the north-eastern edge of Deeping St James, also with *The Fens* LCA. Key landscape characteristics are:

- Low flat terrain, level horizons and large skies
- Large-scale open rectangular fields, divided by drainage ditches and embanked rivers
- Sparse trees and woodland cover
- Little settlement apart from individual farmsteads, often with large-scale agricultural buildings.

5.1.2 The following extracts from the SKLCA provide a local landscape character context to the assessment of the specified sites in The Deepings, in addition to the wider description of the landscape character of the district given in section 2:

“The Fens are a complex landscape formed by the draining of land over the last 2000 years, but with most land drained during the last 150 years. Within South Kesteven the Fens comprise peat, overlying Oxford Clay. The land only exists because of man’s intervention, and continued management, to prevent inundation. Within this area the land lies below 5m AOD, typically at 2-3m above sea level. The land is drained by a series of east/west drainage ditches, such as Haconby Lode and Rippingale Running Dike, which are pumped into the South Forty Foot Drain, which lies to the east and forms the District Boundary.

The character of the Fens is determined by the level low lying terrain. The man-made rectangular fields are large in scale divided by drainage ditches, with virtually no trees or woodland. This results in an open landscape of huge scale, with enormous skies which have a significant influence on the character of the landscape. The open fields are punctuated only by the groups of individual farm buildings spread along the Drovers. Most of these include large-scale agricultural buildings with some scattered trees amid the farms themselves. The rising land to the west of the Kesteven Uplands provides enclosure and visual diversity in this direction. The Fens continue to the north, east and south of the District boundary, adding to the large-scale open character of the landscape. Distant vertical interest in the landscape is provided by wind turbines beyond the District boundary.

The Fens are accessed by a series of lanes or 'Drovers', which extend east from the B1177 and the B1394. These lanes serve individual farmsteads. Most lanes are dead ends, limited by the South Forty Foot Drain. The Fens within South Kesteven contain no significant woodlands, historic parks or houses, ecological conservation areas or nationally designated areas of wildlife value. They are a working landscape based on intensive agricultural production.

The lack of communities or settlements provides a character that is remote and isolated, though punctuated by intensive activity depending on the season and agricultural activity. Settlement within the Fens is generally sparse and restricted to isolated farms and houses. The main settlement is located on the edge of the Fen at Market Deeping and Deeping St James. These settlements merge with each other. Vernacular buildings in the village centres are mostly constructed of limestone, often with Collyweston slate roofs. The settlement centres are typically linear, with more extensive areas of modern development beyond. These

are typically brick- built, of varying age and style.

With few notable landscape features in the surrounding fen landscape, there is little to dictate the form of the settlement. The towns appear to have expanded along the roads and where space was available. The towns do not, therefore, have a distinctive form. Some settlement edges within the wider fen are quite abrupt, perhaps marked by a boundary hedgerow. Any new development around the settlement should carefully consider the settlement edge. In some places it may be appropriate to have properties looking out over the countryside and in other areas to have areas of planting. Back fences backing onto open countryside would not be appropriate.”

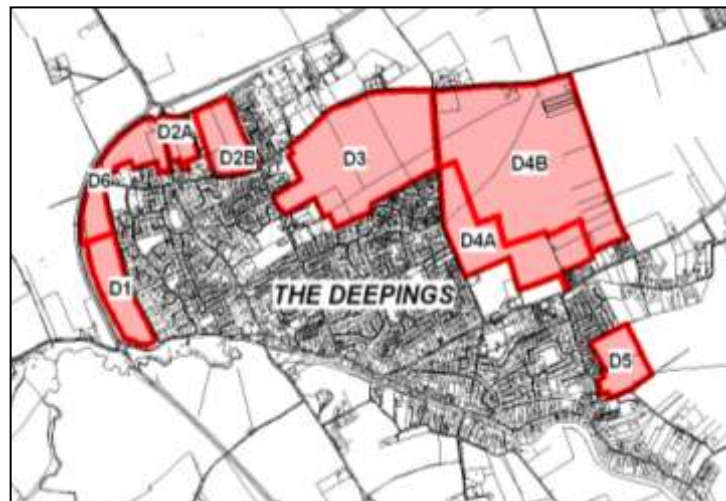
5.1.3 With regard to landscape sensitivity of *The Fens* LCA, the SKLCA states the following:

*“The large-scale of the fen landscape, and the lack of trees and woodlands, creates a very distinctive landscape. The features of value in this landscape include the ditches and watercourses and the wide open views. There is little settlement and few well used roads and lanes. Landscape sensitivity to new employment or residential development would be low to medium and at the edge of the existing settlements. Large-scale development would not, however, be appropriate in the more remote parts of *The Fens*. Any major proposals within this remote and open landscape would be highly visible and would interrupt the openness of the landscape.”*

5.1.4 In line with the proposed project method, fieldwork has been undertaken to ascertain whether localised landscape character shows any variation from the more generic description within the District-wide SKLCA. Any variation in local landscape character is described within the description of each site on the following pages.

5.2 Site Assessment & Analysis of Specified Sites in The Deepings

5.2.1 The following sheets record the assessment and analysis of the six specified sites in The Deepings. The sites have been sub-divided into smaller landscape character units where appropriate and for ease of description and assessment, as follows:



Site D1, ‘West of Millfield Road, Market Deeping’, has not been sub-divided;

Site D2, ‘Northfields, Market Deeping’, is sub-divided into *Site D2A* and *Site D2B*;

Site D3, ‘Godsey Lane/Linchfield Road, Deeping St James’, has not been sub-divided;

Site D4, ‘East of Linchfield Road, Deeping St James’, has been sub-divided into *Site D4A* and *Site D4B*;

Site D5, ‘South of Rycroft Avenue, Deeping St James’, is not sub-divided; and

Site D6, ‘East of A15, Market Deeping’, has not been sub-divided.

Site Assessment and Analysis – The Deepings

Site Number: D1

Site Name: West of Millfield Road, Market Deeping

D1

Site Location

Site D1 lies immediately to the west of the current built extent of Market Deeping. It occupies the area between the quiet lane Millfield Road on the town's western boundary, the A15 dual carriageway bypass to the west, Stamford Road to its south and an open field to its north (*Site D6*). The site takes a roughly rectangular form running in a north south direction. It is level across its entirety, and the low topography continues beyond its northern boundary across the adjacent field. The site is generally well defined and partially enclosed on three sides by mature and maturing hedgerows and broad-leafed trees. To the western boundary the screening is enhanced by a screen bund approximately 3 metres high- a component of the by-pass's landscaping, which runs the full length of the site and beyond into the adjacent *Site D6*.



View A showing the south of the site well enclosed on three sides.

Landscape and Settlement Character and Sensitivity (See Figures 7 & 8)

The site lies within *The Fens* Landscape Character Area as defined by the South Kesteven LCA. It consists of two medium sized and level fields given over to pasture. It is used as the location for the annual agricultural show and occasional grazing. A shallow ditch and central hedge in poor condition bisects the site running from Millfield Road to the bypass. The site is separated from the built extent of Market Deeping by Millfield Lane. The lane is well treed to its southern part, affording a secluded rural character with large detached dwellings set back to the east of the road which are well screened from within the site. The northern part of Millfield Lane gradually becomes less and less vegetated until there is little defining boundary feature to the site. Modern housing development lies to the north-eastern side of the northern parts of the site affording vistas in between the two areas.



View B across the northern field towards the bypass screened by a bund and vegetation. The northern site boundary (to the right) is unenclosed.

The southern and south-western boundaries benefit from well established hedges, trees and structural landscaping component of the bypass development and along the short stretch of Stamford Road. These afford a strong sense of enclosure within the southern two thirds of the overall site when combined with the mature trees along Millfield Road's southern parts. The enclosure and screening from outside the site is further strengthened by the screen bund component of the bypass which extends northwards to beyond the site's northerly extent. The northern part of the site is considerably less enclosed by boundary features, and there is minimal definition between its northern limit and the adjacent pasture.



View C showing mature vegetation alongside Stamford Road (left) and the structural planting and screen bund associated with the bypass along the western site boundary.

Apart from boundary vegetation the site presents unremarkable landscape character and is visually separated from adjacent areas by boundary features and the three surrounding roads. However it does relate much more closely with the continuation of the fields (arable rather than pasture) to the north of the site where boundary definition is weak. Those fields to the north are however also separated from the surrounding countryside by the bypass, and relate more closely to the site itself.

Settlement Form and Pattern

The site closely abuts the western built extent of Market Deeping. Most of the development to the western fringe of the town is mid-to-late 20th century or early 21st century, and as such has little historical significance. The LCA notes that around the settlement landscape and landscape features have had little influence on the growth and form of the 'Deepings'. Millfield Road is a long established byway, but it is only relatively recently that it has become a settlement boundary feature.

The A15 bypass now presents a perceptual outer boundary to the western extent of the town. Whilst there remains a buffer of the pastures (the site) and the northern fields between it and the built limits to the town the road now offers a distinct and containing feature to the town. This delineation is both physical and perceptual, characteristics which are reinforced by the trunk road screen bund and structural planting.

The site's proportion, with a long boundary to the town and a shorter depth to the outer edge would suggest that the development of the site would have a negligible impact upon any landscape setting or historic form of the town.

Visual Considerations (See Figure 8)

Vantage points or public views into or across the sites southern elements are generally limited from outside by its mostly well established boundary hedges and trees. However the site's northern boundaries are, conversely, virtually free from any enclosure and extensive views possible into and across the site from the northern parts of Millfield Road. Views into the site from the A16 are constrained by the bypass's screen bund and structural planting, but it is expected that roofscapes of two and more storied buildings would be partly visible in winter months from the bypass.

The low relief of the site and its wider landscape context means that longer views are limited to northerly vistas. Here, because of the absence of any elevated areas, views are foreshortened by relatively minor landscape features such as farmsteads, hay/straw bales and small stands of trees. The only vista of any local significance is the view out of the site to the steeple of Langtoft church, approximately 2km to the north. The importance of this visual focus to the site is however limited.

A Public Footpath bisects the site from Millfield Road to the bypass. This is linked with an informal network of paths which have become established around the site and its perimeter and appear to be well used, particularly by dog walkers. Development across the site would be highly prominent from the Public Footpath, whilst the informal paths would potentially be lost.

Scope for Mitigation

Reducing visual impact is likely to be most relevant to the north and north-eastern boundaries of the site where existing cover or enclosure is poor or absent. Strengthening of the bypass planting to the north of the site will be appropriate, particularly as this would represent a continuation of the existing linear planting on the western boundary, and would serve to help compensate for the absence of the bund embankment along the northern stretch of road. It may also serve to further reduce inter-visibility and noise nuisance of the road to the site and existing properties.

To retain the rural and relatively tranquil qualities of Millfield Road along its southern parts in particular, development to its west should be set back from the road behind generous gardens, or ensure that planting is supplemented to reinforce the well wooded character of the vicinity.

The public footpath through the centre of the site should be retained, as far as possible within a green corridor helping to maintain its amenity value and act as a green corridor linking the town and open countryside beyond the bypass. Other informal footpaths established around the site are likely to be lost through development. It will be important to seek to integrate local green infrastructure components into any development of the site to off-set such losses and to deliver an environmentally balanced scheme.

The site is used as the venue for the annual Deeping Show, an important rural community event. Development of the site would necessitate an alternative site to be secured, although identification of such a site is not considered by this study.

Sensitivity to Development

Site D1: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- Development would be an appropriate extension of the town with no adverse impact on important aspects of settlement form and pattern.

- Is not important intervening open land between settlements.
- Common-place elements and combination of features present, some of which could not be replaced and which create generally unremarkable character but some sense of place.

Site D1: Visual Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- 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.

Site D1: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21: (see Figure 10).

Site D1: Landscape Value Moderate in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on page 21:

- Presents some public amenity value by way of views, access, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).
- Presents locally distinctive landscape characteristics with some scenic interest.

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity of Site D1

Site D1: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate Landscape Value provide an overall assessment of **Medium Capacity for Site D1** to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (Figure 11).

Due to the scale, character and location of Site D1, modern housing is considered the most appropriate type of development within the site, which should be in keeping with the scale of existing housing to the east. Conventional buildings associated with employment use or similar may be appropriate where the bypass mounding could provide a useful screen, subject to detailed assessment and design. Impact on houses off Millfield Road could be an issue, requiring an appropriate buffer to any employment provision.

Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
D1	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Medium

Site Assessment and Analysis – The Deepings

Site Number: D2

Site Name: Northfields, Market Deeping

D2A
D2B

Site Location

The site lies across the central northern edge of Market Deeping. It is enclosed between Northfield Road along its northern boundary, the mid 20th century housing of Lancaster Way to the east, Towngate East to the south and Peterborough Road to the west.

The site is rather fragmented, with a general rectilinear form subdivided by a number of field boundaries, and most significantly by Spitfire Park, a narrow industrial site which bisects the overall unit along a north south line. The net effect of this split is that the site should be considered in landscape terms as two separate units, *Site D2A* (west) and *Site D2B* (east). The following description and assessment therefore considers the unit as two separate entities.

Landscape and Settlement Character and Sensitivity (See Figures 7 & 8)

Site D2A – Northfields West

The site lies entirely within *The Fens* Landscape Character Area of the South Kesteven LCA. Accordingly it is essentially flat with minimal topographic variation. It lies between the Peterborough Road, Northfield Road and Towngate East, with the small industrial units and compounds at Spitfire Park defining the eastern boundary.

It consists mainly of two medium sized fields running north-south parallel to Peterborough Road, with a smaller area of rough grazing at its north-western corner and a paddock abutting mixed housing and commercial sheds to the southern extent. The site is separated from Peterborough Road by a shallow ditch. The southern boundary is a less clearly defined meeting of the site with a motel, storage yard, private gardens and a small paddock. A maturing area of structural landscaping, an element of the A16 improvement works, partially screens the northern part of the site from the bypass and Northfield Road itself.



View D looking eastwards across Site D2A.

Hedges define the boundaries to the larger eastern field which makes up around two thirds of the site. This field, along with the small north-western and southern parcels of land has a pastoral

character with unimproved grassland providing rough grazing. This character is less typical of the wider landscape where intensive arable land use dominates, including the field abutting Peterborough Road within this site. This softer, more intimate character is further enriched by a number of large mature deciduous trees set within the main central hedgerow and southern boundary, with a smaller number standing in the open meadow in the eastern part of the site. These trees 'in combination' are an important landscape feature, atypical of the northern fringe of the town, and clearly visible from a main route into it, providing a subtle but valuable frame to its northern approach.

Site D2B – Northfields East

The site lies entirely within *The Fens* Landscape Character Area of the South Kesteven LCA. Accordingly it is essentially flat with minimal topographic variation. It lies between the Towngate East along its southern fringe, the Lancaster Way housing estate to the east, Northfields Lane to the north and the light industrial units and compounds of Spitfire Park defining its western boundary.



View E from the north-eastern corner of Site D2B on Northfields Lane towards Spitfire Park.

It essentially consists of 3 fields, which in places are only partially distinguishable because of minimal or absent field boundary features. The larger two fields reach from a northern boundary with Northfield Lane towards Towngate East in the south. A smaller, more pastoral paddock area occupies the south-west corner of the site.

The topography of the site is almost without feature, being extremely level and low lying. Land use is predominantly intensive arable agriculture. Drainage ditches, sometimes with a broken hedge line distinguish most external boundaries. The important northern boundary abutting Northfield Lane is however free from any significant visual enclosure. To the east the site's boundary is defined by gardens to the rear of the mid/late 20th century housing development of Lancaster Way, and the rear of those properties are conspicuous across the site. Similarly there is little effective screening to the shed and compound to the west of the site. Hedges are more prominent and generally act as effective screens and enclosure along Towngate East, the southern boundary. Although occasionally broken, vegetation cover here is thicker and sometimes tall, affording only occasional glimpses into the southern edge of the site and across the Lancaster Way in particular. From the north looking southwards, this enclosure is supplemented by the line of hedge and trees which bound the northern element of the paddock in the south-west section of the site. This gives a partial effect of a greater depth of vegetation in this area when seen from Northfield Road. A somewhat incongruous line of four semi-mature trees stand within the southern central part of the site, possibly part of a now removed hedge line although these make limited contribution to overall character.



View F from the south-western corner of the site across the grass paddock towards Lancaster Way.

The south-western sector of the site is characterised by an area of relatively well enclosed paddock, with associated stables and small agricultural out buildings. The paddock is integral to the wider site but is relatively well defined by its difference in use, character and enclosure. This character is however not highly significant to the wider townscape or its setting.

Settlement Form and Pattern

Site D2A – Northfields West

The site is situated on the northern edge of Market Deeping in an area where the current transition between town and open countryside has become slightly complex because of relatively recent developments of the motel, public house and a series of new build houses which may be based around a former farm complex with some buildings retained. Much of this boundary is partially obscured from public vantage because of the low relief and irregular boundary pattern. The late 20th century public house and motel along with respective car parks present a unremarkable built limit to the town on Peterborough Road, and suggest no long-standing or historic gateway function.

Development of the site would however be contiguous with the existing built limits of Market Deeping along Towngate and Peterborough Road, and importantly would not extend beyond Northfield Road which delineates the northern most parts of the town to the east. It would otherwise represent a perceived extension of the existing built limits into open countryside.

Site D2B – Northfields East

The site is situated on the northern edge of Market Deeping in an area that represents a parcel of agricultural land protruding into an area defined on three sides by development. The built environment in this area of Market Deeping is generally unremarkable. The two roads which define the northern limits of the town, Northfield Road and the close and parallel A15 bypass to its north, present a perceptual and physical northern edge to the town. Consequently, development of it would have little harmful impact upon wider settlement, setting or historic character but it would serve to consolidate the built extent of the town within an area which is currently transitional.

Visual Considerations (See Figure 8)

Site D2A – Northfields West

The low relief of the site and its context limits views out of or into the site. Visual considerations are chiefly associated with relatively close views into the site as no public rights of way cross it.

The site is clearly visible from the important main entry to the town along Peterborough Road which enjoys undeveloped fringes between the motel and the roundabout junction with the A16. Vistas into the site from further away are however limited by built development to the south or the structural landscaping associated with the A15 improvements. There are no significant public vistas towards the site from the west. Views from the east are severely limited by the small industrial site and from the north by roadside planting.

The key consideration therefore is the visual impact development of the site would have from Peterborough Road. Even with a sensitive design scheme which maintains the important mature trees across the site, development would be prominent from the road and its hedges, meadow and 'soft' pastoral character lost. This character, whilst relatively unremarkable in itself, is more important because of its relative rarity around the town, where intensive arable land use is more common. This often gives rise to a more abrupt delineation between urban uses and surrounding countryside. This site has a less clearly defined fringe and helps the junction between countryside and town be less severe.

Site D2B – Northfields East

The low relief of the site and its context limits views out of or into the site. Visual considerations are chiefly associated with relatively close inward views as no public rights of way cross it. Vistas right across the site are possible from the full width of its open northern edge, and limited views back northwards are possible from the south-eastern edge of the site where the hedgerow along Towngate west is in poor condition. Other 'private' views into the site are possible from the rear of properties on Lancaster Way and from Spitfire Park and neighbouring bungalow on the western boundary. Although of only limited and localised value, development of the site in its entirety would serve to take away those views across it.

Vistas from north to south across the site do present a relatively green and soft edge to Towngate West but this can be seen to be off-set by the harsh boundary along Lancaster Way. Development of the site would result in the loss of the established green edge, but conversely allow for a more sensitive design to be provided to the rear of Lancaster Way.

Scope for Mitigation

Site D2A – Northfields West

Development of the site would inevitably lead to the loss of its locally important pastoral and well treed landscape character. Mitigation by way of roadside screening would change the open vista from Peterborough Road and partially 'enclose' that important route into town. Retaining the trees across the site and delivering a high quality of built design, reflecting the historic character and materials of the road south of the Towngate crossroads would help mitigate the impact of the development. Such measures may enhance the built environment of the vicinity, but this could be said of the study sites open to consideration. The essential pastoral character of the site would be lost which would be detrimental to the overall landscape setting and character of the town.

Site D2B – Northfields East

In terms of landscape impact, the low relief across the site limits mitigation measures mainly to locally sensitive building design and boundary treatments, including structural planting. The soft boundary currently found along Towngate West could be replicated to the northern and eastern edges of the site to enhance the layout of the site and improve its landscape fit whilst also reducing layout density when considered alongside the existing development to the east. Opportunities may exist for a green corridor from Towngate West to Northfield Road which provides multiple green infrastructure benefits. The isolated row of semi—mature trees to the south-east of the site should be retained for landscape value.

Sensitivity to Development

Site D2A: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- Distinctive elements and combination of features present that could not be replaced and which make a positive contribution to character and 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.

Site D2A: Visual Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- Important to the setting of the town where development would create unacceptable visual intrusion into the countryside that could not be mitigated.
- 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.

Site D2A: Overall **High Landscape Sensitivity** in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21: (see Figure 10).

Site D2A: Landscape Value **Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on page 21:

- Presents locally distinctive landscape characteristics with some scenic interest.

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity of Site D2A

Site D2A: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate Landscape Value provide an overall assessment of **Low to Medium Capacity for Site D2A** to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (Figure 11).

Sensitivity to Development

Site D2B: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- 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.
- Is not important intervening open land between settlements.
- Development would be an appropriate extension of the town with no adverse impact on important aspects of settlement form and pattern.
- Open space of little or no importance to the appearance, form and character of the built environment.

Site D2B: Visual Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- 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.
- 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.

- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.

Site D2B: Overall Low Landscape Sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21 (see Figure 10).

Site D2B: Landscape Value Low in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on page 21:

- Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value / interest.
- Does not present important public amenity value by way of views, access, sporting facilities, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity of Site D2B

Site D2B: Overall Low Landscape Sensitivity and Low Landscape Value provide an overall assessment of **High Capacity for Site D2B** to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (Figure 11).

Mixed residential and employment development on *Site D2B* would be appropriate, with any employment use located to the north and west and with an appropriate buffer to housing.

Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
D2A	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	High	Moderate	Low to Medium
D2B	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	Low	Low	High

Site Assessment and Analysis – The Deepings

Site Number: D3

Site Name: Godsey Lane, Linchfield Road, Deeping St James

D3

Site Location

A large site located across a block of fields on the central-northern edge of the Deepings. The site is bounded to the west and south by modern century housing and community developments, to the north by an area of industrial and commercial development alongside sporadic farmsteads and sports fields. To the east the site bounds Linchfield Road with extensive open arable farmland beyond.

Landscape and Settlement Character and Sensitivity (See Figures 7 & 8)

The site lies entirely within *The Fens* Landscape Character Area of the South Kesteven LCA. Accordingly, it is essentially flat with virtually no topographic variation. In many respects the site presents minimal landscape interest, but is nevertheless typical of a urban fringe site within the Fens.

It consists of a wide open and level series of arable fields with minimal boundary features subdividing the site. Fields are usually defined by drainage ditches and shallow mounds. The outer edges of the site are generally defined by slightly more substantial ditch systems, whose fringes are left uncultivated.

In some areas, particularly the south-west ‘corner’ of the site hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees remain, helping soften slightly the transition from housing, retail and community facilities to open field. Elsewhere, and particularly along the southern boundary the transition from rural to urban is harsh and abrupt. Here the recent large housing developments accessed from Linchfield Road are prominent from all points to the north and east.



View G looking south-west from the corner of Towngate East and Linchfield Road.

The northern boundary of the site is defined by Towngate East. The northern side of this road is lined with mixed commercial, industrial and community development and uses. The unenclosed nature of the site means that this area is visible from right across the site but is slightly softened by intermittent hedges and trees. It also restricts longer views out of or into the site. Relatively substantial, but as yet immature and ineffective structural planting has been established along the northern boundary of the site.

The eastern boundary to the site, defined by the unenclosed Linchfield Road, allows for extensive views out of the site over similar low lying intensively cultivated farmland, with vistas of varying depth to low horizons.



View H looking south from mid-point on the northern site boundary on Towngate East.

Two footpaths cross the site and take direct routes reflecting the rectilinear field pattern. One stretches from its western boundary between the supermarkets and schools on Godsey Lane to Linchfield Road to the eastern edge, parallel and close to the southern boundary. The other runs north-south from Towngate East to Sorrell Close, part of the recent housing development which bounds the site to the south. Both offer immediate pedestrian only access into open farmland from within the built limits of the town.

Settlement Form and Pattern

The site, whilst open in character is loosely enclosed by existing development on its north, west and southern sides. Relatively recent commercial and business uses to the north of Towngate East means that the road no longer defines the northern most extent of the town. The harsh boundaries resulting from the development of the housing to the south of this site does not present either a historic limit to the town or one which has any strong landscape fit. Rather it is the consequence of earlier housing being developed up to earlier previous rectilinear field boundaries which follow drainage ditches.

Development of this site would therefore have limited impact upon the historic form of the town, or have insignificant implications for its wider setting. At the time of this study there can be seen to be a staggered northern fringe to the Deepings along a west-north-west to east-south-east axis, generally reflecting piecemeal extension of the town through individual housing developments spreading northwards from the historic street pattern along the town's southern edge. Full development of this site may serve to slightly skew that general growth pattern and present a more north-south emphasis. It is however debatable whether such a change in wider settlement form, where low relief means wider landscape fit is difficult to read, is important in landscape terms.

Visual Considerations (See Figure 8)

Views are possible right across the site from points on all public rights of way, including the two footpaths across the site. Any development of the site is likely to detract from the current levels of recreational amenity these offer.

Vistas to the east are most extensive but without particular significance or focus. As with other sites around the Deepings it is the outermost elements of any development which will be prominent in the landscape because of the low relief, and treatments to these will need to be considered carefully in determining detailed design schemes.

Scope for Mitigation

Landscape and settlement form impacts from developing the site are likely to be significant in the immediate vicinity but far less important to the wider landscape character and town setting.



View 1 showing advanced landscape planting on the northern fringe of Site D3.

A development boundary which does not follow the full extent of the proposed site, but instead is staggered from the south-east corner to an approximate mid-point on the northern boundary may present wider 'settlement form' benefits, and allow for a less abrupt interface between the town and open countryside. Design of outer buildings and layout should be delivered which serves to break up the interface between town and country, through combinations of external design, boundary treatments, planting, orientation and layout.

If the public rights of way are lost or significantly compromised by development, compensatory routes across open countryside in the vicinity should be secured in order to maintain or enhance amenity value.

Sensitivity to Development

Site D3: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- 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.
- 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.

Site D3: Visual Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- 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.

- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.

Site D3: Overall Low Landscape Sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21 (see Figure 10).

Site D3: Landscape Value Low to Moderate in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on page 21:

- Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value / interest.
- Presents some public amenity value by way of views, access, sporting facilities, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity of Site D3

Overall Low Landscape Sensitivity and Low to Moderate Landscape Value provide an overall assessment of **High Capacity for Site D3** to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (Figure 11). A Medium to High capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly higher capacity has been allocated to reflect the low intrinsic value of the site, opportunities to mitigate the current settlement boundary to south and western fringes of the site and the juxtaposition of the site with existing development.

This is a large site where mixed residential and employment development would be appropriate, with any light industrial / business use located to the north along Towngate East with an appropriate buffer to housing.

Mitigation of some minor impacts upon settlement form could be achieved through redefining the northern and western boundary so as to reflect the growth of The Deepings over the past half century or so.

Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
D3	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	Low	Low to Moderate	High

Site Assessment and Analysis – The Deepings

Site Number: D4

Site Name: East of Linchfield Road, Deeping St James

D4A
D4B

Site Location

This large site is located to the north-east of the main built extent of The Deepings. Its scale and location gives rise to the likelihood of differing propensities to accommodate development across the area in terms of landscape considerations. The site is therefore separated for the purposes of this study into two parts, **Site D4A** and **Site D4B**.

Site D4A

The site occupies the south-west corner of the larger Site D4, and occupies a ‘corner’ between existing development and playing fields along Spalding Road and newer housing along Linchfield Road. The ‘outer’ boundary to the north-east of the site is presented as a staggered line between the rear of the ribbon of early post-war housing to the northern edge of Spalding Road, and a point adjacent to Linchfield Road close to the existing limit of built development. The precise line delineating D4A from D4B is however open to refinement.



View J looking north-east from Linchfield Road over Site D4A with Site D4B beyond.

Site D4B

Site D4B occupies the northern and eastern outer fringe areas of the ‘full’ site D4. A large, roughly inverted ‘L-shaped’ area located across an extensive block of arable fields with occasional pasture on the north-eastern edge of the Deepings. The site is bounded to the west by the eastern edge of site D3 on Linchfield Road, to the north by the mostly undeveloped lane of Towngate East, to the east by Hall Meadow Road and to the south by locally distinctive but unremarkable open arable fields which extend south towards the mixed urban fringe uses along Spalding Road. To the north and east lies

extensive open countryside beyond Towngate East and Hall Meadow Lane.

Landscape and Settlement Character and Sensitivity (See Figures 7 & 8)

The site lies entirely within *The Fens* Landscape Character Area of the South Kesteven LCA. Accordingly, it is essentially flat with virtually no topographic variation. In many respects the site presents minimal landscape interest, but is nevertheless typical of an urban fringe site within the Fens.

Site D4A

The greater area of the site is of large, wide open arable fields, usually delineated by drainage ditches with shallow mounds, with occasional remnant hedges in poor condition or ditch-side shrubs. The western edge of the site is defined by slightly more substantial drainage ditches up against Linchfield Roads, where fringes are generally left uncultivated. Wide views with little significant landscape variation within them and dominated by 'big skies' are predominant characteristics.

The southern boundary has an urban fringe character where it abuts the rear of mixed development and vacant land along Spalding Road. Parts of this line do benefit from a degree of tree and mature hedgerow delineation – particularly around the school playing fields, which helps soften the junction between town and open countryside. The western boundary is defined by the site's meeting with Linchfield Road, and the abrupt limits of recent housing on its western edge. The north-eastern staggered boundary has no obvious delineating features to follow apart from drainage ditches, and wide open fenland arable fields extend northwards into and across *Site D4B*.

The proximity of *Site D4A* to the existing built limits to The Deepings serves to reduce the sense of exposure and isolation which can be experienced to some extent across *Site D4B*.

Site D4B

The site is virtually free from trees apart from the short eastern boundary to the area of allotment gardens located in the north-east corner, some distance from The Deepings itself. The site also includes a small number of occasional agricultural buildings and the farmstead at Sheepskin Hall. In many respects the area presents minimal landscape interest, but is nevertheless typical of an urban fringe site within the Fens.

Site D4B consists mainly of a mix of wide open and level arable fields with minimal boundary features, and a strip of more pastoral smaller fields fringing the eastern edge of the site adjacent to Hall Meadow Road. These afford a marginally more diverse and intimate character in comparison to the arable fields. This is further emphasised by the slightly anomalous character of the allotment gardens with associated boundary enclosure and internal paraphernalia. A similar small field given over to rough pasture with a hedged boundary in poor condition is located in the north-west corner of the site. Overhead wires are prominent along Towngate East and Linchfield Road, as is Sheepskin Hall Farm as the only significant element of built development across the site. These elements do not however reflect the predominant character of the site. The greater area of the site is of large, wide open arable fields, usually delineated by drainage ditches with shallow mounds, with occasional remnant hedges in poor condition. The outer edges of the site are generally defined by slightly more substantial drainage ditch systems against the surrounding roads, where fringes are generally left uncultivated. Wide views with little significant landscape variation within them, dominated by 'big skies', are predominant characteristics. The site presents a feeling of (relative) remoteness in comparison to those sites located adjacent to The Deepings.



View K showing the pastoral fringe area along Hall Meadow Road looking south-west.

Settlement Form and Pattern

Site D4A

The site has contiguous boundaries with the town to its south and south-west. Consequently, development of the site would be generally well related to the town in terms of settlement form and consequently for access to its services. It would have little relationship with any historic settlement form, but this can be seen to have been severely eroded in recent decades by the expansion of the town away from its generally linear origins. Extension of the built extent of the Deepings across site D4A would therefore serve to continue more recent trends in settlement growth. In doing so it would be important to consider the importance of maintaining rectilinear settlement boundaries along a staggered line between its south-east and north-west limits, reflecting the pattern presented by the network of drainage ditched, the most significant landscape component of the site and the wider landscape setting.



View L looking east from lower parts of Linchfield Road towards Hall Meadow Road, with the urban fringe along Spalding Road behind the vegetation to the right.

Development across the site may therefore be delivered without presenting significant harm or change to wider settlement form. Moreover it may be delivered such that the existing abrupt edge to recent housing to the south-west of Linchfield Road can be mitigated and a softer interface with the open countryside delivered.

Site D4B

The site is poorly related to the current built extent of the Deepings. As delineated by this study the outer elements of the initial D4 site are considerably distant from the existing northern edge of the town, albeit an edge which has 'advanced' generally northwards over recent years. Nevertheless, development extending from the current settlement boundary as far as the eastern fringe of the site and across land adjacent to Towngate East would represent an extension at a strategic scale, serving to significantly alter the scale of the settlement, its built form and consequently its landscape impact.

Visual Considerations (See Figure 8)

Site D4A

The site is open to extensive vistas into it from virtually the whole of Linchfield Road, and from across *Site D4B* from Towngate East, Hall Meadow Road and the public footpaths to the north of *Site D4B*, of which one crosses the northwest corner of this site. Only the hedges and trees of the irregular boundary along Spalding Road afford any screening between it and the town itself. The far south-western boundary of the site abuts the school playing field, and consequently there would remain a significant green space between any development of the site and areas around the junction of Spalding Road and Linchfield Road. The outer edges of built development over the site, whatever their precise extent are likely to have significant local visual prominence, although from middle and far distance those impacts are likely to be significantly lessened.

All views across this type of fenland landscape can however be interrupted by relatively minor features such as remnant hedges or agricultural buildings and consequently those views may be relatively extensive, or equally, significantly foreshortened. Development of the site would be likely to have detrimental impacts upon the amenity value of these paths, particularly as public access into the arable landscape which surrounds the town is generally limited.

Site D4B

The site is open to extensive vistas into it from virtually the whole of Linchfield Road, Towngate East and Hall Meadow Road. Only the hedges and trees of the boundary along Spalding Road afford any screening between it and the town itself (across *Site D4A*). The outer edges of new built development, whatever their extent are likely to have significant local visual prominence, although from middle and far distance those impacts are likely to be significantly lessened by the level topography.

Two public footpaths cross the northern section of the site and afford 360 degree vistas across and out of it, one of which is a continuation of the west-east path across *Site D3*. All views across this type of fenland landscape can however be interrupted by relatively minor features such as remnant hedges or agricultural buildings and consequently those views may be relatively extensive or significantly foreshortened. Development of the site would be likely to have detrimental impacts upon the amenity value of these paths, particularly as public access into the arable landscape which surrounds the town is generally limited around the Deepings.

Scope for Mitigation

Site D4A

Impacts upon landscape and settlement form as a consequence of developing the site are not likely to be significant, although mitigation measures may offer opportunities for improved landscape fit.

The design of buildings on the outer edge of any developed area its layout should be delivered so as to break up the harsh interface between town and country which existing developments have created, through combinations of good external design, boundary treatments, planting, varied

orientation and layout.

A degree of urban-edge vegetation and intermittent tree cover exists along the northern edge of Spalding Road and development across site D4A would benefit from further planting to both reduce the harshness of urban-rural boundaries found elsewhere around the town, and underpin that existing vegetation.

The impact of development on the amenity value of the public footpath which partially crosses the site would be dependent upon precise extent of development. However, measures should be made to ensure access from any new development to the open countryside is maintained and that the amenity value of the right of way is retained, possibly through a slight realignment and access from further north on Linchfield Road.

Site D4B

Landscape and settlement form impacts from developing *Site D4B* are likely to be significant by way of its scale and poor relationship to the existing town. Mitigation measures would therefore be likely to provide only cosmetic benefits. These could however take the form of selective boundary planting, although care should be taken to balance the amount of trees in a landscape where these are generally limited. Delivery of locally distinctive building design, orientation, materials and boundary delineation and treatment will also help integrate the development into the landscape, but would have little significant impact upon its wider prominence.

Sensitivity to Development

Site D4A: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- Development would be an appropriate extension of the town with no adverse impact on important aspects of settlement form and pattern.
- 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.

Site D4A: Visual Sensitivity **Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- Of some importance to the setting of the town but development could be mitigated so that visual intrusion into 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.

Site D4A: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21 (see Figure 10).

Site D4A: Landscape Value Low to Moderate in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on page 21:

- Presents some public amenity value by way of views, access, sporting facilities, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).
- Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value / interest.

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity of Site D4A

Site D4A: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Low to Moderate Landscape Value provide an overall assessment of **Medium to High Capacity for Site D4A** to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (Figure 11). A medium capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly higher capacity has been allocated to reflect its lower landscape value overall higher capacity to accommodate development when compared with Site D1.

Mixed residential and employment development would be appropriate on *Site D4A*, with any light industrial / business use located to the south off Spalding Road in association with ribbon development there, and with an appropriate buffer to housing.

Sensitivity to Development

Site D4B: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- Development would be isolated from the town or would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern.
- 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.

Site D4B: Visual Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- Important to the setting of the town where development would create unacceptable visual intrusion into the countryside that could not be mitigated.
- Development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous and could not be successfully mitigated.
- 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.

Site D4B: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21 (see Figure 10).

Site D4B: Landscape Value Moderate in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on page 21:

- Presents some public amenity value by way of views, access, sporting facilities, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).
- Presents locally distinctive landscape characteristics with some scenic interest.

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity of Site D4B

Site D4B: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate Landscape Value provide an overall assessment of **Low to Medium Capacity for Site D4** to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (Figure 11).

Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
D4A	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium to High
D4B	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	High	Moderate	Low to medium

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Site Assessment and Analysis – The Deepings

Site Number: D5

Site Name: Land South of Rycroft Avenue, Deeping St James

D5

Site Location

The site occupies a relatively compact area lying on the eastern fringe of Deeping St James. It consists of two fields and a smaller area of pasture lying between the late 20th century Rycroft Avenue to the north, Broadgate Lane to the west and Back Lane to the south. To the east the site is open to extensive areas of open arable land.



View M from Rycroft Avenue looking eastwards across Site D5.

Landscape and Settlement Character and Sensitivity (See Figures 7 & 8)

The site lies entirely within *The Fens* Landscape Character Area of the South Kesteven LCA. Accordingly, it is level with virtually no topographic variation. In many respects the site presents minimal landscape interest, but is nevertheless typical of an urban fringe site within the Fens.

The site consists of an area of level and intensively farmed land, semi-enclosed by the existing extent of Deeping St James. Internal landscape features are almost completely absent apart from a small, free-standing agricultural building with concrete apron on its southern fringe and an overhead power line crossing the south-east corner of the site.



View N from Back Lane looking northwards across Site D5.

External boundary features are important to the character of the site as they serve to provide an intermittent softening to the town's edge – although not extensive, despite its immediate proximity. This contrasts to some of the more abrupt boundaries prominent where new housing abuts open farmland around sites D3 and D4. Boundaries to the south of Back Lane, the rear gardens of the properties facing Broadgate Lane and some of the eastern properties of Rycroft Lane consist of established hedges and garden trees, affording a softer but often fragmented green fringe to the site. This characteristic is more pronounced beyond the north-east of the site boundary where the well treed margins of the town help soften the transition between it and the open farmland beyond.

Back Lane which fringes the southern boundary, and separated by only a drainage ditch has a very quiet character with well established hedged outer boundary with frequent hedgerow trees. This reinforces the generally less stark character to the fringes of the site then elsewhere within the study area.

Settlement Form and Pattern

The site is partially enclosed by the irregular eastern fringe of Deeping St James. This would generally allow for development of the site to infill a recess in the settlement boundary without significantly effecting overall settlement form. Settlement form for much of the Deepings is however of little historic or landscape significance.

There is a slightly more mature settlement edge in this area then in many other parts of the Deepings although this mostly dates from only mid to late 20th century. This more intimate character is perhaps emphasised by the relative proximity of the site to the historic core of Deeping St James only a short distance to the west, where street pattern, concentration of older buildings and a mature treescape serve to provide a richer context to it.

The built environment to the immediate site boundary is however unremarkable, consisting mostly of post war housing with little local distinctiveness. Exceptions to this are properties to the south of Back Lane, where deep gardens and paddocks with mature trees stand between it and older housing stock.

Visual Considerations (See Figure 8)

The church spire of The Priory Church of Deeping St James to the west of the site affords an important focal point from within and around the site, although important views of it would be unlikely to be significantly affected by development of the site.



View O from Rycroft Avenue looking south-westwards towards The Priory Church of Deeping St. James.

A network of well used public footpaths, bridleways and informal routes along farm tracks converge

upon, and cross the site, possibly reflecting its proximity to the historic core of the town. These afford immediate access into the open countryside to the east of the town. Development of the site would have a significantly detrimental effect on the western parts of those footpaths and limit the opportunity for short circular walks in open countryside adjacent to the settlement edge.

Vistas out of the town across this site are possible from Rycroft Avenue and from Back lane, and also from a number of rear gardens which fringe the site, particularly off Broadgate Lane. Because of the low relief these localised views across open fenland countryside would be lost. There would however be similar views afforded from the outer limits of any new housing delivered on the site.

Scope for Mitigation

In order to reinforce the more intimate character of the site's vicinity, attention to boundary treatment along Back Lane and the eastern facing site boundary would be important. The character of Back Lane should be maintained, possibly through establishing a well vegetated northern boundary between it and new housing. Building design will be important, particularly to the eastern edge of the site. Development proposals might benefit from housing fronting the open edges of the site rather than rear boundaries creating piecemeal and abrupt settlement limits.

Sensitivity to Development

Site D5: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- Open space of some importance to the setting, appearance, form and character of the built environment.
- Is not important intervening open land between settlements.
- 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.

Site D5: Visual Sensitivity **Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.
- 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.

Site D5: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21 (see Figure 10).

Site D5: Landscape Value Moderate to High in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on page 21:

- Presents locally distinctive landscape characteristics with some scenic interest.
- Presents important public amenity value by way of views, access, sporting facilities, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity of Site D5

Site D5: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate to High Landscape Value provide an overall assessment of **Low to Medium Capacity of Site D5** to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (Figure 11). A medium capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a lower capacity has been allocated to reflect the strengths of the site, such as a modest impact upon settlement form and limited landscape character loss, and the relative importance of the site for informal recreation

and a generally more mature boundary between town and countryside.

Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
D5	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate to High	Low to medium

Site Assessment and Analysis – The Deepings

Site Number: D6

Site Name: East of A15, Market Deeping

D6

Site Location

Site D6 lies on the north-western edge of Market Deeping. *Site D1* and properties off Millfield Road and Towngate West abut the site to the south; the A15 dual carriageway bypass forms the site's northern and western boundaries; and the B1524 Peterborough Road marks the eastern boundary of *Site D6*.

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity (see Figures 7 & 8)

The site lies within *The Fens* Landscape Character Area as defined by the South Kesteven LCA. It predominantly comprises three small to medium sized, flat arable fields. A small triangular area of set-a-side, including mounds of rubble, lies to the west of the Towngate House Farm outbuildings on the narrowest, central part of the site between the Millfield Road / Towngate West junction and the A15 bypass. This is a remnant of a larger field severed by the bypass, its boundary ditches still remaining. A small rectangular grass field is located parallel to the B1524 Peterborough Road.



View P looking westwards into the site from the B1524 Peterborough Road, showing the flat grass field and properties on Lime Tree Avenue.

The site curves around the current built extent of the town to the north-west. It is at its widest and most open at its extreme southern edge where it abuts *Site D1*, the Mill Field showground area (as shown in View Q below). Here post and wire fencing and characteristic open fenland ditches are features of the landscape. Its eastern edge with the B1524 is also relatively wide and generally open, although here tall vegetation alongside the road does provide some enclosure (as shown in View P above). Along its western boundary with the A15 bypass the site is partially enclosed at its southern end by the screen bunding and structural planting associated with the trunk road. There is also an area of mounding parallel with the bypass within the set-a-side field and close to outbuildings associated with Towngate House Farm.



View Q looking northwards from Millfield Road across the open southern boundary of the site, and showing partial enclosure of the western edge by the A15 bypass screen mounding.

Millfield Road and Towngate West are relatively narrow lanes predominantly enclosed by tall vegetation and housing, and high limestone walls around Towngate House Farm. Housing abuts the site east of Millfield Road, and in two cul-de-sacs north of Towngate West, namely modern detached properties in The Paddock and older brick built terraced properties within Lime Tree Avenue. There are proposals for the residential re-development of Corner Farm at the junction of Towngate West and the B1524 which has received permission for alterations and extensions of barns to form 3 dwellings.

Tall mature trees and other dense vegetation around Towngate House Farm and The Paddock break up the site and provide a relatively soft edge to the town in views from the bypass and from further west.

Overall the site has a semi-urban edge character due to its location close to and between the busy trunk road, the Peterborough Road and built development. The Towngate Inn and Motel to the east of Peterborough Road is a further urbanising influence. Landscape character is indistinct and unremarkable.

Settlement Form and Pattern

Site D6 closely abuts the north-western edge of Market Deeping. As mentioned in the description of *Site D1* immediately to the south, most of the development to the western fringe of the town is mid-to-late 20th century or early 21st century, and as such has little historical significance. The LCA notes that around the town landscape and landscape features have had little influence on the growth and form of 'The Deepings'. Millfield Road is a long established byway, but it is only relatively recently that it has become a settlement boundary feature. Built development north of Towngate West is an established feature.

The A15 bypass now presents a perceptual outer boundary to the north-western extent of the town. Whilst there remains a buffer of the pastures to the south (within *Site D1*) and the open fields within *Site D6* between it and the built limits to the town, the trunk road now offers a distinct and containing feature to the town. This delineation is both physical and perceptual, characteristics which are reinforced by its screen bund and structural planting.

Development of the southern part of the site would have a negligible impact upon any landscape setting or historic form of the town. Similarly, development of the northern / eastern part of the site would also have a negligible impact upon any landscape setting or historic form of the town and would follow the pattern of previous development to the north of Towngate West.

Visual Considerations (see Figure 8)

Screen mounding around the bypass and in the set-a-side field, and trunk road hedges and other structural planting limit views into the site from the north and west. The southern boundary with *Site D1* and alongside Millfield Road is open, allowing views across the southern part of the site from nearby housing to the east of Millfield Road, and from the west. There are relatively long distance views northwards, but because of the absence of any elevation views are foreshortened by relatively minor landscape features such as farmsteads, hay/straw bales and small stands of trees. The only vista of any local significance is the view out of the site to the steeple of Langtoft church, approximately 2km to the north. The importance of this visual focus to the site is however limited.

There are some views into the northern / eastern part of the site through the bypass boundary vegetation and from the B1524 Peterborough Road, but views are limited to viewpoints close to the site. Peterborough Road is an important main route into the town which currently enjoys undeveloped fringes off the bypass on both sides, where the soft pastoral character is relatively

scarce amongst the more common intensive arable land use on the edge of the town. Any new development would be prominent from the road.

A public footpath crosses the bypass and continues through the set-a-side field through the middle of the site to Millfield Road, but this appears to be little used.

Scope for Mitigation

Vegetation around Towngate House Farm and The Paddock provides a relatively soft edge to the town, which should be retained if the site is developed. This could be achieved by extending the screen mounding and planting around the bypass. This may also serve to further reduce inter-visibility and noise nuisance of the road to the site and existing properties.

Consideration should be given to planting up the set-a-side area in the centre of the site, to break up the site and thus avoid a continuous built edge alongside the bypass. Retaining the field ditches alongside this small triangular area would help retain the field pattern which existed prior to the construction of the bypass which severed a larger field to the west.

The sensitive re-development of the Towngate House Farm outbuildings for residential use would be appropriate, retaining the characteristic materials and layout of the site (in a similar way to the proposals for the residential re-development of Corner Farm).

Consideration could also be given to retaining an undeveloped pastoral fringe alongside Peterborough Road as a gateway corridor and a transition between town and countryside when leaving the town towards the bypass.

Sensitivity to Development

Site D6: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- Common-place elements and combination of features present, some of which could not be replaced and which create generally unremarkable character but some sense of place.
- Is not important intervening open land between settlements.
- Development would be an appropriate extension of the town with no adverse impact on important aspects of settlement form and pattern.

Site D6: Visual Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- 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 partially open to public or private views where views of the countryside or open space are important.
- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.

Site D6: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21 (see Figure 10).

Landscape Value

Site D6: Landscape Value Moderate in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on page 21:

- Presents locally distinctive landscape characteristics with some scenic interest.

- Presents some public amenity value by way of views and access.

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

Site D6: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate Landscape Value provide an overall assessment of **Medium Capacity of Site D6** to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (Figure 11).

Due to the scale, character and location of *Site D6*, housing is considered the most appropriate type of development within the site, which should be in keeping with the scale of existing housing to the south. The sensitive re-development of the Towngate House Farm outbuildings for residential use would be appropriate, retaining the mature vegetation within the centre of the site. Consideration could be given to creating a green corridor gateway into the town alongside the B1524.

Conventional buildings associated with employment use or similar may be appropriate in the southern part of the site if similar development was permitted on the adjoining *Site D1* and if the bypass mounding was extended to provide a useful screen, subject to detailed assessment and design. Impact on houses off Millfield Road could be an issue, requiring an appropriate buffer to any employment provision.

Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
D6	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Medium

6. Site Assessment & Analysis – Grantham

6.1 Local Landscape Character Context

6.1.1 **Sites G1, G2, G3, G4, G6, G7** and **Site G8** on the northern, eastern and western edges of Grantham lie within the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* Landscape Character Area. Key characteristics 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

6.1.2 Grantham lays at the junction of a range of landscape character areas, with the *Trent and Belvoir Vales LCA* to the north and west, the *Southern Lincolnshire Edge LCA* to the east, the *Kesteven Uplands LCA* to the south and the *Harlaxton Denton Bowl LCA* to the west. The town of Grantham has grown up broadly following the valley of the River Witham, which flows to the north, and on other generally lower lying land at the junction of these character areas. The landscape and the town combine to influence the character of the wider landscape. The urban influences, and agricultural landscape, combine to create a distinct landscape character area with its own characteristics and landscape issues.

6.1.3 The South Kesteven Landscape Character Assessment (SKLCA) describes the physical and human influences, settlement pattern, landscape character and landscape sensitivity within the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* LCA. This description is of direct relevance to the assessment of the sensitivity and capacity of **Sites G1, G2, G3, G4, G6, G7** and **Site G8** (and has some relevance to **Site G5** which lies within another landscape character area as described below) and thus is reproduced here:

“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 lie immediately north of Grantham and the Parkland provides an attractive edge to the town. Free pedestrian access to the park is possible from Grantham, with paying visitors entering through Belton village. 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 surrounding landscape character.

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.

The town of Grantham now includes the once separate village of Manthorpe, which lies to the north. Manthorpe nevertheless retains a distinct character, with a range of stone and brick-built properties extending along the A607.

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 identity 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.

The village of Belton and Belton House lie north of Grantham. Belton House is owned by the National Trust and is a fine example of a neo Caroline Country House. Belton village itself contains some fine stone built houses and cottages, of character consistent with Belton House. The village and immediate surroundings are of a high quality environment where it is important to retain the existing character.

The valley of the River Witham extends into the town from the north, and provides an important green space within the urban area. To the north the valley is farmed. As the valley extends into the town, it includes sports pitches and areas of parkland, with a more intensively managed character.

To the north of Great Gonerby, the land descends towards the Trent and Belvoir Vale. An area of land with an established urban character has developed at Gonerby Moor. This includes large-scale employment and retail development set against the backdrop of rising land. The area includes modern large-scale metal-clad buildings and extensive parking areas.

There is little landscape structure and the area would benefit from a stronger green infrastructure to assimilate the area within the wider landscape.

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."

6.1.4 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.*

6.1.5 The SKLCA acknowledges that because the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* Landscape Character Area is at the junction of a number of other character areas, inevitably the boundaries are not easy to define. **Site G3** on the eastern edge of Grantham directly abuts the *Southern Lincolnshire Edge* Landscape Character Area and shares similar characteristics. Within the SKLCA key characteristics of the *Southern Lincolnshire Edge* LCA of relevance to the specified *Site G3* are:

- *Large-scale open arable landscape*
- *Dominant western scarp slope known as the 'Cliff'*
- *Large rectilinear fields with some fragmented hedgerows and shelterbelts*
- *Sparse settlement pattern on top of the escarpment.*

6.1.6 The following extracts from the SKLCA provide a local landscape character context to the assessment of *Site G3*, in addition to the wider description of the landscape character of the district given in section 2:

“Within South Kesteven the Southern Lincolnshire Edge forms the base of a distinctive spine of limestone that extends north from Grantham, beyond the district, eventually to Whitton on the Humber Estuary. The limestone also extends south, but as a more undulating landscape described as the 'Kesteven Uplands'. The higher ground contrasts with the lower lying vale to the west.

The limestone spine forms a distinctive western scarp slope known as the 'Cliff'. Within South Kesteven this is not so pronounced as it is to the north. The land descends gently to the east from the crest of the Cliff (which is typically at 120-130m AOD), creating an open area of upland, with occasional dry valleys.

The overall character is of a large-scale, open, arable landscape. The west-facing scarp contains some small areas of woodland along the steeper slopes, but it is mostly open. The higher land on top of the escarpment comprises open rectilinear fields under arable cultivation, with some fragmented hedgerows, and few hedgerow trees. There are some shelterbelts. The farmsteads are isolated, with some containing large scale agricultural buildings. Airfields are a characteristic element in the landscape; Barkston Heath remains as an active airfield, but others such as Spitalgate airfield, next to the Prince William Barracks in Grantham are now disused.

Overall the Southern Lincolnshire Edge Character Area is a remote and relatively simple agricultural landscape. The large rectilinear arable fields allow extensive views, limited by distant woodlands or the overlapping of hedgerows. There is a sparse settlement pattern. It is a sparsely populated area. Settlement is mostly concentrated along the western edge of the character area at the boundary with the Trent and Belvoir Vales. These villages include Fulbeck, Caythorpe and Honington.

6.1.7 With regard to landscape sensitivity of the *Southern Lincolnshire Edge* LCA, the SKLCA states the following:

“The Southern Lincolnshire Edge is a large scale relatively open, landscape, with a simple pattern of fields and lanes. Woodland is orientated on the scarp edge to the west of the area and there is little settlement. Airfields provide a human influence. There are few features of intrinsic sensitivity, and few detracting elements. The landscape is mostly rural and remote. Landscape sensitivity to new employment and residential proposals is likely to be medium to high. Whilst the landscape itself contains relatively few sensitive landscape features, the remote and rural character suggests that large-scale new built development would be inappropriate. Large-scale agricultural buildings linked to existing farmsteads would be more easily accommodated if accompanied by an appropriate landscape scheme.”

6.1.8 **Site G5** lies to the west of Grantham, immediately west of the A1, within the *Harlaxton Denton Bowl* Landscape Character Area. It directly abuts the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* LCA immediately to the east. Key characteristics of the *Harlaxton Denton Bowl* LCA of relevance to the specified site are:

- *Varied topography, hills, slopes and valleys*
- *Small to medium-scale landscape*
- *Patchwork of land use including woodlands, arable and pasture land*

- 6.1.9 The following extracts from the SKLCA provide a local landscape character context to the assessment of *Site G5*, in addition to the wider description of the landscape character of the district given in section 2:

“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 115m AOD 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'."

6.1.10 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."

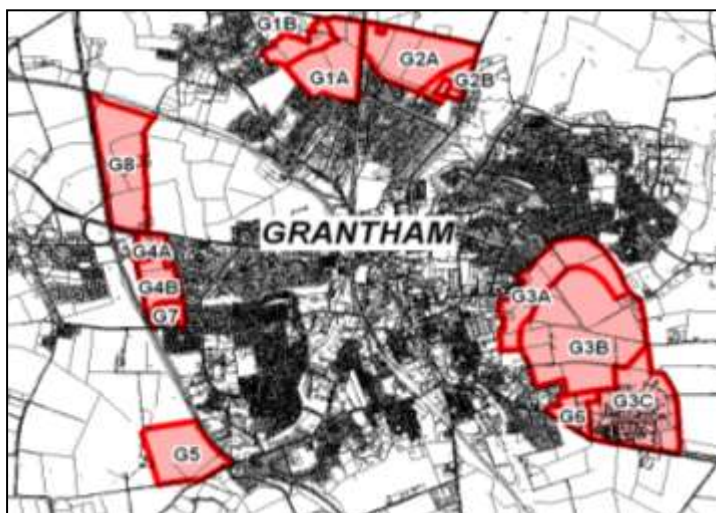
6.1.11 The SKLCA describes the following landscape management objectives for the *Harlaxton Denton Bowl* Landscape Character Area:

- *Protect and enhance ditches watercourses and the Grantham canal.*

6.1.12 In line with the proposed project method, fieldwork has been undertaken to ascertain whether localised landscape character shows any variation from the more generic description within the District-wide SKLCA. Any variation in local landscape character is described within the description of each site on the following pages.

6.2 Site Assessment & Analysis of Specified Sites in Grantham

6.2.1 The following sheets record the assessment and analysis of the eight specified sites in Grantham. The sites have been sub-divided into smaller landscape character units where appropriate and for ease of description and assessment, as follows:



Site G1, 'South of Belton Lane, Great Gonerby', is sub-divided into *Site G1A* and *Site G1B*;

Site G2, 'Manthorpe, Grantham', is sub-divided into *Site G2A* and *Site G2B*;

Site G3, 'Land to the East of Grantham, incorporating Hills & Hollows and TA Barracks', is sub-divided into *Site G3A*, *Site G3B*, and *Site G3C*;

Site G4, 'South of Barrowby Road, Grantham', is sub-divided into *Site G4A* and *Site G4B*;

Site G5, 'Harlaxton Road, Grantham', has not been sub-divided;

Site G6, 'North of A52 Somerby Hill, Grantham', has not been sub-divided;

Site G7, 'North of Dysart Road, Grantham', has not been sub-divided; and

Site G8, 'East of A1, North of A52 including Stubbock Hill, Grantham', has not been sub-divided.

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Site Assessment and Analysis - Grantham

Site Number: G1

Site Name: South of Belton Lane, Great Gonerby

G1A
G1B

Site Location

Site G1 lies on the northern edge of Grantham, between Great Gonerby and the East Coast Main Line. Belton Lane runs along the northern boundary, whilst the southern site boundary adjoins housing development including recently built houses at Gonerby Hill Foot.

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity (see Figures 12 and 13)

For the purposes of this assessment the site has been sub-divided into two; Site G1A covers the majority of the site with Site G1B lying to the west:

Site G1A

Site G1A comprises medium scale arable fields between Belton Lane, the railway line and Gonerby Hill Foot. The most northerly fields lie at around 65m AOD and fall gently to a stream at around 60m AOD. The land then rises steeply to a high point of approximately 100m AOD in the south-western corner, west of Gonerby Hill Foot. The fields are divided by low hedges and a belt of young trees between 6-8m tall. A sinuous line of trees and shrubs follows the course of the stream, and another belt of trees has been planted alongside the railway line, south of the stream. To the north of the stream the railway line is open, with metal railings standing out starkly amongst the countryside.



View A looking to the west from the railway line across Site G1A. Properties at Great Gonerby are seen on high ground (right) and the belt of young planting to the left.

Site G1B

Site G1B lies in the western part of the larger Site G1, and comprises a number of small arable fields divided by dense vegetation. This is a much more intimate, smaller scale landscape than *Site G1A*. Topography is similar to *Site G1A*, rising from around 65m AOD up to the ridge of high ground at approximately 100m AOD where the site abuts the eastern edge of Great Gonerby. The intimacy of the landscape continues between *Site G1B* and Great Gonerby where small, narrow regular grazing fields rise westwards to a similar height.

The character of the landscape is typical of the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* LCA as described above. The entire site was previously designated an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) in accordance with Local Plan Policy EN3 due to the slopes and woodland considered to have a special attraction. The steeply rising slopes in the western half of both sites were also covered by Local Plan Policy EN4 Prominent Areas for Special Protection, which aimed to protect the open character of sites considered important to the setting of the town within a valley landscape where surrounding

hillsides are clearly visible from within the town.



View B looking west across Site G1B. Properties at Great Gonerby are seen on high ground in the centre distance.

Settlement Form and Pattern

Site G1A and *Site G1B* are important to the setting of the town from the north. Recent housing development has extended up the valley slopes at Gonerby Hill Foot, but the open nature of these sites helps separate Gonerby Hill Foot from the village of Great Gonerby, which retains its distinct identity with its own church and community facilities on the higher land to the west. If its separate identity is to be maintained the open nature of *Site G1A* and *Site G1B* needs to remain.



View C showing properties on the slopes at Gonerby Hill Foot (centre left) and Great Gonerby (right), with the open fields of Site G1A inbetween.

Site G1A and *Site G1B* are considered highly sensitive in landscape and settlement character terms. Development would have a negative effect on landscape character, on the setting of the town in the landscape and on settlement form and pattern in maintaining the separate identities of Grantham and Great Gonerby.

Visual Considerations (See Figure 13)

The *Belton House and Park Setting Study and Policy Development*, January 2010, defines the setting of Belton House and the surrounding Grade 1 Registered Historic Park and Garden. Views from Belton Lane on the ridge of high ground east of Great Gonerby, adjacent to the site, which is the main western approach to the parkland from the A1, are considered key views which provide an appreciation of the character of the Park and the wider landscape. The rural character of the approach road itself is considered important to the rural setting of the Park. Views towards the Park from Belton Lane at approximately 2km are considered to be very sensitive to medium sized development (i.e. groups of 50 houses or more large building complexes) that obstructs views into the Park. Areas of higher ground within the setting of the Park, particularly urban fringe areas which includes *Site G1A* and *Site G1B*, are also considered sensitive to development.



View D looking eastwards down Belton Lane across Site G1A and Site G2A towards Belton Park.

Houses on high ground at Gonerby Hill Foot are visible in views from the north, but vegetation along the edge of the development and within *Site G1A*, in particular the belt of young trees aligned east-west down the slope through the site, has some effect at softening the impact of the houses (see View A). No doubt the landowner has strategically located the planting to achieve this effect and which has been successful in slightly reducing the visual sensitivity of the area of *Site G1A* between the young tree belt and existing housing.



View E showing the belt of young trees on the ridgeline to the left and properties on the edge of Great Gonerby to the right.

Housing development on this part of the site would, however, still be visible in views from the A607 on the approach to Manthorpe. The open gap between Great Gonerby and Gonerby Hill Foot is obvious from this location also, and from further beyond, the separate identities of which would be compromised by built development. Housing on the southern edge of Great Gonerby is hidden behind the ridge of high ground along the western edge of *Site G1A* and *Site G1B*.

A public footpath follows the course of the stream through the sites, linking Manthorpe in the east to Great Gonerby to the west via a tunnel beneath the railway, and providing pleasant views of the countryside. There are numerous circular routes around *Site G1A* enjoyed by dog walkers from the nearby residential developments.

Scope for Mitigation

Development on the higher ground which compromised the open nature of the area and the separate identities of Great Gonerby and Grantham could not be mitigated.

If the Council was minded to allocate housing development within *Site G1A* between the young belt

of planting and existing housing at Gonerby Hill Foot, it is likely that no further planting would be necessary as the belt of trees should provide a soft edge as recommended in the SKLCA.

Sensitivity to Development

Site G1A and Site G1B: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- 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.
- Development would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern.

Site G1A and Site G1B: Visual Sensitivity **High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- 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 are very important.
- Development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous and could not be successfully mitigated.

Site G1A and Site G1B: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21 (see Figure 15)

Site G1A and Site G1B: Landscape Value High in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on page 21:

- Lies wholly within a 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.
- Presents important public amenity value by way of views, access, biodiversity interest and opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity of Site G1A and Site G1B

Site G1A and Site G1B: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and High Landscape Value provide an overall assessment of **Low Capacity for Site G1A and Site G1B** to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (see Figure 16).

Development on the steep slopes within *Site G1A* and *Site G1B* would be contrary to the general form and pattern of settlement within Grantham where built development is generally on the lower lying land in the valleys. Key landscape characteristics and features, and visual amenity would be significantly affected which could not be successfully mitigated.

However, the area within *Site G1A* between the young belt of planting and existing housing at Gonerby Hill Foot has slightly lower landscape sensitivity and thus slightly higher capacity to accommodate residential development. Here development would have some association with the town although it would have some effect also on settlement form and pattern. Due to the existing tree belt, visual intrusion into the countryside would be acceptable and although development would be perceptible in views from the north, due to the presence of modern housing at Gonerby

Hill Foot in such views new development is unlikely to alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.

Furthermore, although lying within the setting of Belton House and Park as defined in the *Belton House and Park Setting Study and Policy Development*, development here would lie outside the boundary of sensitive view of the Park from the Belton Lane approach road.

Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
G1A	High	High	High	High	Low
G1B	High	High	High	High	Low

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Site Assessment and Analysis - Grantham

Site Number: G2

Site Name: Manthorpe, Grantham

G2A
G2B

Site Location

Site G2 is located on the northern edge of Grantham, between the East Coast Main Line to the west and the A607 to the east. Belton Lane defines the northern boundary and modern housing development on the most northerly built up edge of Grantham lies to the south.

Site G1 lies beyond the railway line to the west as described above. Beyond the A607 to the east lies Belton House and the Grade 1 Registered Historic Park and Garden. Belton Woods Hotel and Golf Course lies beyond Belton Lane to the north, extending the parkland character in this direction.

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity (see Figures 12 and 13)

For the purposes of this assessment the site has been sub-divided into two; Site G2A covers the majority of the site with Site G2B lying to the east:

Site G2A

Site G2A comprises three medium scale arable fields, separated by low trimmed hedgerows. The western boundary with the railway line is open with metal railings standing out starkly amongst the countryside. Along the eastern boundary a line of mature trees follows the course of a stream. A public footpath, as described above cutting through *Site G1*, runs parallel with the southern site boundary, bounded by a hedgerow at its eastern end near Manthorpe but open as it cuts across the open fields at its western end. A thin belt of land lies between the footpath and housing to the south.

A high point of the site lies west of centre at 68m AOD, falling gradually southwards down to the housing development at approximately 60m AOD and eastwards to the stream at about 50m AOD.



View F westwards from the public footpath across Site G2A, showing houses to the left and the railway in the middle distance.

Site G2B

Site G2B is a smaller, more intimate area of relatively flat grassland lying between the stream and the A607, within the River Witham valley. A hedgerow with trees divides *Site G2B* into two smaller areas; the southern field wraps around Manthorpe Grange, St John's Church and the Vicarage, the latter two lying within the Manthorpe Grantham Conservation Area; and a smaller field to the north where mature roadside trees, ornate railings and metal gates give a parkland character mirroring the

National Trust land around Belton Park on the opposite side of the A607.

An electricity transmission line cuts across the hedgerow which divides *Site G2B* and continues through *Site G2A*.



View G showing the parkland character of the entrance to Manthorpe from the A607.

The character of the landscape is typical of the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* LCA as described above. As with *Site G1* to the west, the entire *Site G2* was previously designated an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) in accordance with Local Plan Policy EN3, although slopes and woodland are less well defined here than further west and east.

Immediately beyond the south-eastern edge of *Site G2B* lies an open area previously protected by Local Plan Policy EN6 Open Areas Important to the Character and Setting of Built-Up Areas. This maintains an open area between Manthorpe and the housing estate along the southern site boundary, but this is not evident other than from close to this area.

Settlement Form and Pattern

Site G2A and *Site G2B* are important to the setting of the town from the north, but the break between town and countryside is less distinctive than at *Site G1* to the west. This is largely because of the lower, flatter topography and the lower lying housing development to the south where boundary vegetation helps to assimilate it into the landscape.



View H looking across Site G2A showing lower lying houses on the southern boundary contrasting with houses on higher ground at Gonerby Hill Foot. Site G2B is beyond the stream-side trees (left).

Site G2A and in particular *Site G2B* provide an important entrance into the town from the north, at

the junction of Belton Lane, the main east – west route from the A1 via Great Gonerby, and the busy north – south A607. The parkland features on the entrance to the conservation village of Manthorpe, described above, provide a particularly attractive entrance (see View G).

Visual Considerations (See Figure 13)

As described above, the *Belton House and Park Setting Study and Policy Development*, January 2010, defines the setting of Belton House and the surrounding Grade 1 Registered Historic Park and Garden. Views from the A607 adjacent to *Site G2B* are considered key views which provide an appreciation of the character of the Park and the wider landscape. The rural character of the approach roads, Belton Lane and the A607, themselves are considered important to the rural setting of the Park. Views towards the Park from both roads adjacent to *Site G2A* and *Site G2B* are considered to be very sensitive to medium sized development (i.e. groups of 50 houses or more large building complexes) that obstructs views into the Park.

Housing on high ground at Gonerby Hill Foot and at Great Gonerby are clearly seen either side of open land separating the two, in views from the Belton Lane / A607 junction across *Site G2A*. This defines the separate identities of the two settlements and provides an attractive view of their setting on the edge of the countryside. Development on the higher ground within *Site G2A* i.e. to the north of the site would prevent such views. However, housing development on the lower lying ground along the southern edge of *Site G2A*, i.e. below the 65m contour, could possibly be designed to avoid closing this important gap.

St John's Church Manthorpe and the church spire at Great Gonerby are features of many views from across *Site G2A* and *Site G2B*.

The public footpath running parallel to the southern site boundary, linking Manthorpe in the east to *Site G1* and Great Gonerby to the west, provides pleasant views of the countryside. It is however slightly elevated with clear views of housing to the south which reduces the visual amenity of the route. The narrow land between the footpath and the housing is well used by dog walkers from the nearby residential developments.

Scope for Mitigation

Development on the higher ground which compromised the open nature of the area and the separate identities of Great Gonerby and Grantham could not be mitigated.

If the Council was minded to allocate housing development in the south of *Site G2A*, it should not breach the 65m contour. Careful design would be necessary to avoid overbearing of any new housing on the existing houses. A 'buffer' area to the east alongside the stream should remain open, and sensitive planting along the northern edge of any new development, for example a belt of trees and shrubs similar to those planted within *Site G1A*, would be necessary to avoid a harsh urban edge and to assimilate any new development into the countryside. This would help avoid significant impact on the setting of Belton Park.

Sensitivity to Development

Site G2A: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- Distinctive elements and combination of features present that could not be replaced and which make a positive contribution to character and sense of place.
- Of some importance to the setting of the town but the break between town and countryside is less distinctive.

- Development would be isolated from the town and would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern.

Site G2A: Visual Sensitivity **High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- 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 are very important.
- Development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous and could not be successfully mitigated.

Site G2A: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21 (see Figure 15)

Site G2A: Landscape Value Moderate to High in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on page 21:

- Lies wholly within a designated landscape but where localised character and scenic value is less distinctive.
- Important to the setting of a registered historic park and garden.
- Presents locally distinctive landscape characteristics with some scenic interest.
- Presents some public amenity value by way of views, access and biodiversity interest.

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity of Site G2A

Site G2A: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate to High Landscape Value provide an overall assessment of **Low to Medium Capacity for Site G2A** to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (see Figure 16). A low capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly higher capacity has been allocated to reflect the less distinctive break between town and countryside and the less distinctive localised AGLV characteristics and scenic value than is evident in *Site G1*.

Sensitivity to Development

Site G2B: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- Distinctive elements and combination of features present that could not be replaced and which make a positive contribution to character and sense of place.
- Of some importance to the setting of the town but the break between town and countryside is less distinctive.
- Development would be isolated from the town and would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern.

Site G2B: Visual Sensitivity **High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- 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 are very important.
- Development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous and could not be successfully mitigated.

Site G2B: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21 (see Figure 15)

Site G2B: Landscape Value High in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on page 21:

- Lies wholly within a 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.
- Presents important public amenity value by way of views.

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity of Site G2B

Site G2B: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and High Landscape Value provide an overall assessment of **Low Capacity for Site G2B** to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (see Figure 16). The slightly lower capacity than Site G2A reflects its more intimate, mature character and presence of locally important features and parkland setting.

Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
G2A	Moderate to High	High	High	Moderate to High	Low to Medium
G2B	Moderate to High	High	High	High	Low

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Site Assessment and Analysis - Grantham

Site Number: G3

Site Name: Land to the East of Grantham, incorporating Hills & Hollows and TA Barracks

G3A

G3B

G3C

Site Location

Site G3 is located on the eastern edge of Grantham. Somerby Hill and the A52 provide the southern site boundary, from where access into the Prince William Barracks is gained. Houses, the cemetery and other built development are located at the bottom of the steep scarp slope known as the 'Cliff' which forms the northern and western site boundaries.

The eastern boundary of *Site G3* follows the eastern edge of the Barracks and the ridge of high ground close to Harrowby Hall and Harrowby Nurseries. Spitalgate Airfield, now disused, lies to the east of the Barracks, where there is a Department for Transport testing station and a number of business within the large hanger-type buildings, well screened by dense plantations and roadside vegetation alongside the A52 / B6403.

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity (see Figures 12 and 13)

For the purposes of this assessment the site has been sub-divided into three distinct areas; Site G3A to the north and west, Site G3B the main central area, and Site G3C land associated with the MOD Barracks:

Site G3A

Site G3A comprises the distinctive, steep western limestone scarp slope, which also wraps around the site to the north. It falls steeply from a height of between 110m - 125mAOD to between 75m – 85m AOD. Land use comprises a number of regular grass / scrubland fields with gappy hedges and occasional woodland and trees inbetween. Apart from Beacon Cottage which lies at the top of the slope, it is otherwise open and unsettled, with a number of dry valleys. A number of public footpaths follow the slope down into the town where built development has continued right up to the foot of the scarp slope.

Landscape sensitivity is low to moderate due to its indistinct character and commonplace landscape elements which could generally be easily replaced. However, the topography is the defining characteristic which provides a strong sense of place and a distinctive feature.



View 1 looking west down the scarp slope.

Site G3B

The overall character of *Site G3B* is of a large-scale, remote, open, flat arable landscape. It comprises open rectilinear fields under arable cultivation, with some fragmented hedgerows, and few hedgerow trees and shelterbelts on the higher land on top of the escarpment. In the centre of Site G3B is an overgrown disused stone pit.

Hall's Hill on the western edge of the site and Harrowby Hall to the east lie at around 130m AOD.

From this height the site falls to the south and west, more gradually than the steep scarp slope of *Site G3A*, to approximately 90m AOD in the south-western corner. A RUPP (Road Used as a Public Path) follows the eastern site boundary and provides access to Harrowby Hall, Harrowby Nurseries and several isolated properties between Turner Road and Harrowby Lane.

There are several public footpath routes across the site which continue down the scarp slope and into the town, providing a well used public amenity. There are a number of masts dotted on the high ground within and beyond the site.



View J looking west from close to the eastern site boundary.

As with *Site G3A*, landscape sensitivity of *Site G3B* is low due to its indistinct character and landscape elements which could be easily replaced. However, it is important to the setting of the town where development would have a negative effect on settlement character, form and pattern.

Site G3C

Site G3C comprises the buildings and associated land at the Prince William Barracks, on high ground on top of the escarpment. The eastern half of the site is relatively flat at between 125m – 130m AOD, falling to the west to around 110m AOD.

Landscape and settlement character of the site is markedly different to the character of *Site G3A* and *Site G3B*. It generally has low to moderate landscape sensitivity, comprising commonplace elements and landscape features which create unremarkable character but some sense of place. It is of little importance to the setting of the town 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.



View K looking southwards into the back of the Prince William Barracks.

Site G3 lies at the junction of the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys LCA* and the *Southern Lincolnshire Edge LCA*, with characteristics typical of each as described above. The entire site was previously designated an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) in accordance with Local Plan Policy EN3 due to the slopes and woodland considered to have a special attraction. The sloping topography of *Site G3A* is very distinctive, but AGLV characteristics are less well defined within *Site G3B* and *Site G3C*.

The steep scarp slopes of *Site G3A* were also covered by Local Plan Policy EN4 Prominent Areas for Special Protection, which aimed to protect the open character of sites considered important to the setting of the town within a valley landscape where surrounding hillsides are clearly visible from within the town.

Settlement Form and Pattern

The entire *Site G3* lies beyond recognised boundaries to built development. The topography of the *Southern Lincolnshire Edge LCA*, and in particular the western scarp slope, has prevented expansion of the town eastwards. Built development occurs at the foot of the scarp slope on ground lying up to 85m AOD. Housing has encroached up Somerby Hill to around 95m AOD

The *Southern Lincolnshire Edge LCA* is typically sparsely populated. Isolated buildings such as Beacon Cottage are typical, with settlement being concentrated in villages at the edge of the LCA.

Expansion of the town eastwards within *Site G3B* would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern if it was (or was perceived to be) connected with the town. If the Barracks was to close, re-development of *Site G3C* should respect the separate identity of Grantham by preventing encroachment down Somerby Hill and ensuring that a gap between them remains. This would be in keeping with the character of the *Southern Lincolnshire Edge LCA* where small villages are separated from Grantham town by narrow areas of open countryside.

Visual Considerations (See Figure 13)

Site G3A and the western edge of *Site G3B* are visually prominent in many views from within Grantham. The scarp slope is also evident from some distance to the north and west, for example see View D showing the slope and most visible from the top of Belton Lane on the eastern edge of Great Gonerby.

As described previously, the *Belton House and Park Setting Study and Policy Development*, January 2010, defines the setting of Belton House and the surrounding Grade 1 Registered Historic Park and Garden. Views from the roof of Belton House are considered the most significant views forming the setting of the Park, with backgrounds to the views, visible beyond the Park boundary, including the hills and ridges of *Site G3A* and *Site G3B*, forming the most significant elements of the setting. Raised areas within the setting of the House and Park would be “exceptionally sensitive” to medium sized development (i.e. groups of 50 houses or more large building complexes). Avoiding development on this high ground provides a rural, enclosed setting to the town. Any new development here would be conspicuous and could not be successfully mitigated.

The numerous public rights of way provide important panoramic views across the town towards high ground including Great Gonerby and Stubbock Hill.



View L from Hall's Hill across the town to Great Gonerby (right of centre) and Stubbock Hill (left of centre).

The Barracks *Site G3C* is not visible from within the town, lying beyond the Somerby Hill ridge. It is seen in close views from the A52 as a self contained site, with its own separate identity.

Scope for Mitigation

Development within *Site G3A* and *Site G3B* could not be successfully mitigated. Re-development of *Site G3C* should respect the separate identity of Grantham by preventing encroachment down Somerby Hill and ensuring that an undeveloped gap remains between the town and the Barracks site.

Sensitivity to Development

Site G3A: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- 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.
- Important to the setting of the town by providing a distinctive break between town and countryside.
- Development would be isolated from the town or would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern.

Site G3A: Visual Sensitivity **High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- 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 are very important.
- Development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous and could not be successfully mitigated.

Site G3A: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21 (see Figure 15)

Site G3A: Landscape Value High in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on page 21:

- Lies wholly within a 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.
- Presents important public amenity value by way of views, access, biodiversity interest and opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity of Site G3A

Site G3A: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and High Landscape Value provide an overall assessment of **Low Capacity for Site G3A** to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (see Figure 16).

Development on the steep slopes within *Site G3A* would be contrary to the general form and pattern of settlement within Grantham where built development is generally on the lower lying land in the valleys. Visual amenity would be significantly affected which could not be successfully mitigated.

Sensitivity to Development

Site G3B: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- 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.
- Important to the setting of the town by providing a distinctive break between town and countryside.
- Development would be isolated from the town or would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern.

Site G3B: Visual Sensitivity **High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- 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 are very important.
- Development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous and could not be successfully mitigated.

Site G3B: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21 (see Figure 15)

Site G3B: Landscape Value Moderate to High in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on

page 21:

- Lies wholly within a designated landscape but where localised character and scenic value is less distinctive.
- Important to the setting of a registered historic park and garden.
- Presents locally distinctive landscape characteristics with some scenic interest.
- Presents important public amenity value by way of views, access, biodiversity interest and opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity of *Site G3B*

Site G3B: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate to High Landscape Value provide an overall assessment of **Low to Medium Capacity for Site G3A** to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (see Figure 16). A low capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly higher capacity has been allocated to reflect the less distinctive landscape character and localised AGLV characteristics than is evident in *Site G3A*.

Sensitivity to Development

Site G3C: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- 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.
- Of little or no importance to the setting of the town.
- Development would have no adverse impact on important aspects of settlement form and pattern.

Site G3C: Visual Sensitivity **Low** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- 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.

Site G3C: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21 (see Figure 15)

Site G3C: Landscape Value Low to Moderate in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on page 21:

- Lies wholly within a designated landscape but where localised character and scenic value is less distinctive or has become degraded.
- Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value / interest.
- Does not present important public amenity value by way of views, access, sporting facilities, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity of *Site G3C*

Site G3C: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Low to Moderate Landscape Value provide an overall assessment of **Medium to High Capacity for Site G3C** to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (see Figure 16). A medium

capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly higher capacity has been allocated to reflect the less distinctive landscape character, less distinctive localised AGLV characteristics and low scenic and public amenity value.

Site G3C is a large site isolated from the town, where mixed use development comprising residential, employment and other uses could be appropriate if the decision was taken to create an area with its own separate identity. This would need to be the subject of detailed impact assessment and design proposals.

Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
G3A	Moderate to High	High	High	High	Low
G3B	Moderate to High	High	High	Moderate to High	Low to Medium
G3C	Low to Moderate	Low	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium to High

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Site Assessment and Analysis - Grantham

Site Number: G4

Site Name: South of Barrowby Road, Grantham

G4A
G4B

Site Location

Site G4 is an area of land alongside the A1 at its junction with the A52, on the western edge of Grantham. The A52 forms the northern site boundary. A RUPP (Road Used as a Public Path) locally known as Sheep Wash Lane forms the western boundary, with a narrow area of open scrubland lying between the RUPP and the A1. Modern housing off Gloucester Road and Barrowby Gate lies to the east. The southern boundary is defined by a minor stream, with a grass field beyond which wraps around a single row of ribbon development housing along Low Road, a minor road running between Grantham and Barrowby over the A1.

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity (see Figures 12 and 13)

The site lies between the A1 and residential development, which gives it an urban-edge character. Trunk road traffic and vehicles on the slip road at the junction with the A52, which is on embankment adjacent to the site, and a Council depot within the junction, are urban influences which reinforce this character. The settlement of Barrowby lies on raised ground approximately 300m to the west, beyond the A1 and an electricity transmission line and pylons, which also provide an enclosing and urban setting to the site. For the purposes of this assessment the site has been sub-divided into two areas; *Site G4A* to the north and *Site G4B* to the south.

Site G4A

The northern part of Site G4 is a small scale, intimate landscape comprising three small grass fields bounded by hedgerows and trees, well vegetated gardens of two properties along the A52, a narrow belt of young trees and shrubs and a small unused area of scrubland alongside the A1 junction. Modern brick buildings at the Fairview Nursing Home occupy an area of the site along the eastern boundary, relatively well screened by boundary vegetation.

Sheep Wash Lane is slightly sunken but generally unenclosed adjacent to Site G4A, providing an open aspect across the site.

The north-eastern corner of the site is the highest point at around 95m AOD at the A52. *Site G4A* falls gently to the south-west to approximately 80m AOD at Sheep Wash Lane.

Site G4B

The southern part of Site G4 comprises three small to medium sized grass fields with low hedged boundaries with occasional trees running east-west across the site. A minor stream runs from the north-west corner at around 80m AOD down to the south-east corner at 75m AOD, its sinuous course emphasised by occasional tall vegetation. Here it joins the minor stream along the southern site boundary. The south-western corner of the site also lies at around 80m AOD.

The rear gardens of two properties off Durham Close are excluded from the site along its eastern boundary. Sheep Wash Lane is bounded by tall vegetation adjacent to Site G4B, and there is a small area of scrubland and evidence of tipping next to the lane.

The overall impression is of a relatively pleasant area of open grassland, with hedgerows, occasional trees and other scrubby vegetation, lying on gently falling ground between residential development and major trunk roads. The entire site was previously designated an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) in accordance with Local Plan Policy EN3, where slopes and woodland were considered to

have a special attraction. These characteristics are indistinct across the site.

Settlement Form and Pattern

Site G4 lies within the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* LCA. The SKLCA mentions areas of open land to the west of the town, but suggests that 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.

Development within the site would have a clear association with settlement form and pattern. It would represent a continuation of the expansion of the town on lower lying ground to the west, avoiding more elevated land to the north, to the A1 which has become a clear boundary to development along the western side of Grantham.



View M, with Sheep Wash Lane to the left, traffic on the A1/A52 slip road, vegetation and grassland within Site G4A and one of the slightly larger grass fields in Site G4B to the right.



View N, a wider-angled view of Site G4B.

Visual Considerations (See Figure 13)

Views into and out of the site are generally contained by surrounding built development to the east and vegetation elsewhere. The A1 is predominantly in cutting opposite the site, with well vegetated cutting sides. More open views are available from Barrowby and the section of A1 adjacent to the site to the west where the site boundary is open. Here the site is seen as an open area on the edge of Grantham, with houses to the east clearly visible.

The entire site was previously protected by Local Plan Policy EN5 Prevention of Coalescence, to retain the separate identities of Grantham and Barrowby to the west. Barrowby is some 300m to the west, on raised ground, with open fields between the settlement and the A1. There is also an area of open land between the A1 and Sheep Wash Lane. It is therefore considered that development of the site would not compromise the separation of Grantham and Barrowby which would still retain their separate identities.



View O with Sheep Wash Lane to the left, Barrowby on raised ground beyond the A1, and open land between.

Scope for Mitigation

Successful mitigation would be by way of good design and layout of development on the site, rather than attempting to assimilate the site into the landscape which is more important for sites backing on to open countryside. Here the A1 provides a distinctive boundary feature, although retention of open land between the site and the A1 is important for the reasons given above.

Protecting gaps between Grantham and adjacent villages is a key management objective within the SKLCA. Protecting and enhancing watercourses is also a key management objective, thus good development design should consider impact on the stream running through the site.

Sensitivity to Development

Site G4A and Site G4B: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- 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 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.

Site G4A and Site G4B: Visual Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- 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 open to views in which the countryside or open space is of less importance.
- Development would be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.

Site G4A and Site G4B: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21 (see Figure 15)

Site G4A and Site G4B: Landscape Value Low to Moderate in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on page 21:

- Lies wholly within a designated landscape but where localised character and scenic value is less distinctive or has become degraded.
- Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value / interest.
- Does not present important public amenity value by way of views, access, sporting facilities, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity of Site G4A and Site G4B

Site G4A and Site G4B: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Low to Moderate Landscape Value provide an overall assessment of **Medium to High Capacity for Site G4A and Site G4B** to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (see Figure 16). A medium capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly higher capacity has been allocated to reflect the less distinctive landscape character, less distinctive localised AGLV characteristics and low scenic and public amenity value.

Modern housing is considered the most appropriate type of development within *Site G4A* and *Site G4B*, which would be in keeping with existing housing to the east. Conventional larger scale buildings associated with employment uses or similar, but not tall structures may also be appropriate where there would be some association with the A1, subject to detailed assessment and design. Mitigation should provide a soft planted varied settlement edge as recommended in the SKLCA. There should be an appropriate buffer between employment development and housing.

Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
G4A	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium to High
G4B	Low to Moderate	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium to High

Site Assessment and Analysis - Grantham

Site Number: G5

Site Name: Harlaxton Road, Grantham

G5

Site Location

Site G5 is located to the west of the A1, immediately to the north of the A607 which forms the southern site boundary with the Grantham Canal. There are no definite boundaries of the site to the north and west; the northern boundary cuts across an arable field to the south of a small copse, from where the western site boundary runs southwards to the canal, passing immediately to the east of Harlaxton Lower Lodge.

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity (see Figures 12 and 13)

Site G5 lies within the *Harlaxton Denton Bowl* Landscape Character Area as defined in the SKLCA. It directly abuts the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* LCA immediately to the east, here comprising the A1 on embankment, the A1 / A607 junction and an industrial estate within Grantham to the east of the A1.

Site G5 lies within a wider landscape exhibiting characteristic features of the LCA including small to medium scale arable and pasture fields amongst a patchwork of land use including woodlands. Topography of the site is less varied than is typical throughout the LCA, being relatively flat at approximately 70m AOD though falling gradually from north to south. The site lies within a valley or bowl of relatively low ground including Haraxton and Denton to the south, with a broad scarp of high land between 120m and 140m AOD extending east-west further to the south. The land then rises again to the north.

The bowl of lower ground between the canal, Barrowby (including *Site G5*) and the ridge of high ground to the west at Casthorpe Hills was previously excluded from the Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) designation in Local Plan Policy EN3, where slopes and woodland were considered to have a special attraction.

Traffic on the busy A1 and the adjacent industrial estate to the east, a Premier Inn and housing on rising ground to the south, and nearby electricity transmission lines and pylons, including a route running through the eastern edge of the site, are urbanising influences.

The Grantham Canal cuts through the south-eastern corner of the site, leaving a small triangular grass and scrub field isolated between the canal and the A607. Drainage ditches and culvert pipes are located within the field, where an electricity pylon is the dominant feature. Here at its eastern end the canal is un-navigable and open. Tall dense roadside vegetation screens the A607 but the Premier Inn and houses on high ground to the east overlook this part of the site.



View P looking from the Grantham Canal across the south-eastern corner of Site G5.

Despite the urban edge location, the character of the remaining part of *Site G5*, north of the canal, is strongly rural, with high scenic value. Where the canal is open, there are clear views across flat arable fields punctuated by isolated copses, with no major roads and a nucleated settlement pattern. Further to the west through the site the canal is enclosed by dense vegetation where the surrounding fields are raised up.

Settlement Form and Pattern

The A1 is generally the limit of built development within Grantham to the west. However, south of the A1 / A607 junction housing rises up the slope along Wyville Road and is located on the ridge of high ground alongside Gorse Lane. The Premier Inn has recently been built within the junction, west of the A1.

Despite this, development within *Site G5* would lie to the west of the A1 and north of the A607 which are clear and important boundary features predominantly defining settlement extent.

Visual Considerations (See Figure 13)

The site is visible in distant views across farmland from the north and west, from the edge of Barrowby, from Low Road and the minor road linking Barrowby with Harlaxton, from isolated farms including Barrowby Lodge, North Lodge and Lower Lodge Cottages, and from several public rights of way which cross the land. Here the site is seen as part of the rural landscape, against the well vegetated embankment sides of the A1 and the canal, with buildings on the industrial estate, the Premier Inn and houses on high ground lying beyond.



View Q looking into Site G5 from the north, with the western edge of Grantham beyond.

There are also distant views into the site from the high ground in the south. In elevated views from Wyville Road the site is seen as open agricultural land amongst hedgerows and copses, clearly beyond the western extent of Grantham defined by the A1 (see View Q).

There are views down into the site from the A1 as it passes on embankment to the east, through the vegetation on the embankment slopes. Beyond the site boundaries views from the A1 are limited.

The closest views into the site are from the canal towpath where it is open at its eastern end through the site. This also serves as National Cycle Route 15, part of the National Cycle Network connecting Castle Donington with National Route 1 in Lincolnshire near Tattersall via Nottingham, Grantham and Sleaford.



View R looking down from Wyville Road where Site G5 (the brown field in front of the copse) is seen against the A1 and industrial estate along the western edge of Grantham.

Scope for Mitigation

The scale of the landscape, its open character and range of landscape elements would make it difficult to assimilate development into the landscape. The SKLCA suggests that landscape sensitivity of the *Harlaxton Denton Bowl* LCA to new employment and residential development is likely to be high, however, the eastern edge of the LCA adjacent to Grantham and the A1 may provide some opportunities for new development if associated landscape planting is used to soften the existing urban edge.

Local landscape character assessment of Site G5 in this study suggests that the existing urban edge is already relatively well assimilated into the landscape. Any new development would be difficult to mitigate and would result in a harsh urban edge with significant effect on the LCA and settlement form and pattern.

Sensitivity to Development

Site G5: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- Distinctive elements and combination of features present that could not be replaced and which make a positive contribution to character and sense of place.

- 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.

Site G5: Visual Sensitivity **High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- 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.

Site G5: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21 (see Figure 12)

Site G5: Landscape Value Moderate to High in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on page 21:

- Lies adjacent to a designated landscape.
- Presents locally important landscape characteristics and scenic value.
- Presents important public amenity value by way of views, access and opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity of Site G5

Site G5: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate to High Landscape Value provide an overall assessment of **Low Capacity for Site G5** to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (see Figure 13). A low to medium capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly lower capacity has been allocated to reflect the overall high landscape, scenic and public amenity value of the site.

Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
G5	High	High	High	Moderate to High	Low

Site Assessment and Analysis - Grantham

Site Number: G6

Site Name: North of A52 Somerby Hill, Grantham

G6

Site Location

This is a relatively small site on the eastern edge of Grantham, north of the A52 at Somerby Hill, lying between existing housing and the Prince William Barracks (*Site G3C* described above). The open sloping arable fields of *Site G3B* lie to the north, with open arable fields to the south also.

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity (see Figures 12 & 13)

The western half of the site comprises two small to medium scale arable fields separated and bounded by low hedgerows and few trees. The eastern half is 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. This assessment only refers to the sensitivity and capacity of the undeveloped western half of the site.

Topography of the site falls relatively steeply from a ridgeline at approximately 100m AOD at the eastern boundary down to around 80m AOD where the site 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 site 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 site as described above, but it is not wooded.



View S from Somerby Hill looking across the western part of the site towards Site G3B in the distance. Properties immediately to the west of the site (centre-left of the photograph) are largely hidden by the dip.

The distinctive topography is one of the most important physical influences on the character of the town, and thus the sloping site and the open sloping fields to the south represent a natural feature important to its setting. There are urbanising influences, predominantly the busy A52, footpath, lamp columns and telephone poles and lines associated with the road.

Settlement Form and Pattern

The site lies beyond the recognised boundary to built development, although some housing has encroached up the hill to the east of the town, beyond the River Witham valley. The low density

detached properties on Eastwood Drive / Hillside Drive west and north-west of the site lie at between 95m – 100m AOD. Development on *Site G6* would extend this form and pattern of settlement further up the valley side.

As discussed in the assessment of *Site G3B* and *Site G3C* above, expansion of the town eastwards within *Site G6* would close the gap between the town and the Barracks, compromising their separate identities.



View T showing the open nature of the western part of Site G6 beyond properties on Hillside Drive. The developed eastern part of the site and the Barracks lie beyond the ridgeline and conifers.

Visual Considerations (see Figure 13)

The site is seen as a prominent open area when leaving the town from the west, providing a distinctive break between town and countryside.

There is no public access across the site. There are views into the site, however, from high ground along Cold Harbour Lane within *Site G3B* to the north and from many locations within Eastwood Drive / Hillside Drive to the north-west of the site.

Scope for Mitigation

It is considered that *Site G6* is important to the setting of the town where development would be visually intrusive and uncharacteristically conspicuous, and which could not be successfully mitigated.

Sensitivity to Development

Site G6: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Moderate to High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- 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.
- Important intervening open land between settlements (the Barracks).
- Important to the setting of the town by providing a distinctive break between town and countryside.
- Development would be isolated from the town or would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern.

Site G6: Visual Sensitivity **High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- 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 are very important.
- Development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous and could not be successfully mitigated.

Site G6: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21 (see Figure 15).

Landscape Value

Site G6: Moderate Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on page 21:

- Lies wholly within a 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

Site G6: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and Moderate Landscape Value provide an overall assessment of **Low to Medium Capacity for Site G6** to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (see Figure 16).

Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
G6	Moderate to High	High	High	Moderate	Low to Medium

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Site Assessment and Analysis - Grantham

Site Number: G7

Site Name: North of Dysart Road, Grantham

G7

Site Location

Site G7 is a small area of land to the east of the A1 and north of Dysart Road, a major east – west route into the town over the trunk road. A RUPP (Road Used as a Public Path) locally known as Sheep Wash Lane forms the short western site boundary alongside the A1. The northern boundary is defined by a minor stream on the boundary with *Site G4*. To the east housing on Valley Road abuts the site, as does housing alongside Dysart Road to the south.

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity (see Figures 12 & 13)

The site comprises two small grass fields separated by a belt of low scrubland with occasional trees. Generally flat and low lying, *Site G7* falls gradually from a high point of approximately 83m AOD in the south-western corner to around 75m AOD at the stream.



View U from Sheep Wash Lane looking across the south-western corner of the site with Site G4B in the middle distance and Site G4A beyond.

The site is similar in character to *Site G4B* which adjoins it in the north. Its location between the A1 and housing to the east and south give it an urban-edge character. The small watercourse follows a sinuous route along the northern boundary, emphasised by occasional tall vegetation, and tall scrubby vegetation alongside Sheep Wash Lane and alongside the A1 also provides some relief from the urban influences.

As with *Site G4B*, the overall impression of *Site G7* is of a relatively pleasant area of open grassland, with scrubby vegetation and occasional trees along the field boundaries, and lying on gently falling ground between residential development and a major trunk road. The site together with *Site G4A* and *Site G4B* to the north was previously designated an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) in

accordance with Local Plan Policy EN3, where slopes and woodland were considered to have a special attraction. These characteristics are however indistinct across the site.

Settlement Form and Pattern

Site G7 lies on the edge of the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys LCA* (the A1 defines the western boundary of the LCA). The SKLCA mentions areas of open land to the west of the town, but suggests that 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.

Development within the site would have a clear association with settlement form and pattern. It would represent a continuation of the expansion of the town on lower lying ground to the west, avoiding more elevated land to the north, and to the A1 which has become a clear boundary to development along much of the western side of Grantham.

Visual Considerations (see Figure 13)

There are limited but clear views into the site from houses immediately to the east and south, primarily from first floor windows, although this surrounding built development does screen more distant views into and out of the site. The well vegetated slopes of the A1, which is in cutting opposite the site, limit views into the site from the west. From the north views are limited from the A1 / A52 junction slip road and from parts of Sheep Wash Lane, where the low-lying site is barely perceptible and is overshadowed by tall warehouse structures and overhead pylons further south.



View V looking south across Site G4B with Site G7 seen in front of housing off Barrowby Gate and Dysart Road.

The entire site was previously protected by Local Plan Policy EN5 Prevention of Coalescence, to retain the separate identities of Grantham and Barrowby to the west. Barrowby is some 350m to the west, on raised ground, with open fields between the settlement and the A1. There is also an area of open land between the A1 and Sheep Wash Lane just to the north of *Site G7*. It is therefore considered that development of the site would not compromise the separation of Grantham and

Barrowby which would still retain their separate identities.

Scope for Mitigation

Successful mitigation would be by way of good design and layout of development on the site, rather than attempting to assimilate the site into the landscape which is more important for sites backing on to open countryside. Here the A1 provides a distinctive boundary feature.

Protecting gaps between Grantham and adjacent villages is a key management objective within the SKLCA. Protecting and enhancing watercourses is also a key management objective, thus good development design should consider impact on the stream running along the northern boundary of the site.

Sensitivity to Development

Site G7: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- 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 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.

Site G7: Visual Sensitivity **Low to Moderate** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- 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 open to views in which the countryside or open space is of less importance.
- Development would be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view.

Site G7: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21 (see Figure 15).

Landscape Value

Site G7: Landscape Value Low to Moderate in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on page 21:

- Lies wholly within a designated landscape but where localised character and scenic value is less distinctive or has become degraded.
- Does not present locally important / distinctive landscape characteristics or scenic value / interest.
- Does not present important public amenity value by way of views, access, sporting facilities, biodiversity interest or opportunity for quiet enjoyment (relative tranquillity).

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

Site G7: Overall Moderate Landscape Sensitivity and Low to Moderate Landscape Value provide an overall assessment of **Medium to High Capacity for Site G7** to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (see Figure 16). A medium capacity would also be a possible result of using the matrix, but on balance a slightly higher capacity has been allocated to reflect the less distinctive landscape character, less distinctive localised AGLV characteristics and low scenic and public amenity value. This assessment is consistent with the landscape sensitivity and capacity assessments of *Site G4A* and *Site G4B* immediately to the north.

Modern housing is considered the most appropriate type of development within *Site G4A* and *Site G4B*, which would be in keeping with existing housing to the east. Conventional employment use or similar may be appropriate on *Site G4A* or *Site G4B*, which are closer to the A1 / A52 junction, but the scale of *Site G7* is unlikely to make this an appropriate alternative form of development within this site.

Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
G7	Low to Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low to Moderate	Medium to High

Site Assessment and Analysis - Grantham

Site Number: G8

Site Name: East of A1, North of A52 including Stubbock Hill, Grantham

G8

Site Location

The site is located west of Grantham, immediately to the east of the A1 and lying between the A52 (Barrowby Road) to the south and a railway line to the north. Its eastern boundary is a relatively long, straight, private track which serves as access to a number of isolated properties including 'Hurnsfield', Boundary Farm and The Limes close to the A52, and Rectory Farm further north towards the centre of the site.

Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity (see Figures 12 & 13)

The site comprises predominantly arable land with grassland and scrub on the steeper slopes. Stubbock Hill, the highest point of the site, is wooded, and the steep slopes alongside the A1 and railway are also well vegetated. The fields are bounded by low gappy hedges with few trees, but there are rows of trees surrounding the properties on the track to the west. The landscape is generally small in scale.

Site G8 lies on the western edge of the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* LCA and at the junction of two other LCAs to the west of the A1, namely the *Trent and Belvoir Vale* LCA and the *Harlaxton Denton Bowl* LCA. Topography is one of the most important physical influences on the character of the area, and topography of the site and surrounding areas is complex. Currently open land to the east of the site between the A52 and railway rises abruptly towards the site to a high point of approximately 110m AOD at Stubbock Hill. At the southern site boundary with the A52 land lies at around 85mAOD and rises more gradually up to the hill, which thus serves to provide enclosure around the west of the town.



View W from the A52 bridge over the A1 looking across the southern part of Site G8. Trees and isolated properties lie on the ridgeline along the eastern site boundary, with Grantham hidden beyond.

The northern part of the site comprises the steep western limestone scarp slope of Stubbock Hill which falls more gradually to the north-western corner of the site at approximately 60m AOD.

The characteristic topography of the site is important to the setting of the town, by providing an open, undeveloped, distinctive break between town and countryside, containing the urban influences and maintaining a rural setting to the town.



View X showing Stubbock Hill and the open, sloping character of the centre of the site, beyond the A1. Recent housing on Gonerby Hill is just visible in the distance.

Settlement Form and Pattern

The higher land through the site continues north around Great Gonerby and west around Barrowby, characteristically framing the town, and has been influential in shaping the form of the town as it stands today. Built development is predominantly confined to the lower land to the south of the A52 and north & east of the railway, although recent building at Poplar Farm has encroached up the slope east of the site.



View Y looking up to the ridge hiding the site and the A1 further west (centre-left). Housing is seen at Gonerby Hill (right) and on higher ground at Great Gonerby (centre-right).

Elsewhere to the west of the town the A1 defines the extent of built development. The only buildings in the area of Site G8, however, are the occasional properties and the two farms along the eastern site boundary. The site is isolated from current limits of built development.

The higher areas of the site are particularly sensitive because of landscape features, essentially steep topography and woodland, visibility and their importance to the setting of the town. New

development on the site would occur on the higher valley slopes and should be avoided, to avoid 'skylining' in keeping with the management objectives for the *Grantham Scarps and Valleys* LCA.

Visual Considerations (see Figure 13)

The rising ground within the site culminating in Stubbock Hill is a distinctive feature prominent in distant views from most directions. The steep western scarp is distinctive in views from the A1 and from an extensive area further west, screening any views of Grantham. From the east the ridgeline at Stubbock Hill is visible from Hall's Hill over 4km away and from the north of Belton some 6km+ away.

The southbound A1 climbs up towards the site from the north and is in deep cutting as it continues past the southern half of the site, reducing its physical influence. The A1 corridor is well vegetated, as is the railway corridor to the north.

Two footpaths cross the site. One runs close to the steep western scarp slope through the northern half of the site, continuing westwards across the A1 into Barrowby and northwards across the railway and into Great Gonerby. The other footpath route runs parallel to the first and further south, across the fields through the site from the A1 and continuing on the track past Rectory farm to join the first route across the railway and into Great Gonerby. These footpaths provide access to the countryside and thus an important amenity value for many people living nearby.

Scope for Mitigation

Development of the site would be isolated from the town, would be uncharacteristically conspicuous and could not be successfully mitigated.

Sensitivity to Development

Site G8: Landscape and Settlement Character Sensitivity **High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 4 on page 19:

- 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.
- Development would be isolated from the town and would detract from important aspects of settlement form and pattern.

Site G8: Visual Sensitivity **High** in accordance with the following criteria in Table 5 on page 20:

- 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 are very important.
- Development would be uncharacteristically conspicuous and could not be successfully mitigated.

Site G8: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 6 on page 21 (see Figure 15).

Landscape Value

Site G8: High Landscape Value in accordance with the following criteria in Table 7 on page 21:

- Lies wholly within a designated landscape where localised character and scenic value is distinctive.

- Presents locally important landscape characteristics and scenic value.
- Presents important public amenity value by way of views, access and biodiversity interest.

Conclusions on Landscape Capacity

Site G8: Overall High Landscape Sensitivity and High Landscape Value provide an overall assessment of **Low Capacity for Site G8** to accommodate development, in accordance with the categories given in the matrix in Table 8 on page 22 (see Figure 16).

Summary Table

Site No.	Landscape & Settlement Character Sensitivity	Visual Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Overall Landscape Capacity
G8	High	High	High	High	Low

7. Recommendations for Priority Sites

- 7.1 In accordance with the project brief, recommendations are given in the tables below to prioritise sites and to help guide the direction of the future growth of Stamford, The Deepings and Grantham. Where sites have been assessed as having the same overall capacity to accommodate development, a judgement is made on the order that these sites could be brought forward for development, in landscape and visual terms only.
- 7.2 The key factors from the assessment influencing the recommended order of priority of site development are summarised after the tables. It is stressed that prioritisation is not an exact science and there may be little to choose between some sites in terms of landscape sensitivity and capacity.
- 7.3 Sites considered to have overall high landscape sensitivity and low or low to medium capacity to accommodate development are shown in the tables as having “Low” priority. There may, however, be special circumstances or other over-riding reasons why these sites may be taken forward for development.
- 7.4 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 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.

Priority Sites in Stamford

Table 9: Priority of Specified Sites in Stamford

Priority	Site No.	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Capacity
1	S3D	Low	High
2	S2	Moderate	Medium to High
3	S1A	Moderate	Medium to High
4	S3C	Moderate	Medium
5	S1B	Moderate	Medium
6	S4	Moderate	Medium
Low	S3B	High	Low to Medium
Low	S3A	High	Low

- 7.5 The key factors influencing the priority of sites in Stamford are as follows:

Site S3D

- Disused / derelict / previously developed site with indistinct character and little or no sense of place. Few, if any, features / elements that could not be replaced
- Site lies next to an industrial estate and a dismantled railway, and west of the River Gwash, where employment development would have some association with settlement form and pattern
- Site is well screened thus development would not lead to unacceptable visual intrusion into the countryside, with or without mitigation

Site S2

- The site is surrounded by urban influences including the A1, other principal routes into / out of the town, and residential development, with an indistinct urban character
- Residential development on the site would be most 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 environmental designations under Local Plan policies EN3 and EN4, the site comprises commonplace elements and combinations of features which create generally unremarkable character, and is not significantly prominent either topographically or visually
- Scope for mitigation as existing young planting alongside the A1 matures

Site S1A

- The site is bounded by urban influences on three sides resulting in an indistinct urban-edge character with no distinctive landscape elements / features
- The site is well enclosed and well contained by Quarry Farm Wood
- Development would be an extension of the town northwards and westwards in keeping with settlement form, to a well defined boundary feature (Quarry Farm Wood)
- Residential or employment development on the site would not lead to coalescence of Stamford with Toll Bar or Great Casterton – their separate identities would remain due to remaining open land inbetween
- Residential or employment development would be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view
- Scope for mitigation along the southern and western site boundaries

Site S3C

- Site lies next to an industrial estate and a dismantled railway, and west of the River Gwash, where employment development would have some association with settlement form and pattern
- On low lying land and not particularly prominent
- Scope for mitigation along eastern boundary with the River Gwash and northern boundary to reduce visual impact such that visual intrusion in to the countryside is acceptable

Site S1B

- Site lies adjacent to housing on two sides resulting in an indistinct urban-edge character with no distinctive landscape elements / features
- Residential development would be an extension of the town northwards in keeping with settlement form and pattern
- Scope for mitigation along the northern boundary to assimilate new development into the landscape such that visual intrusion in to the countryside is acceptable, and to soften harsh built edges of existing development, in keeping with the SKLCA

Site S4

- Despite previous environmental designations under Local Plan policies EN3 and EN4, the site comprises commonplace elements and combinations of features which create generally unremarkable character, and is not significantly prominent either topographically or visually
- Residential development would be an extension of the town northwards in keeping with settlement form and pattern
- Scope for mitigation along the northern, eastern and western boundaries to assimilate new development into the landscape such that visual intrusion in to the countryside is acceptable, and to soften harsh built edges of existing development, in keeping with the SKLCA

Priority Sites in The Deepings

Table 10: Priority of Specified Sites in The Deepings

Priority	Site No.	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Capacity
1=	D2B	Low	High
1=	D3	Low	High
2	D4A	Moderate	Medium to High
3=	D1	Moderate	Medium
3=	D6	Moderate	Medium
4	D5	Moderate	Low to Medium
Low	D2A	High	Low to Medium
Low	D4B	High	Low to Medium

7.6 The key factors influencing the priority of sites in The Deepings are as follows:

Site D2B

- The site is surrounded by urban influences of roads, industrial and residential development, with an indistinct transitional character
- Commonplace landscape elements and combination of features present, some of which could not be replaced but which create generally unremarkable character with some sense of place
- Mixed residential and employment development would be an extension of the town northwards in keeping with settlement form and pattern, to Northfield Road (and close to the A15 bypass) which is a well defined boundary feature
- Scope for mitigation along the northern and eastern boundaries to soften harsh built edges of existing development, in keeping with the SKLCA
- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view

Site D3

- The site is bounded by urban influences on three sides, including roads, housing and commercial / industrial / community uses resulting in an indistinct urban-edge character, thus mixed development of the site would be in keeping with surrounding land uses
- No distinctive landscape elements / features although clearly a fenland landscape
- Development of the site from the west to the south-east corner would be an

- appropriate extension of the town in keeping with settlement form and pattern
- Scope for mitigation to provide a varied edge to development and to soften harsh built edges of existing development, in keeping with the SKLCA
- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view

Site D4A

- The site is bounded by urban influences on two sides, including roads, housing, school playing fields and some commercial / business uses resulting in an indistinct urban-edge character, thus mixed development of the site would be in keeping with surrounding land uses
- Commonplace landscape elements and combination of features present, some of which could not be replaced but which create generally unremarkable character with some sense of place
- Development of the site would be an appropriate extension of the town in keeping with settlement form and pattern, although slightly less so than Site D3 since it would introduce development to the east of Linchfield Road
- Scope for mitigation to provide a varied edge to development and to soften harsh built edges of existing development, in keeping with the SKLCA
- Development likely to be perceptible but would not significantly alter the balance of features or elements within the existing view

Site D1

- The site is bounded by urban influences on three sides, including the A15 bypass, Stamford Road, Millfield Road and its housing, with generally unremarkable character but some sense of place
- Residential use (with lower density residential development fronting Millfield Road) would be an appropriate extension of the town westwards, in keeping with settlement form and pattern, to the A15 bypass which is a well defined boundary feature
- Generally well enclosed site (but more open to the north) such that some employment development would not lead to unacceptable visual intrusion into the countryside, with or without mitigation
- Scope for mitigation along the northern boundary

Site D6

- The site is bounded by urban influences on three sides, including the A15 bypass, Peterborough Road, Towngate West and Millfield Road and its housing, with generally unremarkable character but some sense of place
- Residential use would be an appropriate extension of the town north-westwards, in keeping with settlement form and pattern, to the A15 bypass which is a well defined boundary feature
- Some employment development on the southern part of the site would be appropriate if similar development permitted in Site D1 where it would not lead to unacceptable visual intrusion into the countryside if the bypass screening mound was extended
- Scope for further mitigation in the centre of the site by planting up the set-a-side field to break up the extent of built development on the site and provide a soft edge to the town

Site D5

- The site is bounded by urban influences on three sides, principally housing off Rycroft Avenue to the north and Broadgate Lane to the west, with Back Lane to the south
- Residential development on the site would be an appropriate extension of the town eastwards, in keeping with settlement form and pattern
- Generally unremarkable character but some sense of place
- Scope for mitigation along site boundaries to reinforce the relatively intimate character

Priority Sites in Grantham

Table 11: Priority of Specified Sites in Grantham

Priority	Site No.	Overall Landscape Sensitivity	Overall Landscape Capacity
1=	G4A	Moderate	Medium to High
1=	G4B	Moderate	Medium to High
1=	G7	Moderate	Medium to High
2	G3C	Moderate	Medium to High
Low	G2A	High	Low to Medium
Low	G3B	High	Low to Medium
Low	G6	High	Low to Medium
Low	G1A	High	Low
Low	G1B	High	Low
Low	G2B	High	Low
Low	G3A	High	Low
Low	G5	High	Low
Low	G8	High	Low

7.7 The key factors influencing the priority of sites in Grantham are as follows:

Sites G4A, G4B & G7

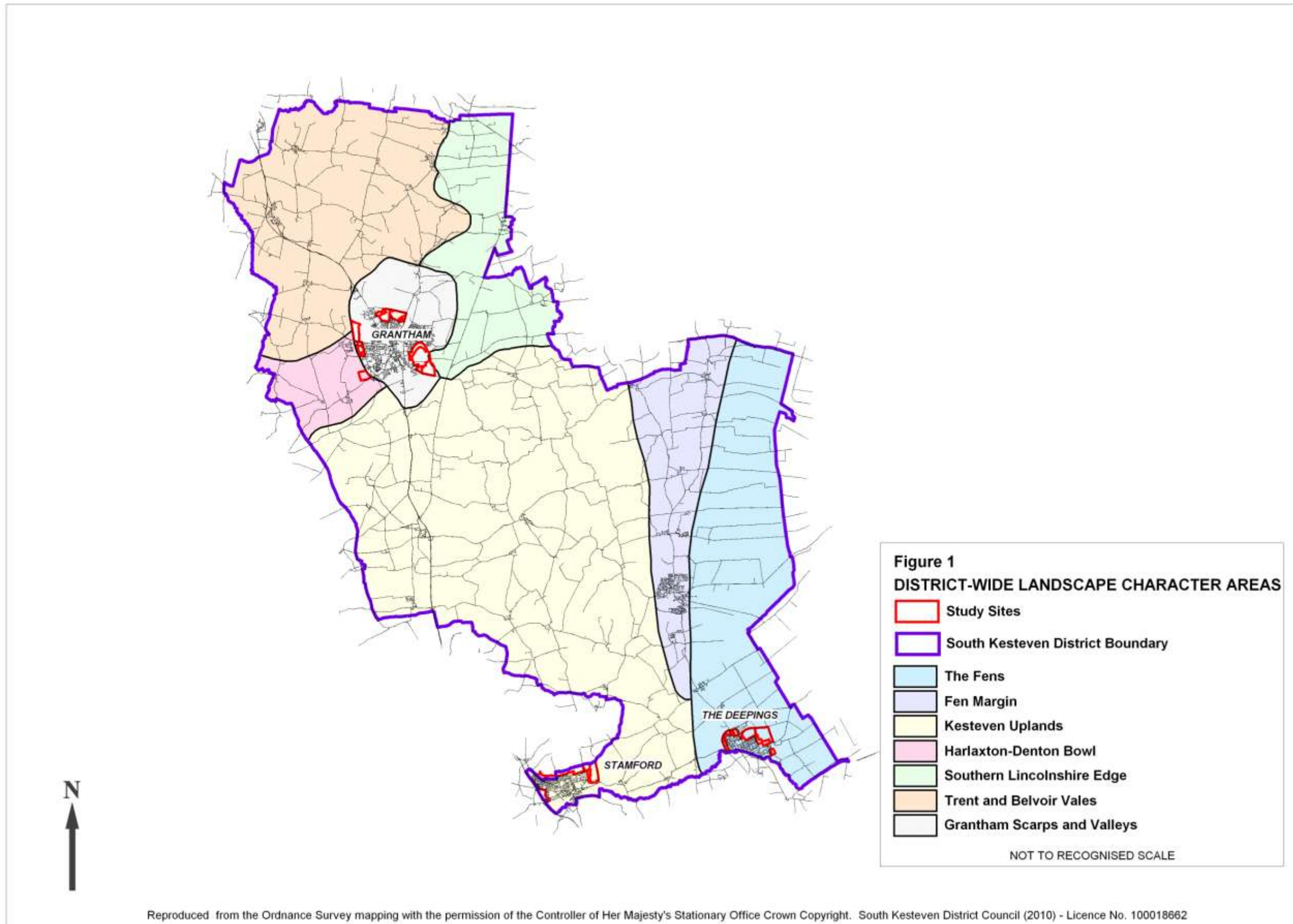
- The sites are surrounded by urban influences including the A1, other principal routes into / out of the town, and residential development, with an indistinct urban edge character
- Residential development on the sites would be most appropriate, although some employment use may also be suitable, as 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 sites 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

Site G3C

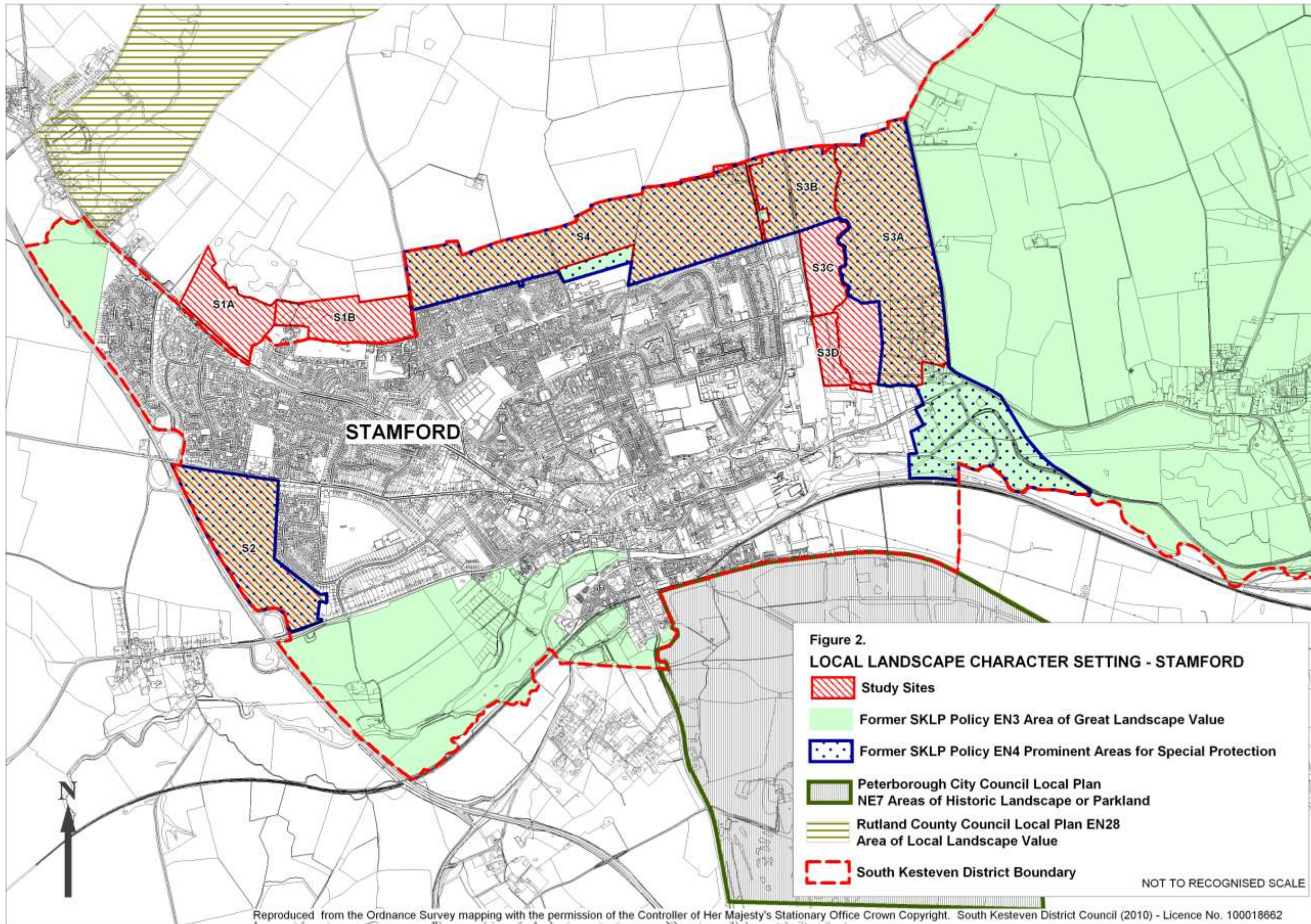
- Site is urban in character, comprising the buildings and associated land at the Prince William Barracks, thus mixed use redevelopment of the site would be in keeping with existing built form
- Site is of little importance to the setting of Grantham lying on high ground but beyond sensitive slopes and 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 sites comprise 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

FIGURES

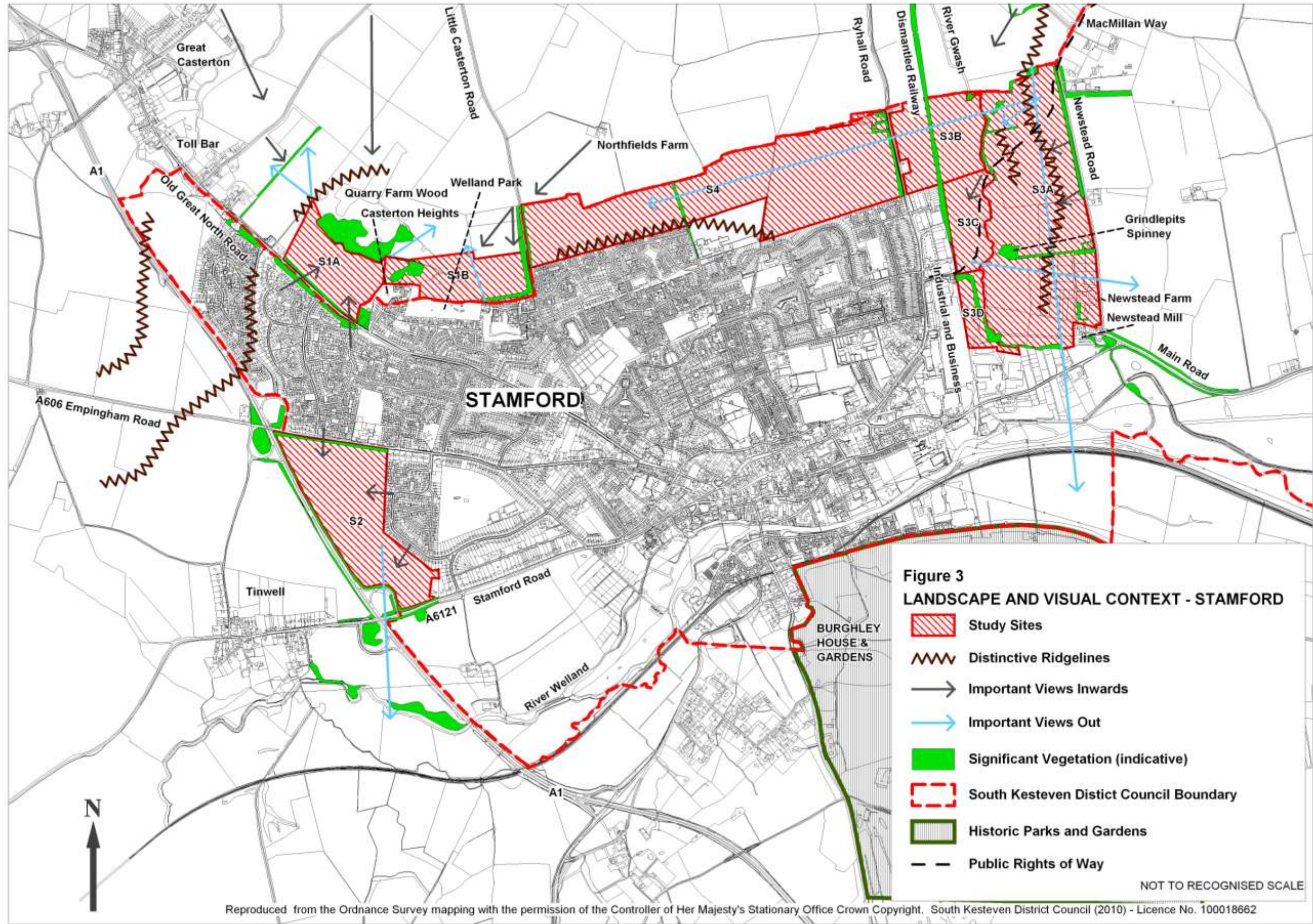
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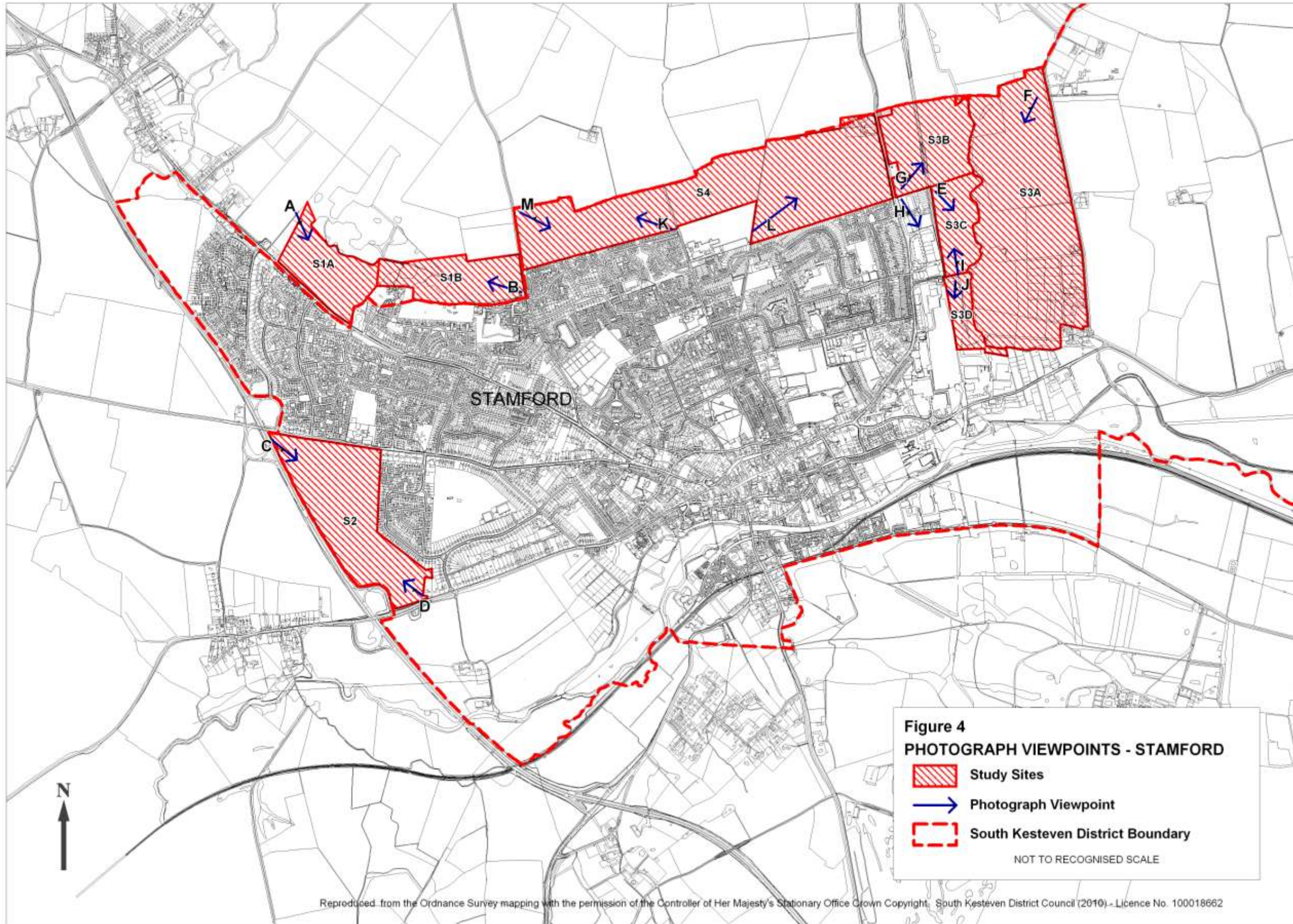
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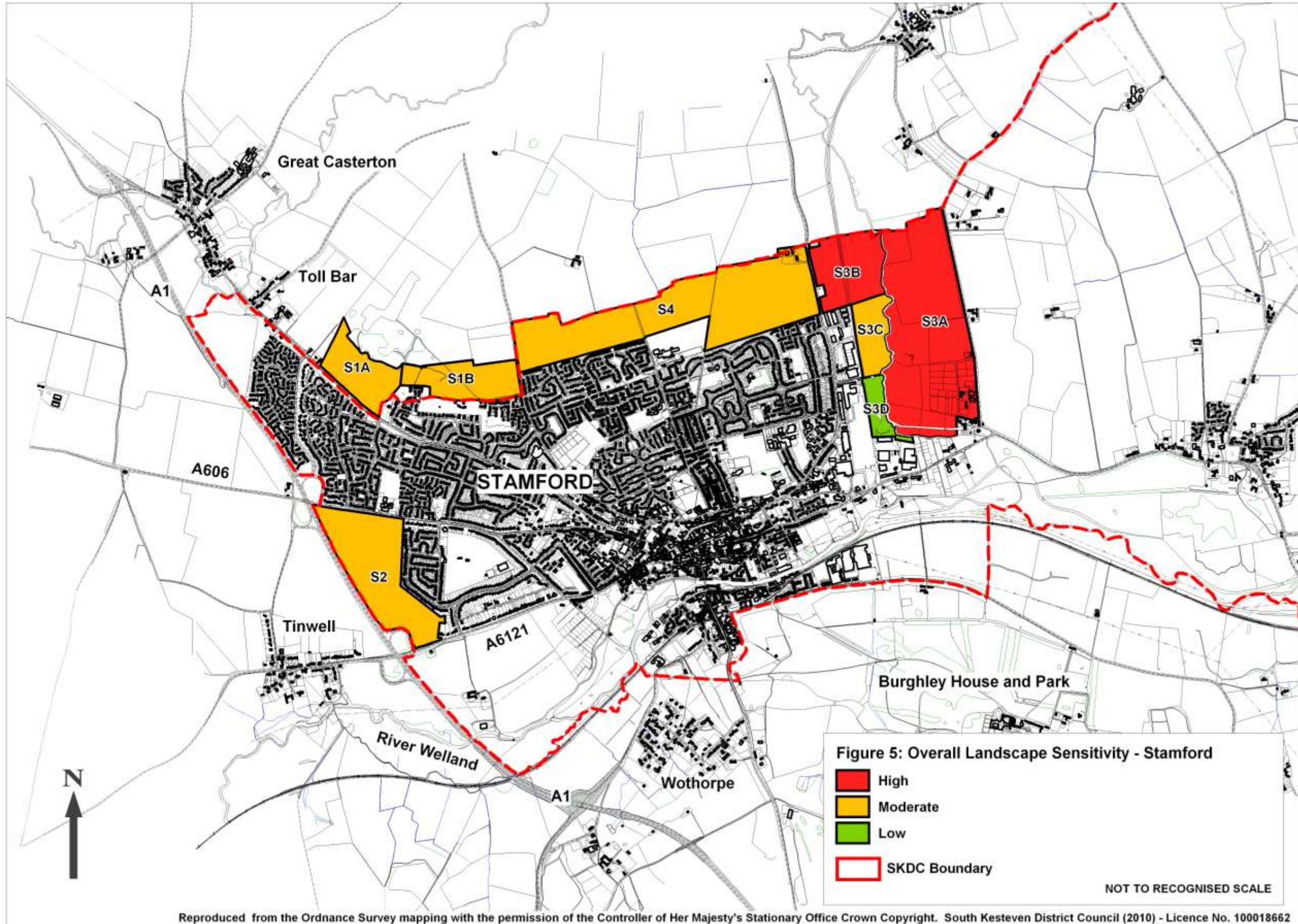
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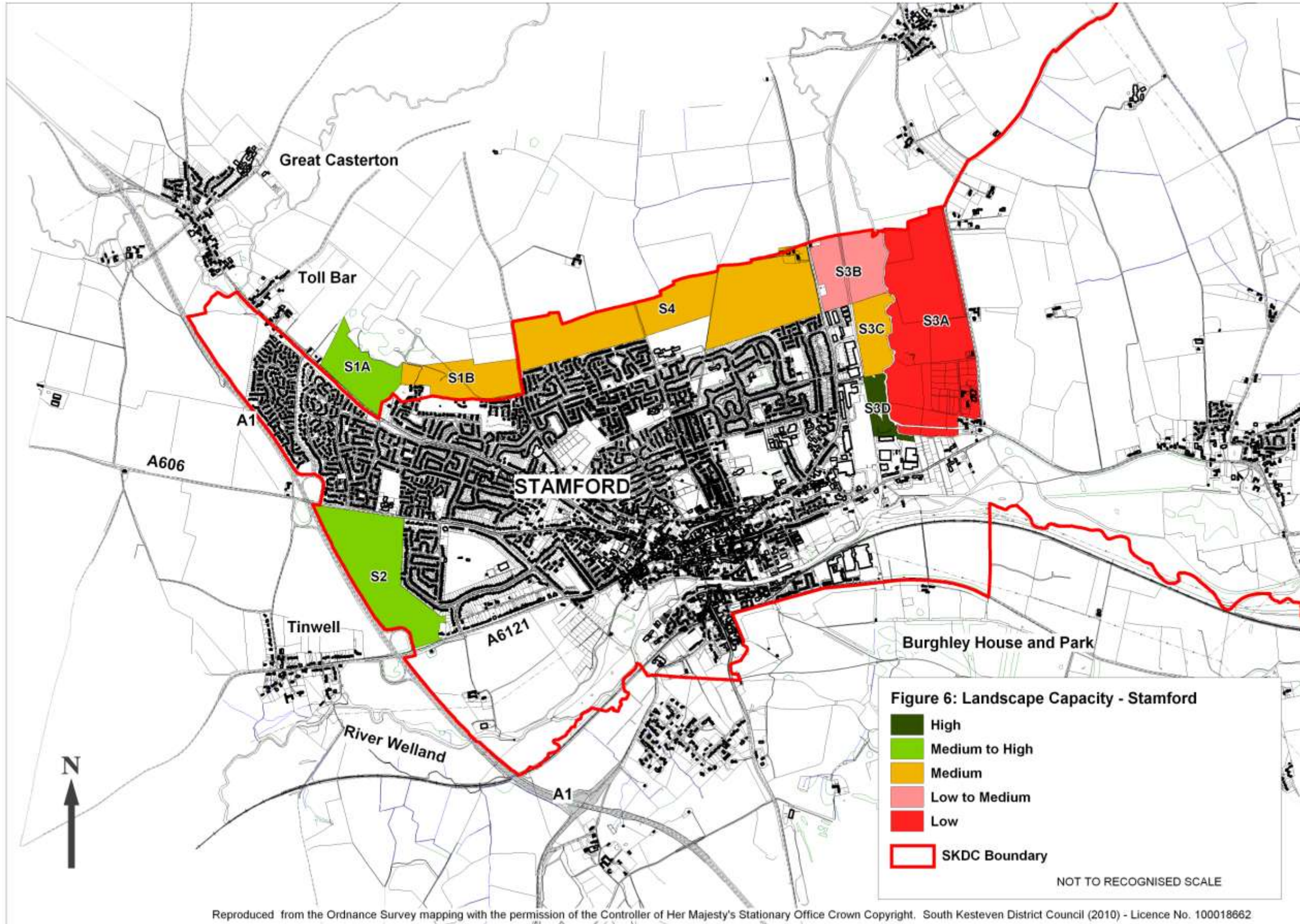
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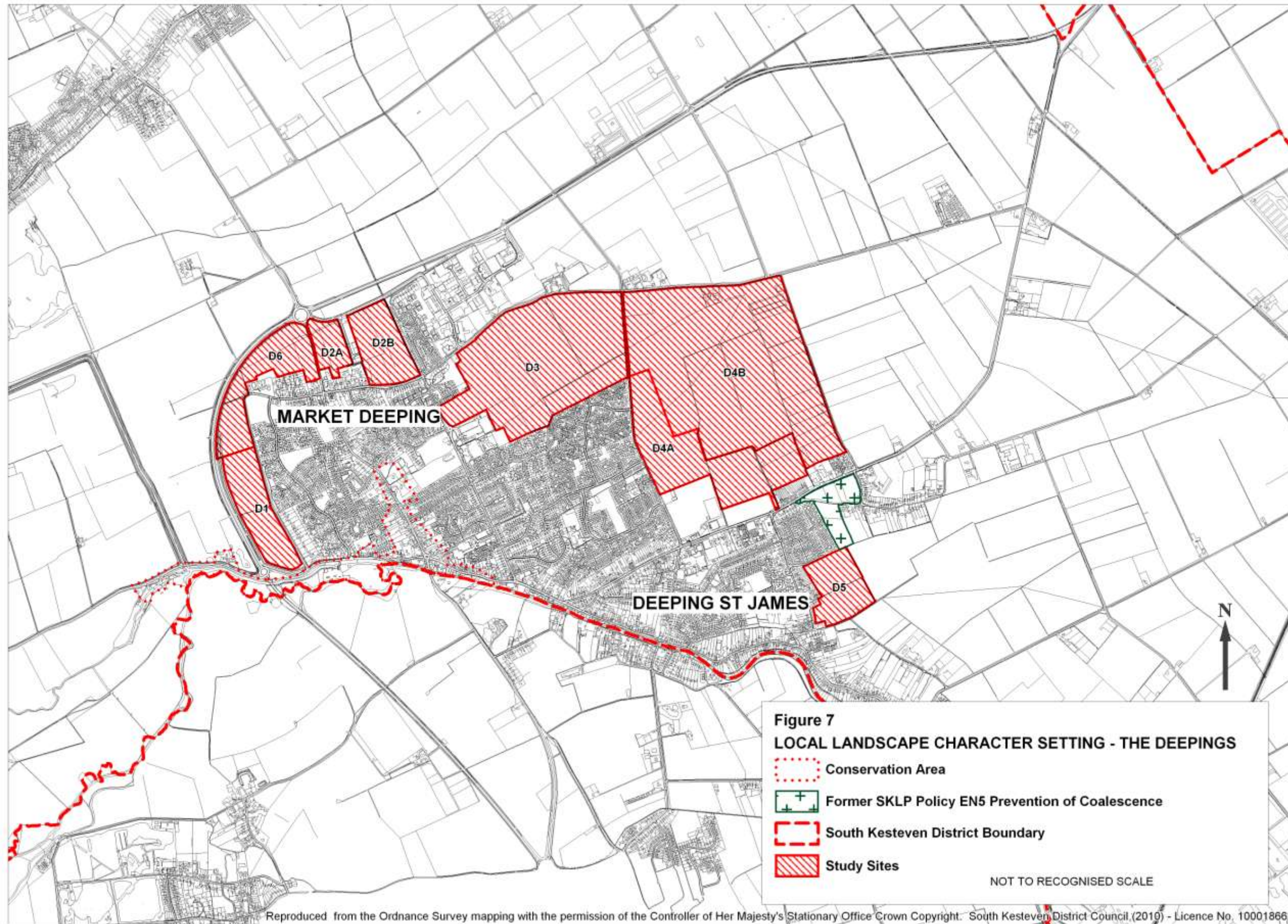
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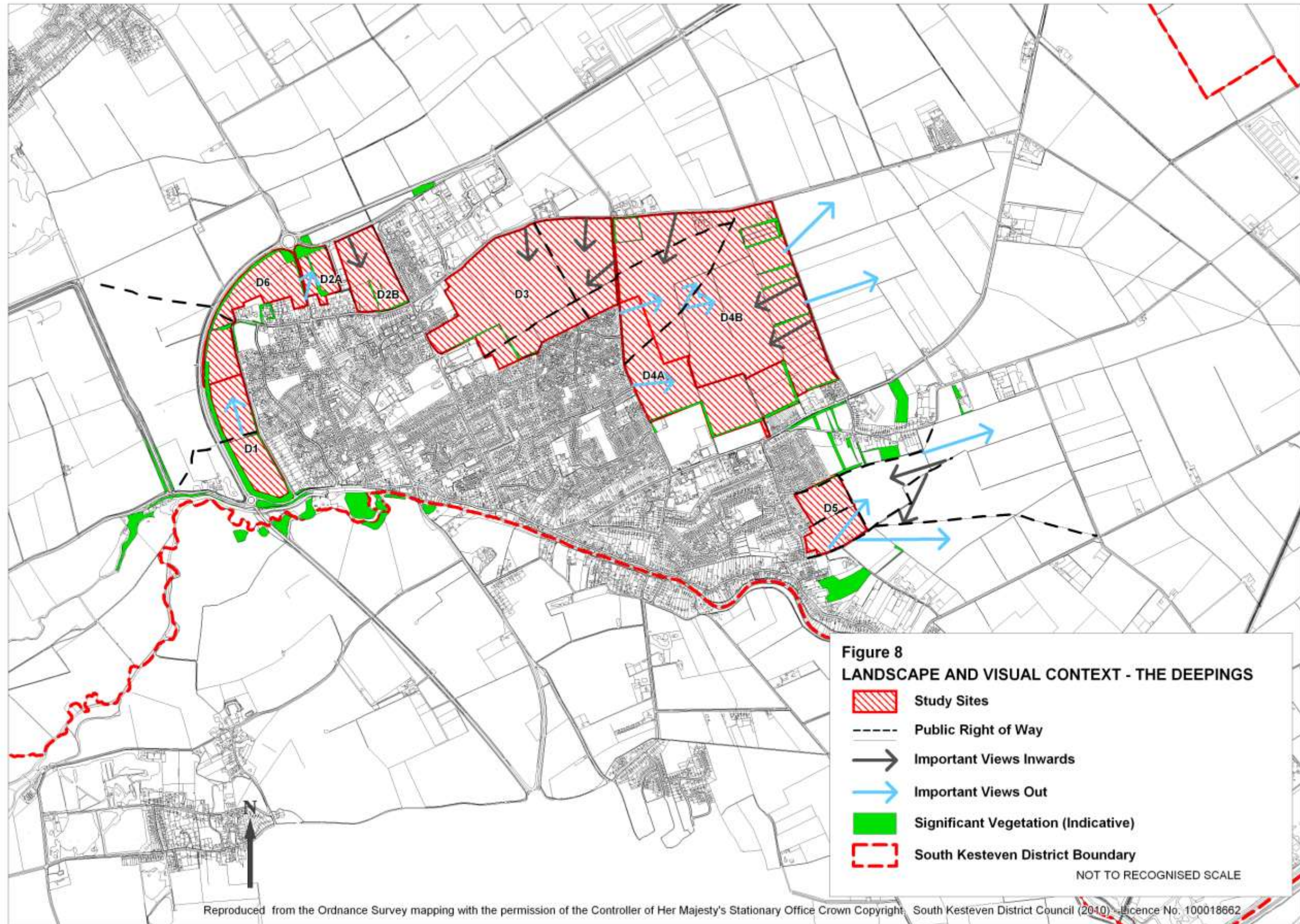
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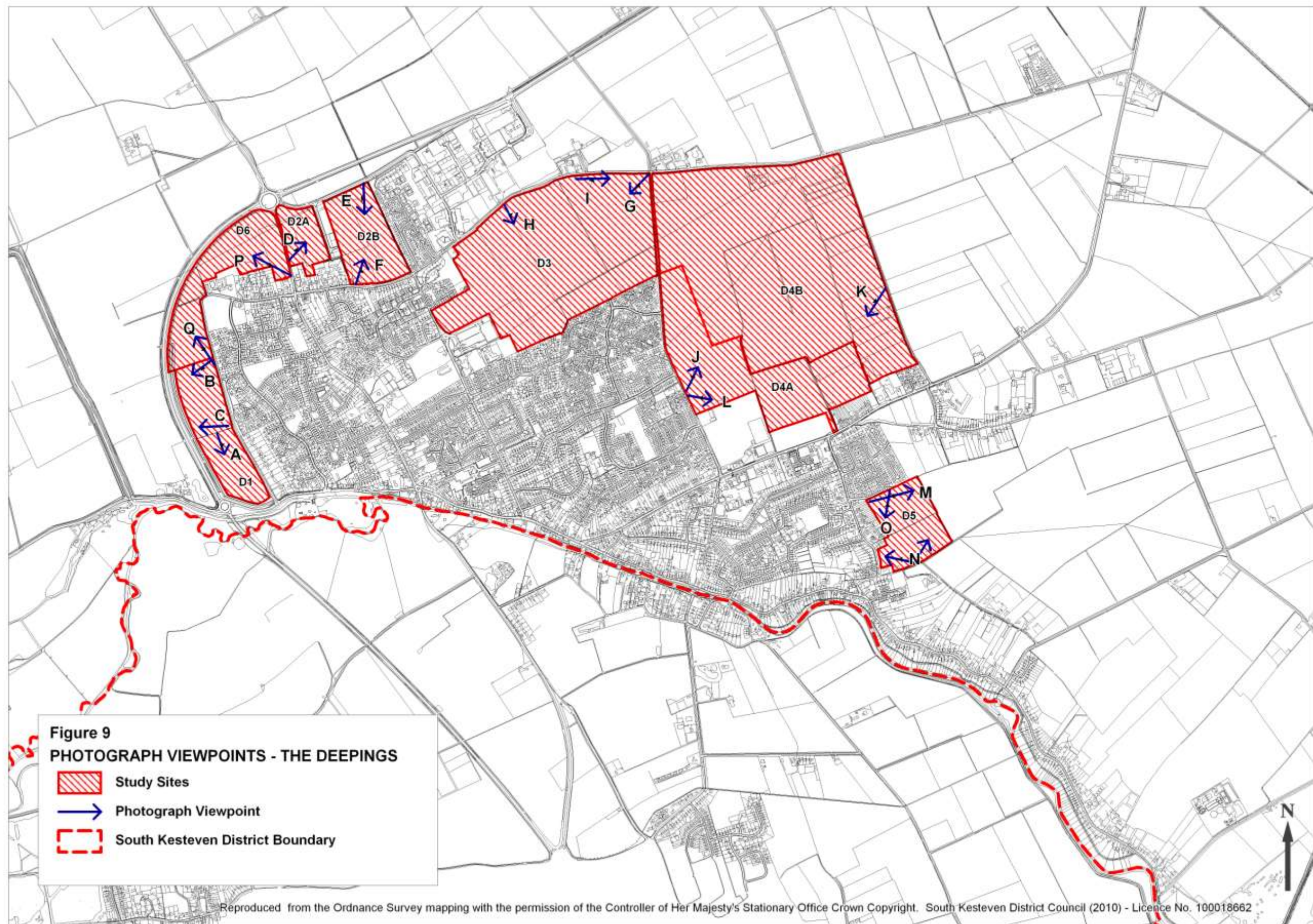
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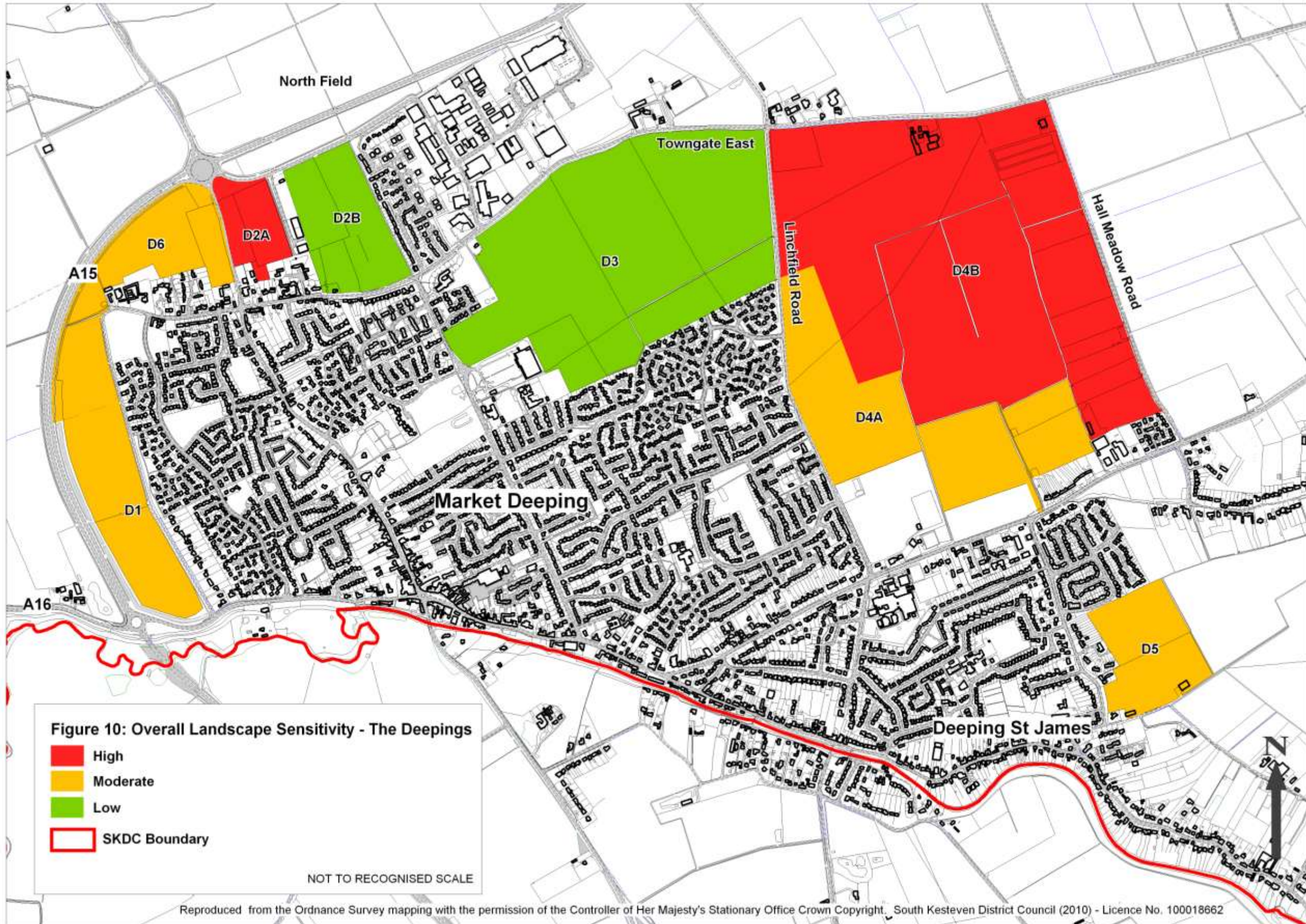
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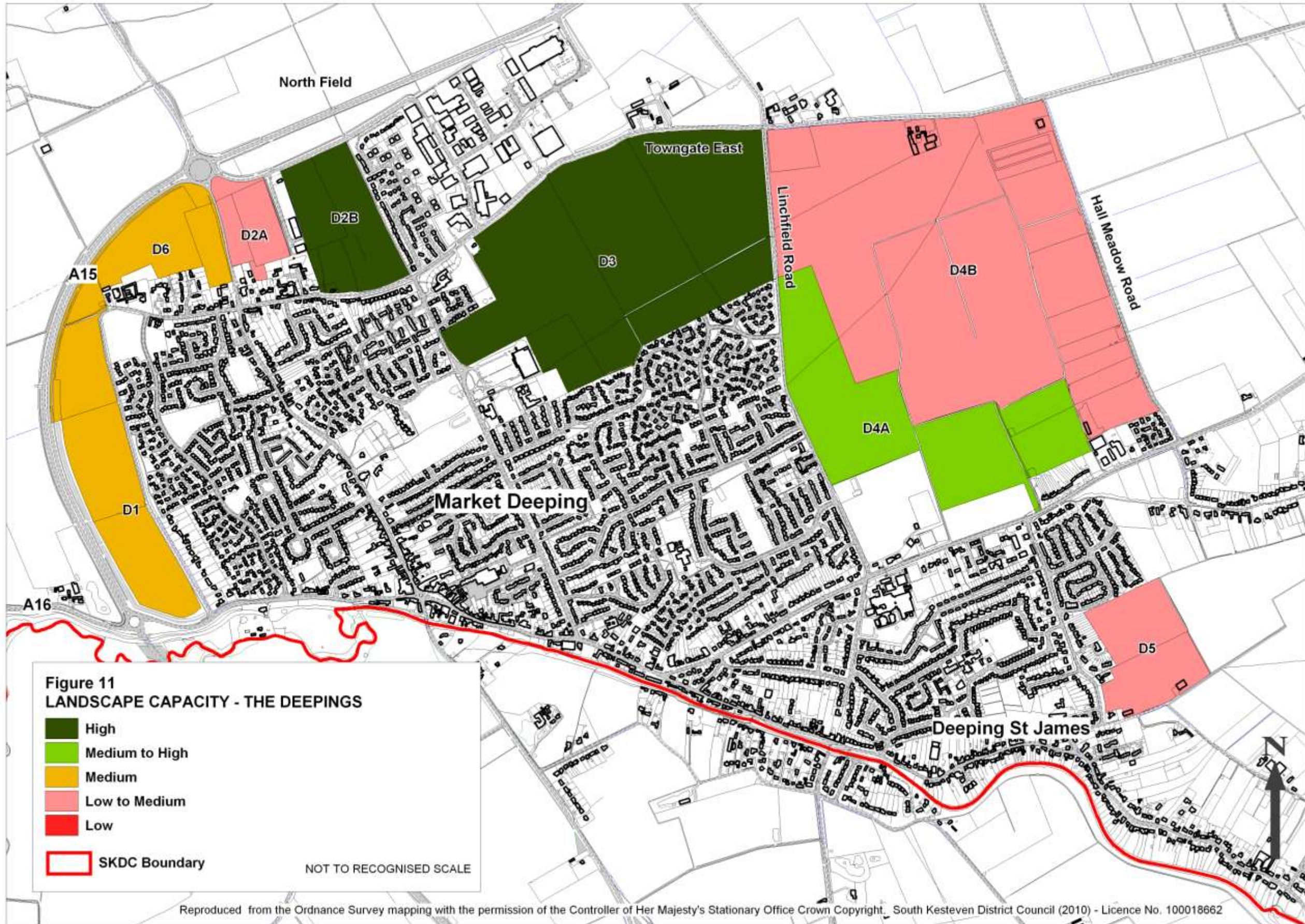
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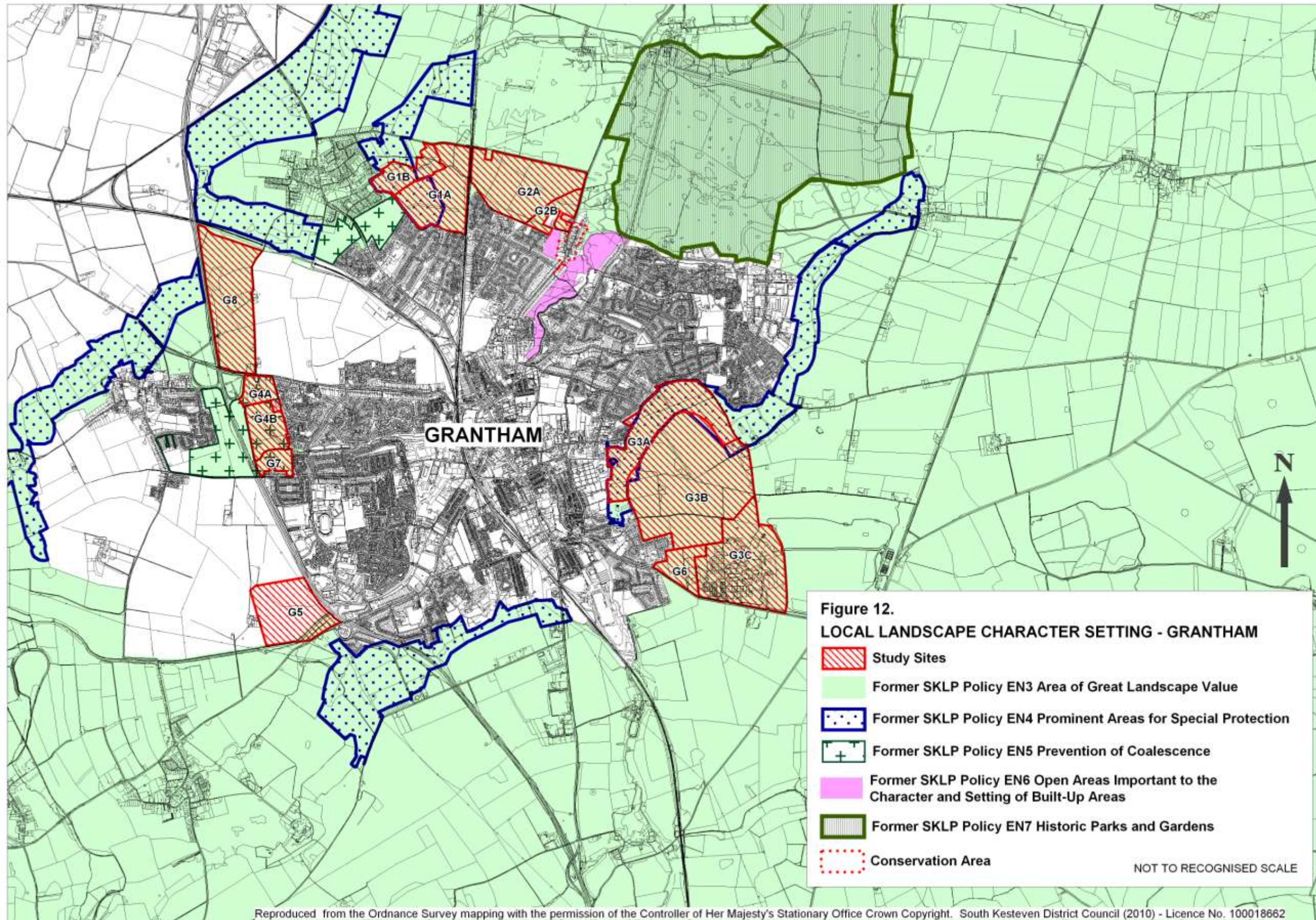
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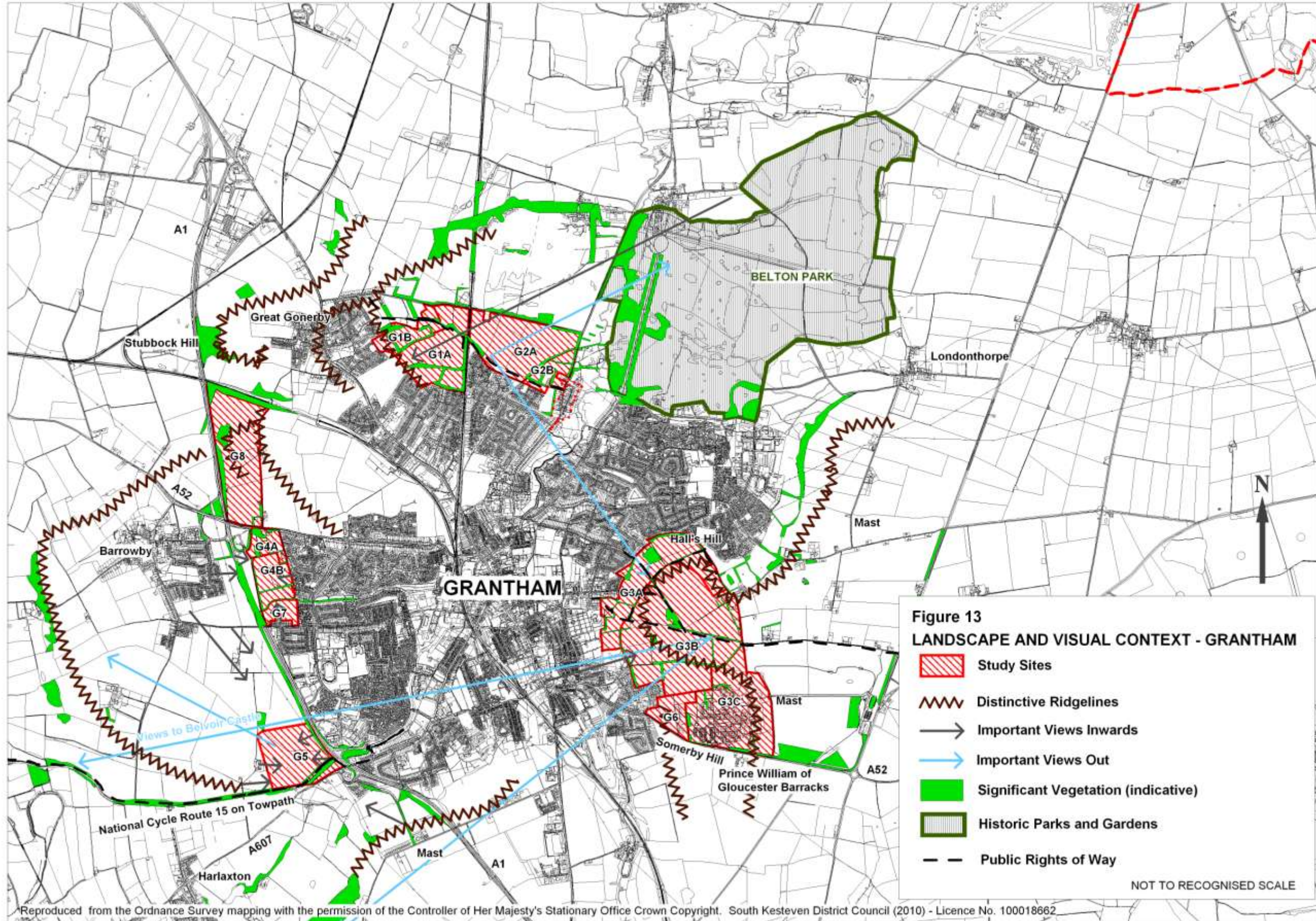
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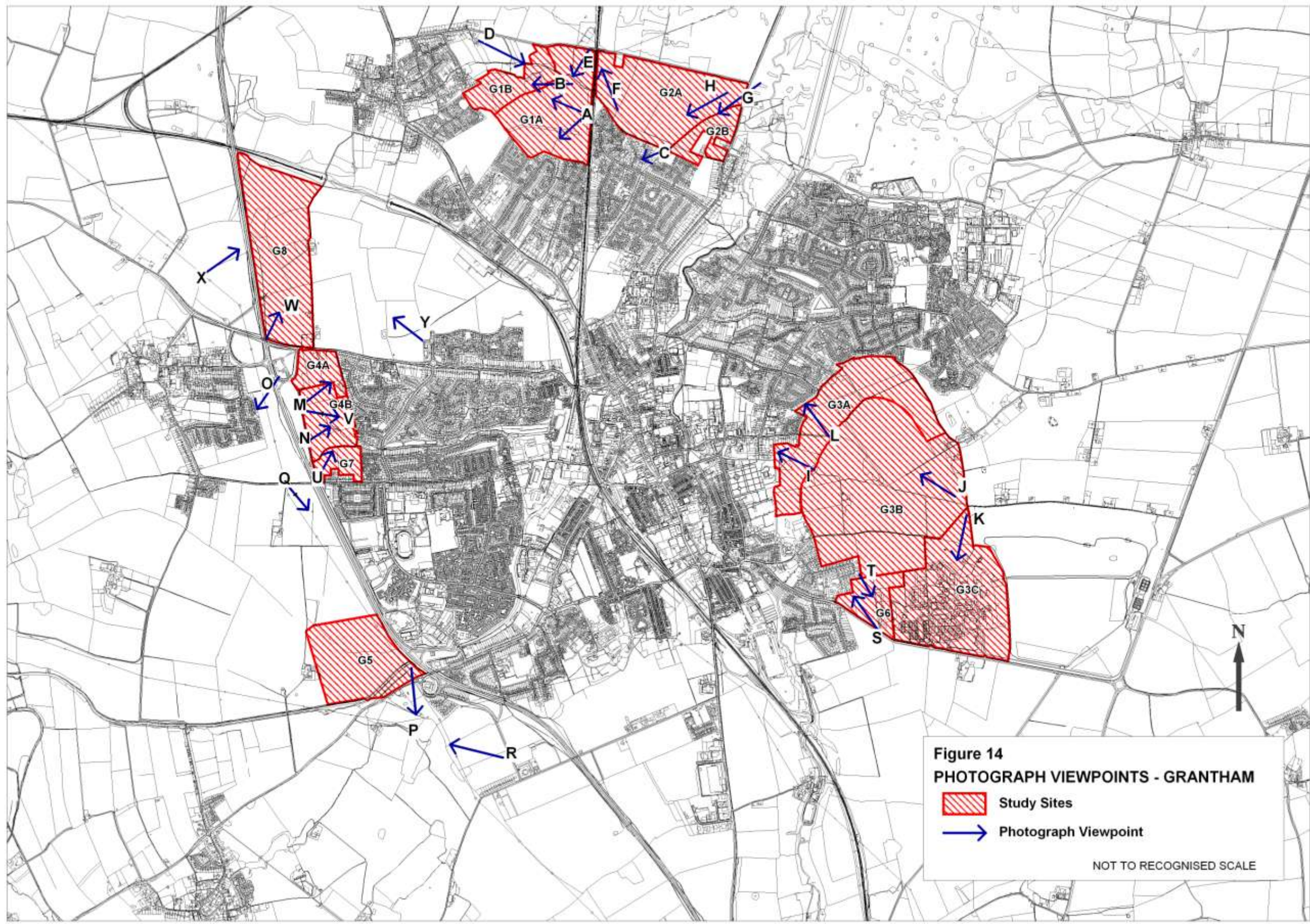
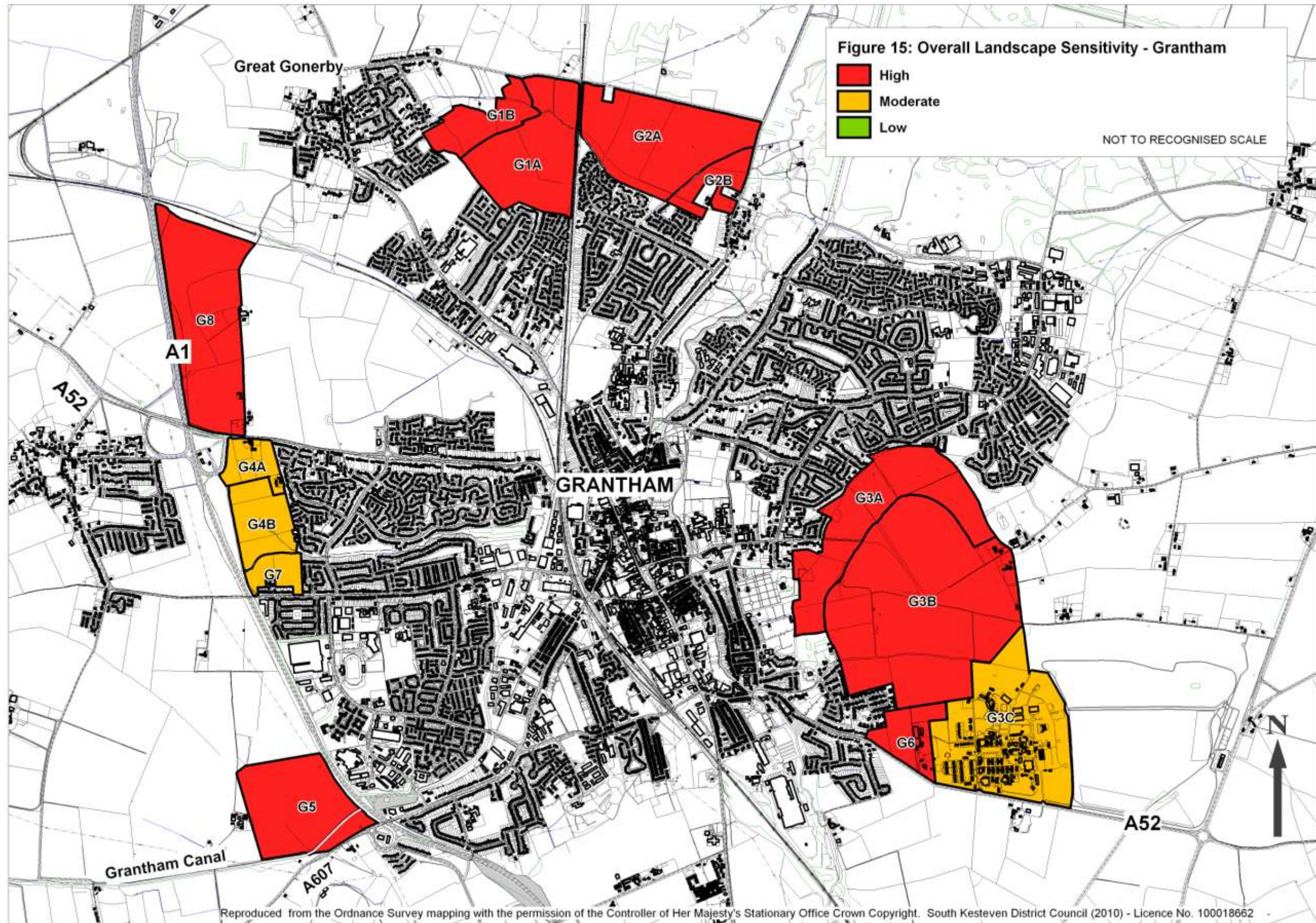


Figure 14
PHOTOGRAPH VIEWPOINTS - GRANTHAM
Study Sites
Photograph Viewpoint
NOT TO RECOGNISED SCALE

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