Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Solar PV and wind energy development

Harborough Council

Final Report

Prepared by LUC

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of this study.

Background to this study

1.1 Harborough Council commissioned LUC to prepare a Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for wind energy and solar photovoltaic (PV) schemes. It provides judgements on the landscape sensitivity of different parts of Harborough to these forms of development. The findings of this study will allow the Council to identify broad areas for renewable energy development and establish a local policy framework for such development, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Policy context

European Landscape Convention

1.2 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) came into force in the UK in March 2007. It established the need to recognise landscape in law; and develop landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management, and planning of landscapes; and to establish procedures for the participation of the general public and other stakeholders in the creation and implementation of landscape policies. The ELC remains relevant despite the UK's departure from the EU.

1.3 The ELC definition of ‘landscape’ recognises that all landscapes matter, be they ordinary, degraded, or outstanding:

> "Landscape means an area, as perceived by people whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors."

1.4 Signing up to the ELC means that the UK is committed to protect, manage, and plan our landscapes for the future. The Convention also advocates work to raise landscape awareness, involvement and enjoyment amongst local and visiting communities. Landscape character is defined by the ELC as “a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse”. Again, this reinforces the underlying message that ‘all landscapes matter’.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

1.1 The UK Government published the latest version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in December 2023, which sets out the environmental, social and economic planning policies for England. Proposed reforms to the NPPF were published in July 2024. The quotes below relate to the currently adopted 2023 version.

1.2 Central to NPPF policies is a presumption in favour of sustainable development; that development should be planned for positively and individual proposals should be approved wherever possible. One of the overarching objectives that underpins the NPPF is set out in Paragraph 8 c): “*to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment…*”.

> Paragraph 180 states that “planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

> "(a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes" and "(b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside…".

1.3 The NPPF also makes explicit reference to the need for defined strategic policies that make sufficient provision for landscape and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation (Paragraph 20).

> Paragraph 160 states that "to help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, plans should:
>
> (a) provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources, that maximises the potential for suitable development, …while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed appropriately (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts);
>
> (b) consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development…"

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

1.4 Further guidance is provided in the NPPG on how local planning authorities can identify suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy. It states that:

> "…when considering impacts, assessments can use tools to identify where impacts are likely to be acceptable. For example, landscape character

areas could form the basis for considering which technologies at which scale may be appropriate in different types of location... "

1.5 This study uses the framework of Landscape Character Areas and Landscape Character Types for the landscape sensitivity assessment as set out in the 2024 Harborough Landscape Character Assessment.

Local Policy

1.6 The current Harborough Local Plan 2011-2031 was adopted 30th April 2019. Work is ongoing with a view to commencing consultation on the new Local Plan between January and March 2025. Adoption is anticipated at the end of 2026.

Policies

1.7 Adopted relevant policies include:

- **Policy GD5 Landscape character** states that development proposals should be *"sensitive to its landscape setting and landscape character area."* Further, development will be permitted where it:

"a. respects and, where possible, enhances local landscape, the landscape setting of settlements, and settlement distinctiveness;

b. avoids the loss of, or substantial harm to, features of landscape importance;

c. safeguards important public views, skylines and landmarks; and

d. restores or provides equivalent mitigation for damaged features and/or landscapes that would be damaged or degraded as a result of the development."

- **Policy GD8 Good design in development** states that development would be permitted with it achieves high standard of design.
- **Policy CC2 Renewable energy generation** states that:

"1. Development for renewable and low carbon energy generation will be permitted where:

- c. it includes measures to mitigate against any adverse impacts on the built and natural environment resulting from the construction, operation and decommissioning of any equipment/infrastructure;
- d. it does not contribute towards an unacceptable cumulative visual impact from renewable energy developments when considered in conjunction with nearby developments and permitted proposals within the District or adjoining local authority areas; …

Chapter 2

Method

This chapter sets out the method for the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment.

Scope and limitations of the assessment

2.1 This Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (LSA) focuses on the landscape considerations associated with ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) and wind energy developments at a strategic level.

2.2 Whilst the LSA results provide an indication of landscape sensitivity at a strategic scale, the assessment should not be interpreted as a definitive statement on the suitability of certain locations or individual sites for a particular development. It is also important to note that this assessment does not provide guidance on the wide range of other planning issues that need to be considered as part of the preparation and determination of planning applications for renewable energy developments. All proposals will need to be assessed on their own merits through the planning process, including – where required – through proposal-specific Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs).

2.3 These results should be interpreted alongside the detailed information provided in separate assessment profiles. Landscape sensitivity often varies within an LCA, with areas exhibiting higher and lower sensitivity. It is therefore very important to take note of the explanatory text supporting the assessments in each Landscape Character Area profile, particularly the sections entitled ‘Notes on any variations in landscape sensitivity’.

Spatial framework for the assessment

The assessment uses the spatial framework of Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and component Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) identified by the existing Harborough Landscape Character Assessment (2024). . The LCTs and LCAs are shown in Figure 2.1.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Solar PV and Wind Energy Development
Harborough District Council

LUC

Figure 2.1: Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Landscape Character Areas (LCAs)

Harborough District
Settlement
Neighbouring Local Authority

Landscape Character Assessment
Landscape Character Types (LCT) and Areas (LCA)

- LCT 1: Farmed Plateau Ridge Tops
  - 1a Tilton on the Hill and Skeffington
- LCT 2: Rolling Tributary Farmland
  - 2a Marefield and Owston
  - 2b Hungarton and Lowesby Estates
  - 2c Houghton-on-the-Hill to Keyham
  - 2d Burton Overy to Billesdon
  - 2e Shangton to East Langton
- LCT 3: Rolling Wooded Farmland
  - 3a Loddington
  - 3b Rolleston to Allexton
  - 3c Horninghold and Stockerston
- LCT 4: Settled and Farmed Edge
  - 4a Stoughton to Scraptoft
  - 4b Great Stretton to Newton Harcourt
- LCT 5: Settled Vale
  - 5a Fleckney
  - 5b Kibworth
  - 5c Market Harborough
  - 5d Theddingworth
- LCT 6: River Valley Slopes
  - 6a Hallaton to Stonton Wyville
  - 6b Medbourne to Eyebrook Reservoir
- LCT 7: River Valley Floodplain
  - 7a Great Bowden to Welham
  - 7b Medbourne to Great Easton
- LCT 8: Elevated Farmed Plateau
  - 8a Laughton and Mowsley
  - 8b Husbands Bosworth
- LCT 9: Open Farmed Lowlands
  - 9a Willoughby Waterleys to Shearsby
  - 9b Claybrooke Magna to Leire
- LCT 10: Transitional Rolling Farmland
  - 10a Lutterworth to Catthorpe
  - 10b Gilmorton to Broughton Astley
  - 10c Walcote to Swinford and North Kilworth

0 3 6 km

Map scale 1:155,000 @ A3

Characteristics of solar PV and wind energy development types and their potential landscape impacts

Solar PV development

2.4 Solar PV developments although not prominent in terms of height, can occupy substantial areas of ground which may be visible, particularly if located on slopes. Landscape effects may include the following:

- Solar PV developments may be particularly visible in open landscapes or on upper slopes of hillsides or where overlooked.
- On a sunny day they can appear blue, while on a cloudy day they can appear a dark grey, both of which contrast with surrounding green areas.
- The presence of Solar PV panels and associated infrastructure may increase the perceived human influence on the landscape and erode intrinsically rural character.
- Solar PV development will change the land use and appearance of a field or fields, affecting land cover patterns.
- The regular edges of solar PV developments may be conspicuous in more irregular landscapes (particularly where field boundaries are irregular)
- The height of racks (up to 3m) may overtop typical hedgerow field boundaries.
- Screen planting around solar PV developments may change the sense of enclosure of a landscape.
- Construction of solar PV development may result in damage to landscape features such as hedgerow field boundaries and alter the landscape scale.

- Structures may appear out of place in particularly wild or undeveloped landscape which are valued for their qualities of remoteness.

Wind energy developments

2.5 All turbines considered in this study are substantial vertical structures that may be highly visible within the landscape. Wind energy developments may affect the landscape in the following ways:

- Construction of turbines and related infrastructure may result in the direct loss of landscape features e.g. trees and hedgerows
- The movement of the blades is a unique feature of wind energy development, setting them apart from other stationary tall structures in the landscape, and may affect characteristics of stillness and remoteness.
- The presence of turbines may increase the influence of built development on the landscape.
- Turbines may be perceived as out of scale in relation to human scale features in the landscape e.g. farmsteads, rural lanes, walls and hedgerows.
- Turbines on skylines may compete with existing skyline features (e.g. church towers) for prominence, where prominent undeveloped skylines or landmark features are characteristic of the landscape.
- Access tracks or upgrades on access routes may be highly visible, particularly in open upland landscapes or undeveloped landscapes.

Type and scale of solar PV developments considered

2.6 The assessment considers the landscape sensitivity of the landscape within Harborough and to ground-mounted solar PV developments. Such

developments consist of 'arrays' of solar PV panels, usually around three metres in height and mounted on aluminium / stainless steel frames, with associated infrastructure including inverters, on-site powerhouse, security fencing and CCTV. Solar PV developments in domestic gardens or roof mounted panels are outside the scope of this study.

2.7 The assessment judges the suitability of different scales of solar PV developments, based on bandings that reflect those that are most likely to be put forward by developers. The sizes used for the assessment are set out in Table 2.1.

2.8 Proposed solar PV developments larger than 60ha have not been considered in this assessment. Landscape sensitivity to these very large schemes would be categorised as “high" sensitivity regardless of location, requiring developers to pay particular attention to this issue in their specific applications.

Table 2.1: Solar PV Development Sizes

Solar PV Development Banding	Area
Small	Up to 5 hectares
Medium	6 hectares – 20 hectares
Large	21 hectares – 50 hectares
Very large	51 hectares – 120 hectares

2.8 Proposed solar PV developments larger than 120 hectares have not been considered in this assessment. Landscape sensitivity to these very large schemes would be categorised as “high” sensitivity regardless of location,

requiring developers to pay particular attention to this issue in their specific applications.

Type and scale of wind energy developments considered

2.9 The wind energy landscape sensitivity assessment applies to all forms of wind turbines, although it has been based on the most common horizontal axis three-bladed turbine.

2.10 The assessment considers the suitability of different turbine heights (to blade tip), based on bandings that reflect those that are most likely to be put forward by developers (now and in the future). These are set out in Table 2.2 below.

Table 2.2: Wind turbine development sizes

Turbine Scale Banding	Turbine Height (to blade tip)
Small wind installation	25 – 60m
Medium wind installation	61 – 100m
Large wind installation	101 – 150m
Very large wind installation	151 – 200m

Cumulative effects

2.11 As larger numbers of renewable energy developments are built, it is increasingly necessary to consider their cumulative effects. Cumulative effects of multiple schemes are a significant issue for planning authorities, particularly

for free standing solar PV developments, which tend to cluster around grid connection points.

2.12 The most significant cumulative effects are those that result in changes in the character of a landscape of such an extent as to transform it into a different landscape type. It should be recognised that if numerous developments are built, then at some point another development could tip the balance through its additional effects.

2.13 Key considerations are how different developments relate to each other, their frequency as one moves through the landscape, and their visual separation.

2.14 The LSA does not include assessment of the potential cumulative impacts of multiple developments as different combinations of development are not known at this stage. These are most appropriately considered at the individual site level, including through the process of Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Additional information on the LVIA and Cumulative LVIA process are included in Appendix A User Guide. Figure 2.2 illustrates existing and consented renewable energy installations of relevance to this study.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for
Solar PV and Wind Energy Development
Harborough District Council

LUC

Figure 2.2: Existing and consented renewable energy installations

Harborough District
Neighbouring Local Authority

Technology

Solar Photovoltaics
Wind Onshore

Landscape Character Assessment
Landscape Character Types (LCT) and Areas (LCA)

LCT 1: Farmed Plateau Ridge Tops
1a Tilton on the Hill and Skeffington
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2d Burton Overy to Billesdon
2e Shangton to East Langton
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3b Rolleston to Allexton
3c Horninghold and Stockerston
LCT 4: Settled and Farmed Edge
4a Stoughton to Scraptoft
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LCT 5: Settled Vale
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5b Kibworth
5c Market Harborough
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Map scale 1:155,000 @ A3

0 3 6 km

Contains Department for Energy Security and Net Zero data.

Evaluating landscape sensitivity

2.15 This assessment draws on advice contained in Natural England's 'Approach to landscape sensitivity assessment' (2019). This describes the term 'landscape sensitivity', within the context of spatial planning and land management, as follows:

> "Landscape sensitivity may be regarded as a measure of the resilience, or robustness, of a landscape to withstand specified change arising from development types or land management practices, without undue negative effects on the landscape and visual baseline and their value."

2.16 It is a term applied to landscape character and the associated visual resource, combining judgements of their susceptibility to the specific development type / development scenario or other change being considered together with the value(s) related to that landscape and visual resource.

Assessment criteria

2.17 Landscape sensitivity assessment requires judgements on both landscape susceptibility (how vulnerable the landscape is to change from the type being assessed, in this case solar PV and wind energy developments) and landscape value (consensus about importance, which can be recognised through designation as well as through descriptions within the 2024 Landscape Character Assessment.

2.18 The selection of landscape sensitivity indicators ('criteria') for this study is informed by the attributes of landscape that could be affected by solar and wind energy development. These consider the 'landscape', 'visual' and 'perceptual'

aspects of sensitivity. Their selection is also based on current best practice and experience of LUC in undertaking similar studies elsewhere in the UK.

2.19 The following five criteria headings are used for this study:

- Landform and scale (including sense of openness / enclosure);
- Landcover (including field and settlement patterns);
- Historic landscape character;
- Visual character (including skylines/intervisibility); and
- Perceptual and scenic qualities.

2.20 The tables below provide guidance and examples of higher and lower sensitivity features/attributes for applying the criteria in Harborough, for solar PV and wind energy, respectively. The assessments present a commentary against each criterion to inform the judgements on levels of sensitivity. It is important to note that the relative importance of each criterion varies between landscapes (due to differences in landscape character). The initial stage of the assessment involved a thorough desk- based study drawing on sources of spatial and descriptive information regarding the landscape (see Appendix B). This was supplemented by field survey work undertaken by a team of landscape professionals to verify the findings.

2.21 The next chapter sets out the overall results of the assessments.

Solar PV assessment criteria

Landform and scale (including sense of openness/enclosure)

2.22 A flat or gently undulating lowland landscape or extensive plateau is likely to be less sensitive to solar PV development than a landscape with prominent landforms and visible slopes. This is because arrays of solar PV panels will be less easily perceived in a flat landscape than on a slope (including hills and knolls), especially higher slopes.

2.23 A landscape with a strong sense of enclosure (e.g. provided by land cover such as woodland, tree cover or high hedges) is likely to be less sensitive to solar PV development than an open and unenclosed landscape because these features will be able to provide screening.

Table 2.3: Landscape and scale defined by the five-point landscape sensitivity scale

Scale	Definition
High	A landscape with a rugged landform or dramatic landform features (which may be large in scale), or a small scale or intimate landform. The landform may be very steep with exposed, visible slopes and no field boundaries or tree cover to provide screening.
Moderate-High	A landscape with distinct landform features, and/or irregular in topographic appearance (which may be large in scale), or a smaller scale landform. The landscape may contain prominent, visible slopes with little sense of enclosure (low, few or no hedges or trees/areas of woodland).

Scale	Definition
Moderate	An undulating landscape, perhaps also incised by valleys, likely to be a medium scale landform, with hidden areas as well as some visible slopes. Some areas lacking screening by field boundaries or tree cover, whilst others might have a greater sense of enclosure owing to a denser occurrence of these features.
Low-Moderate	A simple gently rolling landscape, likely to be a medium-large scale landform. Some enclosure provided by hedges and tree/woodland cover.
Low	An extensive lowland flat landscape or plateau, often a larger scale landform. A very well enclosed landscape – e.g. with fields bounded by high hedges and dense tree/woodland cover.

Landcover (including field and settlement patterns)

2.24 Since solar PV panels introduce a new land cover (of built structures), landscapes containing existing hard surfacing or built elements (e.g. urban areas, brownfield sites or large-scale horticulture) are likely to be less sensitive to field-scale solar PV development than highly rural or naturalistic landscapes. Landscapes with small-scale, more irregular field patterns are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of solar PV development than landscapes with large, regular scale field patterns because of the risk of diluting or masking the characteristic landscape patterns. This would be particularly apparent if development takes place across a number of adjacent fields where the field pattern is small and intricate (bearing in mind that the height of panels could exceed that of a hedge or stone wall).

Table 2.4: Landcover defined by the five-point landscape sensitivity scale

Scale	Definition
High	A landscape characterised by small- scale, ancient field patterns and/ or a landscape dominated by semi-natural land cover.
Moderate-High	A landscape dominated by ancient, small-scale field patterns with a few isolated areas of modern enclosure and / or with some areas of semi-natural land cover.
Moderate	A landscape with a mixture of large- scale, modern fields and some smaller, more historic enclosure. A rural landscape, perhaps with some brownfield sites or urban influences.
Low-Moderate	A landscape which is mainly defined by large, modern fields or those sub-divided for non-traditional uses, e.g. horse keeping. An area of large-scale horticulture or some urban or brownfield influences
Low	A landscape with large-scale, regular fields of mainly modern origin. An urban or 'brownfield' landscape.

Historic landscape character

2.25 Landscapes which contain important archaeological or historic features or historic associations are likely to have a higher level of sensitivity to solar PV development. Historical features may be in the form of historic land cover types and field systems, areas of buried archaeology, historic landscapes such as Registered Parks and Gardens or buildings/structures designated for their historical significance.

2.26 Areas which make a significant contribution to the setting of a historical feature or landscape may also have higher sensitivity to solar PV development. Landscapes that are primarily of modern influence and origin will have a lower sensitivity to solar PV development.

Table 2.5: Historic and landscape character defined by the five-point landscape sensitivity scale

Scale	Definition
High	A landscape with a high density of historic features important to the character of the area and great time depth
Moderate-High	A landscape with many historic features important to the area and a strong sense of time depth.
Moderate	A landscape with some visible historic features of importance to character, and a variety of time depths.
Low-Moderate	A landscape with a small number of historic features important to the character area and sometimes depth.
Low	A landscape with relatively few historic features important to the character of the area and little time depth (i.e. large intensively farmed fields)

Visual character (including skylines/intervisibility)

2.27 The relative visibility of a landscape may influence its sensitivity to solar PV development. An elevated landscape such as a hill range or plateau, which is viewed from other landscapes, may be more sensitive than an enclosed landscape, since any solar panels will be more widely seen. Landscapes which have important visual relationships with other areas, for example where one area provides a backdrop to a neighbouring area, are considered more sensitive than those with few visual relationships. The extent of inter-visibility

may be modified by the importance of these views to appreciation of the landscape, and whether adjacent landscapes provide a setting for one another.

2.28 Prominent and distinctive and/or undeveloped skylines, or skylines with important landmark features, are likely to be more sensitive to solar PV development because panels may detract from these skylines as features in the landscape, or draw attention away from existing landform or landmark features on skylines if not sited appropriately. Important landmark features on the skyline might include historic features or monuments as well as landforms. Where skylines are affected by development, e.g. through the presence of electricity pylons, the addition of solar panels may lead to visual confusion due to differences in scale. Therefore, developed skylines might not necessarily indicate lower sensitivity.

Table 2.6: Visual character defined by the five-point landscape sensitivity scale

Scale	Definition
High	A landscape which has important visual relationships with one or more neighbouring areas. A landscape with prominent or distinctive undeveloped skylines, or with important landmark features on skylines.
Moderate-High	A landscape which is intervisible with several areas, and/or where adjacent areas are strongly interrelated. A landscape with prominent skylines that may form an important backdrop to views from settlements or important viewpoints, and/or with important landmark features.
Moderate	A landscape which has some inter- visibility with neighbouring areas. A landscape with some prominent skylines, but these are not particularly distinctive – there may be some landmark features on the skyline.

Scale	Definition
Low-Moderate	A landscape with limited connections to neighbouring areas, and/or where adjacent landscapes are not visually related. A landscape in which skylines are simple, flat or gently convex and/or there are very few landmark features – other skylines in adjacent LCTs may be more prominent.
Low	An enclosed, self-contained landscape, or one with weak connections to neighbouring areas. A landscape in which skylines are not prominent, and there are no important landmark features on the skyline.

Perceptual and scenic qualities

2.29 Landscapes that are relatively remote or tranquil tend to be more sensitive to solar PV development, since solar panels may be perceived as intrusive. Landscapes which are relatively free from overt human activity and disturbance, and which have a perceived naturalness or a strong feel of traditional rurality, will therefore be more sensitive. Qualities such as tranquillity can be found even in settled areas, where the influence of overtly modern development is reduced. Solar PV development will generally be less intrusive in landscapes which are strongly influenced by modern development, including settlement, industrial and commercial development and infrastructure.

2.30 Landscapes that have a high scenic quality will be more sensitive. Scenic qualities can include contrasts and combinations of landform and landcover. Scenic qualities are recorded in the Landscape Character Assessment and noted from fieldwork.

Table 2.7: Perceptual and scenic qualities defined by the five-point landscape sensitivity scale

Scale	Definition
High	A more naturalistic landscape and/or one with little modern human influence and development. A landscape of consistently attractive character, with pleasing combinations of features, visual contrasts and/or dramatic elements. A tranquil landscape with little or no overt sign of modern human activity and development. A tranquil landscape with little or no overt sign of modern human activity and development.
Moderate-High	A more naturalistic landscape and/or one with little modern human influence and development. A landscape of attractive character, with some pleasing combinations of features, visual contrasts and/or dramatic elements.
Moderate	A rural or semi-rural landscape with much human activity and dispersed modern development, such as settlement fringes. A landscape of intermittently attractive character, with occasional pleasing combinations of features, visual contrasts and/or dramatic elements.
Low-Moderate	A landscape with much human activity and dispersed modern development, such as industrial areas. A landscape of limited attractive character, with few pleasing combinations of features, visual contrasts and/or dramatic elements.
Low	A landscape without attractive character, with no pleasing combinations of features, visual contrasts and/or dramatic elements, such as industrial areas or derelict land.

Wind energy assessment criteria

Landform and scale

2.31 A flat or gently sloping landform is likely to be less sensitive to wind energy development than a landscape with a dramatic rugged landform, distinct landform features (including prominent hills and valleys) or pronounced undulations. Larger scale landforms are likely to be less sensitive than smaller scale landforms - because turbines may appear out of scale, detract from visually important landforms or appear visually confusing (due to turbines being at varying heights) in the latter types of landscapes. Landscapes with frequent human scale features, such as settlements, farmsteads, small farm woodlands, trees and hedges may be particularly sensitive to larger turbines. This is because large features such as wind turbines may dominate smaller scale features within the landscape.

Table 2.8: Landscape and scale defined by the five-point landscape sensitivity scale

Scale	Definition
High	A landscape with a rugged landform or dramatic landform features (which may be large in scale), or a small scale or intimate landform often with a dense distribution of human-scale features, such as woodland. The landform may be very steep with exposed, visible slopes.
Moderate-High	A landscape with distinct landform features, and/or irregular in topographic appearance (which may be large in scale), or a smaller scale landform. The landscape may contain prominent, visible slopes and frequent human-scale features.
Moderate	An undulating landscape, perhaps also incised by valleys, likely to be a medium scale landform, with hidden areas as well as some visible slopes.

Scale	Definition
Low-Moderate	A simple gently rolling landscape with occasional human-scale features such as trees and domestic buildings; likely to be a medium-large scale landform.
Low	An extensive lowland flat landscape or plateau with few/no human-scale features; often a larger scale landform.

Landcover (including field and settlement patterns)

2.32 Simple, regular landscapes with extensive areas of consistent land cover are likely to be less sensitive to wind energy development than landscapes with more complex or irregular land cover patterns, smaller and / or irregular field sizes.

Table 2.9: Landcover defined by the five-point landscape sensitivity scale

Scale	Definition
High	A landscape with a strong variety in land cover, complex field patterns and / or semi-natural land cover. The field pattern may be characterised by small-scale, ancient fields.
Moderate-High	A landscape with irregular or small- scale fields and a variety in land cover. A rural landscape, perhaps with some areas of semi-natural land cover.
Moderate	A landscape with some variations in land cover and medium sized fields (or a mix of modern and historic enclosure). A rural landscape which may contain some brownfield sites or urban influences

Scale	Definition
Low-Moderate	A landscape of large open fields of modern enclosure, with little variety in land cover. A landscape which contains areas of brownfield sites or urban influences.
Low	An open, continuous landscape with uniform land cover, or an urban or 'brownfield' landscape.

Historic and landscape character

2.33 Landscapes which contain important archaeological or historic features or historic associations are likely to have a higher level of sensitivity to wind energy development. Historical features may be in the form of historic land cover types and field systems, areas of buried archaeology, historic designed landscapes such as a Registered Park and Garden, or buildings/structures designated for their historical significance.

2.34 Areas which make a significant contribution to the setting of a historical feature or landscapes may also have higher sensitivity to wind energy development. Landscapes that are primarily of modern influence and origin will have a lower sensitivity to wind energy development.

Table 2.10: Historic and landscape character defined by the five-point landscape sensitivity scale

Scale	Definition
High	A landscape with a high density of historic features (many designations) important to the character of the area and great time depth.
Moderate-High	A landscape with many historic features important to the area and a strong sense of time depth.
Moderate	A landscape with some visible historic features of importance to character, and a variety of time depths.

Scale	Definition
Low-Moderate	A landscape with a small number of historic features important to the character area and some time-depth.
Low	A landscape with relatively few historic features important to the character of the area, and little time depth (i.e. large intensively farmed fields).

Visual character (including skylines)

2.35 The relative visibility of a landscape may influence its sensitivity to wind development. An elevated landscape such as a hill range or plateau, which is viewed from other landscapes, may be more sensitive than a landscape with limited visibility. Landscapes which have important visual relationships with other areas, for example where one area provides a backdrop to a neighbouring area are considered more sensitive than those with few visual relationships. The extent of inter-visibility may be modified by the importance of these views to appreciation of the landscape, and whether adjacent landscapes provide a setting for one another.

2.36 Prominent and distinctive and/or undeveloped skylines, or skylines with important landmark features, are likely to be more sensitive to wind energy development because turbines may detract from these skylines as features in the landscape, or draw attention away from existing landform or landmark features on skylines. Important landmark features on the skyline might include historic features or monuments as well as landforms. Where skylines are affected by development, e.g. through the presence of electricity pylons or existing turbines, the addition of turbines of a different scale may lead to visual confusion. Therefore, the presence of existing development cannot always assume a lower sensitivity to new development.

Table 2.11: Visual character defined by the five-point landscape sensitivity scale

Scale	Definition
High	A landscape which has important visual relationships with one or more neighbouring areas. A landscape with prominent or distinctive undeveloped skylines, or with important landmark features on skylines.
Moderate-High	A landscape which is intervisible with several areas, and/or where adjacent areas are strongly interrelated. A landscape with prominent skylines that may form an important backdrop to views from settlements or important viewpoints, and/or with important landmark features.
Moderate	A landscape which has some inter- visibility with neighbouring areas, and/or where relationships between adjacent landscapes are of more importance. A landscape with some prominent skylines, but these are not particularly distinctive – there may be some landmark features on the skyline.
Low-Moderate	A landscape with limited connections to neighbouring areas, and/or where adjacent landscapes are not visually related. A landscape in which skylines are simple, flat or gently convex and/or there are very few landmark features on the skyline – other skylines in adjacent LCTs may be more prominent.
Low	An enclosed, self-contained landscape, or one with weak connections to neighbouring areas. A landscape in which skylines are not prominent, and there are no important landmark features on the skyline.

Perceptual and scenic qualities

2.37 Landscapes that are relatively remote or tranquil tend to be more sensitive to wind energy, since turbines may be perceived as intrusive. Landscapes

which are relatively free from overt human activity and disturbance, and which have a perceived naturalness or a strong feel of traditional rurality, will therefore be more sensitive. Qualities such as tranquillity can be found even in settled areas, where the influence of overtly modern development is reduced. Wind energy development will generally be less intrusive in landscapes which are strongly influenced by modern development, including settlement, industrial and commercial development and infrastructure.

2.38 Landscapes that have a high scenic quality will be more sensitive to wind energy development. Scenic qualities can include contrasts and combinations of landform and landcover. Scenic qualities are recorded in the Landscape Character Assessment and noted from fieldwork.

Table 2.12: Perceptual and scenic qualities defined by the five-point landscape sensitivity scale

Scale	Definition
High	A landscape of consistently attractive character, with pleasing combinations of features, visual contrasts and/or dramatic elements. All or the vast majority is designated for its scenic qualities. A tranquil landscape with little or no overt sign of modern human activity and development.
Moderate-High	A landscape of attractive character, with some pleasing combinations of features, visual contrasts and/or dramatic elements. A more naturalistic landscape and/or one with little modern human influence and development.
Moderate	A landscape of intermittently attractive character, with occasional pleasing combinations of features, visual contrasts and/or dramatic elements. A rural landscape with some modern development and human activity, such as intensive farmland.

Scale	Definition
Low-Moderate	A landscape of limited attractive character, with few pleasing combinations of features, visual contrasts and/or dramatic elements. A rural or semi-rural landscape with much human activity and dispersed modern development, such as settlement fringes.
Low	A landscape without attractive character, with no pleasing combinations of features, visual contrasts and/or dramatic elements, such as industrial areas or derelict land. A landscape with much human activity and modern development, such as industrial areas.

Making the overall judgements on landscape sensitivity

2.39 As with all assessments based upon data and information which is to a greater or lesser extent subjective, some caution is required in its interpretation. This is to avoid the suggestion that certain landscape features or qualities can automatically be associated with certain sensitivities – the reality is that an assessment of a landscape's sensitivity to development is the result of a complex interplay of often unequally weighted variables (or 'criteria').

2.40 There may be one criterion that has a strong influence on landscape sensitivity in a particular LCT (or LCA) which increases the overall landscape sensitivity score (an example for solar PV might be a landscape with a prominent/highly visible ridgeline, or significant coverage of semi-natural habitats). There may also be criteria that produce conflicting scores. For example, a small-scale landscape with historic field patterns may also afford greater screening of panels from topography and a dense network of hedgerows. A conflicting example for wind could be in the context of a settled landscape. While it would have a greater human influence (indicating a lower sensitivity to new development), it would also contain more human scale features that could be affected by large-scale wind turbines (indicating a higher

sensitivity). Conversely, a more remote landscape is likely to lack human- scale features but is likely to present a higher sensitivity from a perceptual point of view.

2.41 In these situations, a professional judgement is made on overall landscape sensitivity, taking all criteria into account in the context of their importance to the landscape character and quality of the individual LCT/LCA. This is expressed on five-point scale from High to Low, with High representing that the landscape is likely to experience a greater impact on landscape character as a result of a given development type/scale and a score of Low representing that the impact on landscape is like to be lesser.

Table 2.13: The five-point landscape sensitivity scale

Sensitivity Level	Definition
High	Key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are highly vulnerable to change from wind and solar energy development. Such development is likely to result in a significant change in character.
Moderate-High	Key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change from wind and solar energy development. There may be some very limited opportunity to accommodate wind turbines/ solar panels without significantly changing landscape character. Great care would be needed in siting and design.
Moderate	Some of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change. Although the landscape may have some ability to absorb wind and solar energy development, it is likely to cause a degree of change in character. Care would be needed in siting and design.
Low-Moderate	Fewer of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change. The landscape is likely to be able to accommodate wind and solar energy development with limited change in character. Care is still needed when siting and designing to avoid adversely affecting key characteristics.

Sensitivity Level	Definition
Low	Key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are robust in that they can withstand change from the introduction of wind turbines and solar panels. The landscape is likely to be able to accommodate wind and solar energy development without a significant change in character. Care is still needed when siting and designing these developments to ensure best fit with the landscape.

Presentation of results

2.42 The full landscape sensitivity assessments for each of the LCTs are presented in separate assessment profiles. These are structured as follows:

- A map of the LCT, with component Character Areas and representative photographs
- A summary description of the LCT against each of the assessment criteria, giving a landscape sensitivity assessment rating for both development types, following the approach set out at Tables 2.3-2.7 (Solar) and 2.8-2.12 (wind).
- An overall discussion on the landscape sensitivity of the LCT to new solar PV and wind energy developments, referencing particular features, attributes or locations which may be more or less sensitive.
- Landscape sensitivity scores for new solar PV and wind energy development within each of the different bandings, using the five-point scale shown at Table 2.13.
- Discussion of any variations to the overall LCT scores at the LCA level.

2.43 The next chapter sets out the overall results of the assessments.

Chapter 3

Landscape sensitivity assessment results

This chapter presents the overall results of the assessment.

Landscape sensitivity assessment results

3.1 The LCTs within Harborough contain areas of higher and lower landscape sensitivity that vary from the overall scores. It is therefore very important to take note of the content of the individual assessment profiles, including any commentary which highlights areas which could be more sensitive to solar PV or wind energy developments.

3.2 The overall results of the landscape capacity assessment are set out in Tables 3.1 to Table 3.20.

3.3 Figures 3.1 to 3.4 present a spatial representation of the landscape sensitivity of Harborough to new solar PV development (by the five different size bandings). These are followed by Figures 3.5 to 3.8 for wind energy development (by the four different size bandings).

3.4 These maps should always be referred to alongside the individual assessment profiles which set out the scores and reasonings behind them.

Landscape sensitivity scores to new solar PV developments

Table 3.1: Harborough sensitivity to solar PV development: LCT 1

LCT 1: Farmed Plateau Ridge Tops	Small (Up to 5ha)	Medium (6-20ha)	Large (21-50ha)	Very large (51-120ha)
LCA 1a: Tilton on the Hill and Skeffington	High	High	High	High

Table 3.2: Harborough sensitivity to solar PV development: LCT 2

LCT 2: Elevated Rolling Farmland	Small (Up to 5ha)	Medium (6-20ha)	Large (21-50ha)	Very large (51-120ha)
LCA 2a: Marefield and Owston	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	High	High
LCA 2b: Hungarton and Lowesby Estates	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	High	High
LCA 2c: Houghton-on-the-Hill to Keyham	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High

LCT 2: Elevated Rolling Farmland	Small (Up to 5ha)	Medium (6-20ha)	Large (21-50ha)	Very large (51-120ha)
LCA 2d: Great Glen to Billesdon	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	High	High
LCA 2e: Shangton to East Langton	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High

Table 3.3: Harborough sensitivity to solar PV development: LCT 3

LCT 3: Rolling Wooded Farmland	Small (Up to 5ha)	Medium (6-20ha)	Large (21-50ha)	Very large (51-120ha)
LCA 3a: Loddington	High	High	High	High
LCA 3b: Rolleston to Allexton	Moderate-High	High	High	High
LCA 3c: Horninghold and Stockerston	High	High	High	High

Table 3.4: Harborough sensitivity to solar PV development: LCT 4

LCT 4: Settled and Farmed Edge	Small (Up to 5ha)	Medium (6-20ha)	Large (21-50ha)	Very large (51-120ha)
LCA 4a: Stoughton to Scraptoft	Moderate	Moderate-High	High	High
LCA 4b: Great Stretton to Newton Harcourt	Moderate	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	High

Table 3.5: Harborough sensitivity to solar PV development: LCT 5

LCT 5: Settled Vale	Small (Up to 5ha)	Medium (6-20ha)	Large (21-50ha)	Very large (51-120ha)
LCA 5a: Fleckney	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
LCA 5b: Kibworth	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	High	High
LCA 5c: Market Harborough	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	High	High
LCA 5d: Theddingworth	Moderate	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	High

Table 3.6: Harborough sensitivity to solar PV development: LCT 6

LCT 6: River Valley Slopes	Small (Up to 5ha)	Medium (6-20ha)	Large (21-50ha)	Very large (51-120ha)
LCA 6a: Hallaton to Stonton Wyville	High	High	High	High
LCA 6b: Medbourne to Eyebrook Reservoir	High	High	High	High

Table 3.7: Harborough sensitivity to solar PV development: LCT 7

LCT 7: River Valley Floodplain	Small (Up to 5ha)	Medium (6-20ha)	Large (21-50ha)	Very large (51-120ha)
LCA 7a: Great Bowden to Welham	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
LCA 7b: Medbourne to Great Easton	Moderate	Moderate-High	High	High

Table 3.8: Harborough sensitivity to solar PV development: LCT 8

LCT 8: Elevated Farmed Plateau	Small (Up to 5ha)	Medium (6-20ha)	Large (21-50ha)	Very large (51-120ha)
LCA 8a: Laughton and Mowsley	Moderate-High	High	High	High
LCA 8b: Husbands Bosworth	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	High	High

Table 3.9: Harborough sensitivity to solar PV development: LCT 9

LCT 9: Open Farmed Lowlands	Small (Up to 5ha)	Medium (6-20ha)	Large (21-50ha)	Very large (51-120ha)
LCA 9a: Willoughby Waterleys to Shearsby	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
LCA 9b: Claybrooke Magna to Leire	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	Moderate-High

Table 3.10: Harborough sensitivity to solar PV development: LCT 10

LCT 10: Transitional Rolling Farmland	Small (Up to 5ha)	Medium (6-20ha)	Large (21-50ha)	Very large (51-120ha)
LCA 10a: Lutterworth to Catthorpe	Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
LCA 10b: Gilmorton to Broughton Astley	Low-Moderate	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High
LCA 10c: Walcote to Swinford and North Kilworth	Low-Moderate	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High

Landscape sensitivity scores to new wind energy developments

Table 3.11: Sensitivity to new wind energy development - LCT 1

LCT 1: Farmed Plateau Ridge Tops	Small (Up to 5ha)	Medium (6-20ha)	Large (21-50ha)	Very large (51-120ha)
LCA 1a: Tilton on the Hill and Skeffington	High	High	High	High

Table 3.12: Sensitivity to new wind energy development - LCT 2

LCT 2: Elevated Rolling Farmland	Small (Up to 5ha)	Medium (6-20ha)	Large (21-50ha)	Very large (51-120ha)
LCA 2a: Marefield and Owston	Moderate-High	High	High	High
LCA 2b: Hungarton and Lowesby Estates	Moderate-High	High	High	High
LCA 2c: Houghton-on-the-Hill to Keyham	Moderate-High	High	High	High

LCT 2: Elevated Rolling Farmland	Small (Up to 5ha)	Medium (6-20ha)	Large (21-50ha)	Very large (51-120ha)
LCA 2d: Great Glen to Billesdon	Moderate-High	High	High	High
LCA 2e: Shangton to East Langton	Moderate-High	High	High	High

Table 3.13: Sensitivity to new wind energy development - LCT 3

LCT 3: Rolling Wooded Farmland	Small (Up to 5ha)	Medium (6-20ha)	Large (21-50ha)	Very large (51-120ha)
LCA 3a: Loddington	High	High	High	High
LCA 3b: Rolleston to Allexton	High	High	High	High
LCA 3c: Horninghold and Stockerston	High	High	High	High

Table 3.14: Sensitivity to new wind energy development - LCT 4

LCT 4: Settled and Farmed Edge	Small (Up to 5ha)	Medium (6-20ha)	Large (21-50ha)	Very large (51-120ha)
LCA 4a: Stoughton to Scraptoft	Moderate-High	High	High	High
LCA 4b: Great Stretton to Newton Harcourt	Moderate-High	High	High	High

Table 3.15: Sensitivity to new wind energy development - LCT 5

LCT 5: Settled Vale	Small (Up to 5ha)	Medium (6-20ha)	Large (21-50ha)	Very large (51-120ha)
LCA 5a: Fleckney	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	High	High
LCA 5b: Kibworth	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	High	High
LCA 5c: Market Harborough	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	High	High
LCA 5d: Theddingworth	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	High	High

Table 3.16: Sensitivity to new wind energy development - LCT 6

LCT 6: River Valley Slopes	Small (Up to 5ha)	Medium (6-20ha)	Large (21-50ha)	Very large (51-120ha)
LCA 6a: Hallaton to Stonton Wyville	High	High	High	High
LCA 6b: Medbourne to Eyebrook Reservoir	High	High	High	High

Table 3.17: Sensitivity to new wind energy development - LCT 7

LCT 7: River Valley Floodplain	Small (Up to 5ha)	Medium (6-20ha)	Large (21-50ha)	Very large (51-120ha)
LCA 7a: Great Bowden to Welham	Moderate-High	High	High	High
LCA 7b: Medbourne to Great Easton	Moderate-High	High	High	High

Table 3.18: Sensitivity to new wind energy development - LCT 8

LCT 8: Elevated Farmed Plateau	Small (Up to 5ha)	Medium (6-20ha)	Large (21-50ha)	Very large (51-120ha)
LCA 8a: Laughton and Mowsley	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	High	High
LCA 8b: Husbands Bosworth	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	High	High

Table 3.19: Sensitivity to new wind energy development - LCT 9

LCT 9: Open Farmed Lowlands	Small (Up to 5ha)	Medium (6-20ha)	Large (21-50ha)	Very large (51-120ha)
LCA 9a: Willoughby Waterleys to Shearsby	Moderate	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	High
LCA 9b: Claybrooke Magna to Leire	Moderate	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	High

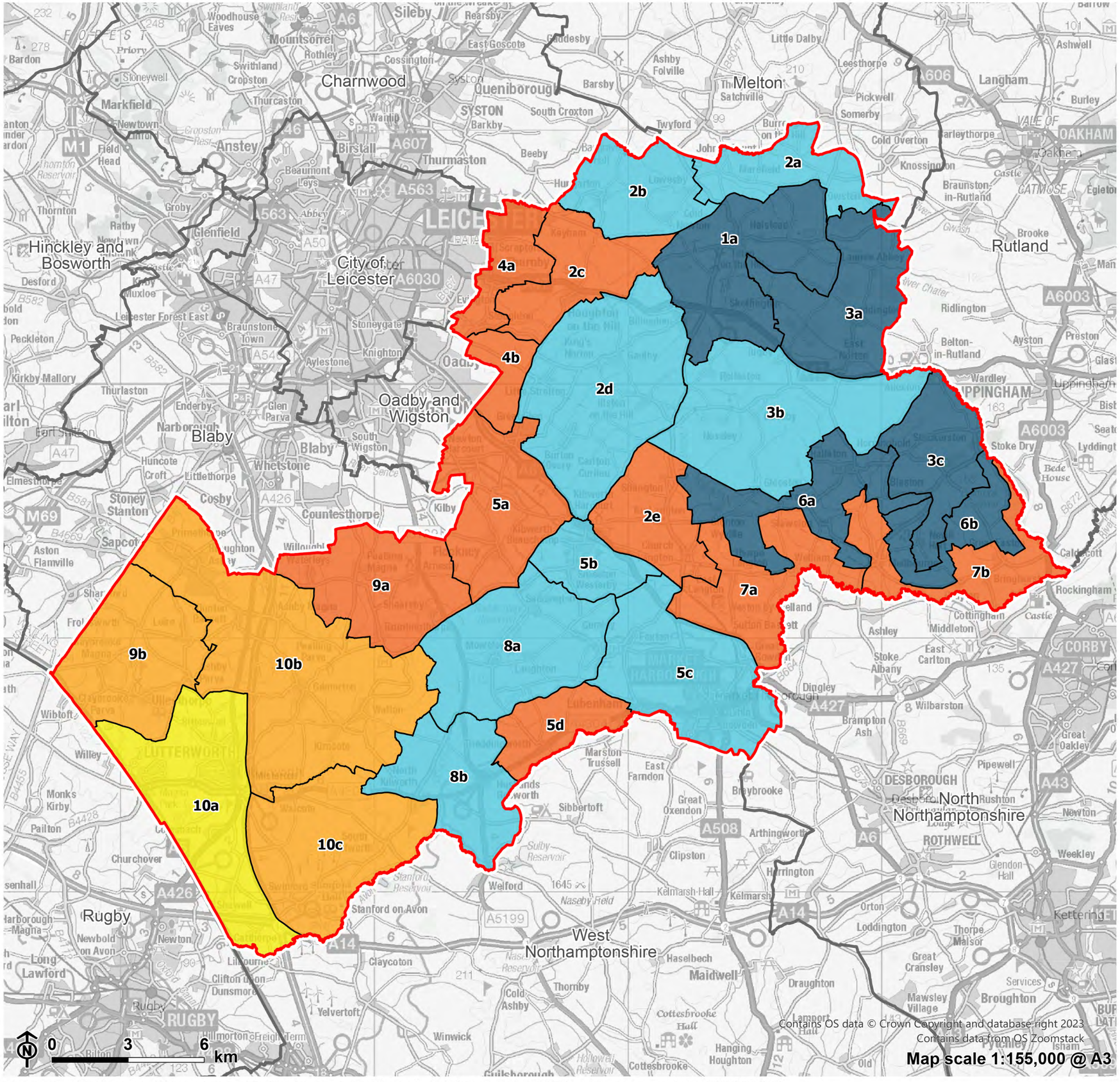
Table 3.20: Sensitivity to new wind energy development - LCT 10

LCT 10: Transitional Rolling Farmland	Small (Up to 5ha)	Medium (6-20ha)	Large (21-50ha)	Very large (51-120ha)
LCA 10a: Lutterworth to Catthorpe	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High
LCA 10b: Gilmorton to Broughton Astley	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High
LCA 10c: Walcote to Swinford and North Kilworth	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for
Solar PV and Wind Energy Development
Harborough District Council

LUC

Figure 3.1: Landscape sensitivity to small scale (up to 5ha) solar energy development



Harborough District
Neighbouring Local Authority
Landscape Character Area

Landscape sensitivity to small scale solar (up to 5 ha)

- High
- Moderate-High
- Moderate
- Low-Moderate
- Low

Landscape Character Types

1. Farmed Plateau Ridge Tops
2. Rolling Tributary Farmland
3. Rolling Wooded Farmland
4. Settled and Farmed Edge
5. Settled Vale
6. River Valley Slopes
7. River Valley Floodplain
8. Elevated Farmed Plateau
9. Open Farmed Lowlands
10. Transitional Rolling Farmland

LUC

Figure 3.2: Landscape sensitivity to medium scale (6-20 ha) solar energy development

Harborough District
Neighbouring Local Authority
Landscape Character Area

Landscape sensitivity to medium scale solar (6-20 ha)

High
Moderate-High
Moderate
Low-Moderate
Low

Landscape Character Types

1. Farmed Plateau Ridge Tops
2. Rolling Tributary Farmland
3. Rolling Wooded Farmland
4. Settled and Farmed Edge
5. Settled Vale
6. River Valley Slopes
7. River Valley Floodplain
8. Elevated Farmed Plateau
9. Open Farmed Lowlands
10. Transitional Rolling Farmland

Map scale 1:155,000 @ A3

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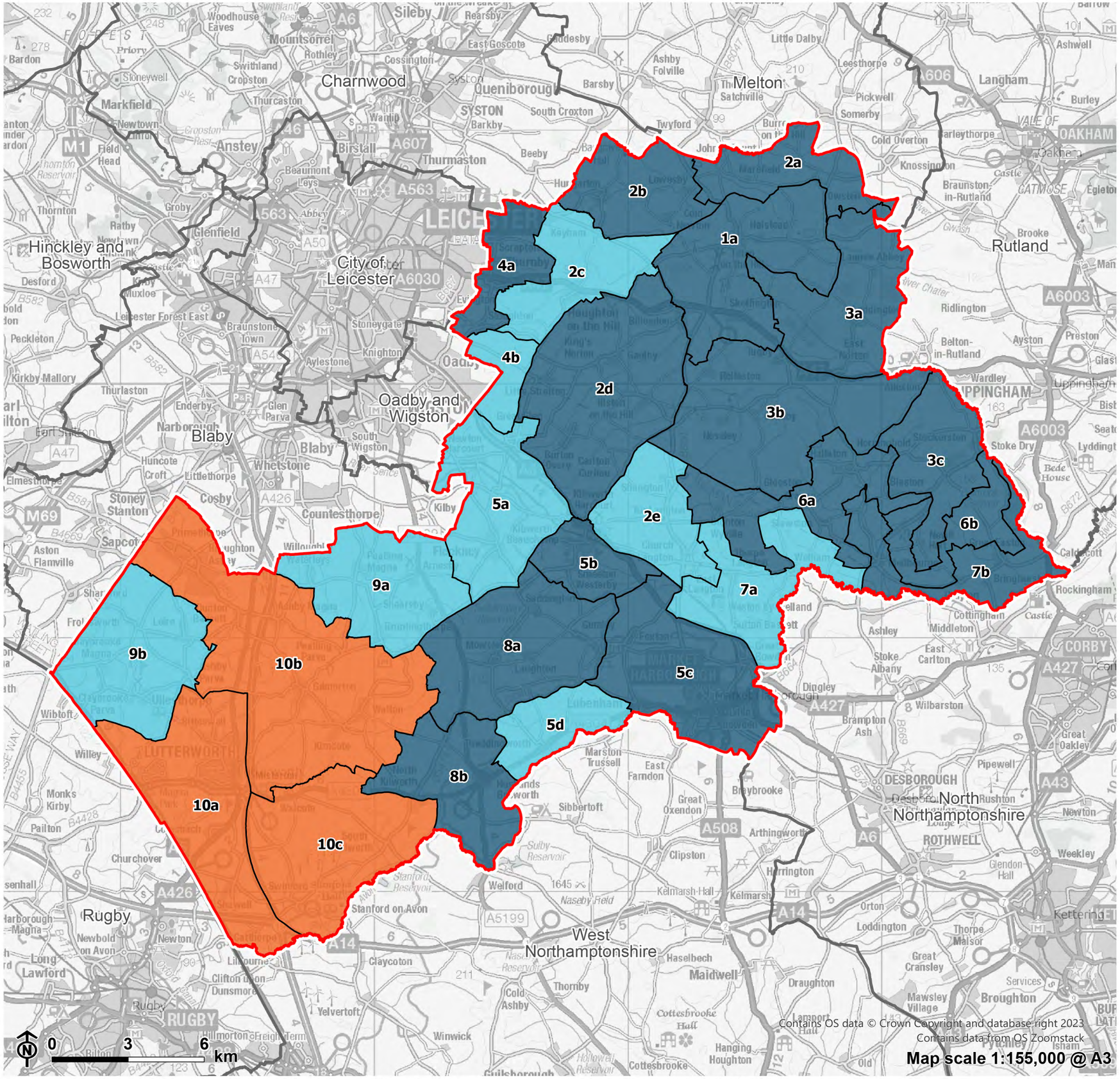
Figure 3.3: Landscape sensitivity to large (21-50 ha) solar energy development



Harborough District
Neighbouring Local Authority
Landscape Character Area

Landscape sensitivity to large scale solar (21-50 ha)

- High
- Moderate-High
- Moderate
- Low-Moderate
- Low

Landscape Character Types

1. Farmed Plateau Ridge Tops
2. Rolling Tributary Farmland
3. Rolling Wooded Farmland
4. Settled and Farmed Edge
5. Settled Vale
6. River Valley Slopes
7. River Valley Floodplain
8. Elevated Farmed Plateau
9. Open Farmed Lowlands
10. Transitional Rolling Farmland

Map scale 1:155,000 @ A3

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Figure 3.4: Landscape sensitivity to very large (51-120 ha) solar energy development

Harborough District
Neighbouring Local Authority
Landscape Character Area

Landscape sensitivity to very large scale solar (51-120 ha)

High
Moderate-High
Moderate
Low-Moderate
Low

Landscape Character Types

1. Farmed Plateau Ridge Tops
2. Rolling Tributary Farmland
3. Rolling Wooded Farmland
4. Settled and Farmed Edge
5. Settled Vale
6. River Valley Slopes
7. River Valley Floodplain
8. Elevated Farmed Plateau
9. Open Farmed Lowlands
10. Transitional Rolling Farmland

Map scale 1:155,000 @ A3

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Figure 3.5: Landscape sensitivity to small scale (25-60 metres tip height) wind energy development

Harborough District
Neighbouring Local Authority
Landscape Character Area

Landscape sensitivity to small scale wind (25-60m)

High
Moderate-High
Moderate
Low-Moderate
Low

Landscape Character Types

1. Farmed Plateau Ridge Tops
2. Rolling Tributary Farmland
3. Rolling Wooded Farmland
4. Settled and Farmed Edge
5. Settled Vale
6. River Valley Slopes
7. River Valley Floodplain
8. Elevated Farmed Plateau
9. Open Farmed Lowlands
10. Transitional Rolling Farmland

Map scale 1:155,000 @ A3

LUC

Figure 3.6: Landscape sensitivity to medium scale (61-100 metres tip height) wind energy development

Harborough District
Neighbouring Local Authority
Landscape Character Area

Landscape sensitivity to medium scale wind (61-100m)

High
Moderate-High
Moderate
Low-Moderate
Low

Landscape Character Types

1. Farmed Plateau Ridge Tops
2. Rolling Tributary Farmland
3. Rolling Wooded Farmland
4. Settled and Farmed Edge
5. Settled Vale
6. River Valley Slopes
7. River Valley Floodplain
8. Elevated Farmed Plateau
9. Open Farmed Lowlands
10. Transitional Rolling Farmland

Map scale 1:155,000 @ A3

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Solar PV and Wind Energy Development
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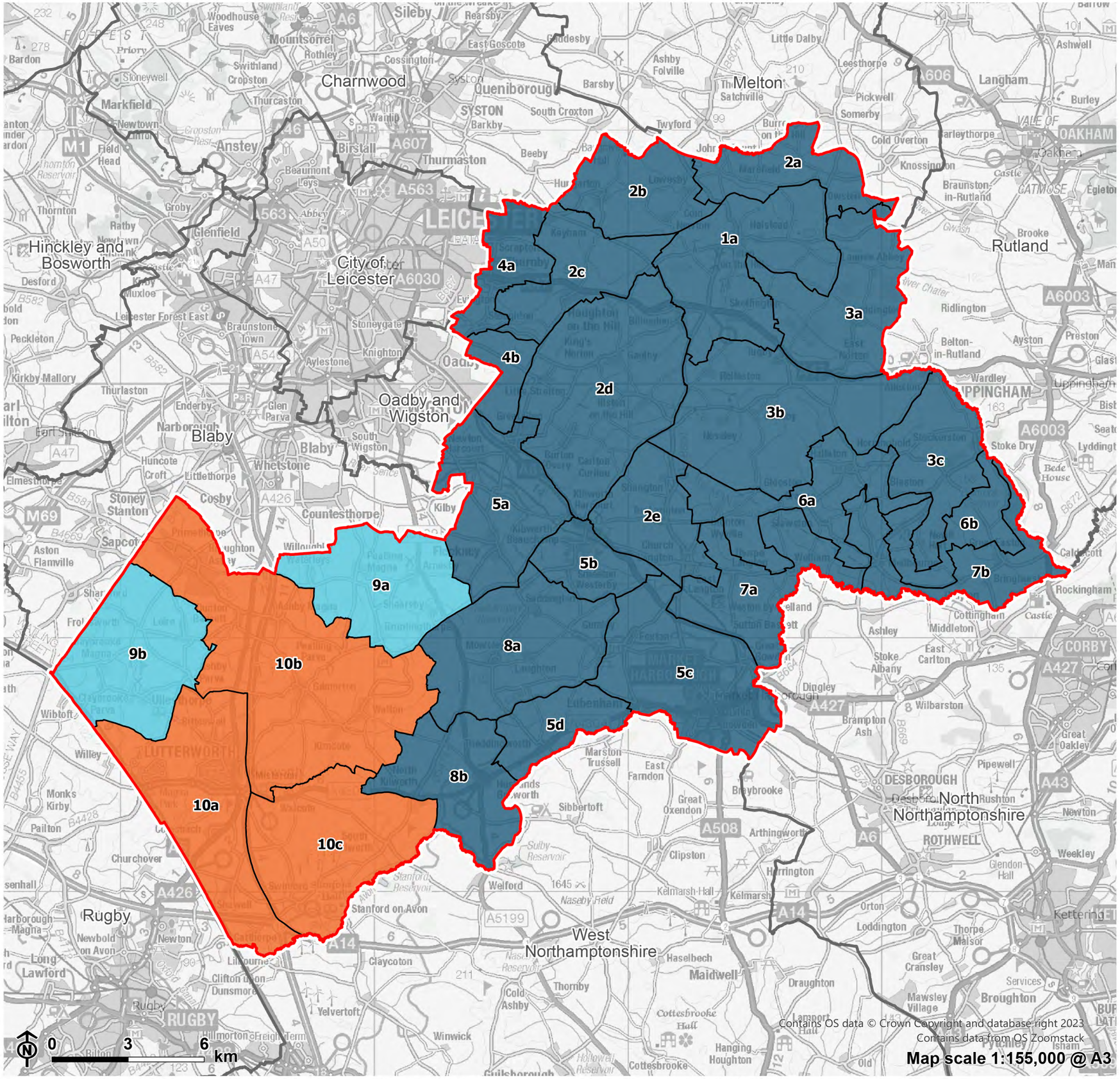
Figure 3.7: Landscape sensitivity to large scale (101 to 150 metres tip height) wind energy development



- Harborough District
- Neighbouring Local Authority
- Landscape Character Area

Landscape sensitivity to large scale wind (101-150m)

- High
- Moderate-High
- Moderate
- Low-Moderate
- Low

Landscape Character Types

1. Farmed Plateau Ridge Tops
2. Rolling Tributary Farmland
3. Rolling Wooded Farmland
4. Settled and Farmed Edge
5. Settled Vale
6. River Valley Slopes
7. River Valley Floodplain
8. Elevated Farmed Plateau
9. Open Farmed Lowlands
10. Transitional Rolling Farmland

Map scale 1:155,000 @ A3

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for
Solar PV and Wind Energy Development
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Figure 3.8: Landscape sensitivity to very large scale (151-200 metres tip height) wind energy development

Harborough District
Neighbouring Local Authority
Landscape Character Area

Landscape sensitivity to very large scale wind (151-200m)

High
Moderate-High
Moderate
Low-Moderate
Low

Landscape Character Types

1. Farmed Plateau Ridge Tops
2. Rolling Tributary Farmland
3. Rolling Wooded Farmland
4. Settled and Farmed Edge
5. Settled Vale
6. River Valley Slopes
7. River Valley Floodplain
8. Elevated Farmed Plateau
9. Open Farmed Lowlands
10. Transitional Rolling Farmland

Map scale 1:155,000 @ A3

Appendix A

User Guide

This appendix gives information on how to use available information to shape proposals and assist in assessing and appraising planning applications.

A.1 In order to assist in using available information to shape proposals for renewable energy development and assist in assessing and appraising planning applications, we have prepared a list of questions that should be considered. These are:

- What type of change is proposed?
- To which Landscape Character Type (LCT) does the proposal relate (refer to Figure 2.1)? If a proposal is close to the edge of two or more LCTs, all relevant profiles will need to be consulted.
- To what degree does the site reflect the typical sensitivities identified in the sensitivity criteria for the LCT in question? Which of these sensitivities will be affected by the proposal and how?
- Does the assessment text identify any areas of higher or lower sensitivity at Landscape Character Area (LCA) level that may be applicable to the proposal?
- Are there any specific site opportunities for mitigation (including those identified in relevant LCT or LCA profiles)?

Strategic guidance for future renewable energy development within Harborough District

Solar PV development guidance

- The overall aim should be to make sure that solar PV developments do not become a key characteristic of the landscape (i.e. avoiding significant cumulative impacts on the LCT from multiple developments that would result in an overall change in landscape character).
- Developments should be clearly separated so that collectively they do not have a defining influence on the overall experience of the landscape.
- Ensure that solar PV developments form part of the mixed farmland mosaic – rather than becoming a dominating land use.
- PV developments be sited within farmland, avoiding semi-natural habitat to retain the naturalistic characteristics and habitat interest.
- Consider views from more elevated areas within the borough which may overlook the area when considering the siting and design of solar PV development in the landscape.
- Locate solar PV development in sheltered folds in the landscape where it will be less visible and have less of an influence on landscape character.
- Avoid locating solar PV development where it would be directly overlooked at close quarters, particularly side-on.
- Maintain the rural character of the landscape and ensure that cumulative development does not impact on any relatively undeveloped skylines.
- Ensure solar PV development does adversely affect the scenic qualities of the landscape or the rural setting it may provide.
- Protect the landscape's role as an immediate rural hinterland to the settlements.

- Conserve the pattern of discreet, small historic villages and retain separation between settlements.
- Protect dark skies by preventing and positively reducing artificial light pollution.

Wind energy development guidance

- Ensure that any new developments are similar in terms of siting, layout and relationship to key landscape characteristics, so as to present a simple image that relates clearly to landscape character.
- Avoid close juxtaposition of different turbine designs and heights within the height category, aiming instead for a consistent design and height in any given area.
- Avoid siting wind turbines in landscapes with smaller scale and irregular field patterns which would be highly vulnerable to wind energy development.
- Ensure wind energy development does not detract from historic landmarks including the numerous Scheduled Monuments, villages with conservation areas and the setting of listed buildings, including churches with spires that are often locally important skyline features.
- Consider views from local settlements and popular recreational routes/areas, including the National Trails, when considering the siting and design of wind energy development in the landscape.
- Maintain the rural character of the landscape and ensure that cumulative development does not impact on the relatively undeveloped skylines.
- Ensure wind energy development does not adversely affect the scenic qualities of the landscape or the rural setting it may provide.
- Protect the landscape's role as an immediate rural hinterland to the settlements.
- Protect dark skies by preventing and positively reducing artificial light pollution.

Harborough landscape character assessment (August 2024)

A.2 The Harborough Landscape Character Assessment (August 2024) evaluation of each LCT identifies key sensitivities and values, provides a landscape strategy, and details guidelines for how the strategy can be achieved through landscape management and development management. Refer to this guidance for each LCT within the decision making process.

Guidance on undertaking Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Overall need/purpose

A.3 A landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) is a key part of assessing the effect of proposed wind energy or solar PV developments, including as part of the EIA process. An EIA may not be required for all developments however it is likely that a landscape and visual impact assessment or appraisal (LVIA) will be required to accompany the planning application. The level of detail required will be dependent upon the sensitivity of the site and the nature of the proposal and its potential effects. Pre-application discussions with Harborough Council are strongly recommended for all wind energy and solar PV applications. This will provide an opportunity to agree the scope, level of detail and presentation of the LVIA, and ensure that it is based on accurate and up-to-date information. The LVIA should address the key landscape issues raised by the proposals, providing information that is relevant, necessary and material to the decisions to be made.

A.4 General guidance on LVIA is provided in the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment's 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (GLVIA3). However, the following

guidance sets out the type of information that could be expected to be submitted as part of an LVIA for a solar PV or wind energy development in Harborough. In addition, LVIAs for EIA developments should comply with the scoping opinion given by the planning authority where this has been sought.

A.5 The following section sets out the required components of an LVIA, in terms of information required to submit along with a planning application.

Project description

A.6 The planning application should include a description of the project at each phase in its life cycle in sufficient detail to allow the assessment of landscape and visual effects including:

- The location, layout, orientation and dimensions or extent of all plant and structures (including plans, elevations and sections);
- A description of the scale and duration of project activities during construction, operation, and decommissioning (including method of construction and traffic generation);
- Information on site access including routes for transport of renewables infrastructure, including any need for removal of landscape features;
- Location and size of temporary lay down areas, construction compounds, materials storage, temporary fencing, foundations and site cable runs;
- Excavation/levelling details and soil removal estimates (if applicable);
- Plans for site reinstatement;
- Details of any tracking or moving mechanisms;
- Location, specification and design of any structures, roads, hardstanding or storage buildings, temporary and permanent;
- Location and appearance of any signage, security features, lighting, fencing and onsite and offsite grid connection points (substation/switchgear cabinet);

- Plans for landscape mitigation measures and/or landscape enhancement; and
- Plans for decommissioning (removal of infrastructure and ancillary structures, proposals for restoration and future land management).

A.7 The LVIA should highlight those aspects of the development that are the key sources of landscape and visual change.

Baseline studies

A.8 The baseline studies should set out the existing conditions within the study area. The study area should be agreed with the planning authority. Information on land use, landscape features, landscape character and landscape designations should be provided, drawing on the Landscape Character Assessment. A field survey should be undertaken to supplement desk based information.

A.9 The landscape baseline should be evaluated in accordance with the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (3rd Edition) – known as GLVIA3.

A.10 A zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) should be prepared to indicate the area over which the renewable energy development may be seen. These should consider all components of the renewable energy development e.g. solar PV panels and associated infrastructure. ZTVs should be used, alongside fieldwork, to identify representative assessment viewpoints. These viewpoints should be discussed and agreed with the planning authority and other stakeholders. The number of viewpoints required will vary depending on the size of the development and sensitivity of the location. Priority should be given to views from distances of less than 3km and from sensitive locations (e.g. residential areas, areas popular with visitors or for outdoor recreation where views may be focussed on the landscape and recognised/iconic views) The purpose for selection should be recorded within the LVIA.

Mitigation

A.11 As a consequence of the assessment process there are likely to be modifications to the scheme design to minimise landscape and visual effects, particularly for larger schemes. In addition, there may be measures to prevent, reduce or offset significant adverse effects. These should be described in terms of relationship to/conservation of valued landscape features, relationship to landscape character (particularly topography, scale, landform and landscape pattern), and appearance from sensitive viewpoints. All mitigation measures should be described and an indication of how they will be implemented provided. Mitigation itself may have an impact on the landscape character, for example, hedgerow screening for a solar PV development could interrupt important long-distance views.

A.12 A description of the main reasons for site selection and any alternatives in site design or layout would also be helpful.

Enhancement

A.13 Enhancement aims to improve the character and quality of the landscape. It may take many forms, including improved land management or creation of new landscapes or features. Landscape enhancement, as part of a proposal, will be looked upon favourably.

Description of effects

A.14 This section should systematically identify and describe the likely effects of the proposal, identifying magnitude of change as a deviation from baseline conditions. Methods should be clearly set out. The assessment should cover effects at construction, operational and decommissioning phases and should consider direct, indirect, secondary, short, medium and long term effects.

Effects on landscape features/fabric, landscape character, landscape values and visual amenity should be assessed.

- Effects on landscape features/fabric should consider loss of elements (e.g. hedges, trees).
- Effects on landscape character should describe the direct changes that will occur to the character of the landscape in which the proposal is located and the indirect changes to character of landscapes from where the development will be visible – this should include how the renewable energy development will affect perceptions of character and how widespread and prominent the changes will be.
- Effects on landscape values should describe any potential changes in special qualities of landscapes as recorded in Landscape Character Assessments.
- Effects on visual amenity should describe and illustrate the extent of visibility and record changes in views from the representative assessment viewpoints with reference to photographs and visualisations. The assessment needs to ensure that the representative viewpoints and visualisations are used to explain the impact of the scheme on visual receptors (e.g. on roads or public rights of way) across the whole route, rather than just spot points.
- Effects on settlements and individual properties should also be considered where relevant.

Assessment of significance

A.15 The significance of effects should be assessed by reference to GLVIA 3. The assessment should identify which effects are considered to be significant in the context of the EIA Regulations (for EIA development), as well as which are adverse or beneficial. Methods should be clearly set out and any assumptions clearly stated. The report should acknowledge that when assessments result in multiple negative effects, even when these are not classified as significant under EIA regulations, the cumulative effect of these can be significant.

Presentation of the LVIA

A.16 The document should be clear and logical in its layout and presentation. It should be a balanced document providing an unbiased account of the landscape and visual effects, with reasoned and justifiable arguments. A glossary of technical terms and reference list would also be helpful. For EIA development, a non-technical summary should be provided to enable a non-specialist to understand the landscape and visual effects of the proposal – this should include a summary description of the development, the aspects of landscape character and visual amenity likely to be significantly affected, and the mitigation measures to be implemented.

Maps and illustrations to accompany an LVIA

A.17 The number of maps and illustrations may vary according to the sensitivity of the site and type of proposal. Where possible, a suitable OS base should be used to indicate vegetation and public rights of way.

A.18 As a guide, the following illustrations will typically be required as part of an LVIA (see next section for maps and figures required as part of a cumulative assessment):

- A site layout plan showing position of infrastructure, access arrangements, location of any compounds, and all ancillary elements for the development in the context of the physical landscape fabric (this may already form part of the planning application in which case it can be cross-referenced);
- National Character Areas within the study area;
- Landscape Character Areas/Types (distance dependent upon scale of development);
- Open access land and public rights of way within the study area;
- Rights of way and ancient woodland closer to the site (distance dependent upon scale of development);

- Mapping of historic parks and gardens, conservation areas, scheduled monuments, listed buildings and heritage trails may also be relevant to the LVIA (this information may also be recorded in the cultural heritage assessment);
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility within study area or an indication of extent of visibility (including the proportion of the site which will be theoretically visible if possible, and clearly indicating distance radii from the site);
- A map showing viewpoint locations, overlaid onto the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (may be combined with above maps if relevant);
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility overlaid onto character areas and designations (likely to be more than one map); and
- Photographs and photomontages/visualisations for viewpoints to illustrate the location and extent of development in the landscape, provided and reproduced at a minimum viewing distance of 30-50cm, and reflect best practice. Viewpoint locations and type of visualisation will need to be agreed with the LPA. Winter views are usually required as outlined in GLVIA3.

Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (CLVIA)

Overall need/purpose

A.19 Cumulative assessment as part of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required under the EU Directive on EIA (Directive 97/11/EC amending Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment), which was implemented from 1999. It refers to ‘an additional cumulative effect that is additional to the impact to be expected from the developments taken individually’ (The Council of the European Union, 1997).

A.20 The Landscape Institute defines cumulative landscape and visual effects as ‘additional changes to landscape and visual amenity caused by the proposed development in conjunction with other developments (associated with or separate to it) or actions that have occurred in the past, present or are likely to occur in the foreseeable future’. Cumulative effects can trigger the EIA process. Even if EIA is not required, it is likely that a cumulative landscape and visual impact assessment or appraisal (CLVIA) will be required to accompany the planning application.

Differences between LVIA and CLVIA

A.21 Although both cumulative and non-cumulative landscape and visual impact assessment (CLVIA and LVIA respectively) consider the effects of a renewable energy development on views and on the landscape character of the surrounding area, there are differences in the baseline against which the assessments are carried out.

A.22 For LVIA, the baseline is the existing landscape, which includes any existing solar PV or wind energy developments. This is a known baseline that can be clearly defined. For CLVIA, the baseline is to some extent uncertain, and is partially speculative. This is because renewable energy developments considered as part of the baseline should include not only those existing in the landscape, but also those which are consented but not yet built. The baseline may therefore include (in addition to existing renewables developments):

- Renewables developments currently under construction
- Renewables developments which have been granted planning permission but are not yet constructed;

A.23 Schemes that are at the pre-planning or scoping stage are not generally considered in the assessment. They should only be included “if absolutely necessary to make a realistic assessment of potential cumulative effects”. In accordance with GLVIA 3 it may also be necessary to separately consider the total and additional cumulative effects of developments. The list of schemes to

include and assessment scenarios should be agreed with the Council who will need to decide what is reasonable and proportionate to request for specific applications.

Information required to be submitted as part of a CLVIA

A.24 The level of detail required will be dependent upon the sensitivity of the site, the nature of the proposal and other existing and proposed schemes, and the potential for cumulative effects. A pre-planning application meeting with the relevant LPA may provide an opportunity to discuss scope. The following presents some guidance on undertaking CLVIA of wind energy/solar PV developments in Harborough.

Study area and sites to be included

A.25 It is suggested that the CLVIA focuses on potentially significant cumulative effects and that a study area is selected to enable these significant effects to be reported. Study areas will depend on the size and location of other existing and proposed schemes within the landscape and will vary with type of landscape, but initial areas of search may be up to 10km from the proposal. Sequential impacts should also be considered, for example along a long-distance footpath. All existing and proposed renewables developments should be mapped within that area. The assessment may then focus in on ‘hotspot’ areas to identify likely significant effects – these ‘sub-areas’ might be less than 10km from the development. This will help keep the assessment proportional to the scale of the project and the nature of its likely effects.

Cumulative ZTV Analysis

A.26 Creating Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTVs) for each development, and overlaying these to create a CZTV, could help indicate areas where the proposed development is predicted to be visible (either on its own, or in conjunction with other renewables developments), and areas where other renewables developments will be visible but the proposed development will not. This can help focus the assessment.

A.27 Applicants should assess the cumulative landscape and visual effects of different scenarios, if applicable. This may include, for example, a scenario that considers the proposed development in the context of other existing, under construction and consented renewables developments (a fairly certain scenario) as well as a scenario that considers the proposed development in the context of other existing, under construction and consented developments.

Choice of viewpoints

A.28 A number of viewpoints should be selected to illustrate cumulative visual effects arising from the renewable energy development being assessed, in combination with other existing and proposed renewable energy developments. These selected viewpoints may be the same as, or a subset, of the main LVIA viewpoints, or they may be different. In any case they should be selected specifically to illustrate cumulative effects, including sequential views, representing the worst-case. These should be agreed with the relevant LPA prior to submission of a planning application and preferably at the scoping stage.

Baseline evaluation for the CLVIA

A.29 The sensitivity of the landscape and visual resource will be the same as that recorded in the LVIA. However, guidance published by Scottish Natural

Heritage (SNH, 2012) on CLVIA recommends that key routes should also form part of the cumulative assessment. If routes are included in the assessment their sensitivity will also need evaluating. Key routes should be selected with reference to SNH guidance and should include well used or important routes (e.g. National and Regional Trails and well used tourist routes) that may be affected by cumulative effects.

Preparing cumulative visualisations

A.30 Cumulative visualisation, to a level agreed with the LPA, and/or photomontages should be prepared from viewpoints to illustrate the nature and degree of cumulative change to the landscape and views. This is particularly important in cases where significant cumulative effects are predicted.

Describing and assessing effects

Magnitude of cumulative change to landscape

A.31 The magnitude of cumulative change to landscape character is the influence the additional renewables development will have on the character of the area which is informed by:

- The distance over which the development will have an influence on landscape character in combination with other renewables developments;
- The siting or location of the development being assessed in relation to other existing and proposed renewables developments (and their relationship to landscape character types);
- The design of the renewable energy development being assessed in relation to other existing and proposed renewable energy developments (including scale and layout of the development); and

- Whether key characteristics of the surrounding landscape are affected by the cumulative impact.

A.32 It will also be important to consider the combined effect of fencing, tracks, buildings and other ancillary features of the renewable energy developments on the landscape.

Magnitude of cumulative change to views

A.33 The magnitude of cumulative change to views should be described taking into account the following considerations:

- The arrangement of developments in the view, e.g. developments seen in one direction or part of the view, or seen in many directions;
- The visibility/prominence of the Proposed Development compared to the other existing and proposed schemes;
- The apparent distances, from the viewer, and between developments;
- The relationship between the various sizes and layouts of the developments;
- In the case of magnitude of change to routes (sequential effects), the relative duration of views of developments from routes;
- It will also be important to consider the combined effect of tracks on views; and
- The CLVIA may also consider cumulative effect on views from settlements through use of CZTVs and visits to the settlements.

Significance

A.34 The assessment should identify which effects are considered to be significant in the context of the EIA Regulations (for EIA development), as well as which are adverse or beneficial.

Figures

A.35 The number of maps and illustrations may vary according to the sensitivity of the site, the nature of the proposal and other existing and proposed schemes, and the potential for cumulative effects. However, as a guide the following illustrations will typically be required as part of a CLVIA for EIA development:

- Location map for all operational, consented and application sites within the study area, presented on a 1:50,000 or 1:25,000 OS base to indicate public rights of way, with concentric distance bands;
- CZTV for existing and proposed renewable energy developments in combination with the proposed development (CZTVs may be particularly useful for larger schemes – more than one CZTV may be useful to show different scenarios, as set out in the guidance above);
- CZTVs overlaid onto landscape character areas, landscape designations and cumulative assessment viewpoints as relevant; and
- Photographs or visualisations (comprising photomontages) of up to 360 degrees to show the proposed development in the context of other developments – annotated with site name, status (operational, permitted, application), and distance to each development, and clearly labelled to indicate how the images should be held and viewed.

Appendix B

Data and Information Sources

This appendix lists the used data and information sources.

Key sources of information used to inform the study

- Harborough Landscape Character Assessment (LUC 2024)
- Nature Conservation designations (international, national and local)

B.1 In addition, the following table lists the main datasets collated and analysed in Geographic Information System (GIS) software as a key part of the evidence base for this study.

Table B.1: GIS Base maps considered in the study

GIS layer	Source
Local authority boundaries	Ordnance Survey
Ordnance Survey 1: 25K	Harborough Council
Ordnance Survey 1: 50K	Harborough Council
Ordnance Survey 1:250k	Ordnance Survey
Aerial imagery	ESRI

Table B.2: List of GIS landscape maps considered in the study

GIS layer	Source
National Character Areas	Natural England
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty	Natural England
Agricultural Land Classification	Natural England
Light pollution	CPRE
Tranquillity	CPRE
CORINE Land Cover	EEA

Table B.3: List of GIS historic environment maps considered in the survey

GIS layer	Source
Conservation areas	Harborough Council
Listed buildings	Historic England
Registered Parks and Gardens	Historic England
Scheduled Monuments	Historic England
Registered battlefields	Historic England
Locally listed buildings	Harborough Council

Table B.4: List of GIS ecological environment maps considered in study

GIS layer	Source
Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI)	Harborough Council

GIS layer	Source
Priority Habitat Inventory (PHI)	Natural England
Local Nature Reserves (LNR)	Natural England
National Nature Reserves (NNR)	Natural England
Ramsar	Natural England
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)	Natural England
Special Protection Areas (SPA)	Natural England
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Natural England
Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI)	Natural England

Table B.5: List of GIS access and recreation maps considered in study

GIS	Source
Country Parks	Natural England
National Trails	Natural England
National and Regional Cycle Routes	Sustrans
Ordnance Survey Open Greenspace	Ordnance Survey
PRoW Act Open Access Land / Open Country	Natural England
National Trust Land – Always Open / Limited Access	National Trust

Appendix C

Landscape Character Type Profiles

This appendix gives an assessment of landscape sensitivity to renewable energy development for the Landscape Character Types

LCT 1: Farmed Plateau Ridge Tops

Figure C.1: Contextual map of LCT 1: Farmed Plateau Ridge Tops

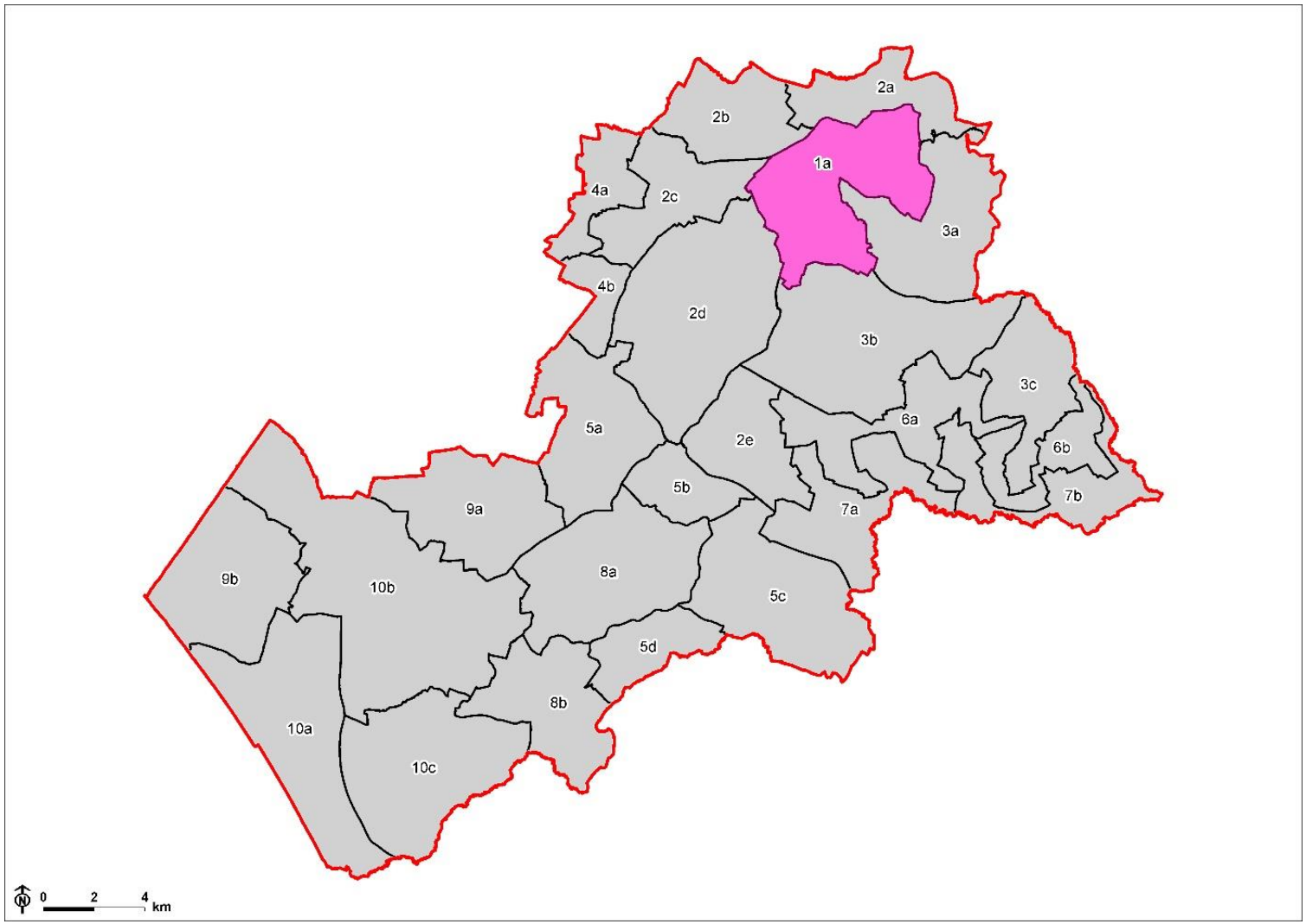

Figure C.2: LCT 1: Farmed Plateau Ridge Tops with component Landscape Character Areas

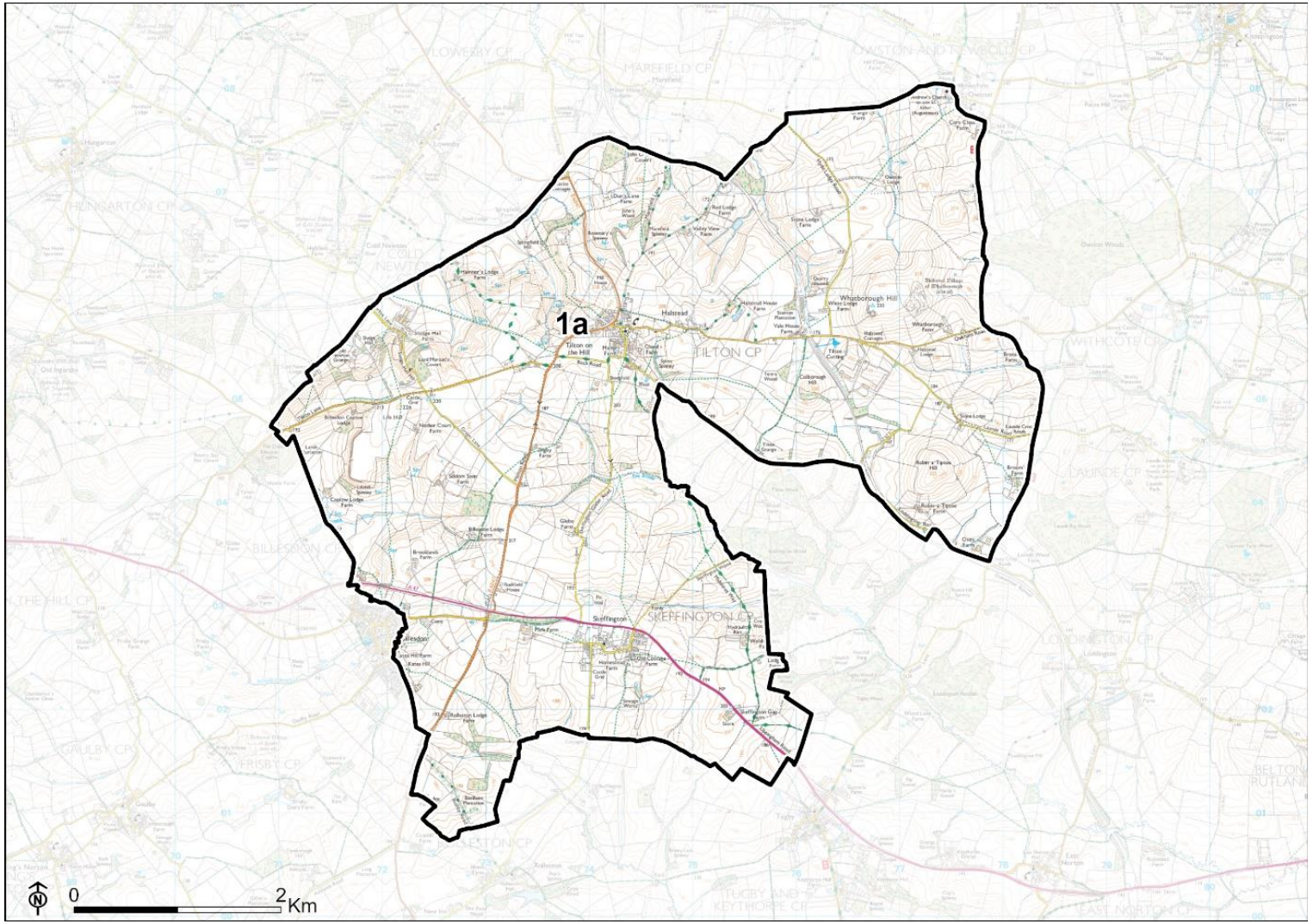

Figure C.3: LCT 1 representative photo 1

Figure C.4: LCT 1 representative photo 2

Assessment of landscape sensitivity to renewable energy development

Landscape sensitivity assessment

Landform and scale (including sense of openness/ enclosure)

- The Farmed Plateau Ridge Tops LCT comprises an elevated landscape of rolling farmland, with distinctive hills and steep tributary valleys.
- The landscape falls from a high point north-east of the LCT at Whatborough Hill (circa 230m AOD) to the valley bottom (circa 135m AOD).
- Primarily a landscape of large-scale arable fields with pockets of smaller pastoral farmland on steeper slopes. Human scale features include; the small woodland blocks, vegetation along the former railway line and farmsteads.
- An elevated character with a strong sense of openness and steep visible hillsides. There is little enclosure due to the often gappy hedgerows and limited woodland except within the narrow tributary stream valleys.

Landcover (including field and settlement patterns)

- The landcover is generally arable farmland with a large-scale regular field pattern, with pockets of smaller-scale pastoral farmland.
- An agricultural landscape with isolated semi-natural habitats, including vegetation along streams and railway lines, pockets of grassland and wide grass verges with wildflowers along roadsides.

- Fields are bound by a relatively intact hedgerow network, which is gappy in places, and occasional hedgerow trees, interspersed by occasional woodland blocks and narrow woodland strips.
- Settlement is limited to the villages of Skeffington and Tilton on Hill with small, isolated properties and farmsteads scattered across the landscape.

Historic landscape character

- Time depth is associated with the historic character of the villages of Skeffington and Tilton on the Hill, which are designated as conservation areas and contain listed buildings, including grade I and II* churches.
- Fields are generally mid-19th century re-organised piecemeal enclosure and 18th/19th century planned enclosure, although field amalgamations resulting in very large post-war fields have weakened the overall time depth of the landscape pattern.
- Occasional ridge and furrow, scheduled monuments and a dismantled railway add to the historical value of the landscape.

Visual character (including skylines)

- The rolling landform and limited woodland allows for long-distance views across much of the LCT. The prominent hills form an important backdrop to views.
- The landscape has a strong visual relationship with neighbouring LCT's including the woodland of LCT 3, the valleys and parkland of LCT 2, and the neighbouring Rutland district.
- An overhead pylon line, large agricultural buildings and masts are often prominent on the skyline and contribute to a cluttered skyline.
- The church at Tilton-on-the-Hill forms a landmark feature and is nestled well within the landscape.

Perceptual and scenic qualities

- The landscape is predominantly rural with a low settlement density.
- The influence of the A47 and busier roads in the south, along with pylons, masts, and large agricultural buildings create a fragmented landscape in places.
- Tranquillity and light pollution levels vary within the LCT, with the north-east experiencing higher levels of tranquillity and dark skies while the south is disrupted due to busier roads and infrastructure.
- Recreational access to the landscape is associated with PRoW, local cycle routes, and the Midshires Way Long Distance path.

Table 1: Overall sensitivity scores for each criterion

Criteria	Sensitivity Score: Solar	Sensitivity Score: Wind
Landform and scale (including sense of openness/enclosure)	High	High
Landcover (including field and settlement patterns)	Moderate	Moderate
Historic landscape character	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
Visual character (including skylines)	High	High
Perceptual and scenic qualities	Moderate-High	Moderate-High

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments

Existing solar PV developments

- There are no operational or consented solar PV developments within this LCT at the time of writing this assessment.

Summary of overall landscape sensitivity

- The large-scale field pattern and consistent arable land cover lowers landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments. The limited semi-natural land cover or human scale features, and existing large-scale infrastructure development, including pylons, masts, and large agricultural buildings, some of which are present on the skyline, also decrease landscape sensitivity.
- However, the distinctive landform and open, elevated character of the landscape and the presence of historic features, such as the scheduled monuments and historic villages, increase the sensitivity of the landscape to solar PV development. In addition, the recreational network within the LCT, through the PRoW / Long Distance Footpath, also increase sensitivity to solar PV developments, as does the rural character and sense of tranquillity in most areas.
- Taking into account the features mentioned above, in particular the open nature of the landscape, its dramatic landform and far-reaching views, the sensitivity of the landscape to solar PV developments of any scale would be High. Overall, solar PV development is likely to result in a significant change in character within this LCT.

Variations in landscape sensitivity at LCA level

- This section is not applicable as there is one LCA within LCT 1.

Table 2: Landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments in LCT 1 – overall landscape sensitivity rating

Solar PV Development scenario	LCA 1a
Small solar (1-5 ha)	High
Medium solar (6-20 ha)	High
Large solar (21-50 ha)	High
Very large solar (51-120 ha)	High

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to wind energy developments

Existing wind energy developments

- There were no wind farms in operation or consented within this LCT at the time this assessment was completed.

Summary of overall landscape sensitivity

- Landscape characteristics that increase landscape sensitivity to wind energy development include the distinctive hills, steep tributary valleys and limited woodland cover which allows for intervisibility to surrounding landscapes and long-distance views within the LCT and to adjacent landscapes. In addition, the historic villages and the PRoW/ Long Distance Footpath increase landscape sensitivity to wind energy development.
- However, the large-scale field pattern and regular landcover pattern of arable farmland, as well as the existing vertical features, including pylon lines and masts, many of which form skyline features, indicate a lower sensitivity to wind energy development.

- Taking into account the features mentioned above, the strong rural character and high tranquillity within the LCT, despite the presence of some vertical features, the sensitivity score for wind energy developments is considered to be high. Areas which are more sensitive to wind energy development broadly cross of the north of the LCT whilst those more fragmented areas in the south would be slightly less sensitive, but not enough to reduce the overall score. Overall, the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are highly vulnerable to change from wind energy development.

Any variations in landscape sensitivity

- There is only one LCA within this LCT so there would not be any variations at LCA level.

Table 3: Landscape sensitivity to wind energy developments in LCT 1 – overall landscape sensitivity rating

Wind energy development scenario	LCA 1a
Small scale wind (25-60m)	High
Medium scale wind (61-100m)	High
Large scale wind (101-150m)	High
Very large scale wind (151-200m)	High

LCT 2: Elevated Rolling Farmland

Figure C.5: Contextual map of LCT 2: Elevated Rolling Farmland

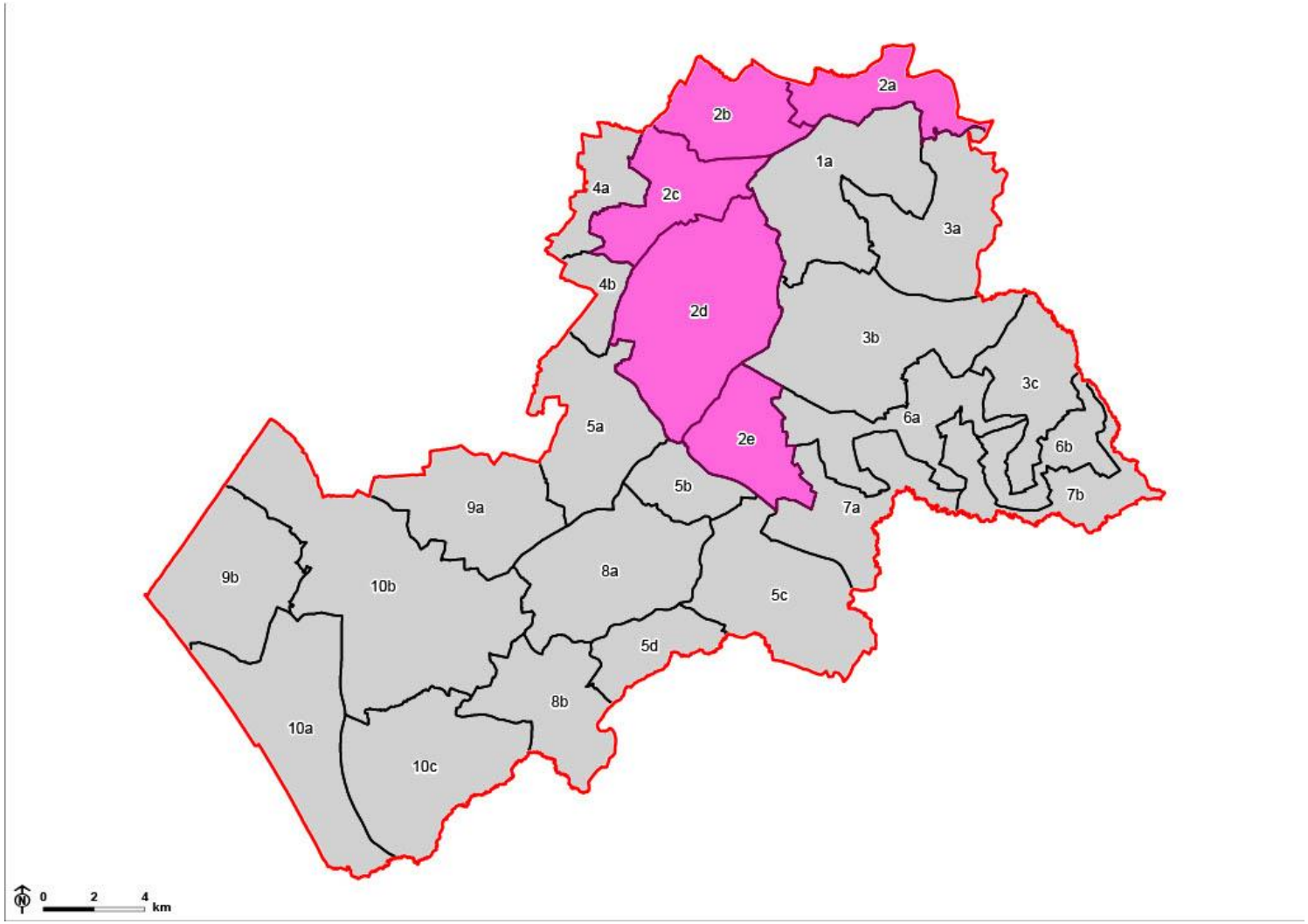

Figure C.6: LCT 2: Elevated Rolling Farmland with component Landscape Character Areas

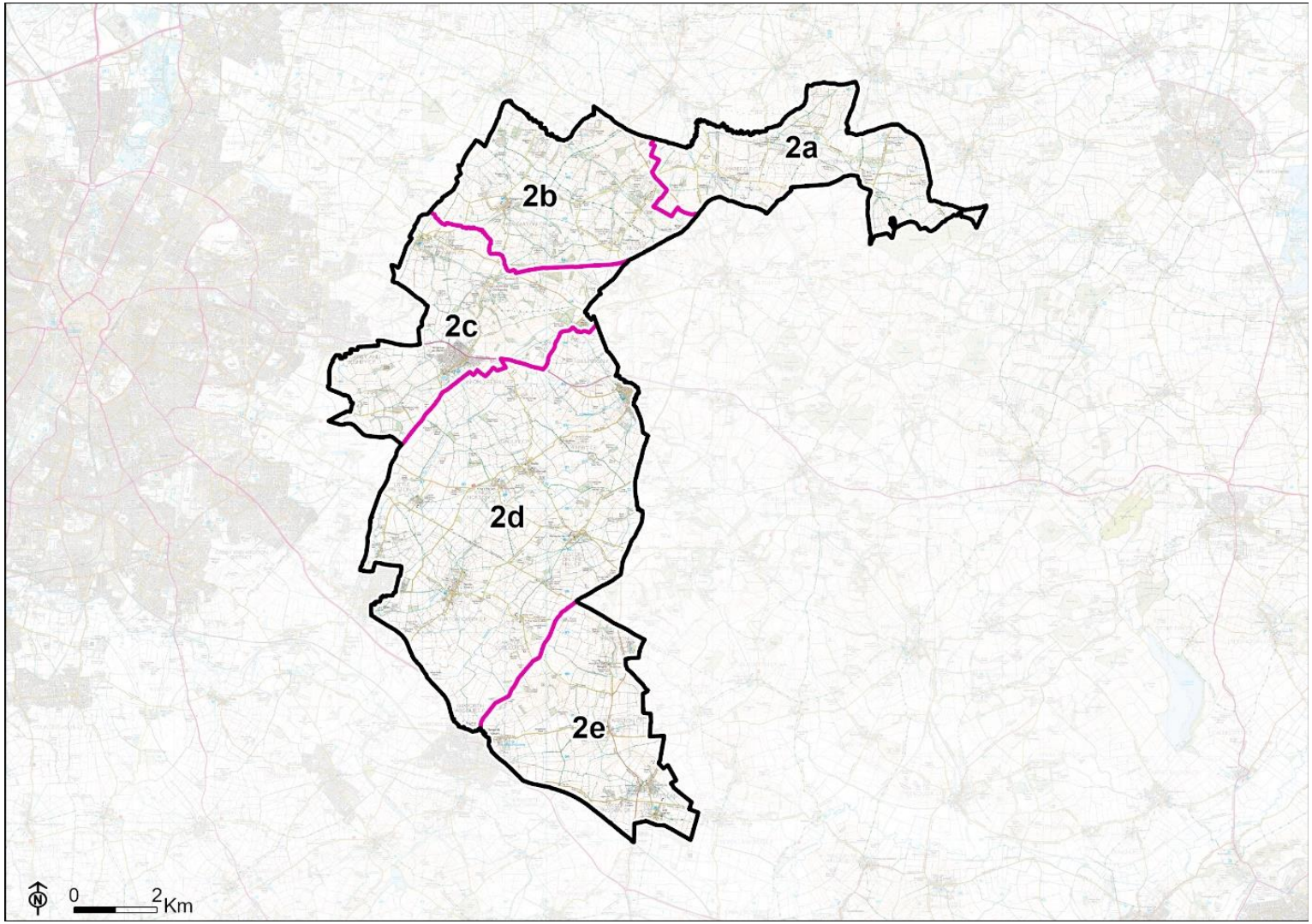

Figure C.7: LCT 2 representative photo 1

Figure C.8: LCT 2 representative photo 2

Assessment of landscape sensitivity to renewable energy development

Landscape sensitivity assessment

Landform and scale (including sense of openness/ enclosure)

- This LCT mostly comprises an elevated rolling landform, with the steep more intimate landform of the tributary valleys which feed the Rivers Soar, Sence, Wreake and Welland.
- This varied landform ranges from approximately 90m AOD at Keyham to 188m AOD at Frisby.
- Fields are primarily medium to large scale fields, with some smaller scale fields on the edge of settlement and in the valley bottoms. Human scale features include hedgerows and some small blocks of woodland.
- There is a strong sense of openness in elevated areas in contrast with the sense of enclosure experienced within valley bottoms.

Landcover (including field and settlement patterns)

- Landcover is generally arable fields, with some pasture in the valley bottoms and areas of parkland character. Fields are bound by hedgerows with hedgerow trees.
- Deciduous woodlands are located alongside streams and on steeper slopes, creating a network of valued habitats along with grassland and traditional orchards. However, the overall network is fragmented.
- Large to medium regular and irregular field patterns, with some smaller scale fields on the edge of settlements, including pockets of horse pasture.

- A settled landscape, with a large number of small, scattered villages and hamlets throughout the LCT, some nucleated and other on hilltops, arranged in a linear formation.

Historic landscape character

- A strong sense of time-depth as the landscape is rich in historic landscapes and features.
- Villages and hamlets are often associated with historic estates. Historic villages such as Tur Langton, Illston-on-the-Hill and Kings Norton are designated as conservation areas due to their clusters of listed buildings, notably grade II* listed churches and historic houses.
- The historic parkland and estates within the LCT (including registered parks and gardens) display a strong sense of time-depth, with parkland trees and avenues of trees within a landscape of gated roads and open grazing.
- Numerous designated assets include scheduled monuments, many of which are the sites of medieval villages, such as at Frisby and Carlton Curlieu, and areas of ridge and furrow which further contribute to the time-depth of the landscape.

Visual character (including skylines)

- Long-distance views are afforded across the open rolling farmland resulting in important visual relationships with neighbouring areas, including north across the district of Melton and to the south. This contrasts with the enclosure within the tributary valley bottoms.
- The prominent hill tops of LCT 1 to the east and the woodland within LCT 3 to the south and east are notable in views and often form features on the horizon.
- Intrusive vertical elements disrupt the skyline including overhead pylon lines in the west the LCT, masts south of Tur Langton and in LCT 1, and wind turbines.

Perceptual and scenic qualities

- The LCT has a strong sense of place, comprising mixed farmland interspersed with distinctive parkland, with small historic villages linked by winding tree-lined local roads.
- The exposed rural landscape has a sense of tranquillity and relatively dark skies becoming stronger in the east away from urban noise and light pollution extending from Leicester and in proximity to the settled landscapes of LCT 4 and 5 in the south and west.
- Larger scale infrastructure, such as the A47 which runs east-west across the LCT and the A6 which runs along the southern boundary, introduce human activity to the rural landscape.
- Rich recreational resources include the National Cycle Network (NCN), public rights of way (PRoW) and local cycle routes and long-distance footpaths, such as the Midshires Way and Leicestershire Round.

Table 4: Overall sensitivity scores for each criterion

Criteria	Sensitivity Score: Solar	Sensitivity Score: Wind
Landform and scale (including sense of openness/enclosure)	High	High
Landcover (including field and settlement patterns)	Moderate	Moderate
Historic landscape character	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
Visual character (including skylines)	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
Perceptual and scenic qualities	Moderate-High	Moderate-High

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments

Existing solar PV developments

- Circa 6.5 ha. operational solar farm at land off Ingarsby Lane to the north of Houghton on the Hill (15/00676/FUL), located within central north of LCA 2c: Houghton-on-the-Hill to Keyham.

Summary of overall landscape sensitivity

- The predominantly medium to large-scale, arable landcover with fragmented semi-natural habitats and man-made elements on the skyline indicate a lower sensitivity to solar PV development.
- However, the varied landform, a sense of openness with intervisibility with neighbouring areas, time depth associated with medieval villages and areas of parkland, and strong scenic qualities increase sensitivity to solar PV developments.
- The tributary valleys are considered to be more sensitive to solar PV developments due to their steeper slopes, a higher concentration of semi-natural habitats and smaller scale field pattern.
- Taking into account the features mentioned above, particularly the open character of the landscape, with far reaching views across the open rolling farmland, the sensitivity to solar PV development ranges from moderate for very small scale, where some of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change, to a score of high for large and very large scale, where development would likely result in a significant change in character.

Variations in landscape sensitivity at LCA level

- LCA 2b: Hungarton and Lowesby Estates and 2d: Great Glen to Billesdon are most sensitive within LCT 2 to PV development due to the higher

elevation and openness, the more evident parkland character, time depth (including historic hilltop villages) and stronger sense of place.

- LCA 2a: Marefield and Owston is considered to be less sensitive to solar PV development than LCA 2b and 2d due to often having a larger field pattern and more uniform arable land cover. However, this is offset by the fact that LCA 2a also has darker skies, is more tranquil and less woodland cover, resulting in more openness, and therefore increasing sensitivity to solar PV development.
- LCA 2c: Houghton-on-the-Hill to Keyham and 2e: Shangton to East Langton are less sensitive to solar PV development within LCT 2. This is due to these LCAs being less open, and being in close proximity to larger settlements, as well as comprising a more transitional landscape, in terms of landform.

Table 5: Landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments in LCT 2 – overall landscape sensitivity ratings

Solar PV development scenario	LCA 2a	LCA 2b	LCA 2c	LCA 2d	LCA 2e
Small solar (Up to 5 ha)	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	Moderate	Moderate-High	Moderate
Medium solar (6-20 ha)	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	Moderate	Moderate-High	Moderate
Large solar (21-50 ha)	High	High	Moderate-High	High	Moderate-High
Very large solar (51-120 ha)	High	High	High	High	High

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to wind energy developments

Existing wind energy developments

- There were no wind farms/turbines in operation within this LCT at the time this assessment was completed.

Summary of overall landscape sensitivity

- Landscape characteristics that increase landscape sensitivity to wind energy development include the varied landform features of this LCT (particularly the intimate valleys) the intervisibility of this LCT with adjacent landscapes, time depth associated with medieval villages and areas of parkland, and strong scenic qualities.
- The tributary valleys are also considered to be more sensitive to wind turbine development due to visible slopes and smaller scale field pattern.
- Intrusive vertical elements on the skyline, indicate a lower landscape sensitivity to wind energy developments.
- Taking into account the features mentioned above, particularly the intervisibility of the landscape with adjacent landscapes, tranquillity and scenic value, and historic associations of parts of the LCT, the sensitivity to wind energy development ranges from moderate-high for very small scale development, where key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change from wind energy to high where they are highly vulnerable to change and development would result in a significant change in character.

Variations in landscape sensitivity at LCA level

- Although there are some variations in the landscape of the LCT, and LCA 2c and 2e are the more transitional areas, all LCAs would have similar

sensitivity to wind energy development, with high sensitivity to medium and larger scales of turbines.

Table 6: Landscape sensitivity to wind energy developments in LCT 2 – overall landscape sensitivity rating

Wind energy development scenario	LCA 2a	LCA 2b	LCA 2c	LCA 2d	LCA 2e
Small scale wind (25-60m)	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
Medium scale wind (61-100m)	High	High	High	High	High
Large scale wind (101-150m)	High	High	High	High	High
Very large scale wind (151-200m)	High	High	High	High	High

LCT 3: Rolling Wooded Farmland

Figure C.9: Contextual map of LCT 3: Rolling Wooded Farmland

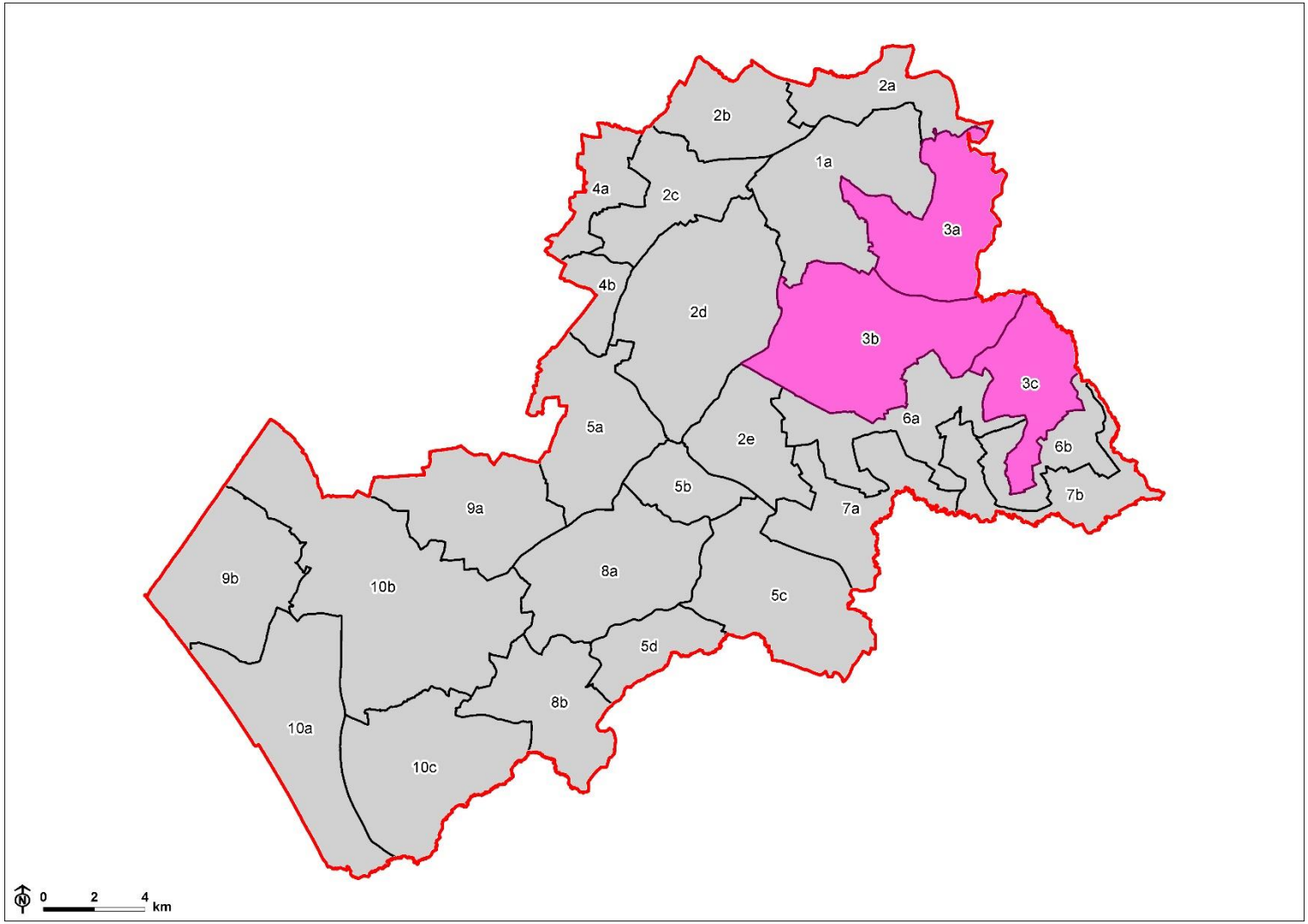

Figure C.10: LCT 3: Rolling Wooded Farmland with component Landscape Character Areas

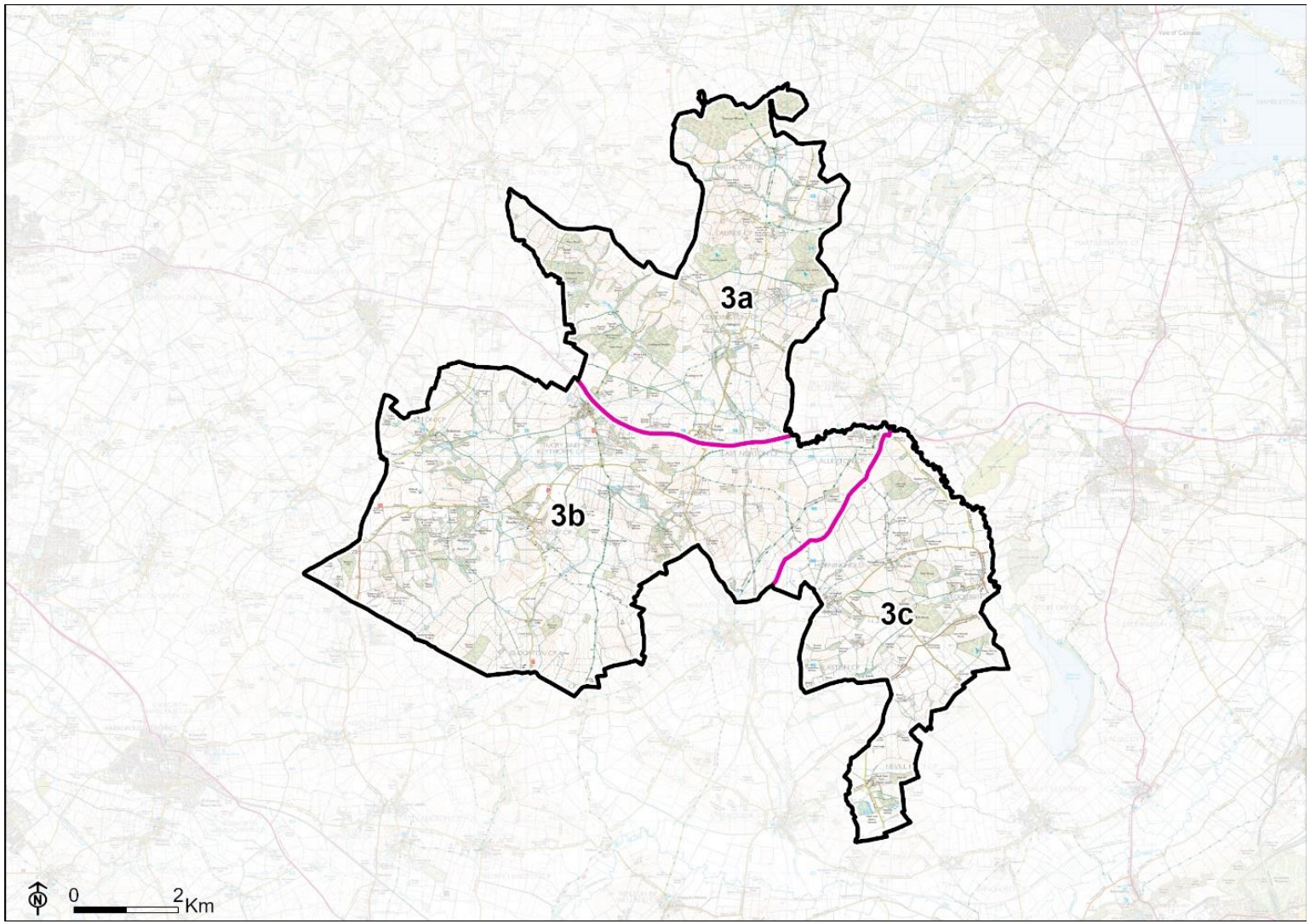

Figure C.11: LCT 3 representative photo 1

Figure C.12: LCT 3 representative photo 2

Assessment of landscape sensitivity to renewable energy development

Landscape sensitivity assessment

Landform and scale (including sense of openness/ enclosure)

- The varied landform is a defining characteristic of the area, which comprises a rolling landscape of elevated ridges and narrow valleys, ranging from approximately 75m to 202m AOD.
- A large scale landscape due to simple field pattern and extensive woodland blocks. Human scale features include woodlands, trees, hedgerows, and farmstead.
- The farmed landscape has a sense of openness, particularly from more elevated areas, contrasting with intimate views within the narrow valleys and woodlands.

Landcover (including field and settlement patterns)

- Landcover comprises arable fields bound by strong hedgerows and hedgerow trees. This is interspersed with large blocks of woodland, much of which is ancient (and often designated as LWS and SSSI). Woodland is more fragmented in LCA 3a, with occasional coniferous blocks.
- Semi-natural landcover including grassland, meadows, traditional orchards, seasonally wet pasture, and wet woodland are scattered throughout the landscape.
- A pattern of large arable field with simple field patterns, often organic in form, interspersed with some smaller areas of geometric, smaller-scale fields, particularly in LCA 3c. Settlement comprises scattered, nucleated villages and hamlets, connected by a network of winding rural lanes.

Historic landscape character

- Time depth is associated with the extensive woodland which represents the remnants of a medieval royal hunting ground with rich cultural heritage such as Leighfield Forest, and PRoW's running through the area.
- Estates and formal parkland landscapes associated with country houses such as Launde Abbey contribute to the historic character of the landscape.
- Many villages have nucleated cores (designated as conservation areas) with listed buildings and churches with little modern expansion. This includes Rolleston, Noseley, Goadby, Tugby, East Norton, Loddington and Allexton.
- Fields patterns are varied, with planned enclosure, reorganised piecemeal enclosure, and very large post-war and large irregular fields.
- Occasional ridge and furrow and a dismantled railway line add to the sense of time depth in the landscape.

Visual character (including skylines)

- The farmed landscape of the LCT has a sense of openness with medium to long-distance views experienced from higher elevations and from the edge of woodland across the rolling landform. This contrasts with intimate views along the valley bottoms and within woodland, as well as designed views within parkland.
- Longer distance views are often interrupted by the landform, mature trees, and woodland blocks and as a result there is limited intervisibility with the surrounding landscapes in neighbouring LCTs.
- Woodland such as Launde Big Wood and Launde Abbey are a distinctive feature on the skyline.

Perceptual and scenic qualities

- Farmland and woodland create a strong rural character and tranquillity. This is strengthened in areas of woodland, due to the sense of remoteness and enclosure.
- Some of the darkest skies are experienced in the district due to a relative absence of light pollution.
- The A47 cuts east-west, resulting in a localised reduction in tranquillity due to traffic movement and noise.
- The recreational resource offered within the LCT is rich, including the NCN, a strong network of PRoW and long-distance footpaths, such as the Midshires Way, Leicestershire Round, and the Macmillan Way.

Table 7: Overall landscape sensitivity scores for each criterion

Criteria	Sensitivity Score: Solar	Sensitivity Score: Wind
Landform and scale (including sense of openness/enclosure)	High	High
Landcover (including field and settlement patterns)	High	High
Historic landscape character	High	High
Visual character (including skylines)	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
Perceptual and scenic qualities	High	High

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments

Existing solar PV developments

- There are no operational or in planning solar PV developments within this LCT at the time of writing this assessment.

Summary of overall landscape sensitivity

- Enclosure provided by extensive woodland cover and the rolling landform of ridges and valleys, the large arable fields, and simple field patterns indicate a lower landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments.
- However, the distinct landform features, including prominent slopes and ridgelines, as well as the open character of much of the landscape increase sensitivity to solar PV development. Also, the presence of historic features including historic estates and formal parklands, occasional ridge and furrow, the extensive deciduous woodlands (much of which is

ancient), the PRoW running through the landscape and strong rural character increase sensitivity to solar PV developments.

- Taking account of the features above, the intervisibility and far-reaching views, the sensitivity score for solar PV developments would range between moderate-high to high dependant on its size and location. Less elevated areas would be less sensitive for smaller solar PV developments whilst placing solar PV developments in areas with parkland character would bring significant change in character to the landscape. Overall, the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are highly vulnerable to change from solar energy development.

Variations in landscape sensitivity at LCA level

- The sensitivity of LCA 3b is decreased compared to the other LCAs in this LCT. This is due to its smaller and more fragmented woodland, and higher occurrence of coniferous blocks (compared to the extensive ancient woodland of LCA 3a), and its larger, simpler field pattern (compared to the more intricate field pattern in LCA 3c).

Table 8: Landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments in LCT 3 – overall landscape sensitivity rating

Solar PV development scenario	LCA 3a	LCA 3b	LCA 3c
Small solar (Up to 5 ha)	High	Moderate-High	High
Medium solar (6-20 ha)	High	High	High
Large solar (21-50 ha)	High	High	High
Very large solar (51-120 ha)	High	High	High

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to wind energy developments

Existing wind energy developments

- There are no operational or consented commercial scale wind turbines within this LCT at the time of writing this assessment.

Summary of overall landscape sensitivity

- The relatively open character and simple large-scale field patterns decrease sensitivity to wind energy developments.
- However, the strong rural character, distinct landform features including prominent slopes and ridgelines, as well as the presence of historic features, including historic estates and formal parklands, and the PRoW running through the landscape, all increase sensitivity to wind energy developments.
- Taking into account the features above, the intervisibility and far-reaching views, the overall sensitivity score for wind energy developments would be high, regardless of the scale or location. The landscape is highly vulnerable and any wind turbine intervention would result in a significant change in character. Overall, the key characteristics and qualities of this landscape are highly vulnerable to change from wind energy development.

Any variations in landscape sensitivity

- All LCAs would have similar sensitivity to wind energy development.

Table 9: Landscape sensitivity to wind energy developments in LCT 3 – overall landscape sensitivity rating

Wind energy development scenario	LCA 3a	LCA 3b	LCA 3c
Small scale wind (25-60m)	High	High	High
Medium scale wind (61-100m)	High	High	High
Large scale wind (101-150m)	High	High	High
Very large scale wind (151-200m)	High	High	High

LCT 4: Settled and Farmed Edge

Figure C.12: Contextual map of LCT 4: Settled and Farmed Edge

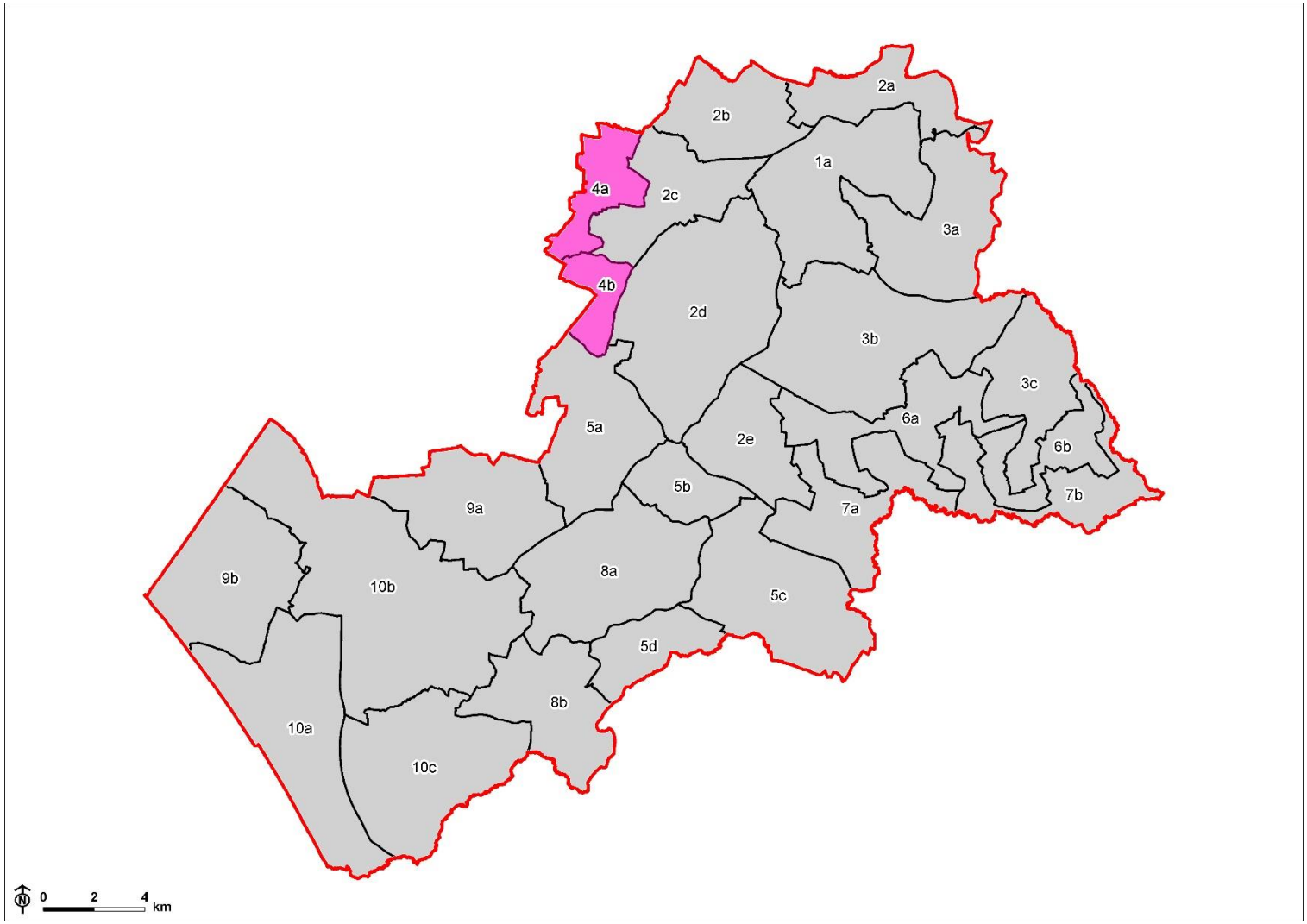

Figure C.13: LCT 4: Settled and Farmed Edge with component Landscape Character Areas

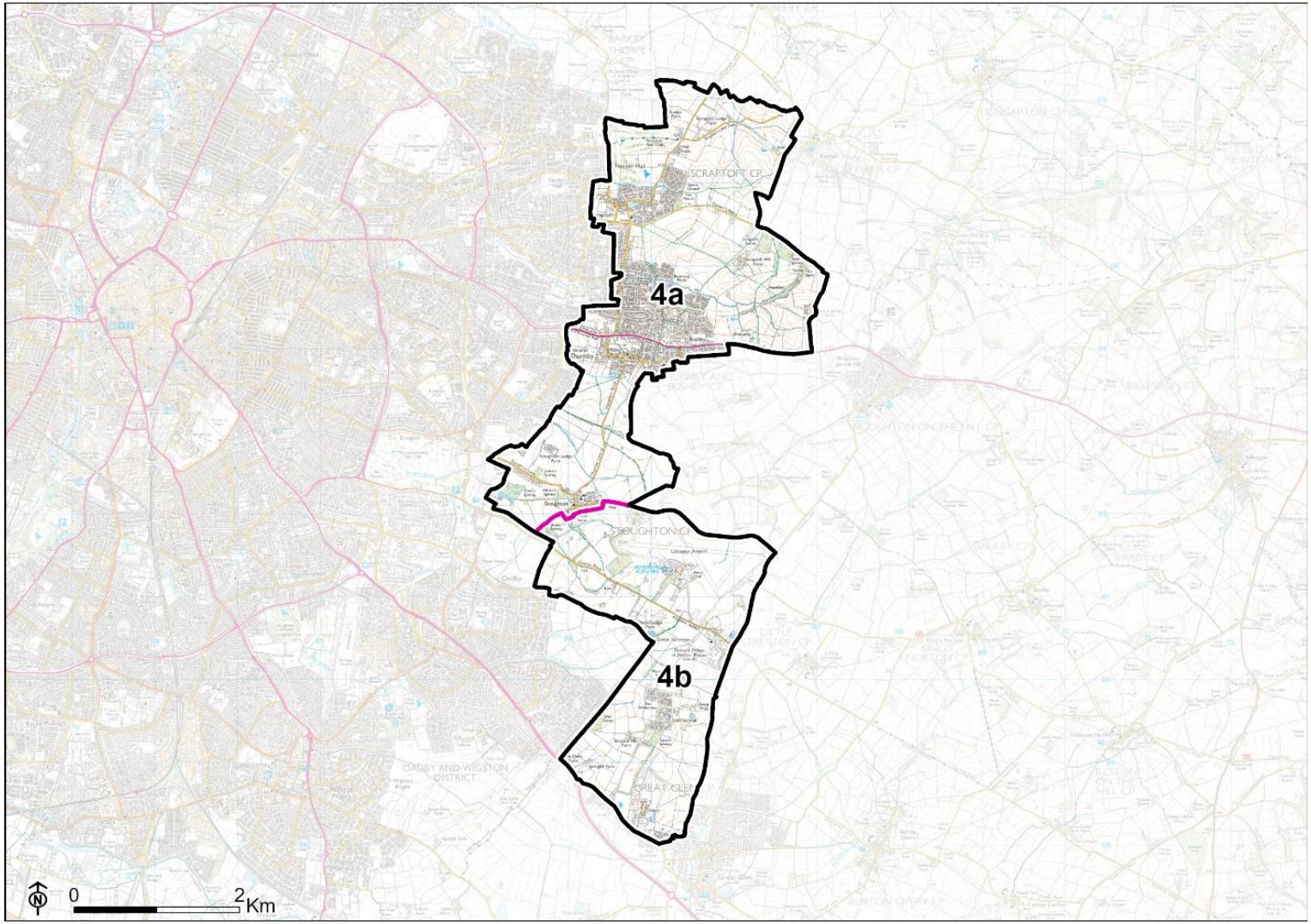

Figure C.14: LCT 4 representative photo 1

Figure C.15: LCT 4 representative photo 2

Assessment of landscape sensitivity to renewable energy development

Landscape sensitivity assessment

Landform and scale (including sense of openness/ enclosure)

- Varied medium scale landform, which is gentler in the south and undulating in the north due to the river valley landform, ranging from approximately 90m to 140m AOD.
- Human scale features include hedgerows and trees, linear woodland and settlements.
- Some enclosure is provided by intact, strong hedgerows and occasional woodlands, but elevated areas and visible slopes have a sense of openness, particularly in the east of the LCT.

Landcover (including field and settlement patterns)

- A primarily farmed landscape of mixed arable and pastoral farmland of varying scale and pattern.
- A mostly regular field pattern, with a mix of modern and historic enclosure, and bound by strong hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees, which provide a strong landscape framework and ecological connectivity.
- Occasional linear belts of woodland, small woodland blocks, occasional orchards, mature trees and riparian vegetation.
- Settlement is in the form of large villages at Thurnby, Bushby and Scraptoft, which have historic centres and have expanded with modern housing development, and small villages such as Stoughton and Great Stretton.

Historic landscape character

- The medieval village of Stretton Magna and Gartree Road (Roman Road) provide localised time-depth in this LCT. However, this is diluted by modern expansion.
- The small village of Stoughton has retained its historic character and is designated as a conservation area, as are the historic cores of Thurnby and Bushby and Scraptoft though these have been expanded by modern development.
- Fields are primarily re-organised piecemeal enclosure and planned enclosure which date to the 18th and 19th centuries, with some examples of piecemeal enclosure in the north which dates to the 16th and 17th centuries. However very large post-war fields, which are a result of field amalgamation, are also common.
- The parkland surrounding Stretton Hall has been expanded with mid-century modern housing development, which disrupts the historic character of this local landscape.
- Large-scale infrastructure and peri-urban land uses, including a school, Leicester Airport, commercial nurseries and a golf course, reduce the sense of time depth in the landscape.

Visual character (including skylines)

- The elevation of the landscape, particularly in the east, allows some intervisibility with neighbouring landscapes, with long-distance views afforded from the settlement edges within the LCT and from the edge of Leicester.
- In contrast, there is a sense of enclosure created by the undulating landform, tree cover and built form on the edges of settlement or along valley bottoms.
- Church spires nestled into the landscape provide local landmark features on the skyline, including those within the neighbouring LCT 2, for example at Houghton on the Hill.

Perceptual and scenic qualities

- The mixture of settlement and farmland combine to create a rural character, particularly in the east.
- This rural character is diluted in closer proximity to the settlement edges of Leicester and larger villages, and along faster roads, which introduce light pollution, noise and movement.
- Large urbanising structures include wooden telegraph poles, commercial nursery structures, large sheds and infrastructure associated with Leicester Airport.
- Recreational resource across the LCT is limited to NCN Route 63 and a network of local PRoW which connect into the wider countryside to the east. This network is interrupted in the south by Leicester Airport and Stretton Hall.

Table 10: Overall landscape sensitivity scores for each criterion

Criteria	Sensitivity Score: Solar	Sensitivity Score: Wind
Landform and scale (including sense of openness/enclosure)	Moderate	Moderate
Landcover (including field and settlement patterns)	Moderate	Moderate
Historic landscape character	Moderate	Moderate
Visual character (including skylines)	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
Perceptual and scenic qualities	Moderate	Moderate

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments

Existing solar PV developments

- There were no operational or consented solar PV developments within this LCT at the time of writing this assessment.

Summary of overall landscape sensitivity

- The human influence (in the form of urban and peri-urban land uses and the airport) has reduced the perceptual qualities and tranquillity in parts of this landscape. Some areas of enclosure are provided by strong hedgerows. This, alongside limited semi-natural features, and recreation opportunities, particularly in the south, indicates a lower landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments.
- However, the varied landform (particularly in the north) with some visible slopes, the presence of historic features, openness and intervisibility with surrounding landscapes, and skyline features increase sensitivity to solar PV developments.
- Taking into account the features above, the sensitivity score for solar PV developments would range between moderate to high dependant on its size and location. Areas broadly to the north are more vulnerable to change due its intervisibility, whereas areas to the south may have ability to accommodate small scale PV developments, although care would be needed in its siting and design.

Variations in landscape sensitivity at LCA level

- The more varied landform within LCA 4a: Stoughton to Scraptoft results in more openness and intervisibility with surrounding areas, increasing the sensitivity to all scales of solar PV development, and is considered to have high sensitivity to large and very large-scale solar PV developments.

However, there may be opportunities to accommodate carefully sited solar developments of up to medium scale solar PV in areas influenced by adjacent settlements which have a more urban edge character and where enclosure can be provided by hedgerows.

- The gentler landform and more wooded character of LCA 4b: Great Stretton to Newton Harcourt result in a greater level of enclosure reducing the sensitivity for large scale solar PV compared to LCA 4a. Also, the recreational resource is poorer and Leicester Airport and Stretton Hall, and is limited to a small number of PRoW, which further lowers its sensitivity to solar PV development compared to LCA 4a.
- Perceptual qualities for LCA 4b are influenced by the airport and neighbouring settlements, but LCA 4a has the settlement within its boundary with the A47 passing through, and so their overall levels of tranquillity are considered to be comparable.

Table 11: Landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments in LCT 4 - overall landscape sensitivity rating

Solar PV development scenario	LCA 4a	LCA 4b
Small solar (Up to 5 ha)	Moderate	Moderate
Medium solar (6-20 ha)	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
Large solar (21-50 ha)	High	Moderate-High
Very large solar (51-120 ha)	High	High

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to wind energy developments

Existing wind energy developments

- There were no wind farms of commercial scale in operation or consented within this LCT at the time this assessment was written.

Summary of overall landscape sensitivity

- Landscape characteristics that increase landscape sensitivity to wind energy development include the varied landform, particularly in the north, and relatively open character with limited woodland cover, allowing intervisibility and long-distance views between this LCT and surrounding landscapes, particularly to LCT 2.
- The urban influences, some of which are at a large scale, such as the airport, school complex and commercial nurseries, reduce lower sensitivity to wind energy development. This, alongside limited semi-natural features, and recreation opportunities, particularly in the south, indicates a lower landscape sensitivity to wind energy developments.
- Taking into account the features mentioned above, overall, the landform and areas of intervisibility particularly result in a landscape sensitivity score for wind energy of moderate-high for small scale, and high for medium to very large scale. There may be some very limited opportunities to accommodate wind turbines of small scale without significantly changing landscape character, but great care would be needed in siting and design. Larger development of medium scale up, would likely result in significant changes to this LCT.

Any variations in landscape sensitivity

- Both LCAs would have similar sensitivity to wind energy development.

Table 12: Landscape sensitivity to wind energy developments in LCT 4 - overall landscape sensitivity rating

Wind energy development scenario	LCA 4a	LCA 4b
Small scale wind (25-60m)	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
Medium scale wind (61-100m)	High	High
Large scale wind (101-150m)	High	High
Very large-scale wind (151-200m)	High	High

LCT 5: Settled Vale

Figure C.16: Contextual map of LCT 5: Settled Vale

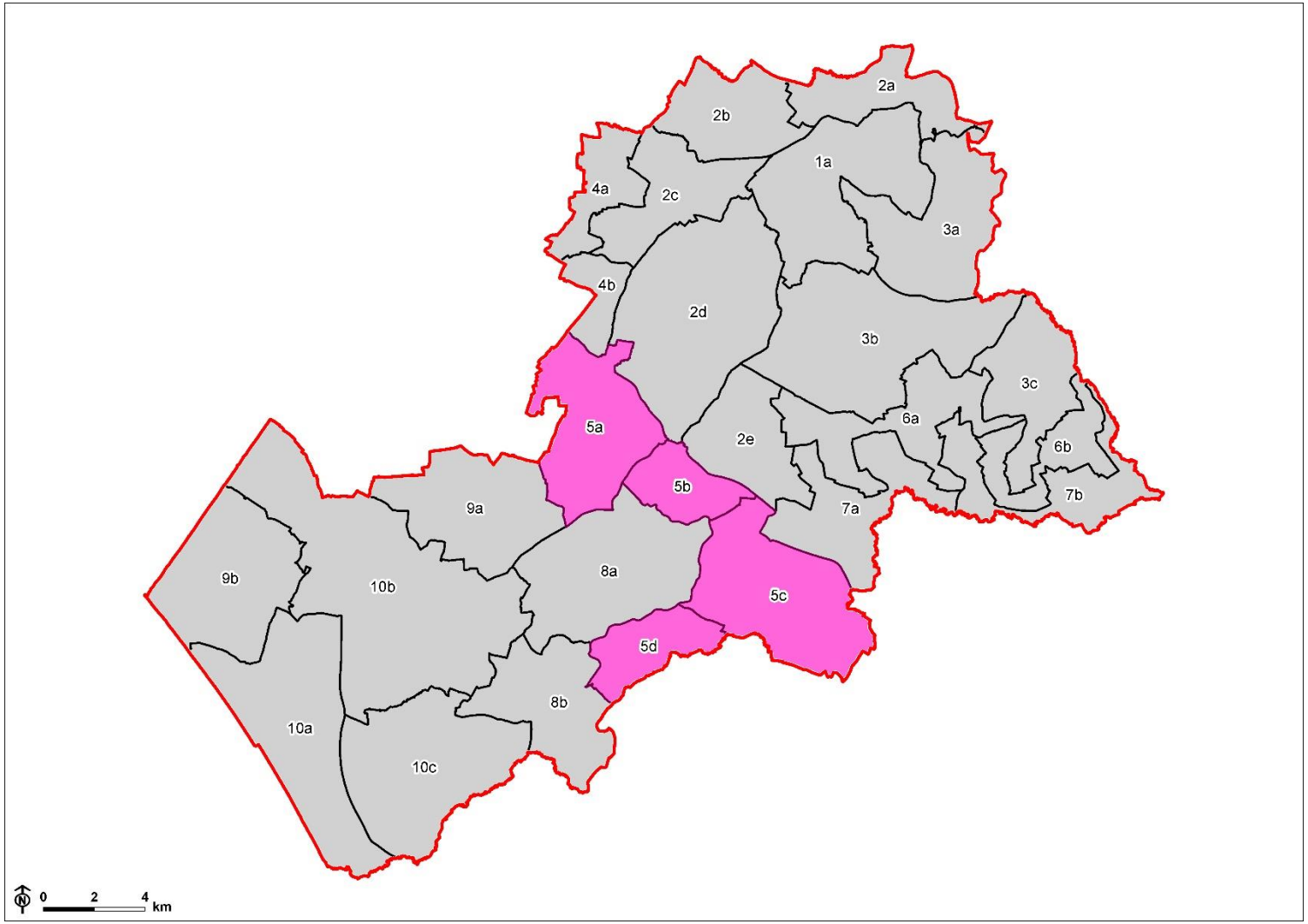

Figure C.17: LCT 5: Settled Vale with component Landscape Charater Areas

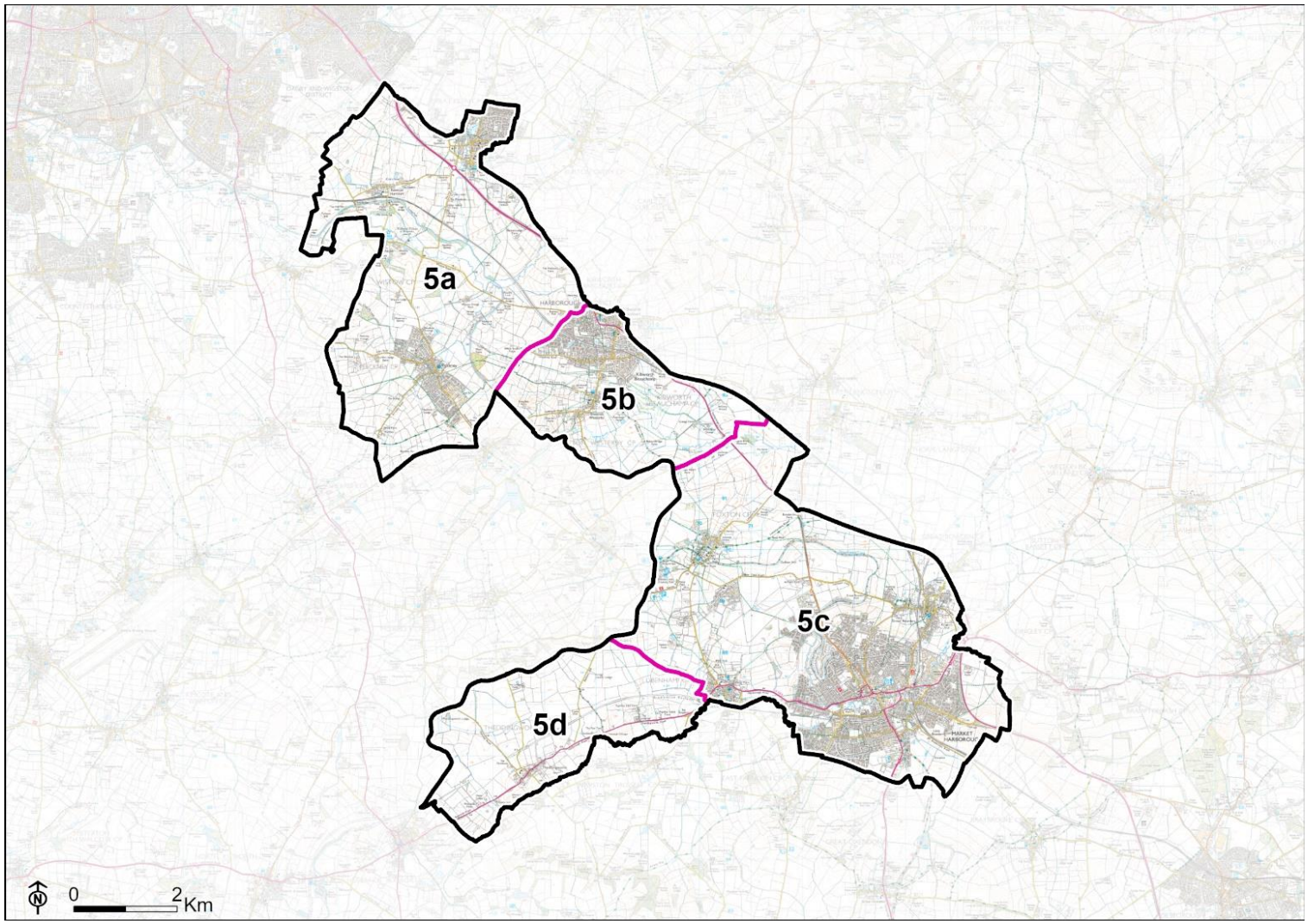

Figure C.18: LCT 5 representative photo 1

Figure C.19: LCT 5 representative photo 2

Assessment of landscape sensitivity to renewable energy development

Landscape sensitivity assessment

Landform and scale (including sense of openness/ enclosure)

- The Settled Vale LCT comprises the broad and shallow river valleys of the River Welland and River Sence, with a flat to gently rolling landform.
- The landscape falls from a high point north of Market Harborough (circa 130m AOD) to the floodplain of the River Welland (circa 70m AOD).
- Predominantly large-scale arable landscape with smaller pastoral fields along watercourses. Human scale features include hedgerows red brick bridges and locks associated with the canal.
- An open character with large fields contained by mature, mostly intact hedgerows and tree coverage limited to occasional hedgerow trees and small, linear woodlands located along watercourses or transport corridors.

Landcover (including field and settlement patterns)

- Landcover is generally large-scale arable farmland, with pasture within floodplains.
- Pockets of semi-natural habitats are associated with the Grand Union Canal, rivers, Great Bowden Borrowpit and grasslands. Priority habitats include good quality semi-improved grassland, lowland fens, floodplain grazing marsh and traditional orchards.
- A large regular field pattern. Fields are bound by mature hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees which connect occasional linear woodlands.

- A settled landscape, with large scale settlements including Market Harborough and numerous dispersed but expanding villages.

Historic landscape character

- Time depth is associated with historic villages scattered across the landscape (including Smeeton Westerby, Great Bowden, Foxton, Lubenham and Theddingworth).
- Many of these villages have nucleated cores (designated as conservation areas) with listed buildings set around a church.
- Arable fields are generally mid-19th century re-organised piecemeal enclosure and 18th/19th century planned enclosure, although there are some very large post-war fields. Smaller pastoral floodplain fields are present in the valley bottoms.
- Occasional ridge and furrow, industrial heritage related to the canal and railway and a number of medieval remains contribute to the historic character of the landscape.

Visual character (including skylines)

- The relatively flat landform in places and limited woodland allows medium distance views and some intervisibility with neighbouring landscapes, including the elevated landform of LCT 2 to the east and LCT 8 to the west.
- More intimate views are experienced within valley bottoms, and along the Grand Union Canal due to linear woodland and gently rising landform.
- Distinctive skyline features include church spires at Theddingworth and Husband Bosworth in views from the north of LCA 5d: Theddingworth.
- A wind turbine close to the northern boundary and pylons are prominent on the skyline to the south of Kibworth in LCA 5b: Kibworth.

Perceptual and scenic qualities

- Strong urban influences impact the landscape, due to the settled character of the landscape (particularly on the edge of Market Harborough) and human activity associated with infrastructure including the Midland Mainline, trunk roads (A6, A4304), pylons, and occasional wind turbines. Where these features combine, the rural character is locally eroded.
- A settled landscape where rural character is associated with the gently rolling arable fields, river valleys and tree lined Grand Union Canal.
- Dark skies are impacted by lighting associated with Market Harborough and Kibworth. However, some areas experience minimal light pollution, such as around Theddingworth and north-west of Foxton.
- Tranquillity is generally low due to settled nature of the landscape, however there are pockets where this is higher, notably in the valley bottoms and within the corridor of the Grand Union Canal.
- Recreational access to the landscape is associated with the Grand Union Canal, Foxton Locks Country Park, marinas, PRoW and National Cycle Network (NCN) routes.

Table 13: Overall sensitivity scores for each criterion

Criteria	Sensitivity Score: Solar	Sensitivity Score: Wind
Landform and scale (including sense of openness/enclosure)	Moderate	Moderate
Landcover (including field and settlement patterns)	Moderate	Moderate
Historic landscape character	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
Visual character (including skylines)	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
Perceptual and scenic qualities	Moderate	Moderate

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments

Existing solar PV developments

- There were no ground mounted solar farms in operation or consented within this LCT at the time this assessment was completed.

Summary of overall landscape sensitivity

- The predominantly large-scale flat to gently rolling landform, human influence (in the form of urban land uses and modern development associated with settlements and infrastructure) and some areas of enclosure provided by tree/woodland cover, indicate a lower landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments.
- However, the open character of much of the landscape, the presence of historic features (including medieval villages, occasional ridge and furrow, industrial heritage related to the canal and railway), and areas of more

remote rural character (particularly in parts of LCA 5d: Theddingworth and parts of LCA 5c: Market Harborough away from the urban centres) increase sensitivity to solar PV developments. The Grand Union Canal is also popular for recreation and would be a sensitive receptor to any development.

- Taking into account the features mentioned above, particularly in relation to the openness and time depth of this LCT, the sensitivity to solar PV development would range from moderate to moderate-high for small scale, whereby some of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change development, to a score of moderate-high or high for larger scale PV development, whereby development of this scale would likely result in a significant change in the character of this LCT.

Variations in landscape sensitivity at LCA level

- The more elevated areas of this LCT, such as parts of LCA 5b: Kibworth and LCA 5c: Market Harborough, due to their open character and variations in landform, meaning areas are sometimes more visible, are more sensitive to all scales of solar PV development and are considered highly sensitive to Very Large solar PV developments
- However there may be opportunities to accommodate carefully sited solar developments of up to Large in areas influenced by adjacent settlements which have a more urban edge character or in association with the infrastructure that cross the LCT (including the A6 and midland mainline), where enclosure can be provided by hedgerows, areas are less open and field sizes are larger, such as in LCA 5d: Theddingworth.
- LCA 5d: Theddingworth contains a larger scale field pattern, is relatively flat and enclosed by vegetation which slightly reduces its sensitivity, most notably to the north of the former railway. However, there is intervisibility with the more elevated landscape in LCA 8a: Laughton and Mowsley, which forms a rural, dramatic backdrop to this LCA as well as increasing visibility to any proposed energy development within this location.

Table 14: Landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments in LCT 5 - overall landscape sensitivity rating

Solar PV development scenario	LCA 5a	LCA 5b	LCA 5c	LCA 5d
Small solar (Up to 5 hectares)	Moderate	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	Moderate
Medium solar (6-20 hectares)	Moderate	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
Large solar (21-50 hectares)	Moderate-High	High	High	Moderate-High
Very large solar (51-120 hectares)	High	High	High	High

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to wind energy developments

Existing wind energy developments

- There are no existing commercial-scale wind turbines within this LCT but there is a single turbine within the western extent of LCA 5b to the south of White Stacks Farm. Others on the skyline are within Northamptonshire to the south.

Summary of overall landscape sensitivity

- Landscape characteristics that increase landscape sensitivity to wind energy development include areas of more remote rural character, the relatively open character with limited woodland cover, allowing some

intervisibility to surrounding landscapes and long-distance views within the LCT and to adjacent landscapes.

- The large-scale field pattern and relatively simple landform indicates lower sensitivity to wind energy development.
- Taking into account the features mentioned above, particularly the areas intervisibility and human scale of parts of the LCT, the sensitivity to wind energy development would range from moderate-high for small and medium scale, where key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change, to high from large and very large scale turbines where the landscape is highly vulnerable to change, and development of this scale would result in a significant change in character of this landscape.

Any variations in landscape sensitivity

- All LCAs would have similar sensitivity to wind energy development.

Table 15: Landscape sensitivity to wind energy developments in LCT 5 – overall landscape sensitivity rating

Wind energy development scenario	LCA 5a	LCA 5b	LCA 5c	LCA 5d
Small scale wind (25-60m)	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
Medium scale wind (61-100m)	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
Large scale wind (101-150m)	High	High	High	High

Wind energy development scenario	LCA 5a	LCA 5b	LCA 5c	LCA 5d
Very large-scale wind (151-200m)	High	High	High	High

LCT 6: River Valley Slopes

Figure C.20: Contextual map of LCT 6: River Valley Slopes

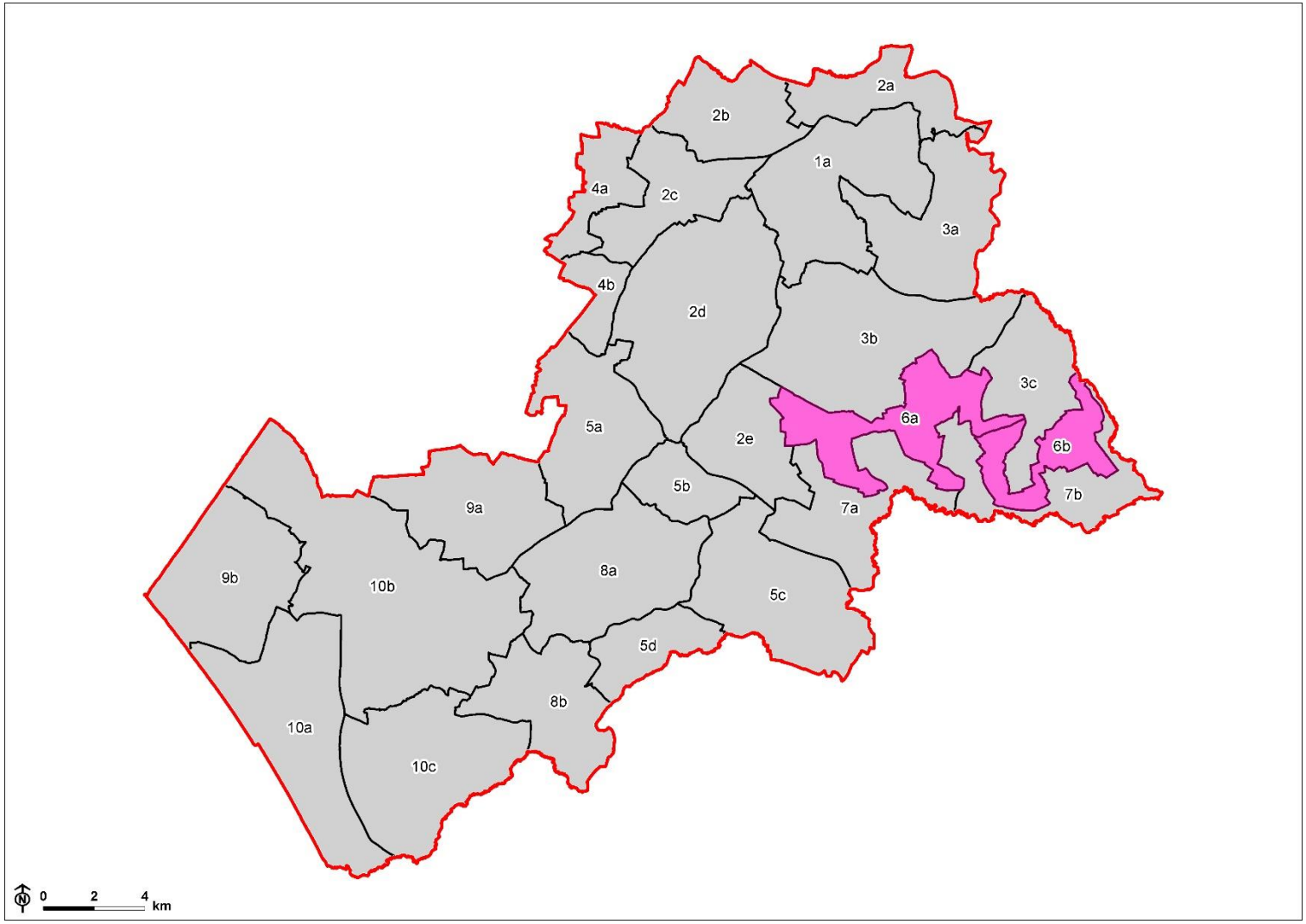

Figure C.21: LCT 6: River Valley Slopes with component Landscape Character Areas

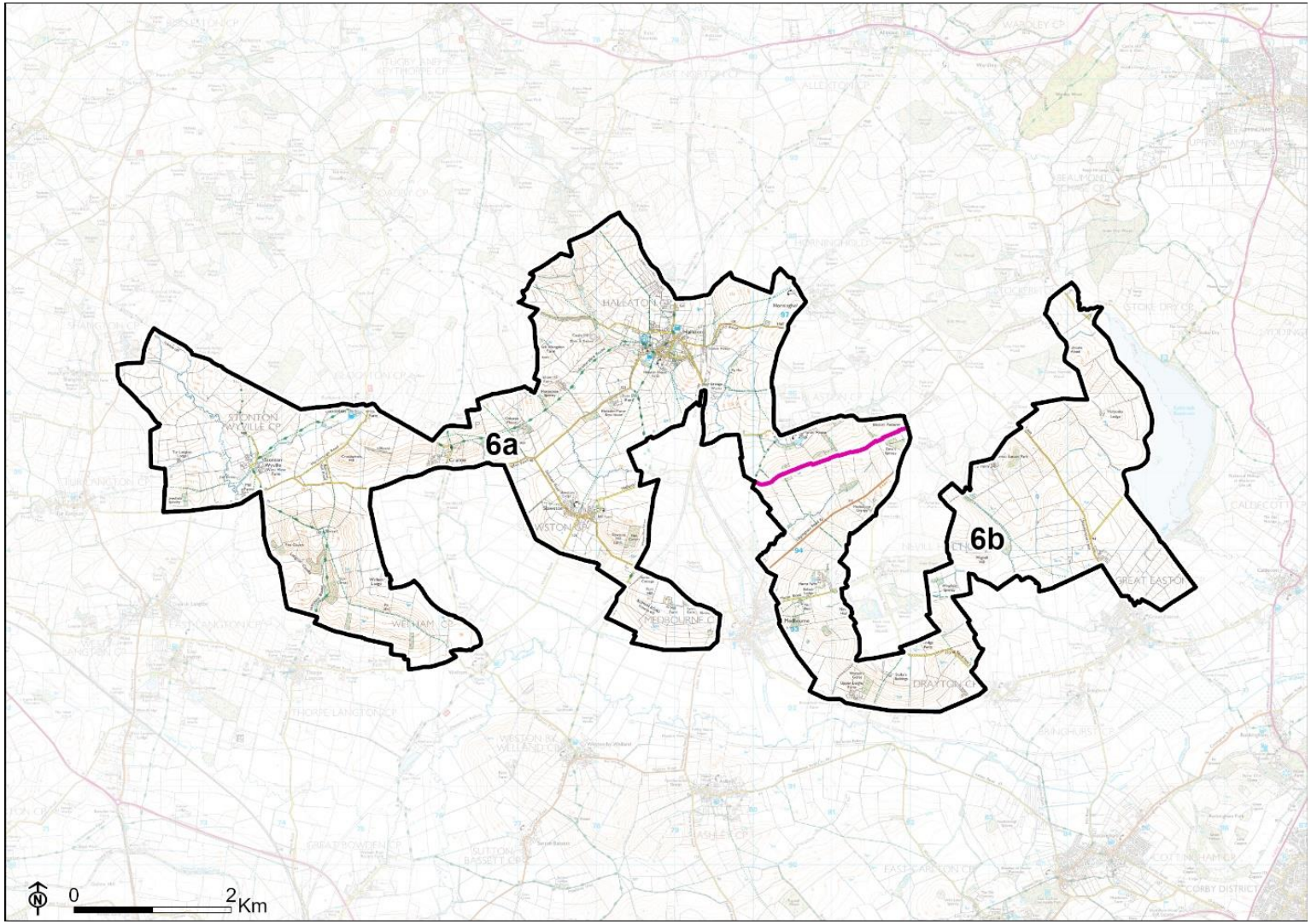

Figure C.22: LCT 6 representative photo 1

Figure C.23: LCT 6 representative photo 2

Assessment of landscape sensitivity to renewable energy development

Landscape sensitivity assessment

Landform and scale (including sense of openness/ enclosure)

- The Settled Vale LCT comprises gently sloping river valley sides, which are steeper in places, associated with the wide river valley bottom of the River Welland to the south.
- The landscape ranges from high points in the west (circa 145m AOD) to low points in the south (circa 65m AOD), with distinctive mounds at Crossburrow Hill, Langton Caudle and Slawston Hill.
- Predominantly medium to large-scale landscape. Human scale features include hedgerows, hedgerow trees and medieval village remains.
- An open character due to the limited woodland and hedgerow field boundaries. There is a sense of exposure on higher slopes and mounds due to the lack of vegetation.

Landcover (including field and settlement patterns)

- The landcover is generally arable and pastoral farmland with a medium-scale, geometric field pattern.
- A farmed landscape with limited woodland cover and pockets of semi-natural habitats associated with the hedgerow network (which is interspersed with occasional small woodland blocks), watercourses and floodplains.
- Semi-natural landcover include deciduous woodland, traditional orchards, riparian trees along streams and an area of floodplain grazing marsh.

- Settlement includes the scattered villages of Stonton Wyville, Cranoe, Slawston and Hallaton, with smaller, isolated properties and farmsteads spread across the landscape.

Historic landscape character

- Time depth is associated with the nucleated villages of Hallaton, Slawston and Blaston, as well as several hamlets, all designated as conservation areas due to their clusters of historic buildings, including grade I and grade II* listed churches.
- Medium sized fields are primarily 18th/19th century planned enclosure, with some mid-19th century large, irregular fields. A few large post-war fields created through amalgamation are located broadly to the east of the LCT.
- Occasional ridge and furrow, scheduled monuments and a dismantled railway line contribute to the historical value of the landscape.

Visual character (including skylines)

- The rolling landform and limited woodland allow for long-distance views across the LCT.
- The landscape has a strong visual relationship and intervisibility with neighbouring landscapes, with views south across the floodplains of LCT 7, east towards Eyebrook Reservoir in LCT 7 and across the water towards Rutland.
- Corby power station within North Northamptonshire forms a landmark feature on the horizon.

Perceptual and scenic qualities

- The landscape has a strong rural character due to its agricultural land uses and the absence of modern development, although overhead pylon lines are visible.

- The network of hedgerows and rural roads contribute to a strong landscape pattern.
- Dark skies are experienced across much of the LCT due to low settlement density and the absence of road noise results in a strong sense of tranquillity.
- A network of long-distance footpaths, including the Leicestershire Round and Macmillan Way, National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 64, local cycle routes, and the local PRoW network result in a rich recreational resource.

Table 16: Overall sensitivity score for each criterion

Criteria	Sensitivity Score: Solar	Sensitivity Score: Wind
Landform and scale (including sense of openness/enclosure)	High	High
Landcover (including field and settlement patterns)	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
Historic landscape character	High	High
Visual character (including skylines)	High	High
Perceptual and scenic qualities	High	High

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments

Existing solar PV developments

- There were no operational or consented solar farms within this LCT at the time of writing this assessment.

Summary of overall landscape sensitivity

- The large scale of the landscape, particularly of post-war fields (located in the eastern part of both LCAs), limited semi-natural landcover or human scale features, and overhead pylons decrease the landscape sensitivity of the area to solar PV development, as does the enclosure provided by intact hedgerows and hedgerow trees and the sparse woodland blocks.
- However, the elevated, open landform of the valley slopes, the mounded hills, and the intervisibility with neighbouring landscapes increase sensitivity to solar PV developments. Also, the time-depth of the landscape due to historic villages and areas of historic field patterns increases the sensitivity of the landscape to solar PV development. The PRoW/ Long Distance Footpath along with the dark skies, high sense of tranquillity associated with the rural character of the landscape, and lack of modern development also increase the sensitivity.
- Taking into account the features above, the sensitivity score for solar PV developments would be high, regardless of size and location. This is due to the dramatic landform and high level of intervisibility with adjacent landscapes which would result in any solar PV development bringing significant change in character to the landscape.

Variations in landscape sensitivity at LCA level

- Although there is some variation between the LCAs the overall sensitivity scores to solar PV developments remain the same.
- Both LCAs in LCT 6 have distinctive landforms, with the mounds at Langton Caudle, Crossburrow Hill and Slawston Hill in LCA 6a and steeper, more defined valleys in LCA6b. The landform and limited woodland results in increased visibility, increasing sensitivity.
- Both LCAs have historic field patterns. However, the presence of very large post-war fields in some areas, including to the east of Hallaton in LCA 6a and at Wignell Hill in LCA 6b lowers sensitivity in relation to historic landscape character in these areas.
- Both LCAs have strong rural characters, although there are higher levels of light pollution and human development in LCA 6a.

Table 17: Landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments in LCT 6 – overall landscape sensitivity rating

Solar PV development scenario	LCA 6a	LCA 6b
Small solar (Up to 5 ha)	High	High
Medium solar (6-20 ha)	High	High
Large solar (21-50 ha)	High	High
Very large solar (51-120 ha)	High	High

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to wind energy developments

Existing wind energy developments

- There were no commercial scale wind farms in operation or consented within this LCT at the time of writing this assessment.

Summary of overall landscape sensitivity

- The relatively open character and distinctive landform with limited woodland cover, allow for some intervisibility between this LCT and neighbouring landscapes and long-distance views within the LCT which increases sensitivity to wind energy developments. The lack of modern development and high sense of tranquillity reinforce the rural character of this LCT, in turn increasing the landscape sensitivity.
- Large-scale post-war field pattern weaken the historic field pattern in some areas, and existing overhead pylon lines are visually intrusive, indicating lower sensitivity to wind energy development.
- Taking into account the features above, the sensitivity score for wind energy developments would be high, regardless of size and location. This is due to the dramatic landform and high levels of intervisibility with adjacent landscapes which would result in any wind energy development bringing significant change in character to the landscape.

Variations in landscape sensitivity at LCA level

- There is no variation in landscape sensitivity at LCA level.

Table 18: Landscape sensitivity to wind energy developments in LCT 6 – overall landscape sensitivity rating

Wind energy development scenario	LCA 6a	LCA 6b
Small scale wind (25-60m)	High	High
Medium scale wind (61-100m)	High	High
Large scale wind (101-150m)	High	High
Very large-scale wind (151-200m)	High	High

LCT 7: River Valley Floodplain

Figure C.24: Contextual map of LCT 7: River Valley Floodplain

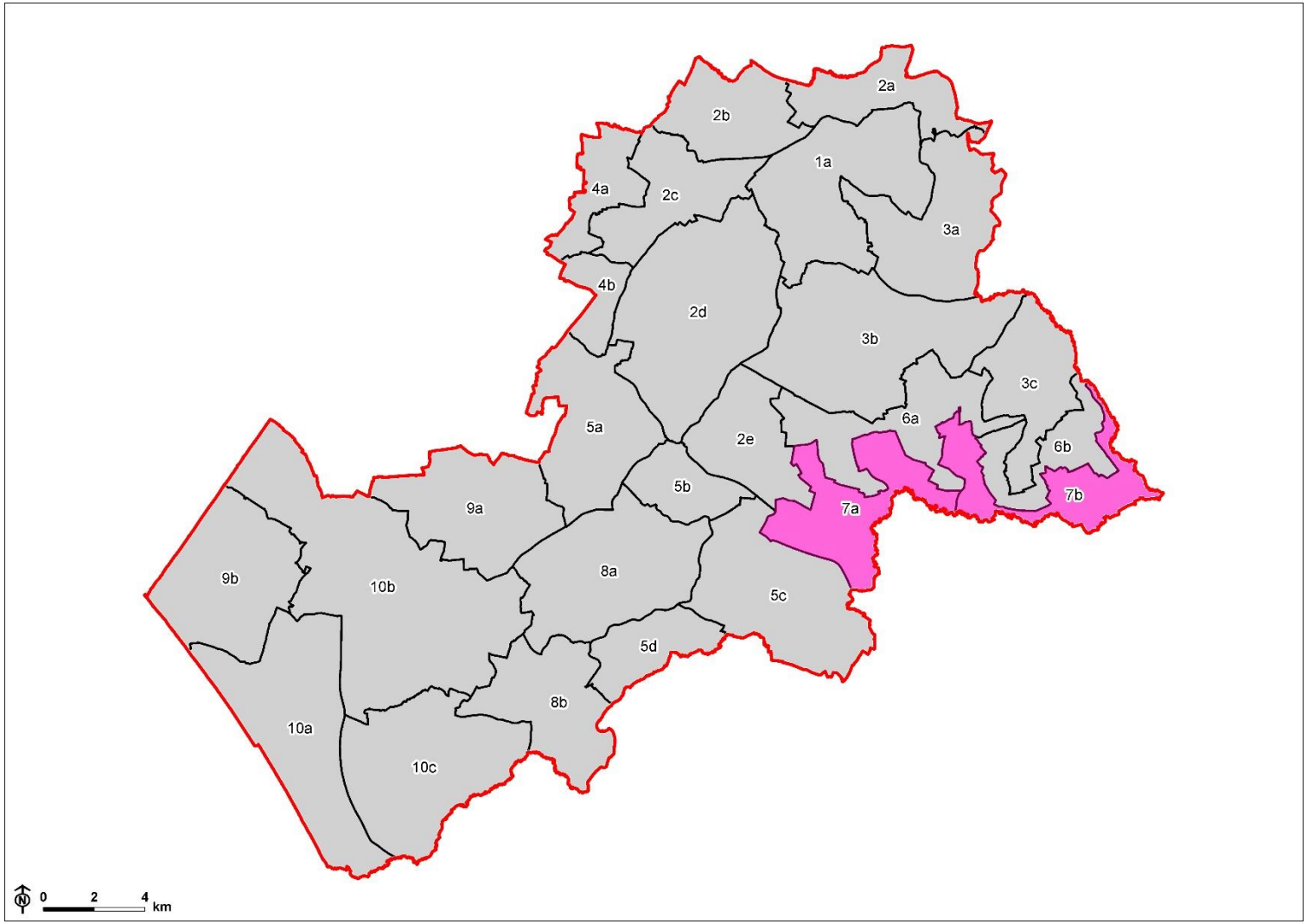

Figure C.25: LCT 7: River Valley Floodplain with component Landscape Character Areas

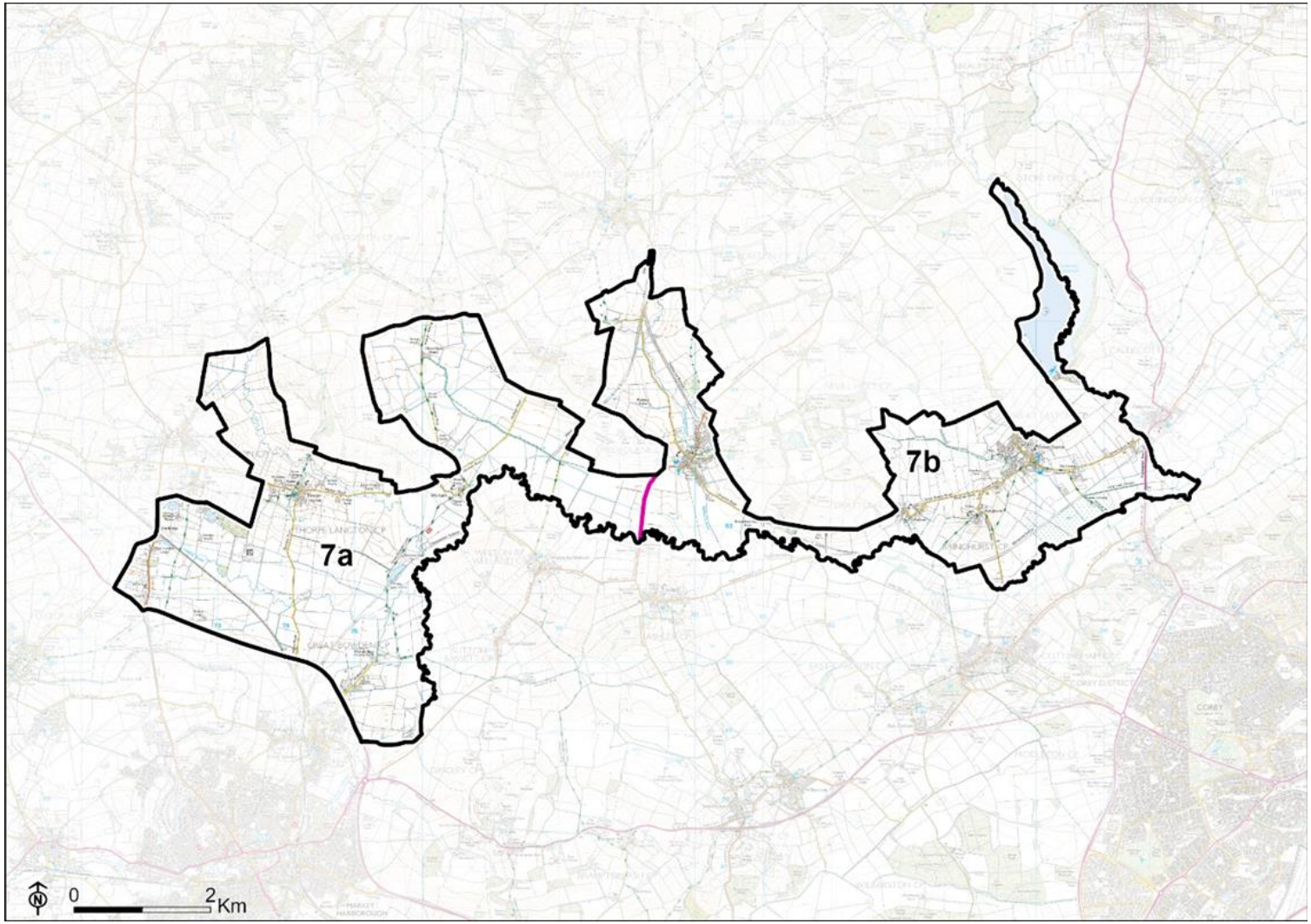

Figure C.26: LCT 7 representative photo 1

Figure C.27: LCT 7 representative photo 2

Assessment of landscape sensitivity to renewable energy development

Landscape sensitivity assessment

Landform and scale (including sense of openness/ enclosure)

- The River Valley Floodplain LCT comprises the broadly flat, floodplain of the River Welland and its tributaries with occasional gentle mounds forming localised high points within the valley floor.
- Landform ranges from approximately 50 m AOD along the river to 95 m AOD on the lower valley sides.
- Predominantly medium to small-scale arable landscape that is smaller in scale closer to the settlements. Human scale features include hedgerows and riparian vegetation.
- The limited woodland and flat landform results in a generally open character across the landscape.

Landcover (including field and settlement patterns)

- Landcover is a mixture of both arable and pastoral farmland with floodplain fields and meadows.
- Woodland cover is limited, however there are occasional wet carr woodlands in river meanders along the southern boundary and riparian trees line the River Welland and its tributaries, which contribute to a relatively strong green infrastructure network.
- Fields are geometric in shape, with smaller fields located near to settlement including paddocks and closes. There are also larger, rectilinear, irregular fields in localised areas.

- Settlements are generally sparse with most small villages located in the east of the LCT (LCA 7b).

Historic landscape character

- A strong historic character is present within the villages most of which are scattered across the landscape of LCA 7b (including Great Easton, Bringhurst, Drayton, Medbourne and Welham).
- Although many of the villages have historic centres (designated as conservation areas), their overall historic character is diluted by the presence of modern expansion on their outskirts and there are limited designated cultural heritage designations in the wider landscape.
- Fields are primarily planned enclosure from the 18th and 19th century with some fine examples of ridge and furrow, although there are some very large post-war fields. Smaller pastoral floodplain fields are present in the valley bottoms.
- A dismantled railway line, once part of the Great Northern, London and North Western Joint Railway, crosses the LCT in multiple locations and is evident in the landscape through remnants of its brick structures.

Visual character (including skylines)

- The open character of the landscape, results in intervisibility with neighbouring landscapes, with expansive views afforded across the flat valley floor and towards the slopes of the Welland Valley within LCT 6 and neighbouring North Northamptonshire.
- Church spires such as the church tower at Welham, often create landmark features on the skylines.
- The openness of the surrounding fields contrasts with a sense of intimacy within the villages, where built form and trees within the settlement create a localised sense of enclosure.

Perceptual and scenic qualities

- A strong rural character and a sense of tranquillity, particularly to the east, is strengthened by birdsong, the presence of running water and rustling trees.
- This tranquillity is reduced slightly to the west where there is a concentration of man-made infrastructure, such as the A6 and the Midland Main Line railway line, which introduce moving and audible features into the landscape. Other human influences on the landscape, include a solar farm at Meadow Farm, large agriculture sheds and numerous overhead lines.
- The relative absence of light pollution results in some of the darkest skies in the District, with the exception of the south-western boundary where the landscape is influenced by light pollution from Market Harborough.
- A strong network of PRoW, local cycle routes, NCN Route 64 and long-distance footpaths, including the Midshires Way and Jurassic Way, contribute to an overall rich recreational resource.
- Human influences include a solar farm at Meadow Farm, south of Thorpe Langton, which is well contained, a hotel and services along the A6, the Midland Main Line railway line, multiple overhead lines and large-scale agricultural operations.

Table 19: Overall sensitivity score for each criterion

Criteria	Sensitivity Score: Solar	Sensitivity Score: Wind
Landform and scale (including sense of openness/enclosure)	Moderate	Moderate
Landcover (including field and settlement patterns)	Moderate	Moderate
Historic landscape character	Moderate	Moderate

Criteria	Sensitivity Score: Solar	Sensitivity Score: Wind
Visual character (including skylines)	Moderate-High	Moderate- High
Perceptual and scenic qualities	Moderate-High	Moderate-High

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments

Existing solar PV developments

- Medium scale (circa 13.8 ha.) ground mounted, operational solar farm at land at Meadow Farm to the south-west of Thorpe Langton (15/01116/FUL), located within the west of LCA 7a: Medbourne to Great Easton.

Summary of overall landscape sensitivity

- The predominantly medium-scale, flat landform and urban influences of pylons, road and rail infrastructure and an existing PV solar site contribute to a lower landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments, particularly in the west.
- However, the open character of much of the landscape, resulting in intervisibility within the landscape and neighbouring LCT 6, presence of landmark features on the skylines, high levels of dark skies and tranquillity and the remote rural character increase sensitivity to solar PV developments. As do the presence of historic features (including medieval villages, fine examples of ridge and furrow and industrial heritage related to the railway), and strong riparian habitat networks.
- Taking into account the features above, in particular the intervisibility within the neighbouring LCT 6 and the open character of the landscape,

the sensitivity score for solar PVs would range from moderate to high depending on scale and location. More enclosed areas of the LCT with strong hedgerows would be less sensitive for small scale PV development. Whereas, key characteristics and qualities of this landscape are more vulnerable to change from medium to large scale solar PV development. Very large scale solar PV development would result in bringing a significant change in character to the landscape.

Variations in landscape sensitivity at LCA level

- LCA 7a: Medbourne to Great Easton is a relatively busy and complex landscape, which has a weaker sense of time depth and is more impacted by human influences, which reduces its sensitivity in comparison to LCA 7b. However, it has a strong network of recreational routes and some openness within the LCA which would need to be carefully considered if any proposals are brought forward.
- LCA 7b: Medbourne to Great Easton has a slightly higher sensitivity to PV development due to its higher levels of tranquillity and the stronger time depth associated with historic villages and heritage features.

Table 20: Landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments in LCT 7 - overall landscape sensitivity rating

Solar PV development scenario	LCA 7a	LCA 7b
Small solar (Up to 5 ha)	Moderate	Moderate
Medium solar (6-20 ha)	Moderate	Moderate-High
Large solar (21-50 ha)	Moderate-High	High
Very large solar (51-120 ha)	High	High

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to wind energy developments

Existing wind energy developments

- There were no existing commercial-scale wind turbines within this LCT at the time of writing this assessment.

Summary of overall landscape sensitivity

- Landscape characteristics that increase landscape sensitivity to wind energy development include the relatively open character with very limited woodland cover, allowing some intervisibility with surrounding landscapes and long-distance views within the LCT and to adjacent landscapes. This LCT comprises many human scale features, which also increases its landscape sensitivity. Also, the presence of historic features (including medieval villages, fine examples of ridge and furrow and industrial heritage related to the railway), and areas of more remote rural character, increase sensitivity to wind energy development.
- The relatively flat, simple and medium-scale landform, and the urban influences of pylons, road and rail infrastructure and existing solar farm, indicates lower sensitivity to wind energy development.
- Taking into account the features above, particularly the intervisibility of the landscape with adjacent landscapes, tranquillity, human scale features, the sensitivity to wind energy development is moderate-high for small scale wind development, where key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are vulnerable to change from wind energy. The score would be high for medium to large scale wind energy developments as they are highly vulnerable to change, and development would result in a significant change in character.

Variations in landscape sensitivity at LCA level

- All LCAs would have similar sensitivity to wind energy development.

Table 21: Landscape sensitivity to wind energy developments in LCT 7 – overall landscape sensitivity rating

Wind energy development scenario	LCA 7a	LCA 7b
Small scale wind (25-60m)	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
Medium scale wind (61-100m)	High	High
Large scale wind (101-150m)	High	High
Very large scale wind (151-200m)	High	High

LCT 8: Elevated Farmed Plateau

Figure C.28: Contextual map of LCT 8: Elevated Farmed Plateau

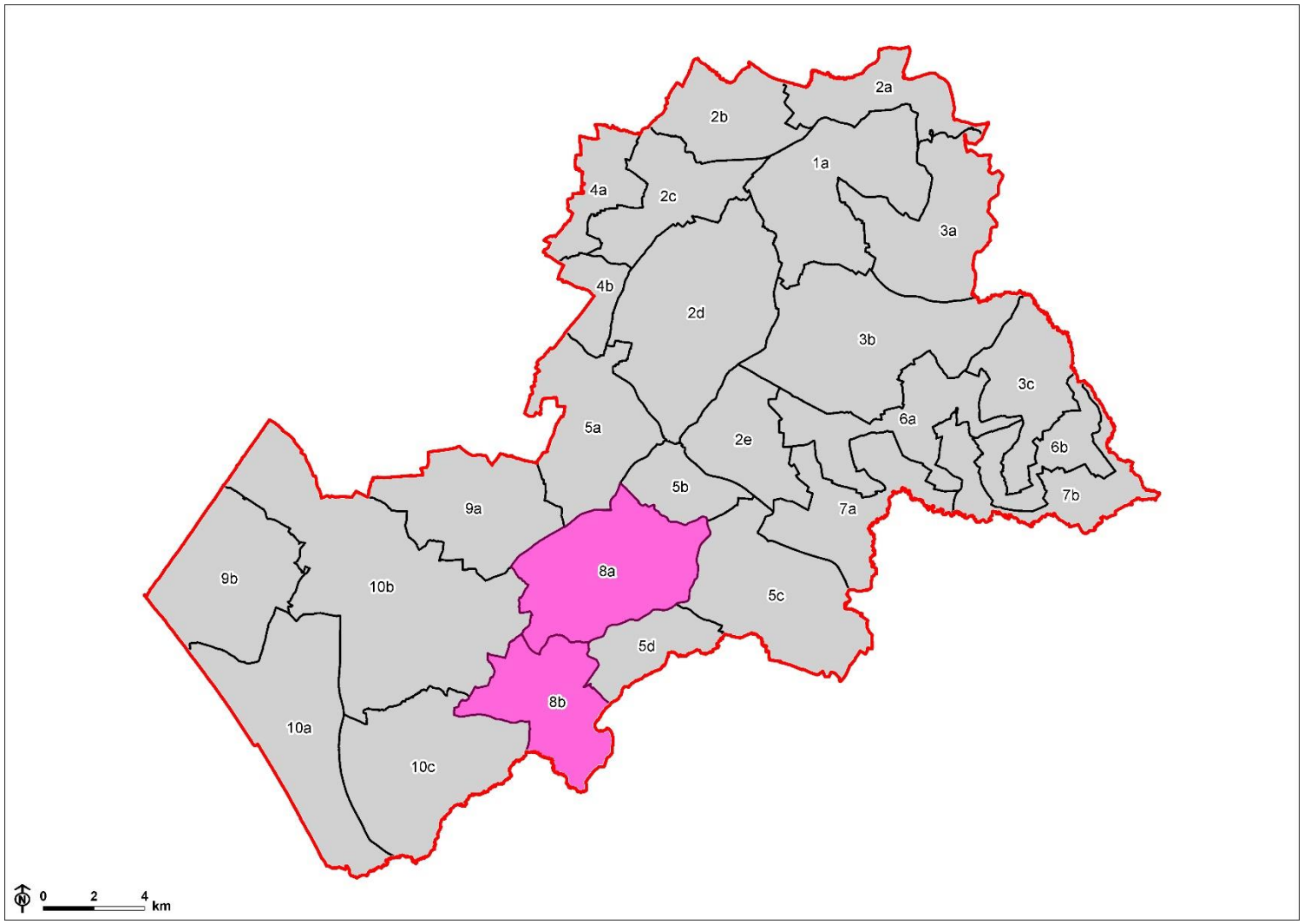

Figure C.29: LCT 8: Elevated Farmed Plateau with component Landscape Charater Areas

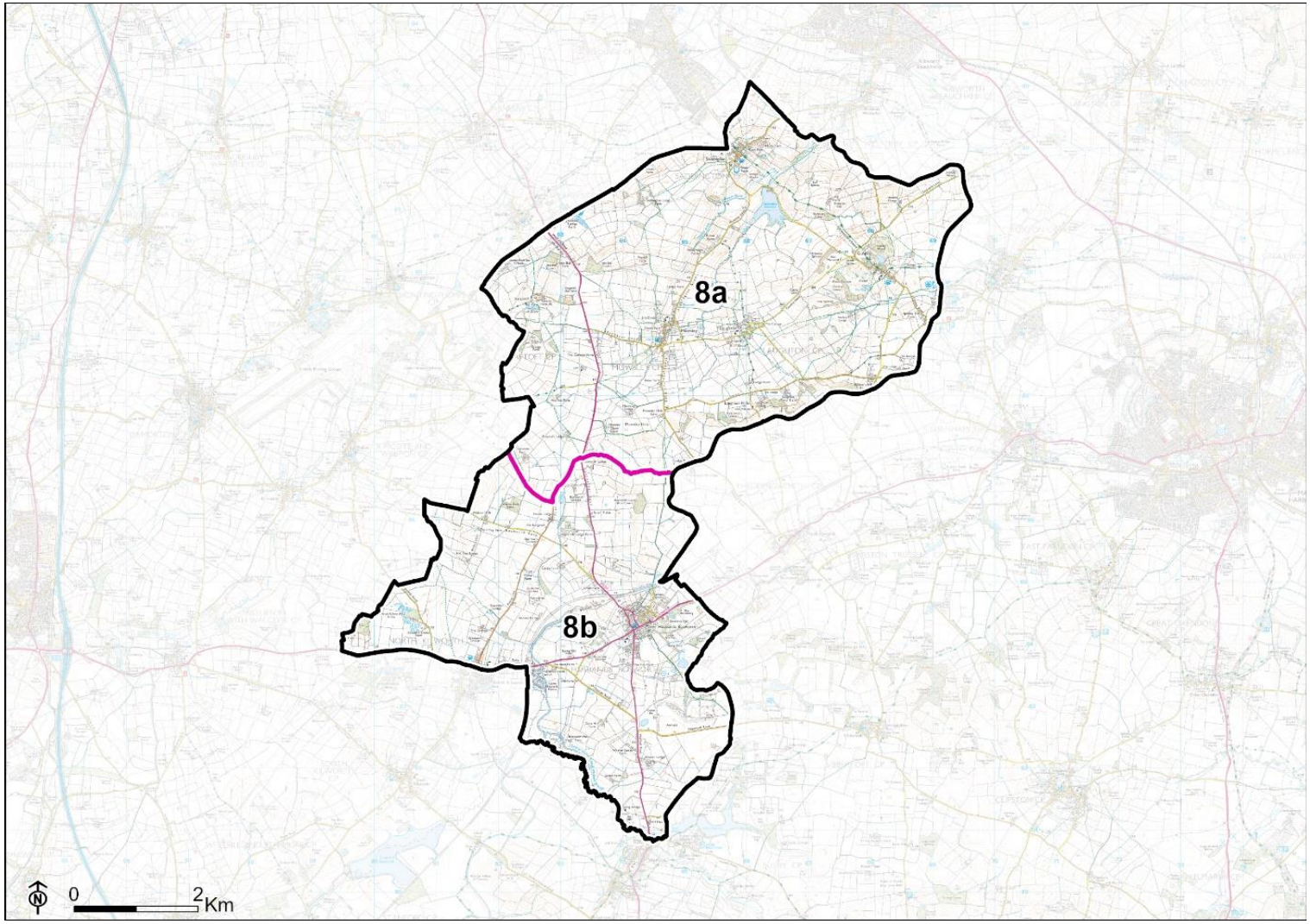

Figure C.30: LCT 8 representative photo 1

Figure C.31: LCT 8 representative photo 2

Assessment of landscape sensitivity to renewable energy development

Landscape sensitivity assessment

Landform and scale (including sense of openness/ enclosure)

- An elevated undulating plateau landscape formed by an elongated distinctive ridgeline with steep sides that continues south beyond the district boundary. The topography is variable, with steep tributary brook valleys and the undulating landforms of Mowsley and Laughton Hills.
- The landform ranges from high points of approximately 177m AOD at Knaptoft Hill and Walton Holt to approximately 105m AOD at the Grand Union Canal east of Saddington.
- Medium-scale mixed agricultural fields, transition to smaller-scale pastoral farmland. Human scale features include scattered farmsteads and villages.
- The undulating landforms of much of the LCT corresponds with higher woodland cover and smaller field pattern with hedged boundaries, which results in a sense of enclosure. However flatter areas with larger field patterns are more open.

Landcover (including field and settlement patterns)

- Landcover is primarily arable and pastoral farmland interspersed with pockets of semi-natural habitats such as deciduous woodland and wetland habitats associated with watercourses.
- A landscape with pockets of good quality semi-improved grassland, lowland fen and a traditional orchard (listed as priority habitats). There are occasional blocks of ancient woodland such as Gumley Wood with oak and ash being the dominant tree species along roadsides.

- A strong framework of low, well-maintained hedgerow and occasional hedgerow trees.
- Variety of field patterns ranging from medium-large scale arable fields to smaller pastoral fields, both of a regular pattern. The are some very large post-war fields in the flatter parts of the LCT.
- A settled landscape including the nucleated village of Husbands Bosworth, several small linear villages, and scattered farmsteads.

Historic landscape character

- Time depth is associated with historic villages which have retained their historic character such as Saddington and Laughton which are designated as conservation areas. They contain clusters of listed buildings, including grade II* churches such as the Church of All Saints in Husbands Bosworth.
- Wooded coverts and tree lined avenues are associated with farmsteads and undesignated parkland once associated with Gumley Hall, which was demolished in the 1960s.
- Fields are primarily a mix of 19th century planned enclosure, and reorganised piecemeal enclosure. Large post-war fields of modern origin, formed by the process of field amalgamation are in flatter areas.
- Occasional ridge and furrow, medieval settlement remains and earthworks (both scheduled monuments) contribute to the historic character of the landscape.
- Strong industrial heritage is reflected in the Grand Union Canal, several listed red brick bridges associated with the canal, Saddington Reservoir, Bosworth Tunnel, and a dismantled railway.

Visual character (including skylines)

- Views across farmland are often contained by landform and intact hedgerows.

- However, long distance views across the rolling and vale landscapes of neighbouring LCTs are available close to the plateau edge, with occasional wide views towards distant hills on the southern edge of the Peak District, east of Stoke-on-Trent.
- Frequent large agricultural sheds, turbines, pylons and masts are located in this LCT but are often screened by woodland.

Perceptual and scenic qualities

- Strong rural character associated with the mixed farmland and small historic villages.
- Occasional areas of mixed land use contrast with the predominant rural character including, a gliding centre, mineral extraction sites, turbines, pylons, masts and frequent large agricultural sheds and infrastructure.
- New residential development located on the southern edge of Husbands Bosworth.
- Dark skies and relative tranquillity characterises the landscape, particularly in the north, however, light pollution is associated with Husbands Bosworth.
- A network of cycle routes and footpaths, including the towpath of the Grand Union Canal and public right of way (PRoW) Leicester Round Long-Distance Footpath provide access to the landscape, although this becomes notably sparse south of Husbands Bosworth.

Table 22: Overall landscape sensitivity scores for each criterion

Criteria	Sensitivity Score: Solar	Sensitivity Score: Wind
Landform and scale (including sense of openness/enclosure)	High	High
Landcover (including field and settlement patterns)	Moderate	Moderate
Historic landscape character	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
Visual character (including skylines)	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
Perceptual and scenic qualities	Moderate-High	Moderate-High

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments

Existing solar PV developments

- There are no operational or in planning solar PV developments within this LCT at the time of writing this assessment.

Summary of overall landscape sensitivity

- Large-scale development in the landscape such as modern agricultural sheds, masts and pylons decrease landscape sensitivity to solar PV development, along with the limited coverage of semi-natural habitats and relatively enclosed visual character of much of the LCT
- However, the distinctive landform features of ridgeline, hills and tributary valleys, presence of historic features, particularly those related to the industrial heritage of the area, the strong rural character and relative

tranquillity and dark skies of much of the LCT, increase sensitivity to solar PV developments.

- Taking into account the features mentioned above, and the intimate field patterns the overall sensitivity score for solar PV developments would range between moderate-high to high dependant on its size and location. Areas with more parkland character and village edges should be avoided, as developing here could cause a significant change in landscape character. Areas with dense vegetation and enclosure could potentially have lower sensitivity to small solar PV developments, if care is taken in its sitting and design.

Variations in landscape sensitivity at LCA level

- Within the south of LCA 8b: Husbands Bosworth, urban development and infrastructure associated with the larger settlement of Husbands Bosworth disrupts rural character and tranquillity, which along with the larger more regular field patterns reduces sensitivity to solar PV development.
- LCA 8a: Laughton and Mowsley has a stronger rural character and more varied and prominent landform and visible slopes, allowing more intervisibility with the surrounding landscape, increasing its sensitivity.

Table 23: Landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments in LCT 8 - overall landscape sensitivity rating

Solar PV development scenario	LCA 8a	LCA 8b
Small solar (Up to 5 hectares)	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
Medium solar (6-20 hectares)	High	Moderate-High
Large solar (21-50 hectares)	High	High

Solar PV development scenario	LCA 8a	LCA 8b
Very large solar (51-120 hectares)	High	High

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to wind energy developments

Existing wind energy developments

- There is an operational wind turbine at Warren Farm of medium scale (circa 77m) in located to the west of the A5199 within in south-west of LCA 8a (Ref: 13/00182/FUL).

Summary of overall landscape sensitivity

- Landscape characteristics that increase landscape sensitivity to wind energy development include the relatively open character, with long-distance views and intervisibility with surrounding landscapes. The varied landform, human scale features (such as woodland and scattered farmhouses) the time depth of the landscape associated with historic villages and strong industrial heritage, increases landscape sensitivity to wind energy development.
- However, the medium-large scale field pattern in some areas, existing infrastructure such as pylons, turbines and masts indicate lower sensitivity to wind energy development.
- Taking into account the features mentioned above, the overall sensitivity would range between moderate-high to high dependant on its size and location. Areas with more parkland character and village edges should be avoided as wind energy development here could cause a significant change in character. Areas where existing infrastructure is visible in the surrounding areas could be potentially less sensitive to small and medium

scale wind turbines, however it is highly likely that this could result in a significant change to the landscape character.

Any variations in landscape sensitivity

- All LCAs would have similar sensitivity to wind energy development.

Table 24: Landscape sensitivity to wind energy developments in LCT 8 - overall landscape sensitivity rating

Wind energy development scenario	LCA 8a	LCA 8b
Small scale wind (25-60m)	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
Medium scale wind (61-100m)	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
Large scale wind (101-150m)	High	High
Very large-scale wind (151-200m)	High	High

LCT 9: Open Farmed Lowlands

Figure C.32: Contextual map of LCT 9: Open Farmed Lowlands

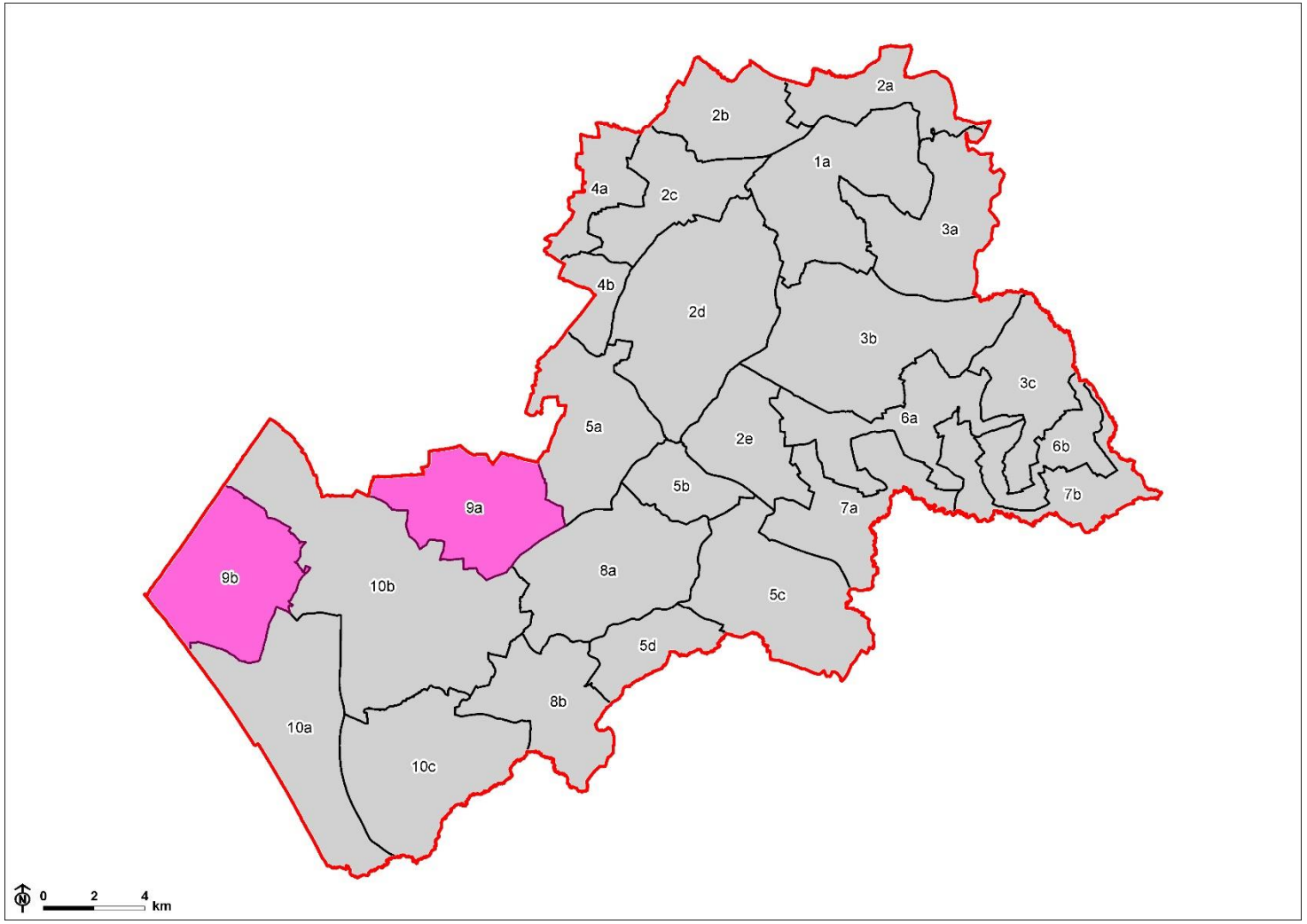

Figure C.33: LCT 9: Open Farmed Lowlands with component Landscape Character Areas

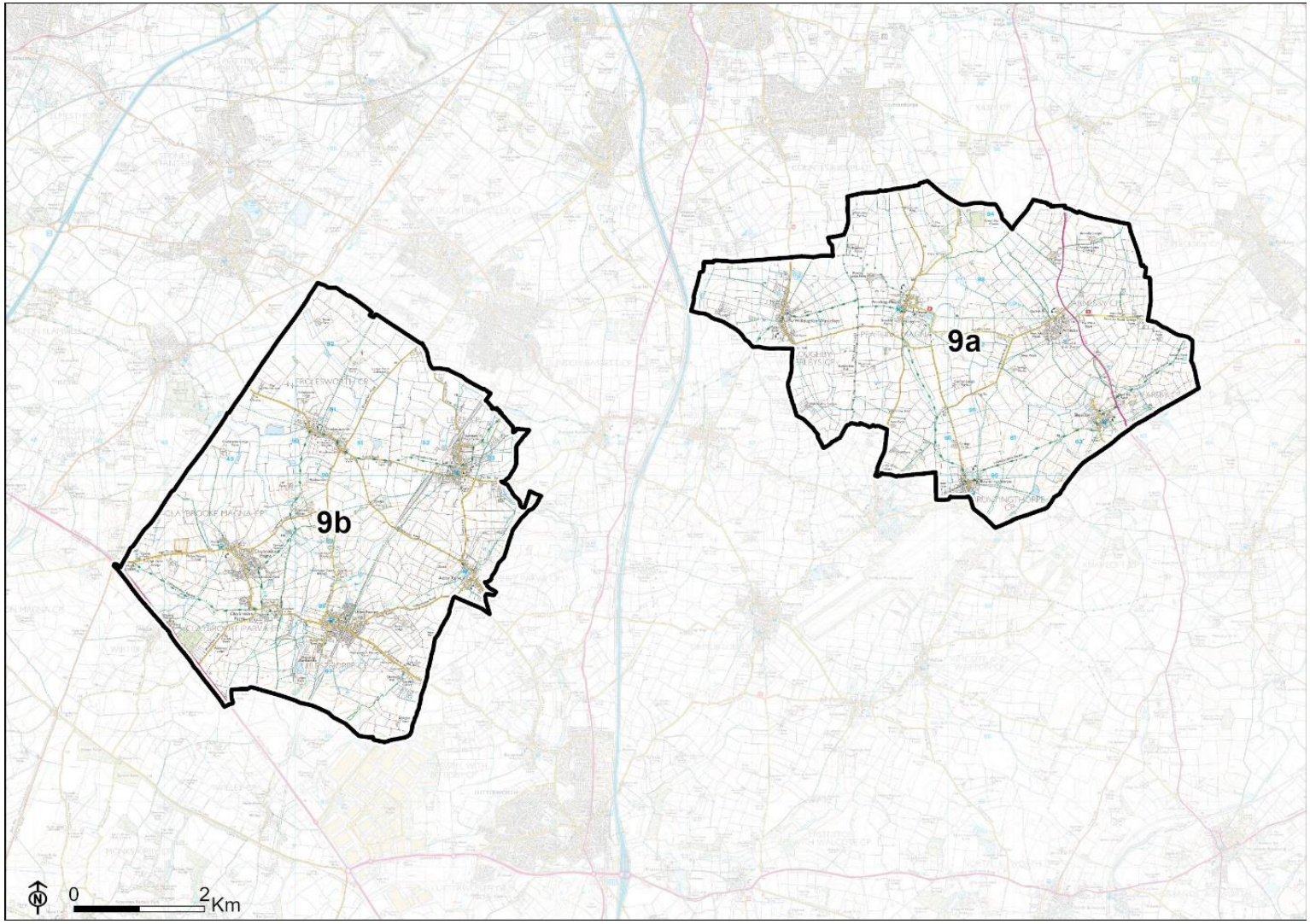

Figure C.34: LCT 9 representative photo 1

Figure C.35: LCT 9 representative photo 2

Assessment of landscape sensitivity to renewable energy development

Landscape sensitivity assessment

Landform and scale (including sense of openness/ enclosure)

- A gently undulating lowland that slopes gradually towards the wide valley of the River Sence and the River Soar in Blaby to the north.
- The elevation ranges from a height of approximately 140m AOD west of Ashby Parva to approximately 85m AOD north of Peatling Magna.
- Small to medium scale arable landscape with some limited areas of woodland. Human scale features include hedgerows, hedgerow trees and small settlements.
- A generally open landscape due to the limited woodland cover and low hedgerows. Within floodplains, denser vegetation along field boundaries creates a localised sense of enclosure.

Landcover (including field and settlement patterns)

- Arable farmland is the dominant landcover, bound by mature hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees.
- Woodland cover is sparse with only pockets of other semi-natural habitats. These include good quality semi-improved grassland north of Shearsby and north of Ullesthorpe, and traditional orchards often on the edges of villages such as Claybrooke Magna.
- Smaller field patterns surround villages but are set within a framework of larger arable fields. Within floodplains, field patterns are more sinuous and sometimes large in size.

- Settlement is well integrated into the landscape fabric with a high concentration of linear and nucleated historic villages such as Shearsby and Claybrooke Parva.

Historic landscape character

- Time depth is associated with historic villages closely scattered across the landscape such as Shearsby and Claybrooke Parva which have limited modern development. The LCT plays an important role in the setting to these villages.
- Settlements are often designated as conservation areas due to the concentration of listed buildings, including grade I or II* listed churches such as the Church of St Peter at Claybrooke Parva.
- Fields are predominantly 19th century reorganised piecemeal enclosure and planned enclosure with occasional ridge and furrow. Very large post-war fields associated with more modern arable farming methods are also present.
- Historic features include the remains of the Roman town at High Cross (scheduled monument), which was of strategic importance during the occupation of Roman Britain, along with medieval settlements and moated sites.

Visual character (including skylines)

- Limited woodland cover, and low well-maintained hedgerows allow views over a relatively uniform agricultural landscape, although some views are enclosed by the undulating landform and vegetated skylines.
- Intervisibility with neighbouring districts and LCTs is also comparatively low due to bands of woodland on the boundary of the LCT, although some long distance views are occasionally available from within the northern part of the LCT. The city of Leicester is not clearly visible from the northern edge of the LCT despite its proximity due to the intervening landform.

- A contrasting sense of enclosure is often experienced when approaching and within settlements due to the variation in field pattern and density of vegetation.
- Skylines are disrupted by pylons, wind turbines, such as existing wind turbines to the north of Frolesworth, and a mast along the A5 on the southern boundary.

Perceptual and scenic qualities

- The lowland farmland, interspersed by areas of woodland and traditional villages connected by winding lanes evokes a strong rural character and sense of tranquillity.
- The perception of rurality can be disrupted in places by intrusive modern development, including large agricultural sheds, operational turbines and major road infrastructure (including the A5 and A5199).
- Skies are relatively dark in the east, but light pollution is experienced in the west, particularly in proximity to Magna Park logistics centre.
- NCN Route 6, local cycle routes and PRoWs, including part of the Leicestershire Round Long-Distance Footpath, provide access to the landscape.

Table 25: Overall landscape sensitivity scores for each criterion

Criteria	Sensitivity Score: Solar	Sensitivity Score: Wind
Landform and scale (including sense of openness/enclosure)	Low-Moderate	Low-Moderate
Landcover (including field and settlement patterns)	Moderate	Moderate
Historic landscape character	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
Visual character (including skylines)	Moderate	Moderate
Perceptual and scenic qualities	Moderate-High	Moderate-High

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments

Existing solar PV developments

- There are no operational or in planning solar PV developments within this LCT at the time of writing this assessment.

Summary of overall landscape sensitivity

- The predominant gently undulating lowland landform, human influence such as urban infrastructure, a consistent landcover of medium-large to large scale arable fields, limited semi-natural habitats, sparce woodland and some areas of enclosure provided by the undulating landform, indicate a lower landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments.
- However, the presence of historic features, the time depth associated with historic villages, historic 19th century field patterns, and areas of more remote rural character increase sensitivity to solar PV developments. The

southern part of the LCT has more intervisibility with neighbouring LCTs and is more open, increasing the sensitivity of this landscape to solar PV development.

- Taking into account the features mentioned above, there would be a range in landscape sensitivity from low-moderate to high for solar PV development, dependent on its size and location. The capability to accommodate smaller-scale solar PV development would be low-moderate or moderate sensitivity, meaning solar of this scale could be accommodated with a limited to slight change in landscape character. Due to the historic character of the landscape, the landscape scale and some areas of rural character, this LCT would be unable to accommodate very large scale solar PV development without significantly changing the landscape character of this LCT.

Variations in landscape sensitivity at LCA level

- The generally larger scale field pattern with strong network of hedgerows, slightly gentler landform and influence from neighbouring Magna Park slightly reduced the sensitivity of LCA 9b compared to 9a, particularly at a small-scale and at a very large-scale.

Table 26: Landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments in LCT 9

Solar PV development scenario	LCA 9a	LCA 9b
Small solar (Up to 5 ha)	Moderate	Low-Moderate
Medium solar (6-20 ha)	Moderate	Moderate
Large solar (21-50 ha)	Moderate-High	Moderate-High

Solar PV development scenario	LCA 9a	LCA 9b
Very large solar (51-120 ha)	High	Moderate-High

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to wind energy developments

Existing wind energy developments

- There are two existing, operational windfarms of a small-scale in LCA 9b to the north of Frolesworth as follows;
  - 2 turbines of circa 45m at Flat House Farm (Ref: 11/01214/FUL); and
  - 2 turbines of circa 35m at Frolesworth Lodge (Ref:11/00313/FUL).
- A further operational, single turbine of a medium-scale (circa 67m) is located to the south of Ullesthorpe within the southern extent of LCA 9b.

Summary of overall landscape sensitivity

- Landscape characteristics that increase landscape sensitivity to wind energy development include the historic villages and scheduled monuments, access provided to the landscape through the network of PRoW's and the overall tranquil, rural character of the landscape. The relatively open character with limited woodland cover allows for some intervisibility to surrounding landscapes, particularly in the north of the LCT.
- The disruption from intrusive modern features (including existing wind turbines, mast and pylons, large agricultural sheds, and trunk roads), the simple landform, consistent landcover of medium-large scale arable fields and limited semi-natural habitats all indicate a lower sensitivity to wind energy development.

- Taking into account the features mentioned above, there would be a range in landscape sensitivity score for wind energy development from moderate to high for this LCT depending on scale and location. The LCT would be slightly less sensitive to small scale wind energy but would still cause a degree of change to the landscape character. Particular care should be taken in the siting and design of any applications to ensure areas within this LCT which contribute to setting of historic villages are carefully considered. Turbines of medium scale and higher could have the potential for significant effects upon the landscape character.

Any variations in landscape sensitivity

- Both LCAs would have similar sensitivity to wind energy development.

Table 27: Landscape sensitivity to wind energy developments in LCT 9

Wind energy development scenario	LCA 9a	LCA 9b
Small scale wind (25-60m)	Moderate	Moderate
Medium scale wind (60-100m)	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
Large scale wind (100-150m)	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
Very large scale wind (150-200m)	High	High

LCT 10: Transitional Rolling Farmland

Figure C.36: Contextual map of LCT 10: Transitional Rolling Farmland

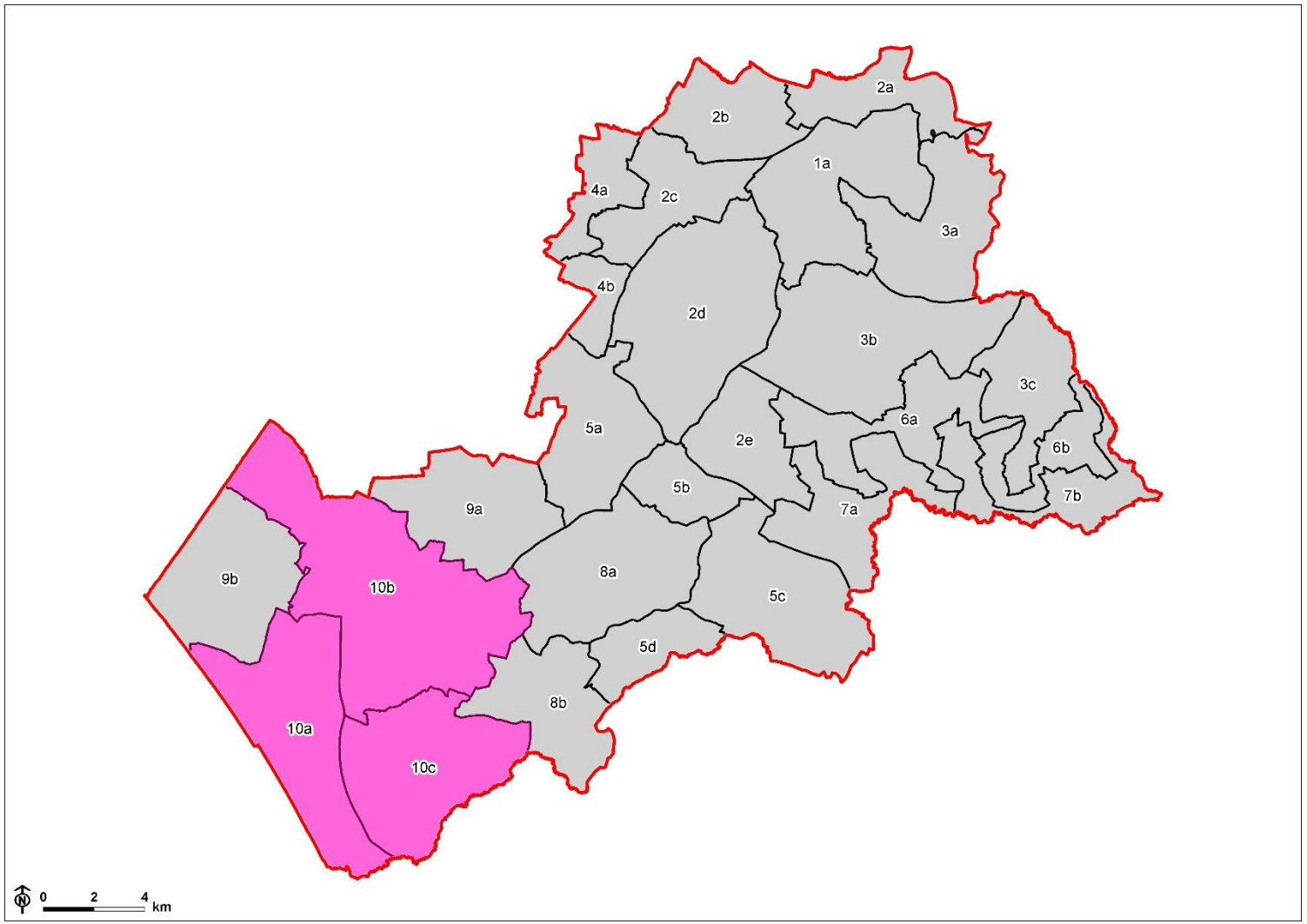

Figure C.37: LCT 10: Transitional Rolling Farmland with component Landscape Character Areas

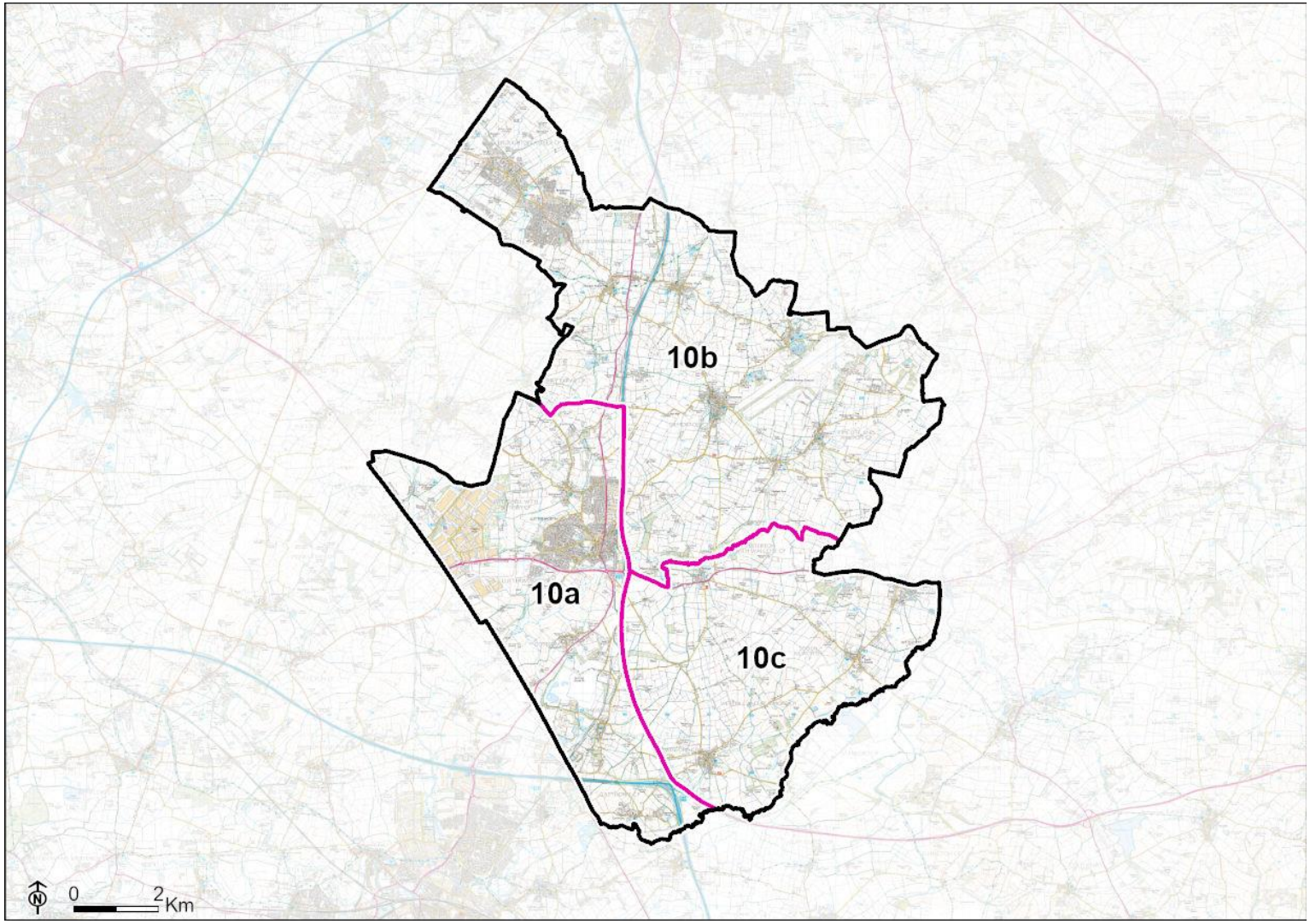

Figure C.38: LCT 10: Transitional Rolling Farmland representative photo 1

Figure C.39: LCT 10: Transitional Rolling Farmland representative photo 2

Assessment of landscape sensitivity to renewable energy development

Landscape sensitivity assessment

Landform and scale (including sense of openness/ enclosure)

- The Transitional Rolling Farmland LCT comprises a rolling landform containing the gentle valleys of the River Soar, River Swift, River Avon, and their associated tributaries.
- The elevation ranges from approximately 154m AOD south-east of Walcote to approximately 70m AOD near Broughton Astley.
- Predominantly medium to large scale mixed agricultural and settled landscape. Human scale features include low hedgerows, hedgerow trees and settlements. Larger scale features include turbines, major road infrastructure and pylons.
- The relatively flat topography and low to moderate woodland cover results in a broad and relatively open landscape.

Landcover (including field and settlement patterns)

- Landcover is primarily arable farmland, with some pasture in floodplains and associated with villages. Fields are enclosed by a strong framework of hedgerows, mature hedgerow trees.
- Pockets of varied habitat including woodland, wetland and grassland including three sites of special scientific interest (SSSI) relating to marshland, wetland, and historic parkland. Flooded quarry pits form groups of fishing ponds across the area.

- Larger blocks of deciduous woodland are found further north, largely screening urban elements such as the M1 corridor, distribution parks and the aerodrome.
- Large to medium scale settlements and enterprise parks characterise the area, including the town of Lutterworth, large village of Broughton Astley, and the notable built-up area at Magna Park distribution park. Bruntingthorpe Aerodrome is also a prominent feature.
- A number of small, discreet historic villages sit within the landscape.

Historic landscape character

- Historic villages (including Peatling Parva, Bitteswell and Swinford), and remains relating to prehistoric and medieval settlement and medieval earthworks associated with a motte castle near Shawell (all scheduled monuments) add to the sense of time-depth in the landscape.
- Occasional parklands such as Stanford Hall (Registered Park & Garden), also contribute to a localised sense of time-depth within this LCT.
- Field patterns vary from very large post war fields, 18th and 19th century planned enclosure, reorganised piecemeal enclosure from the mid-19th century to16th/17th century piecemeal enclosure west of Gilmorton.
- Areas of ridge and furrow are found in the LCT, particularly around Walton and Kimcote.
- The Stanford Reservoir was built in the late 1920s. It forms a significant body of standing water on the boundary between Harborough and West Northamptonshire that is visible from the north.

Visual character (including skylines)

- The visual character of the landscape varies notably within this LCT.
- Sweeping longer distance views are available across the open agricultural landscape, associated with the gently undulating topography and limited

vegetation. Areas of larger field pattern south of Lutterworth contribute to a sense of an openness.

- Some views are enclosed by topography, hedgerows, and hedgerow trees, while pockets of enclosed character are associated with parklands and woodland blocks.
- Long distance dramatic views area afforded into West Northamptonshire and towards distant hills on the southern edge of the Peak District.
- The presence of pylons, wind turbines and masts introduce modern vertical features onto the skyline which are occasionally softened by woodland screening.

Perceptual and scenic qualities

- Urban and more modern features impact the landscape which includes modern residential development on the edges of Lutterworth, Magna Park distribution park, the M1 and M6 motorways, Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground, wind farms, and pylons. Where these features combine, the rural character is locally eroded.
- Whilst urban and modern features are consistent across the landscape, pockets of rural character have been preserved. Historic villages are present in the north-east and south of the LCT.
- Tranquillity is impacted, particularly to the west around Lutterworth and Magna Park, in the north around Broughton Astley, and in the vicinity of the M1 and M6. Pockets of tranquillity and dark skies are found in the east, away from larger settlements and urban influences.
- The public right of way (PRoW) network provides access to the landscape, including a section of the Leicestershire Round Long Distance Footpath a network of local cycle routes and Route 50 of the National Cycle Network (NCN).

Table 28: Overall landscape sensitivity scores for each criterion

Criteria	Sensitivity Score: Solar	Sensitivity Score: Wind
Landform and scale (including sense of openness/enclosure)	Low-Moderate	Low-Moderate
Landcover (including field and settlement patterns)	Low-Moderate	Low-Moderate
Historic landscape character	Moderate	Moderate
Visual character (including skylines)	Moderate	Moderate
Perceptual and scenic qualities	Low - Moderate	Low-Moderate

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments

Existing solar PV developments

- Circa 50 ha. operational solar farm at Northfield House Farm, Rugby Road, Cotesbach located within western extent of LCA 10a Lutterworth to Catthorpe (Planning ref: 20/01289/FUL).
- Circa 25 ha. under construction solar farm on land East of Swinford Barn Lutterworth Road (Planning ref: 19/01853/FUL) located within the central west part of LCA 10c.
- There is a roof top PV granted planning permission at the Armstrong Logistics unit at Magna Park (Planning ref: 23/01374/PDN). Given the height of these existing buildings, this addition would have little impact on the sensitivity to ground mounted solar PV development within the LCT.

Summary of overall landscape sensitivity

- The predominantly gently rolling landform of medium-scale, human influence (in the form of settlements, road infrastructure and large-scale distribution infrastructure) indicate a lower landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments. Also, the enclosure provided by strong hedgerows contribute to a lower sensitivity to solar PV development, particularly alongside major infrastructure roads.
- However, the historic villages of Peatling Parva, Bitteswell and Swinford as well as historic field patterns and occasional ridge and furrow increase sensitivity to solar PV development in parts of the LCT. There is a sense of openness in the landscape, with long distance views into neighbouring landscapes, both within and outside of the district, which increase sensitivity to solar PV developments. However, the nature of these views are often influenced by urban development including pylons, masts and turbines.
- Taking into account the features mentioned above, there would be a range in landscape sensitivity from low to moderate-high for solar PV development dependent on its size and location within the LCT. Across the landscape of the LCT, in areas where the field patterns are larger and also have good landscape structure to enclose development would be lower in sensitivity.
- Overall, the landscape would have low to low-moderate sensitivity to small and medium scale solar PV, meaning that the landscape is likely to be able to accommodate this scale of development with limited change in character. Care would still be needed when siting and designing any development to avoid adversely affecting key characteristics within this LCT. There would be a range in scores from moderate to moderate-high landscape sensitivity for large and very large scale solar PV development as key characteristics would be more vulnerable to change of this scale.

Variations in landscape sensitivity at LCA level

- LCA 10a: Lutterworth to Catthorpe has a lower sensitivity to solar PV development than other LCAs in this LCT at certain scales and locations,

due to the sparse PRoW, and higher levels of existing development and infrastructure including the distribution centre Magna Park, expanded modern settlement on the edge of Lutterworth, and strategic road networks of the M1, M6, A14 and A5.

Table 29: Landscape sensitivity to solar PV developments in LCT 10

Solar PV development scenario	LCA 10a	LCA 10b	LCA 10c
Small solar (Up to 5 hectares)	Low	Low-Moderate	Low-Moderate
Medium solar (6-20 hectares)	Low-Moderate	Low-Moderate	Low-Moderate
Large solar (21-50 hectares)	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Very large solar (51-120 hectares)	Moderate	Moderate-High	Moderate-High

Overall assessment of landscape sensitivity to wind energy developments

Existing wind energy developments

- Large-scale operational wind farm at land at Low Spinney Farm, Dunton Road incorporating 4 turbines at 125m high (Ref: 09/00174/FUL) located in the central northern part of the LCA 10b.

- Large-scale operational wind farm at land east of Lutterworth Road incorporating 11 turbines at 125m high (Ref: 08/00506/FUL) located in the central part of LCA 10c.

Summary of overall landscape sensitivity

- Landscape characteristics that lower landscape sensitivity to wind energy development includes the predominantly gently rolling landform, medium to large-scale field pattern and human influence (in the form of settlements, road infrastructure, large scale distribution infrastructure, wind farms, pylons and modern residential development). The resulting impacts on perceptual qualities also indicate a lower landscape sensitivity to wind energy developments.
- However, intervisibility with the surrounding landscape, and the presence of historic villages of Peatling Parva, Bitteswell and Swinford contribute to the time depth of the landscape and increase sensitivity to wind energy development. However, the nature of these views are influenced in parts of the LCT by urban development including pylons, masts and turbines.
- Taking into account the features mentioned above, in particular the existing human influence on the landscape, the overall sensitivity of the landscape to wind energy would range from low-moderate for small scale to moderate-high for very large scale development. Wind development in this LCT would require careful consideration of any potential cumulative effects.
- Some parts of the LCT, in particular those which contribute to the settings of historic villages or are notably more tranquil or scenic due to their distance from motorways and existing urban influences, would have a higher sensitivity to wind energy of all scales, as key characteristics and qualities of the landscape would be vulnerable to change from wind energy development.

Variations in landscape sensitivity at LCA level

- All LCAs would have similar sensitivity to wind energy development.

Table 30: Landscape sensitivity to wind energy developments in LCT 10

Wind energy development scenario	LCA 10a	LCA 10b	LCA 10c
Small scale wind (25-60m)	Low-Moderate	Low-Moderate	Low-Moderate
Medium scale wind (61-100m)	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Large scale wind (101-150m)	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Very large scale wind (151-200m)	Moderate-High	Moderate-High	Moderate-High

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