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Planning, Landscape & Environment  
an **RSK** company

# TEST VALLEY LANDSCAPE STUDIES

Landscape Sensitivity Study:  
Final report to Test Valley Borough Council,  
January 2024

Prepared by Stephenson Halliday,  
An RSK Company, with RSK ADAS

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Annexes - Site specific Landscape Sensitivity Assessments (Separate documents):

Annexe 1: Residential sites assessments

Annexe 2: Employment sites assessments

## Document history

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

1.1.1 Stephenson Halliday an RSK Company, working with RSK ADAS, was commissioned in 2022 by Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) to undertake two landscape evidence base studies to inform their planning and direction of growth in the Local Plan to 2040. These are:

- A landscape sensitivity study considering the sensitivity of candidate sites in the TVBC Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA).
- A Local Gaps study assessing the efficacy of the Local Gap designations in maintaining separation between the principal settlements.

1.1.2 This report covers part 1: Landscape Sensitivity Study.

## 1.2 Purpose of this report and scope of the study

1.2.1 This report sets out the approach to landscape sensitivity used for the Test Valley Landscape Sensitivity Study, the geographical scope of the work and the findings and recommendations resulting from the landscape sensitivity analysis.

1.2.2 The study considers the sensitivity of the landscape of a number of SHELAA sites to change arising from large scale residential, (including mixed use) and employment purposes. The study forms part of the policy evidence base for the emerging Test Valley Local Plan to 2040 and also links to the parallel Local Gaps study commissioned from Stephenson Halliday. The approach set out in this report is grounded in current thinking and widely accepted industry good practice on landscape assessment and its applications including landscape sensitivity analysis, as set out in section 1.2.5 below.

1.2.3 The approach developed for this study also draws upon the experience of senior members of the project team, including chartered landscape architects with over twenty years' experience in landscape assessment and characterisation, and relevant parts of landscape assessment methodologies developed by Stephenson Halliday and ADAS, benchmarked where appropriate against and reflecting upon similar methodologies and studies developed by others. The methodology is therefore robust and comprehensively grounded in widely accepted industry good practice.

1.2.4 The sites in the study are assessed for development, as potential residential or employment sites in the report, but in some instances may also be mixed use development. Residential development assumes a density of 35-50 dwellings per hectare and 2-2.5 storey development, whilst employment development assumes a maximum of 2 commercial storeys. The study is therefore designed only for assessing and guiding these development scenarios. The receiving landscape would be sensitive in different ways to other scales of development and to other types of development scenario beyond residential and employment development, and these would therefore need a new analysis. This is a strategic landscape study and as development proposals may come forward for sites in future they will require further, more detailed landscape and visual assessment.

1.2.5 The locations assessed in this study are listed in Tables 1.1 and 1.2.

## Guidance and sources of information

- 1.2.6 The approach and methodology for this study are grounded in the following and widely accepted industry good practice and methodologies:
- Natural England, 2019, *An approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management*<sup>1</sup>.
  - Natural England, 2014, *An approach to Landscape Character Assessment*<sup>2</sup>.
  - Landscape Institute, 2021, *TGN 02-21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations*<sup>3</sup>.
  - Landscape Institute and IEMA, 2013, *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition ('GLVIA 3').
- 1.2.7 Account is also taken of historic, now superseded but still useful guidance contained in the old *Topic Paper 6: Techniques for Assessing Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity* (2004), produced by the then Countryside Agency as a companion annexe to the first edition of the national *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance* (2002, catalogue reference CAX 84F), now superseded by Natural England's 2014 and 2019 publications listed above.
- 1.2.8 It is recognised that landscape is a dynamic medium and that change in the landscape, both anthropomorphic and environmental, can and will occur during the Local Plan period and beyond. As such the findings in this study represent a point in time – the situation at the time of survey in 2022 and 2023.

## Structure of this report

- 1.2.9 The remainder of this report is set out as follows:
- Section 2: Methodology.
  - Section 3: Landscape sensitivity analysis, guidance and recommendations.
  - Section 4: Summary and conclusions.
  - Appendices

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<sup>1</sup> Tudor, C, Natural England, 2019, *An Approach to Landscape Sensitivity Assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management*, NE724. Link [here](#)

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<sup>2</sup> Tudor, C, Natural England, 2014. *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment*, NE579. Link [here](#)

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<sup>3</sup> Landscape Institute, 2021, *TGN 02/21: Assessing Landscape Value outside National Designations*. Link [here](#)

## Index of sites assessed by this study

1.2.10 The following tables present the sites assessed in this study, classified according to: Residential sites, and Employment sites.

**Table 1.1 - Index of Residential sites (See Annexe 1)**

Location	Individual sites/parcels	SHELAA references
Andover North	Land at Manor Farm (near Enham Alamein/Knights Enham)	173
Andover North East	Land at Finkley Road/East Anton	165, 231, 234, 305
Andover East 1	Land at Picket Twenty	76, 203, 258, 404, 441, 322, 14, 202
Andover East 2	Land at Picket Piece	31,12
Andover South East 1	Land at Bere Hill, Bere Hill Farm, Bailiffs Bottom, west of Micheldever Road	419, 167, 247
Andover South East 2	Land south of London Road / south east of London Road (east of Middleway)	340
Andover South East 3	Land south of Forest Lane	338
Andover South West	Land North of Abbots Ann and Little Ann	252, 358, 359, 300
Andover West 1	Land at Harrow Way House, Land at Homestead Farm	392, 281
	Land at Croft House, Land East of Short Lane, Penton Corner	204, 316
Romsey North 1	Land at Jermyns Lane (also known as land at Brentry Nurseries)	344
Romsey North 2	Land at Ganger Farm	284
Romsey North 3	Land north of Sandy Lane (also known as land at Belbins)	187
Romsey North 4	Land at Oxlease	308, 384
Romsey North East	Land south of Crampmoor Lane	180
Romsey East 1	Land north of Highwood Lane	41
Romsey East 2	Land at Highwood Lane/Halterworth Lane	282, 139, 370, 356
Romsey South 1	Land south of Romsey Bypass (adj Burma Road)	154, 155
Ludgershall 1	Land north of Andover Road, (also known as Land east of Ludgershall)	61
Ludgershall 2	Land south of Andover Road, (also known as Land South of A342 and east of Shoddesden Lane, Ludgershall)	324
North Baddesley 1	Land south of Botley Road (Roundabouts Copse)	406
North Baddesley 3	Land at Packridge Farm	19, 255
Nursling 1	Land west of A3057 (also known as Land at Upton Lane/Upton Triangle)	394, 385
Nursling 2	Land at Four Horseshoes	250
Rownhams 1	Land at Fields Farm	253
Rownhams 2	Land at Rownhams Lane	201
Chilworth	Land at Chilworth, Old Village	146
Chandlers Ford 1	Land north west of St James Park (also known as Land adj King Edwards Park, Land adj Trotts Copse)	295
Valley Park 2	Land north of Flexford Road	169
Valley Park 3	Land south of Flexford Road	246
Valley Park 4	Land at Velmore Farm (includes land at Castle Lane)	82, 285
Stockbridge 1	Land east of Old London Road	408, 409, 410, 411

Stockbridge 2	Land west of Test Valley School	237, 236
Stockbridge 3	Land west of Houghton Road	(assessed as a cluster)

**Table 1.2 - Index of Employment sites (See Annexe 2)**

Location	Individual sites/parcels	SHELAA references
Romsey East 4	Land east of Abbey Park	133, 296, 397
Romsey East 5	Land south side of Botley Road	(assessed as a cluster)
North Baddesley 2	Land at Test Valley Business Park	
Weyhill	Land west of Ordnance Lane	143
Chilworth 2	Kennels Farm, adjacent Chilworth Science Park	244
Thrupton 1-2	Land at the Aerodrome and Land south of the Aerodrome	400, 401
Nursling 1	Land west of A3057 (also known as Land at Upton Lane/Upton Triangle)	394, 385

## 2 METHODOLOGY

2.1.1 This section sets out the assessment methodology developed for and applied in the study, which is summarised in Figure 2.1 below and has been developed in accordance with the guidance cited in section 1.2.5. This is followed by detail on and practical considerations associated with the method, along with assumptions and limitations for its application in decision making in TVBC.

Figure 2.1: Summary of methodology



## 2.2 Landscape sensitivity: What is it? Some practical considerations and applications

2.2.1 First of all, some definitions. Landscape may be defined as follows, with reference to the European Landscape Convention (ELC):

*'... an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and / or human factors'.<sup>4</sup>*

Or even more succinctly, by Nan Fairbrother: *'Landscape = Habitat + Man'*.

It should be noted that the ELC definition covers 'natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas' and its scope includes 'land, inland water and marine areas' – this includes townscape and seascape. The ELC's aims are to promote landscape protection, management and planning, a flexible approach which recognises that landscapes are dynamic, ever changing media and that all landscapes matter – every landscape is valued by somebody, irrespective of its designated status or perceived quality. Landscape sensitivity analysis is a flexible approach that can assist these aims, by informing decisions on where new development, and/or changes in land management, might be most appropriately directed or located from a landscape perspective. All planning applications will need to be judged on their own merits, but the suitability or otherwise of a development may be informed, in part, by an appropriate landscape sensitivity analysis.

Figure 2.2: All landscapes matter, irrespective of designation - a core tenet of the ELC (Image © Stephenson Halliday)



2.2.2 Figure 2.3 overleaf sets out Natural England's consideration of the elements which make up landscape, whether place (physical, natural and systems elements) or people (cultural

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<sup>4</sup> Council of Europe (CoE), 2000, European Landscape Convention. Link [here](#)

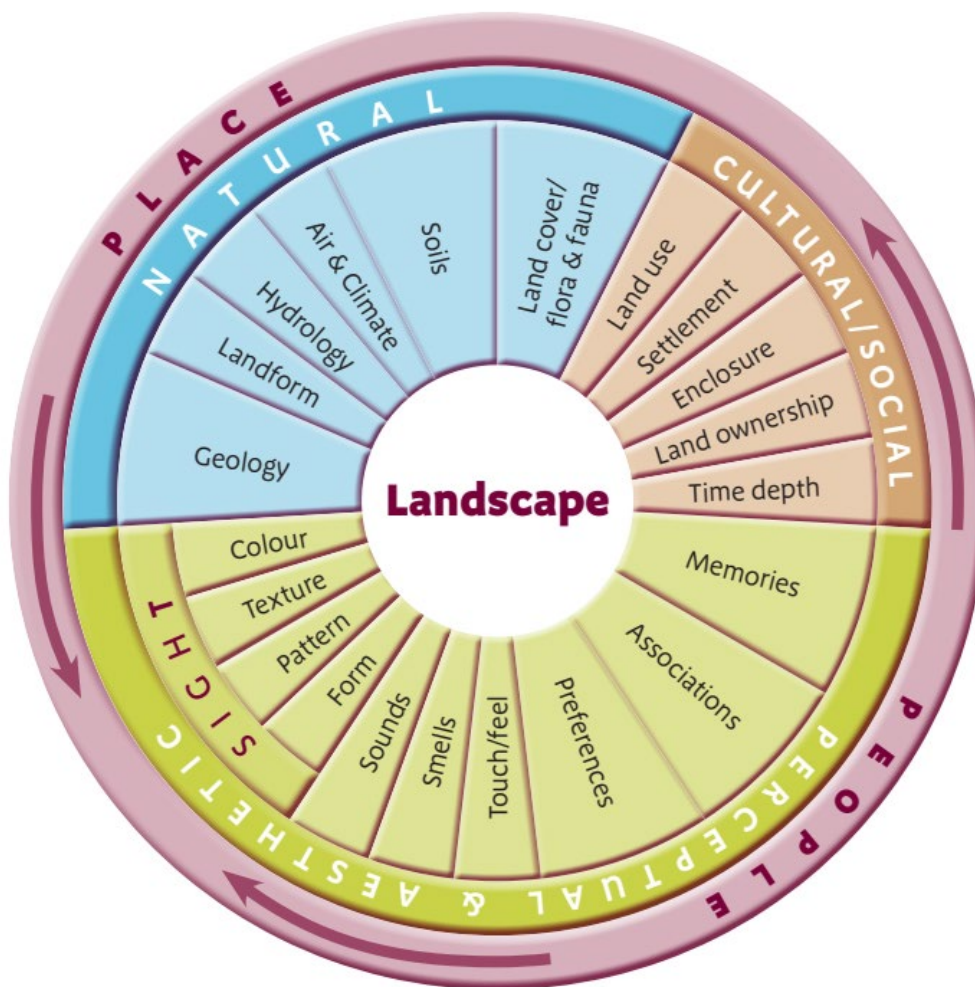


pattern, social, community and land use) elements, as they relate to the ELC definition above.

2.2.3 With reference to Natural England’s 2019 document:

*‘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 – such as changes to valued attributes of baseline landscape character and the visual resource.’<sup>5</sup>*

Figure 2.3: What is landscape? Natural England, 2014<sup>6</sup> (Reproduced under [Open Government Licence v3.0](#))



<sup>5</sup> Natural England, 2019, Op Cit, pg. 5

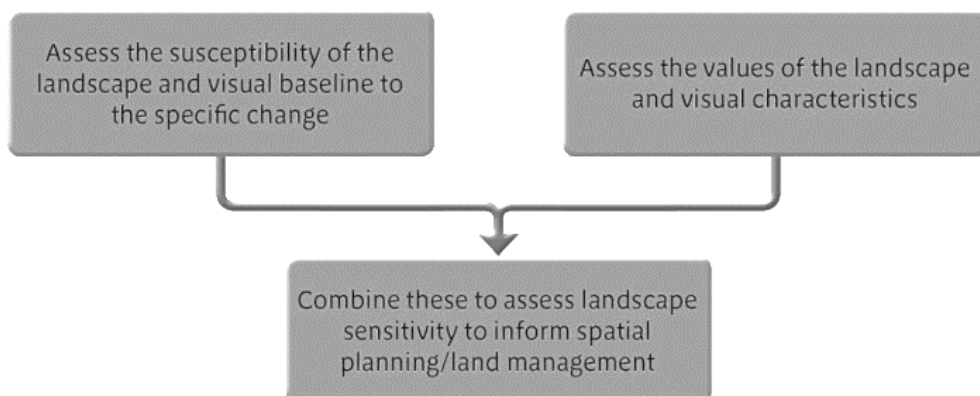
<sup>6</sup> Image contains public sector information licenced under the [Open Government Licence version 3.0](#)

2.2.4 With reference to the current Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA 3)<sup>7</sup>, landscape sensitivity is also a function of the value placed on a landscape, allied to the vulnerability or susceptibility of that landscape and its component characteristics or attributes to change arising from a specific development or change scenario. Landscape value and susceptibility are discussed in detail in the next section on assessment criteria. Natural England’s 2019 document expands on the above concepts, going on to state at page 7 that:

*‘Within the context of spatial planning and land management, landscape sensitivity 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. 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’<sup>8</sup>.*

2.2.5 The approach may be summarised in brief in the simple diagram below at Figure 2.4, which is closely related to the approach in GLVIA 3:

**Figure 2.4: Summary of the Landscape Sensitivity analysis process (Natural England, 2019<sup>9</sup>)**



2.2.6 Natural England’s 2019 document goes on to describe landscape sensitivity analysis or assessment as follows:

*‘Landscape sensitivity assessment is a process that assesses the resilience / robustness of landscape character and the visual resource – and what we value - to a defined change, or changes. It can help decision makers to understand likely changes and the nature of change*

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<sup>7</sup> Landscape Institute and IEMA, 2013 Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition

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<sup>8</sup> Natural England, 2019, Op Cit

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<sup>9</sup> Image contains public sector information licenced under the [Open Government Licence version 3.0](#)

*should particular courses of action - the development / land management scenarios – be taken forward.*<sup>10</sup>

- 2.2.7 The process is therefore essentially a form of applied landscape characterisation, using, interpreting and in some cases refining and updating information in strategic level Landscape Character Assessments or LCA for use at the more granular site cluster or local sub-character area level.

### **Sensitivity to what?**

- 2.2.8 Landscape characteristics and landscape attributes are of course sensitive in different ways to different types of development/change scenario and to different quanta of development. In this case the scenario to be assessed will be that of medium to large scale residential and employment development,. A series of assessment criteria have therefore been devised below, based on interpretation of valued landscape characteristics to bring forward in the context of sensitivity to this development scenario. Where the criteria have had to be tailored to reflect large scale employment development scenarios, this is noted in the relevant site report.

### **Sensitivity or capacity?**

- 2.2.9 Often, reference is still made to landscape capacity as well as landscape sensitivity. This is now an increasingly out of date approach since wider environmental capacity for development is necessarily based on consideration of a much larger series of elements which may or may not link to landscape (e.g. inter alia ecosystem services and natural capital potential, wider environmental limits to growth and absolute and relative constraints such as biodiversity, heritage and flood risk). The term capacity is also misleading as it can imply a kind of threshold for development and change when this is seldom the case in reality with landscape. Relative capacity may alter over time with changes in the landscape baseline or policy targets, aims and legislative drivers – the bar may be set higher or lower, so capacity is very difficult to define with any robustness or confidence.
- 2.2.10 In this study a different, more modern approach has therefore been employed, interpreting the landscape sensitivity analysis and overall judgement, along with the key attributes of the landscape, to develop concise, spatially referenced guidance in relation to the sites being assessed. This approach guides change in ways most responsive to character and provides TVBC with a robust, informed view as to the potential ability or otherwise of sites or parts of sites to accommodate well designed and integrated development. Landscape guidance also advises where appropriate on mitigation potential and landscape opportunities which may be realised as part of a landscape led planning and design approach in the future.

### **Factors which may drive or shape the approach to landscape sensitivity analysis – First principles**

- 2.2.11 The purpose behind the commissioning of a sensitivity study, the change/development scenario/s to be assessed and the scale at which the assessment is to be undertaken or the scale of decision-making at which it is to be applied, will all have a bearing on the shape its

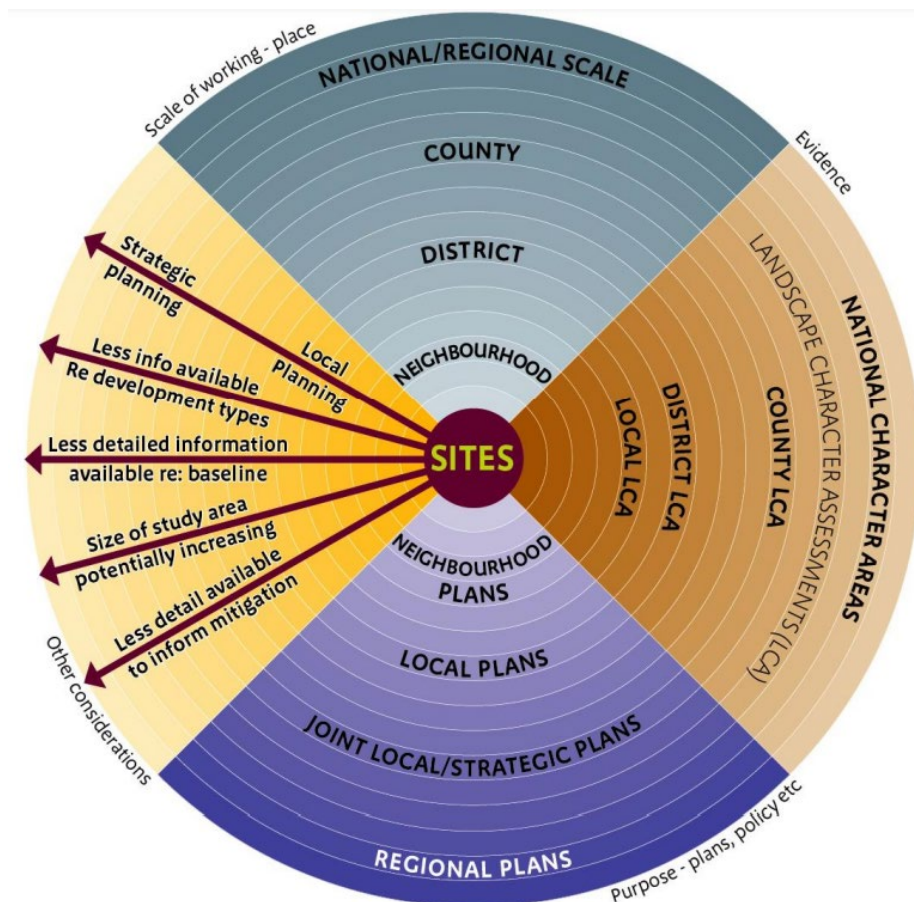
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<sup>10</sup> Ibid

outputs take. Typically sub-regional or district/borough scale studies will be strategic sensitivity studies but may also have more specific guidance to inform siting, growth options and potential development allocations (as with this study). Much finer grain site specific studies, such as for a development brief or a planning application, will typically take the form of either a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) or Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA), of which landscape sensitivity analysis will form a critical part of the baseline.

2.2.12 The diagram overleaf at Figure 2.5 from Natural England, 2019, provides an illustration of the elements which may influence the shape of a landscape sensitivity study.

Figure 2.5: Factors informing the approach to landscape sensitivity analysis (Natural England, 2019<sup>11</sup>)



## 2.3 ‘Local’ level landscape classification; Developing and applying assessment criteria

2.3.1 This sub-section sets out the approach to developing two key steps of the process: 1. Reviewing and updating/refining where needed the available LCA information and evidence

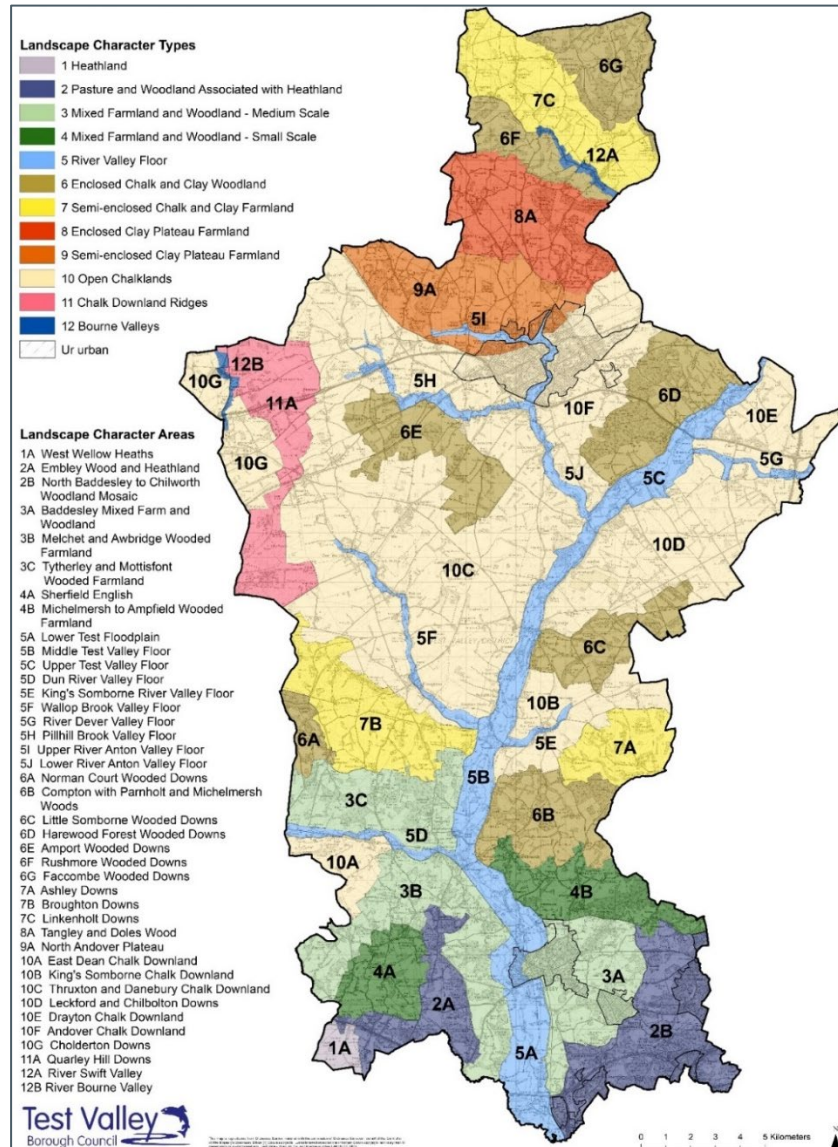
<sup>11</sup> Image contains public sector information licenced under the [Open Government Licence version 3.0](#)

base to work with, and 2. Developing the assessment criteria. We start with the landscape evidence base below.

## Reviewing the existing LCA evidence base; developing a ‘local’ landscape classification and sub-divisions

2.3.2 The existing landscape classification developed in the Borough LCA is shown at Figure 2.6.

Figure 2.6: The Test Valley Borough Landscape Classification (Source: © Test Valley Borough Council)



2.3.3 The existing LCA is a very useful starting point for the exercise. However, in using the LCA data for this study, account was also usefully taken of the following:

- The purpose of the original LCA study.

- The scale at which it was undertaken – some of the character areas may need further sub-division to enable a meaningful analysis in relation to the land parcels/site clusters in this study.
- The age of the LCA and potential for changes to the landscape baseline since it was published. Desk study and particularly fieldwork identified such changes and any associated refinements that were required to be captured in the baseline for the sensitivity study.

2.3.4 Where LCA sub-divisions needed to be made to accurately capture the local baseline and provide an appropriately fine-grained basis for the sensitivity analysis, a first principles approach was adopted, reviewing available GIS (Geographic Information System) mapped information layers to determine where draft sub-divisions may fall, for testing in the field survey.

2.3.5 In doing this, whilst the emphasis was primarily on snapping any local boundary amendments to mappable physical or cultural landscape features to give a robust, evidenced rationale, it should always also be remembered that landscape character boundaries are zones of transition. They are not hard and fast physical lines on the ground in reality.

2.3.6 The landscape character areas from the Test Valley Borough Landscape Character Assessment, which form the primary basis for the landscape analysis units in this study, are shown on Figure 2.6.

## 2.4 Assessment criteria

2.4.1 The below section sets out the assessment criteria that have been applied to assess the landscape value and susceptibility of each parcel/cluster to build up the overall profile/assessment of landscape sensitivity for each parcel or, for larger parcels, the relevant parts of the landscape character areas represented within them.

### Landscape value

2.4.2 Drawing from GLVIA 3, the following factors influence landscape value:

- Designated landscape interests (National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and associated scenic quality (representation of Special Qualities).
- Landscape quality, condition and intactness.
- Rarity and distinctiveness.
- Conservation interests relevant to character (Ecological/natural heritage, geological or historical/cultural heritage).
- Recreational value.
- Experiential and perceptual qualities.
- Community values (drawing from existing information in the LCA and in relation to locally valued sites relevant to character and place, such as SINC's and community nature

reserves/non-designated greenspaces and assets valued by communities. The Covid-19 pandemic and the associated spotlight it shone on equality and inequality of access to greenspace, nature and local landscapes during the various national lockdowns, is of relevance here as many such sites and locations were often only ‘discovered’ and appreciated for the first time by communities then).

- Cultural associations, such as links with events, writers, artists, poets, composers etc.

#### 2.4.3

Much has changed within the global and UK policy ‘landscape’ in the years since GLVIA3 was published, not least with the global declaration of the Climate Emergency and the ecological crisis and the associated emphasis on landscape resilience and landscape and nature recovery in the UK Environment Act 2021. Allied to this is the recognition of the value that landscapes provide more widely in terms of essential goods and services, or ecosystem services, derived from the natural capital assets closely allied to key characteristics of the landscape. This has been recognised to a degree in the Landscape Institute’s recent Technical Guidance Note *TGN 02-21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations*<sup>12</sup>, which cites a number of other layers to consider in an assessment of landscape value, including natural heritage and natural resources, nature recovery networks/nature-based networks, nature pathways and multi-functional green infrastructure networks. Certainly links to these important areas need to be made for landscape studies and evidence bases to be appropriately future-proofed, resilient and integrated with other spatial planning evidence. To this end, the landscape value criteria for this study also consider:

- Landscape function: Level of landscape functionality, multi-functionality and resilience (linked to condition and quality but also considering green infrastructure and natural capital assets, and associated opportunities for connectivity).
- Level of landscape change and restoration/enhancement potential and opportunity.

#### 2.4.4

Taking all of the above attributes into account as relevant, a narrative judgement has been recorded for the discussion of landscape value in relation to the parcels/relevant parts of landscape character areas, guided by the following hierarchy (table 2.1). Different elements or combinations of elements may be applicable in each case, and formulating an overall value judgement is a matter for reasoned professional judgement, considering all factors relevant to character:

**Table 2.1 Landscape value hierarchy**

Landscape value level	Commentary and examples
International	May form part of a landscape designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and recognised as being of Outstanding Universal Value and cultural value of global significance. Alternatively, a landscape which may be designated as part of a UNESCO Geopark and recognised as being of global significance for geology and natural history.

<sup>12</sup> Op Cit, 2021

Landscape value level	Commentary and examples
	<p>The landscape may form part of an outstanding and internationally recognised/designated network of natural resources, assets and living systems and/or embody internationally rare landscape features which contribute to such systems and networks at trans-national or international level.</p> <p>(In reality, this category is not used for TVBC as there are no examples of these in the borough).</p>
National	<p>May form part of a nationally designated landscape recognised for scenic quality at national level (National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – AONB). May contain nationally rare landscape types or elements or unique, archetypal or notably intact examples, or conservation interests (heritage/ecological) designated/recognised at the national level. Likely to be strongly representative of archetypal landscape character and/or to contain a very high concentration of positive key landscape characteristics identified in the LCA. The landscape may have featured in or inspired artistic or literary works of national importance and may also form an integral part of nationally designated historic designed landscapes or their setting, or landscapes otherwise of national importance, or forming an essential and documented, designed/functional part of the setting of nationally significant buildings.</p> <p>The landscape may have a high to very high degree of intactness and associated degree of functionality in terms of living systems, natural resources and natural capital assets, and may therefore also perform very strongly in terms of green or blue infrastructure, nature pathways and ecological networks.</p>
Regional (County level)	<p>May contain regionally rare or important landscape types or elements, or notable examples, and which may be recognised through regional or local designation. May also contain notable examples of important landscape types at the county level or be broadly representative of this and/or contain a moderate-high concentration of positive key landscape characteristics identified in the LCA. May include assets designated as being of county level importance, e.g. locally listed landscapes on the county register, or may be recognised for its recreational quality/importance e.g. Regional Park or Country Park. May have featured in artistic/literary works of regional/sub-regional importance.</p> <p>The landscape may have a moderate/high degree of intactness and associated degree of functionality in terms of living systems, natural resources and natural capital assets, and may therefore also perform strongly in terms of green or blue infrastructure, nature pathways and ecological networks, and/or exhibit restoration and enhancement opportunities.</p>
Local (Borough level)	<p>May contain notable concentration of locally rare landscape types/examples of district importance, which may be recognised through local designation, or have moderate degree of representativeness of wider landscape character, and or contain a moderate concentration of positive key landscape characteristics identified in the LCA. May include assets of local importance, e.g. a locally listed landscape or may include locally designated nature</p>



Landscape value level	Commentary and examples
	<p>conservation interests. May have featured in artistic or written works of local importance.</p> <p>The landscape may have a moderate/low degree of intactness or potentially a high degree of landscape fragmentation and associated low degree of functionality in terms of living systems, natural resources and natural capital assets. It may therefore have notable potential for restoration and enhancement with regard to green or blue infrastructure, nature pathways and ecological networks, and/or exhibit considerable restoration and enhancement opportunities.</p>
Neighbourhood (Community level)	<p>May contain moderate-low or partial concentration of locally rare landscape types or elements or have low degree of representation of wider landscape character and/or a low concentration of positive key landscape characteristics identified in the LCA. May include assets of community importance or of importance to the settlements within the Borough, or which contribute to character and/or landscape elements valued at the wider community level.</p> <p>The landscape may have a low degree of intactness and may be highly fragmented other than localised occurrences of natural systems and landscape features and may exhibit considerable restoration or enhancement potential.</p>

## Landscape susceptibility

2.4.5 Tudor/Natural England (2019) define landscape susceptibility as follows:

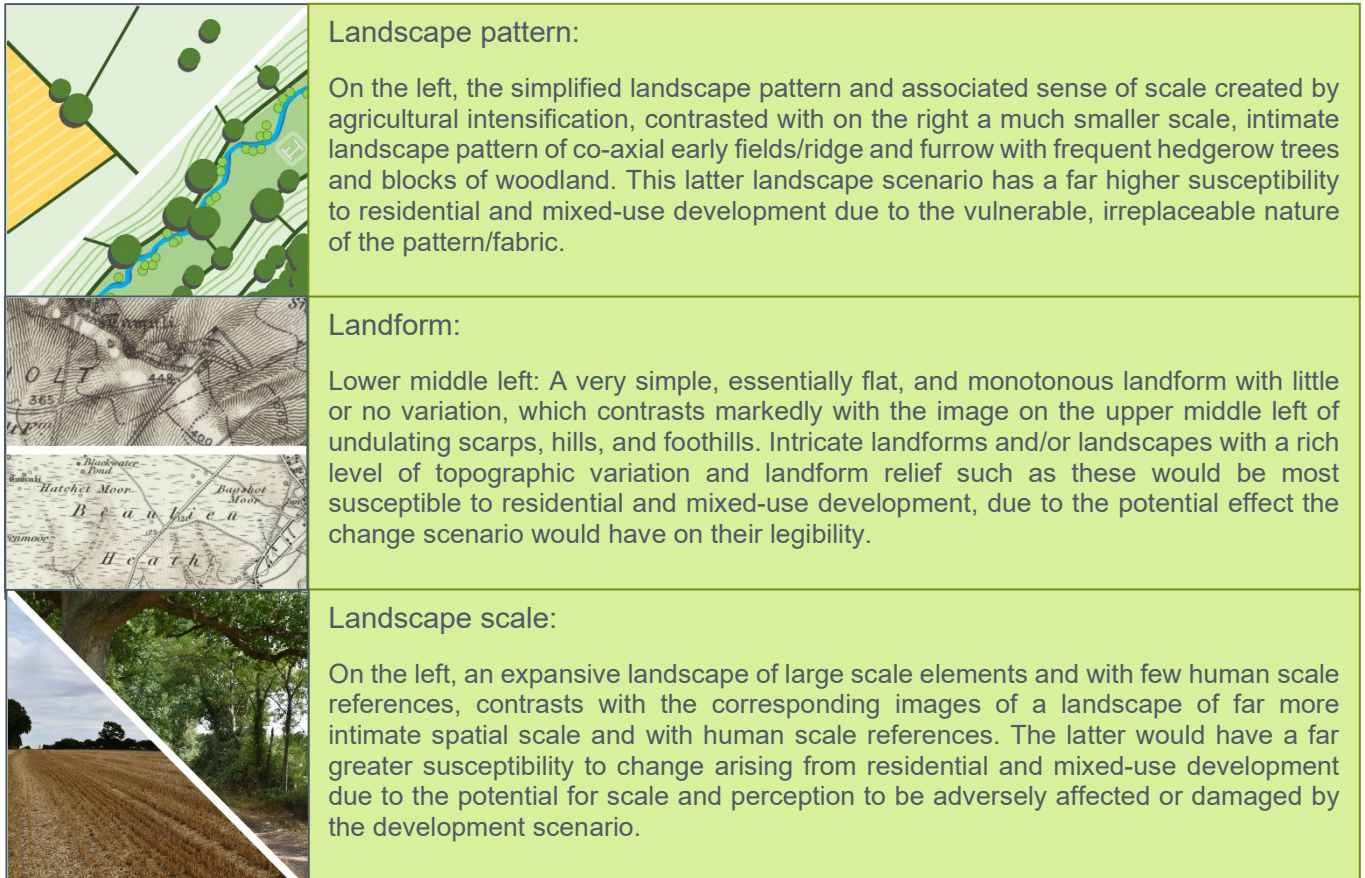
*'Landscape susceptibility is the degree to which a defined landscape and its associated visual qualities and attributes might respond to the specific development type / development scenario or other change without undue negative effects on landscape character and the visual resource'.*

2.4.6 The following landscape susceptibility criteria have been defined in the context of interpreting key positive landscape attributes relevant to the Test Valley Borough context and those landscape attributes likely to be susceptible to larger scale residential and employment development. The criteria are listed below:

- Designated landscape interests (National Parks and National Landscapes – the latter were formerly titled AONBs at the time of writing this report and therefore referred to as such throughout) and their Special Qualities.
- Landscape scale, pattern and texture.
- Perceptual and experiential characteristics.
- Settlement characteristics and settlement edge conditions.
- Topographic features and skylines; and
- Visual characteristics and intervisibility.

2.4.7 Some high level illustrations of why certain landscape attributes and variations within them are more or less susceptible to residential and employment development are shown in Figure 2.7.

**Figure 2.7: Some illustrations of higher and lower landscape susceptibility to residential and mixed-use development<sup>13</sup>**



2.4.8 The criteria and a scale of higher and lower landscape susceptibility in the context of the development scenario is discussed in more detail in table 2.2 overleaf. It should be noted that the criteria are not intended to cancel each other out, rather that reasoned professional judgement is used to bring out the subtleties of landscape character and variations within this. This is used to build up an overall profile of susceptibility (an overall susceptibility judgement) taking account of the elements most relevant to intrinsic character and which would be most vulnerable to change in the context of the development scenario.

<sup>13</sup> Historic map images on this page reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland, [CC-BY](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). Other images in Figure 2.5 are © Stephenson Halliday.

**Table 2.2: Attributes indicating higher and lower landscape susceptibility to large scale residential and mixed-use development in Test Valley Borough**

**Landscape susceptibility assessment criteria**

**Designated landscape interests (National Parks/AONBs) and their Special Qualities:**

Designated landscape interests would have a high susceptibility to change in the context of residential and mixed use development. This is due to the potential for such a development scenario to adversely affect the integrity of the designation and associated Special Qualities.


Data sources: National Park/AONB Management Plans.

**No scale is provided for this criterion as landscapes are either designated or they are not.**

**Landscape scale, pattern and texture (including cultural pattern):**

Landscapes with an intimate spatial scale and intricate patterns and textures of great/relative complexity, which form intricate landscape mosaics (e.g. flood meadows in chalk river valleys) would typically have a greater susceptibility to change arising from residential and mixed-use development than would large scale, simple landscapes. This is due to the greater potential for effect on legibility or loss of landscape elements which are difficult to replace. Related to the above points, intact and intricate and diverse landscapes may also have much higher levels of landscape functionality in the context of natural capital, ecosystem services and green and blue infrastructure. This would also render them of higher susceptibility to change arising from the development scenario. Landscapes with a strong sense of historic continuity (time depth) and/or intactness e.g. historic parklands, designed landscapes, planned estate farmlands and estate villages, would typically have a higher susceptibility to change arising from large scale residential and mixed-use development than eroded or fragmented landscapes where such qualities are largely absent.

Data sources: OS Explorer Map, Aerial photography, Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC), LCA and historic OS mapping, field survey

<b>Attributes indicating lower landscape susceptibility</b>		<b>Attributes indicating higher landscape susceptibility</b>
Large scale landscape, and/or with simple, regular or rectilinear pattern. Landscape pattern is likely to be formed by arable agriculture and field systems, with eroded landscape framework and boundary loss (agricultural intensification). Associated with this, there is likely to be a very weak sense of time depth and legibility.		Highly intricate, irregular and/or varied pattern and texture, intimate scale – ‘mosaic’ landscape. May include landscape elements that would be highly vulnerable to loss (e.g. chalk valleys and flood meadows). Established or intact landscapes with considerable time depth and legibility.

**Perceptual and experiential characteristics:**

Landscapes with a strong sense of tranquillity, relative wildness and remoteness, or landscapes representing or relating clearly to the special qualities of designated landscape interests would have a higher susceptibility to change resulting from residential and employment development than would landscapes characterised by overt, obvious modern or intrusive human influences/developments. This is due to the potential for such characteristics, their legibility and the experience of them to be adversely changed by the development scenario.

Data sources: Tranquillity mapping, field survey, LCA information, National Park/AONB Management Plans and Special Qualities where relevant.

<b>Attributes indicating lower landscape susceptibility</b>		<b>Attributes indicating higher landscape susceptibility</b>
Very weak or eroded perceptual character and quality, likely to be		The landscape forms or creates a clear gap or sense of settlement


### Landscape susceptibility assessment criteria

defined by proximity to urbanising or infrastructure influences. This may include the physical, visual and aural presence of motorway and rail corridors and other large scale linear or communications infrastructure. Cultural associations are likely to be very weak or absent.	setting/definition of settlement edge, with little or no proximity to modern, urbanising or infrastructure influences. There may also be a very strong sense of scenic quality, tranquillity and relative remoteness. Potential strong community, artistic, literary or cultural associations to the landscape.
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#### **Settlement characteristics and settlement edge conditions:**

Landscape defined by traditional, historic settlement with vernacular buildings strongly associated with the landscape (e.g. hamlets associated with village greens, historic valley-side villages, distinctive and historic use of locally specific materials) would typically be more susceptible to change arising from residential and mixed-use development than would landscapes characterised by modern, expanded settlements. This is due to the potential for the adverse effects on their legibility and sense of place which could arise from the development scenario. Well integrated settlement edges within the wider context (e.g. by topography and vegetation) would typically be more susceptible than exposed or abrupt settlement edges, which may offer mitigation potential and opportunity.


Data sources: OS and historic mapping, aerial photography, field survey.

<b>Attributes indicating lower landscape susceptibility</b>		<b>Attributes indicating higher landscape susceptibility</b>
Very modern settlements with little apparent relationship to or integration with their landscape. Very weak, exposed or poorly integrated settlement edges, with detracting elements which jar with surrounding landscape character and context.		Traditional settlements and pattern that makes a notable contribution to key characteristics of the landscape. Strongly intact, often historic settlement pattern with associated sense of vernacular design and materials. Very well integrated settlement edges through use of elements such as materials, planting and landform.

#### **Topographic features and skylines:**

Landscapes defined by dramatic and prominent topography and /or 'naturalistic' or mostly undeveloped skylines would have the greatest susceptibility to change arising from residential and mixed-use development. This is due to the potential for the development scenario to adversely influence the prominence of such skylines. Skylines already characterised by modern development and/or infrastructure influences would accordingly have a much lower susceptibility to change arising from the development scenario.

Data sources: Field survey

<b>Attributes indicating lower landscape susceptibility</b>		<b>Attributes indicating higher landscape susceptibility</b>
Low level of landform relief/variation/distinction. Skylines are dominated by modern settlement, development and/or infrastructure, such that there is little relationship to wider rural landscapes.		Very strong/prominent sense of landform relief/dominant or prominent topographic features. Almost entirely undeveloped skylines, with strongly 'naturalistic' and/or open qualities.


#### **Visual characteristics and intervisibility:**

Landscapes characterised by elevated or open, expansive views with extensive intervisibility between one landscape and another, or intervisibility with prominent, notable landmarks and their

### Landscape susceptibility assessment criteria

settings, would typically have a higher susceptibility to change resulting from residential and mixed-use development than would visually highly contained landscapes. Similarly, landscapes characterised by advertised or well publicised views, or landscapes with views enjoyed by a broad cross-section of people (receptors) would be more susceptible than those which do not. This is due to the greater potential for visual change that would potentially be experienced in such visually open landscapes as a result of the development scenario.

Data sources: Field survey

<b>Attributes indicating lower landscape susceptibility</b>		<b>Attributes indicating higher landscape susceptibility</b>
The landscape is visually extremely contained and enclosed. Views are either inward looking or kept short by density of vegetation, development or the nature of landform, and/or channelled or directed upwards by such features, resulting in very low levels of intervisibility.		Very strong sense of visual openness. The landscape is characterised by expansive, far reaching views or is visually highly exposed, with a very strong sense of intervisibility with other landscapes and/or with notable landmarks (natural/historic/human-induced) and their settings.

### Overall landscape sensitivity

2.4.9 Next, an overall landscape sensitivity judgement is built up, taking account of the judgements reached in relation to landscape value and susceptibility, to define a calibrated and justified overall judgement of landscape sensitivity to the change proposed. It should be noted that, depending on the size, location and landscape complexity of the parcel being assessed, that there may be variation in landscape sensitivity across the parcel. This is captured in the report for each parcel as relevant, with concise analysis undertaken for the areas of variation, to inform the development of the most useful landscape guidance and recommendations.

2.4.10 Landscape sensitivity is assessed using a five point scale where appropriate, to give the required flexibility in the making of judgements. The scale and definitions are set out below in table 2.3. With regard to the definitions presented in the scale below, it should be noted that higher sensitivity landscapes particularly in the Moderate-High category may not always preclude appropriate, well designed and sensitively integrated development, subject to the reasons for which such landscapes exhibit elevated sensitivity (i.e. the specific characteristics, elements or combinations of elements which may be susceptible to the development scenario). Conversely a lower sensitivity landscape or more eroded condition may not always be suitable for development for example if the erosion of landscape fabric has resulted in undue visual prominence or in a visually open landscape with few or no practical possibilities for appropriate and effective mitigation. It comes back to context and the individual circumstances and merits of each site, in each case.

**Table 2.3: Landscape sensitivity scale and definitions**

<b>Overall landscape sensitivity level</b>	<b>Definition and justification</b>
High-Very high	A landscape which is highly sensitive to change arising from residential and employment development, and where the characteristics of the landscape are very vulnerable to change arising from the development scenario. Such landscapes are unlikely to be able to accommodate many development scenarios or quanta, in all but the most restricted instances. In the limited instances where suitable development is

	deemed possible and appropriate, an exceptionally high degree of care would be required in the siting, design, layout, materiality, detailing and edge conditions/integration of such development for positive integration with the characteristics, sensitivities and valued attributes of the receiving landscape.
Moderate-High	A landscape with a moderate-high sensitivity to change arising from residential and employment development, and where the characteristics of the landscape are vulnerable to change arising from the development scenario. If development were deemed to be appropriate by virtue of the landscape characteristics and specific sensitivities, a considerable degree of care would be required in the siting and design of any development, its layout, materiality, detailing and edge conditions, to ensure it integrated with the characteristics, sensitivities and valued attributes of the receiving landscape.
Moderate	A landscape with a moderate sensitivity to change arising from residential and employment development, with moderate levels of vulnerability and/or some robustness to change arising from the development scenario, subject to sensitive and context-informed siting and design, and with regard to layout, materiality, detailing and edge conditions/integration.
Moderate-Low	A landscape with a moderate-low sensitivity to change arising from residential and employment development, and/or with low levels of vulnerability and/or potentially higher robustness to change arising from the development scenario, subject to sensitive, context-informed design. Moderate-low sensitivity landscapes may also present greater opportunities for landscape restoration and enhancement as part of the mitigation and integration of appropriate and well-designed development.
Low	A landscape with a low sensitivity to change arising from residential and employment development, and/or with low levels of vulnerability to change/potentially high levels of robustness to change arising from the development scenario. Sensitively designed, context-informed change can potentially be more easily accommodated and there may be notable opportunities to create new character, for context-appropriate mitigation, or to restore/enhance the landscape as part of the integration of appropriate and well-designed development.

## 2.5 Guiding change in the landscape to respond to character – an integrated approach

- 2.5.1 The landscape sensitivity analysis of each parcel/landscape unit is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. It provides guidance and recommendations on landscape sensitivity to inform decision making, but recognises that many other considerations will also be pertinent for planning assessment and plan making. Sensitivity analysis is a broad brush site planning and design tool, and the findings are used to develop practical, locally relevant landscape guidance for each parcel. In some situations development will not be able to be accommodated at all due to the sensitivity, fragility, functionality or value of the landscape, or due to a combination of all of these factors. In some instances an area of high landscape sensitivity may be able to accommodate a quantum of sensitively designed and well-integrated development, whilst sometimes a much lower sensitivity, relatively more eroded landscape may fulfil an important visual or strategic/gap function, which would render

development impossible in landscape and visual terms. In each case, it all comes back to context and what is most important to intrinsic character.

- 2.5.2 Regardless of the approach, landscape guidance developed should be concise, relevant and clearly linked back to the baseline and evaluation – there must be a clear landscape rationale for what is proposed. This can be made even stronger if links can be made to wider green infrastructure, nature recovery or landscape scale objectives which have been drawn out in the earlier analysis, as it also strengthens the case for landscape led approaches to planning and designing well integrated, responsible development. Like all good systems-based and resilient landscape planning this principle recognises the core tenet that ‘everything is connected’.

# 3 LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS AND GUIDANCE

3.1.1 This section sets out the Landscape Sensitivity Analysis and recommendations in relation to potential residential and employment sites. .

## 3.2 Landscape sensitivity analysis by site

3.2.1 The landscape sensitivity analysis and guidance for each individual site is presented in Annexes 1 and 2.

3.2.2 The master legend for the individual maps in each parcel (in relation to designated interests relevant to character) is shown on Figure 3.1 below. The landscape character maps for each are annotated individually in each write up in this section. It should be noted that the Local Gaps symbol identified in the legend below and the corresponding Local Gaps noted in the assessments within this report relate to the Local Gaps identified in the Adopted Test Valley Local Plan 2016.

Figure 3.1: Master legend for designated interests mapping in the report annexes.





