

5 Strategic Opportunity Assessment Zone profiles



5 Strategic Opportunity Assessment Zone profiles

Overview of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment results

- 5.1 **Table 5.1** provides a summary of the overall judgement scores for each of the SOAZs by the two development scenarios (housing and commercial (light industrial)). These are also shown in mapped format at **Figures 5.1** and **5.2**, followed by the individual SOAZ assessment profiles.
- 5.2 Please note that the additional development scenario of large-scale warehousing was considered for more focused zones within SOAZ 2: Northern Gateway and SOAZ 3: Southern Gateway. The overall judgement scores for these additional assessments are shown in the relevant profiles.

Table 5.1: Summary of sensitivity assessment judgements for each SOAZ

SOAZ (click to jump to profile)	Development Scenario		
	Residential development (2-3 storeys)	Commercial development (use classes B1 and B2)	Commercial development (use class B8) – <i>focused sub-zones only</i>
SOAZ 1: Melton Mowbray (page 41)	M	M	-
SOAZ 2: Northern Gateway (page 51)	M	M	M
SOAZ 3: Southern Gateway (page 60)	L-M	M	M-H
SOAZ 4: Lutterworth (page 70)	M	M	-
SOAZ 5: Eastern Growth Corridor (north) (page 80)	M-H	M-H	-
SOAZ 5: Eastern Growth Corridor (south) (page 80)	L-M	M	-
SOAZ 6: Six Hills (page 91)	L-M	L-M	-

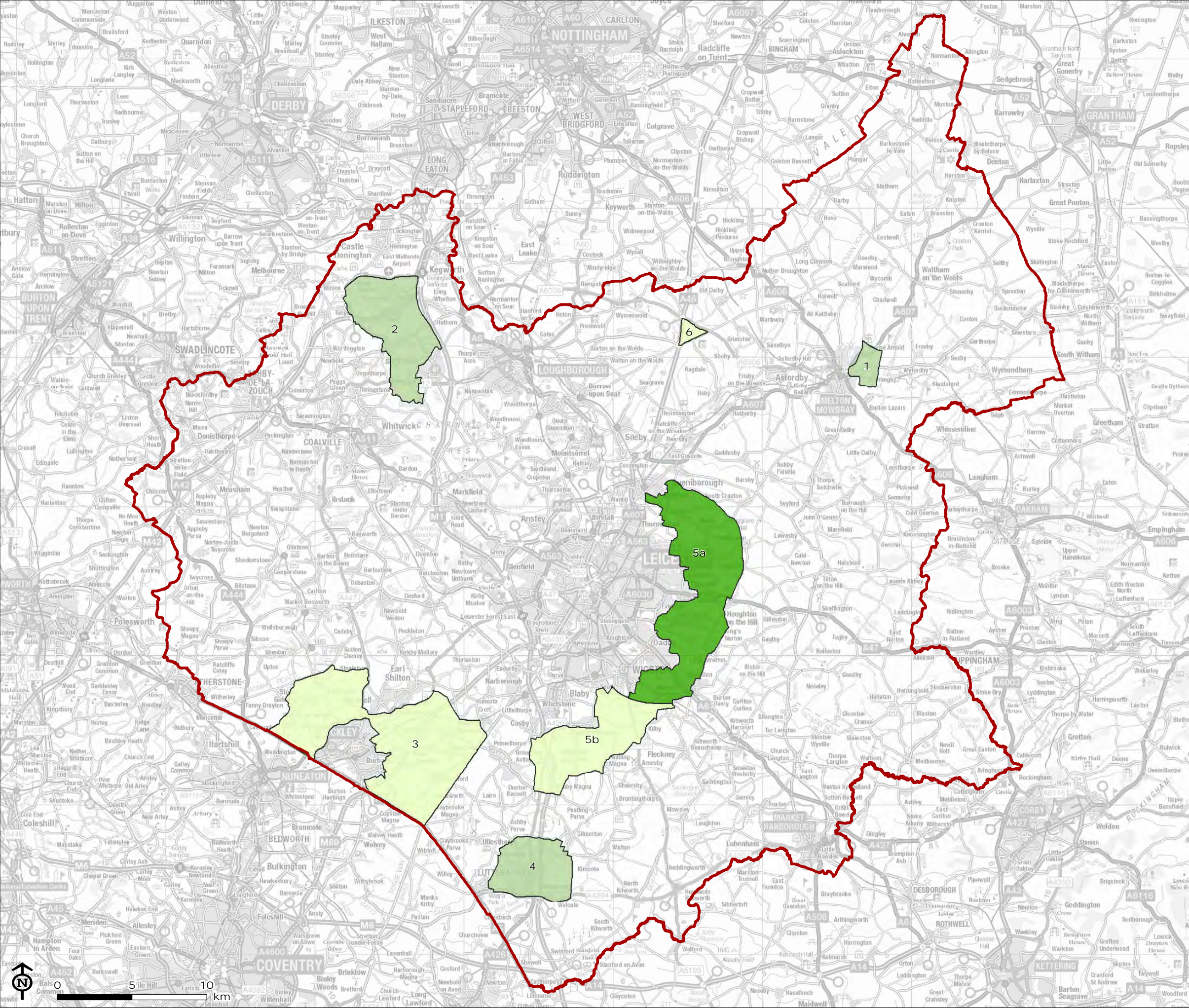
Content of each assessment profile

- 5.3 Each SOAZ assessment profile is structured as follows:
- Overview of SOAZ location and relationship to the landscape character framework
 - Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, comprising:
 - description and judgement of landscape sensitivity by assessment criteria;
 - evaluation of criteria and (overall) landscape sensitivity judgement – using the five point scale for each development scenario, with supporting explanatory text;
 - summary of key landscape sensitivities to development;
 - landscape guidance to consider in relation to any new development; and

- reference to further local-level landscape evidence.
- Green Infrastructure analysis, comprising:
 - map of current Green (and Blue) Infrastructure assets;
 - analysis of existing assets, constraints and opportunities; and
 - map of example GI opportunities within the SOAZ – note this is indicative only because the exact locations of any future development (which could stimulate GI opportunities and enhancements) are unknown.

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Figure 5.1: Strategic Opportunity
Assessment Zone (SOAZ) Sensitivity:
Residential Development (2-3
storeys) Scenario



Study area

Sensitivity rating

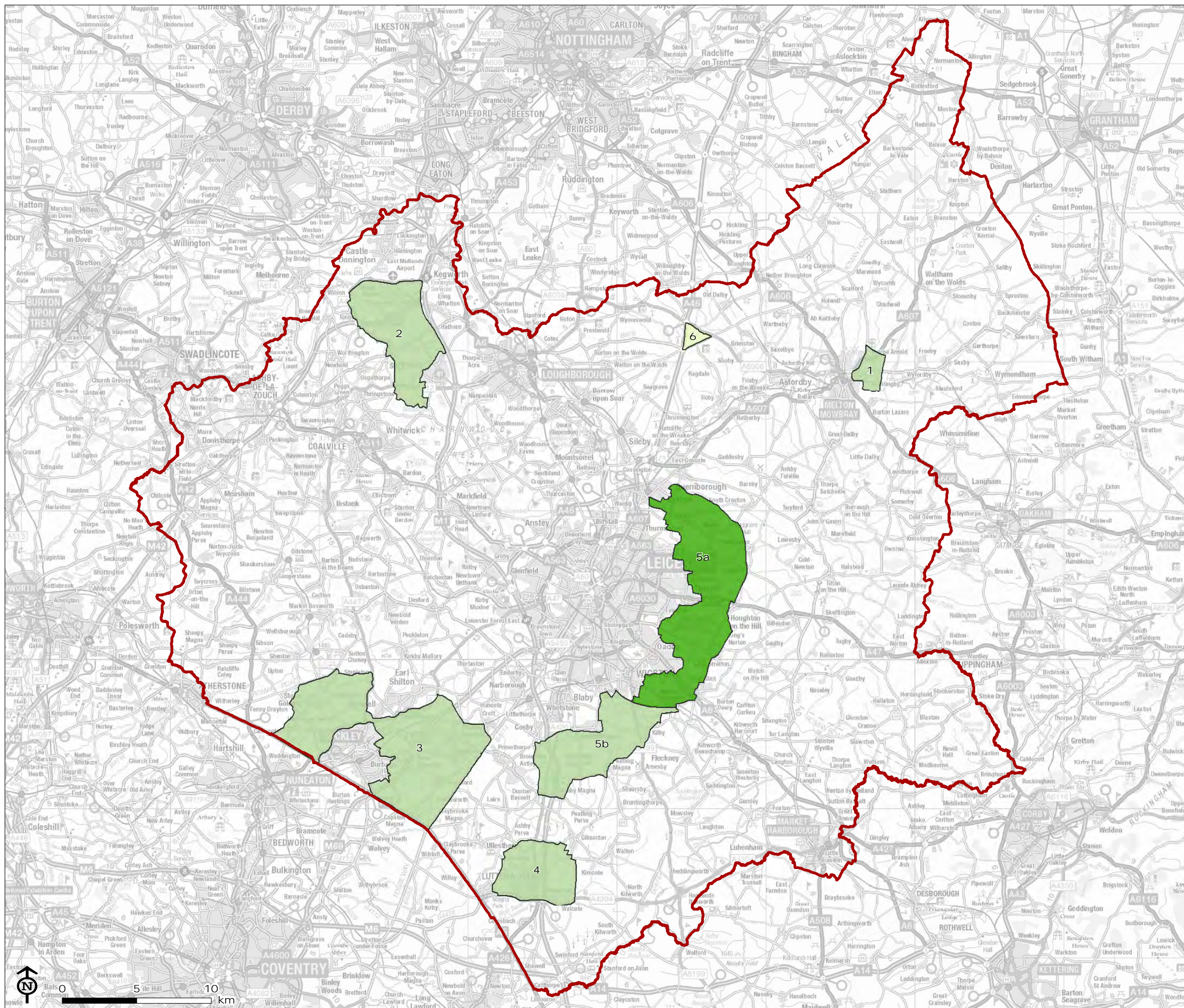
- High
- Moderate - High
- Moderate
- Low - Moderate
- Low

SOAZ

- 1: Melton Mowbray
- 2: Northern Gateway
- 3: Southern Gateway
- 4: Lutterworth
- 5a: Eastern Growth Corridor (North)
- 5b: Eastern Growth Corridor (South)
- 6: Six Hills

Map Scale @A3: 1:250,000





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Figure 5.2: Strategic Opportunity Assessment Zone (SOAZ) Sensitivity: Commercial Development (light industry) Scenario

Study area

Sensitivity rating

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

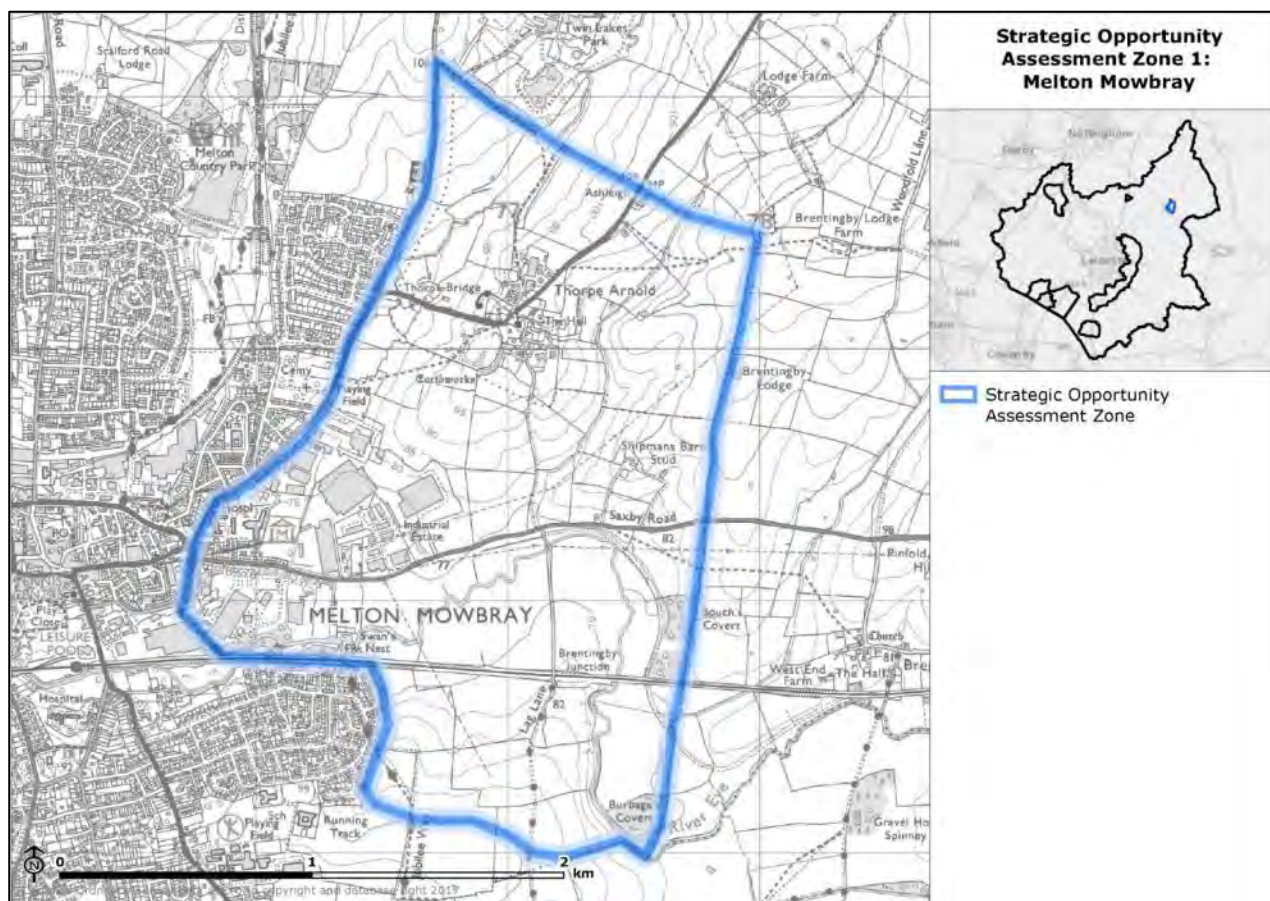
SOAZ

- 1: Melton Mowbray
- 2: Northern Gateway
- 3: Southern Gateway
- 4: Lutterworth
- 5a: Eastern Growth Corridor (North)
- 5b: Eastern Growth Corridor (South)
- 6: Six Hills

Map Scale @A3: 1:250,000



SOAZ 1: Melton Mowbray (Melton)



Summary of SOAZ location and landscape character context

This Strategic Opportunity Assessment Area (SOAZ) falls within the following county-level Landscape Character Areas: The Wolds and Wreake Valley.

The SOAZ is located immediately to the east of Melton Mowbray, including the settlement of Thorpe Arnold and industrial estates on the edge of Melton Mowbray. The B676 and railway cross through the SOAZ. The western edge of the SOAZ follows the A607, Melton Spinney Road and the urban edge, while the eastern boundary of the SOAZ follows the civil parish boundary. The northern and southern boundaries follow contours and field boundaries.

Representative photographs



SOAZ 1: Melton Mowbray (Melton)

Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description and indication of sensitivity	Rating
Physical character (including topography and scale)	In the north of the SOAZ are steeply sloping valley sides associated with the River Eye and tributary streams. The bottom of the main valley in the south of the SOAZ is flatter and less dramatic, with medium-large fields. Elsewhere, the overlying field pattern is small-medium scale, with more intricate enclosures located around Thorpe Arnold. Trees introduce small scale features within the landscape; however there are also some existing large scale industrial buildings on the eastern edge of Melton Mowbray.	M-H
Natural character	Fields are under mixed arable and pasture use, with wet pastures along the valley floor. A number of priority habitats are located within the SOAZ including good quality semi-improved grassland, deciduous woodland and floodplain grazing marsh. The length of the River Eye is nationally designated as a SSSI. Trees are found within hedgerows and along rivers. In particular, the edges of Thorpe Arnold have a strong wooded character.	M-H
Historic landscape character	The HLC indicates that much of the SOAZ is reorganised planned enclosures, with historic piecemeal enclosures around the edges of Thorpe Arnold. There a number of Listed Buildings in Thorpe Arnold in the north of the area, including the Grade II* listed Church of St Mary the Virgin. Earthworks are found adjacent to the south west of Thorpe Arnold. Melton Mowbray Conservation Area is located 120 metres to the west, although there is a limited relationship between the SOAZ and the Conservation Area.	M
Form, density and setting of existing development	<p>Thorpe Arnold is a small nucleated village of ironstone and red brick vernacular which occupies a hill top position in the north of the SOAZ and is well-integrated into the landscape with trees softening the edges of the settlement. Thorpe Arnold is located approximately 500 metres east of the Melton Mowbray urban edge. A Strategic Area of Separation is located between Melton Mowbray and Thorpe Arnold.</p> <p>The eastern edge of Melton Mowbray is characterised by large factories and large buildings within the Saxby Road Industrial Estate, which are located on the lower lying land of the flood plain. The residential urban edge of the north eastern part Melton Mowbray is well-contained by the A607 (Thorpe Road) and Melton Spinney Road. The south-eastern edge of Melton Mowbray is contained by natural features, including a stream and hedgerows. The part of the town is clearly visible from the valley floor, though it is not widely prominent within the landscape and the urban edge is softened by hedgerows and trees. The remainder of the landscape contains isolated farm buildings. The undeveloped countryside forms a strongly rural setting to the existing development.</p>	M
Views and visual character including skylines	There is strong intervisibility between the north and south valley sides across the valley. Despite the hilltop location of Thorpe Arnold, it is not overly prominent within the landscape. There are some long views from the adjacent countryside, although these are dependent on tree cover. Several pylon lines cross the area and punctuate the skyline. There is an open character on the valley floor due to the lack of woodland in this area, with views along the valley and to the higher land to the north and south.	M
Perceptual and experiential qualities	For the most part this is a strongly rural landscape although it is locally impacted by the transport infrastructure and large scale industrial buildings and views to the urban edge of Melton Mowbray. There are a large number of naturalistic features which contribute to the rural character of the landscape. Noise from vehicles on the major roads and railway line can detract from tranquillity, though in some places the landscape feels far removed from the urban environment despite its close proximity.	M

SOAZ 1: Melton Mowbray (Melton)



View to the north eastern edge of Melton Mowbray



View east along the valley floor of the River Eye



Large-scale warehouses and pylons on the eastern edge of Melton Mowbray



Medium-scale fields with copses of woodland east of Thorpe Arnold



Car park and large-scale employment development next to the River Eye and Jubilee Way



View of pasture fields to the north of Thorpe Arnold

SOAZ 1: Melton Mowbray (Melton)

Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

The SOAZ is judged as of **moderate** overall sensitivity to both residential housing and commercial (light industrial – use classes B1 and B2) developments. The presence of existing generally well-integrated housing and industrial developments within and adjacent to the SOAZ, areas of flat and not prominent land, and busy roads/railway lessen sensitivity. However, the strong rural qualities of the wider landscape, steep valley slopes, nationally important wetland habitats along the River Eye, historic buildings within villages (including the Grade II* listed Church of St Mary the Virgin), open views along the valley and relative levels of tranquillity away from main roads/railway would be sensitive to change.

Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Residential housing (2-3 storeys)			M		
Commercial development (Use classes B1 and B2)			M		

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the area

The following attributes and features of the SOAZ would be particularly sensitive to development:

- The steep, and in some cases visually prominent slopes to the north and south of the main river valley.
- The small-scale piecemeal enclosures located on the edge of Thorpe Arnold.
- Numerous small-scale natural features within the farmed landscape, including hedgerows, trees and streams.
- Valued semi-natural habitats including the nationally designated River Eye.
- Several Listed Buildings within Thorpe Arnold, including the Grade II* listed Church of St Mary the Virgin.
- Open views funnelled along the valley landform.
- Rural, tranquil and undeveloped character away from the main roads and railway, despite the close proximity of urban development.

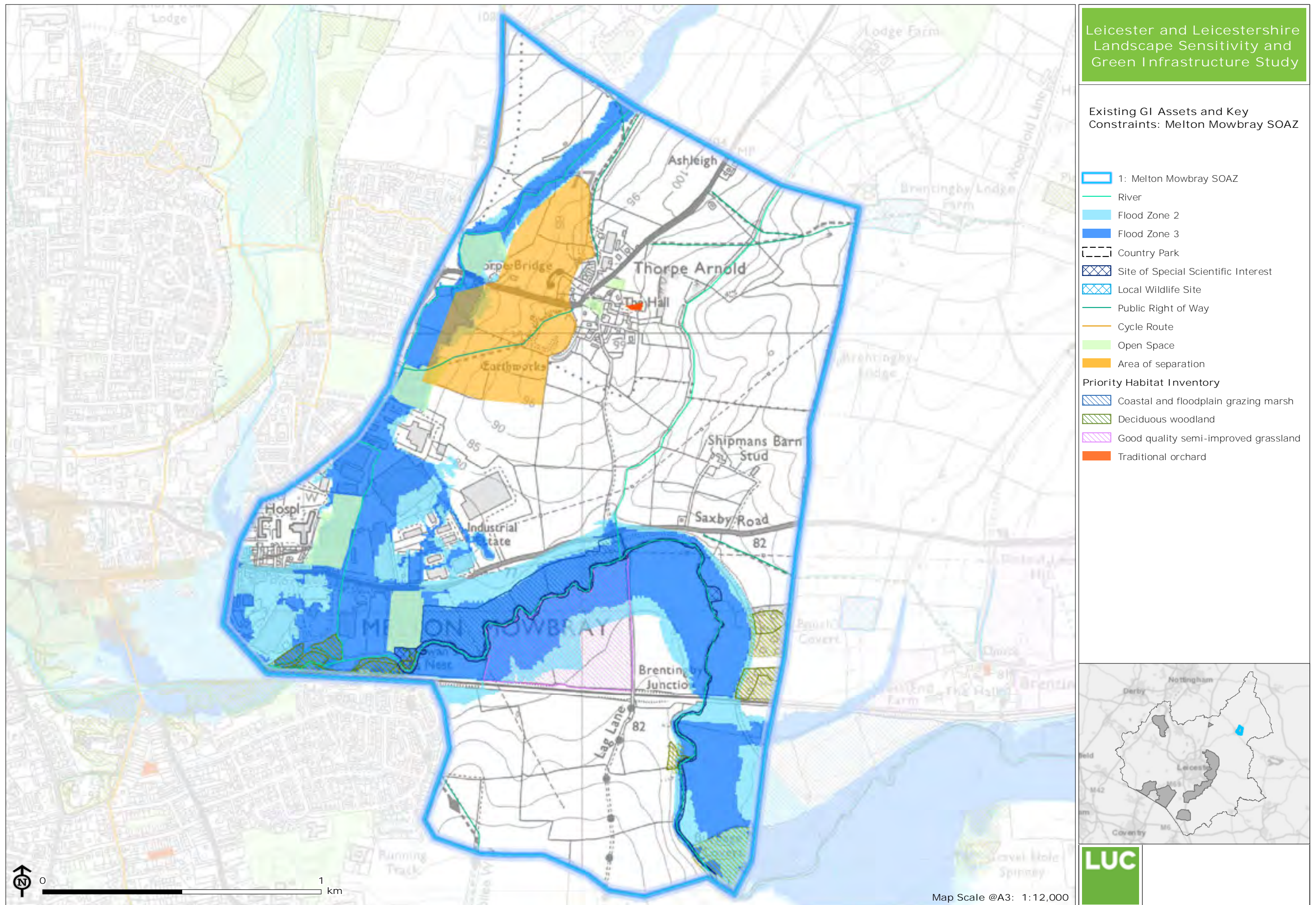
Landscape Guidance

Any new development within this SOAZ should:

- Avoid the steepest slopes and visually prominent locations.
- Protect the historic piecemeal field patterns around Thorpe Arnold.
- Retain valued semi-natural features within the development design and protect designated habitats including the River Eye SSSI.
- Respect the setting of valued heritage features including the Listed Buildings within Thorpe Arnold and the earthworks close to the church.
- Utilise existing landscape features and topography to effectively screen/integrate development into the landscape.

References for further local-level landscape evidence:

- Melton Borough Landscape & Historic Urban Character Assessment Report (2006)
- Melton Landscape Character Assessment Update (2011)



SOAZ 1: Melton Mowbray (Melton)

Existing Green and Blue Infrastructure assets, constraints and opportunities

Theme	Existing assets / constraints	Opportunities
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant areas of the site are within Flood Zone 3. The River Eye and its flood plain meanders through the south of the area connecting Leicester to Melton Mowbray. The majority of the river crossing the site is within the River Eye SSSI. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On low-grade agricultural land adjacent to river there may be the opportunity for the cultivation of short-rotation coppice for wood-fuel. This could simultaneously provide cover for game birds and other fauna moving along the river corridor⁸. Land management along watercourses should be targeted to reduce soil loss/diffuse pollution and enhance their functions as natural corridors⁸. Semi-natural green space should be created along the river corridor⁸. Review the operating regime of the local flood alleviation schemes to increase storage and attenuation, such as the River Eye scheme at Brentingbury in the southeast of the SOAZ and the Thorpe Brook Scheme in the southeast of the area⁹. Explore opportunities to provide additional flood storage attenuation and require developments to implement sustainable drainage and source control measures⁹. Take action to restore the River Eye SSSI following the Action Plan set out in the River Eye SSSI Strategic Restoration Plan¹⁰. This will improve water quality and water flow. Deliver the Priority Green Infrastructure Enhancement Area – River Wreake & River Eye Strategic River Corridor as laid out in the Green Infrastructure Strategy for Melton Borough⁸.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A number of priority habitats are located within the SOAZ including good quality semi-improved grassland, deciduous woodland and floodplain grazing marsh. Broadleaved woodland is located centrally within the site north of Saxby Road. Much of the length of the River Eye crossing through the SOAZ (from Swan's Nest to the eastern edge), is designated as a SSSI. This is in an unfavourable condition that has seen no change due to agricultural impacts, inappropriate weirs dams and other structures, invasive freshwater 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take action to restore the River Eye SSSI to favourable condition, following the Action Plan set out in the River Eye SSSI Strategic Restoration Plan¹⁰. Appropriately manage existing priority habitats within the SOAZ and create/maintain linkages between these valued habitats including hedgerows, woodlands and wetlands. There is potential to increase hedgerow, woodland and tree planting to enhance the wooded character of the area, particularly along the river. Natural England recommends that 1ha of LNR should be provided per 1000 people however the Borough does not currently contain any Local Nature Reserves (LNRs). There is therefore a shortfall in the current provision of

⁸ TEP (2011) A Green Infrastructure Strategy for Melton Borough. Prepared for Melton Borough Council.

⁹ Leicestershire County Council (2015) Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

¹⁰ Natural England (2015) River Eye SSSI: Strategic Restoration Plan

SOAZ 1: Melton Mowbray (Melton)

	<p>species and water pollution caused by discharge and agricultural run-off.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The land adjacent to this is within an Impact Risk Zone where all developments could cause adverse effects upon the SSSI. The majority of site is within an Impact Risk Zone where some development, such as rural residential development, could cause adverse effects upon the SSSI. 	<p>opportunities for the education and the enjoyment of wildlife under a designation¹¹. LNRs could be created within the area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A river park comprising semi-natural green space could be created along the River Eye corridor¹¹, which could also serve as a destination for recreation and play. The majority of site is Grade 3-4 agricultural land. This quality of agricultural land presents the opportunity for habitat creation/woodland planting and, particularly within the floodplains in the area, potentially bio-fuel crops for wood fuel¹¹. Land management along watercourses should be targeted to reduce soil loss/diffuse pollution and enhance their functions as natural corridors¹¹. Flood plains should be managed for flood storage, wildlife and access¹¹. The biodiversity value or function for wildlife in existing green spaces should be increased¹¹. Deliver the Priority Green Infrastructure Enhancement Area – The Jubilee Way as laid out in the Green Infrastructure Strategy for Melton Borough¹¹, to enhance connectivity to the wider countryside, and buffer woodlands to help woodland wildlife adapt to and be less vulnerable to climate change.
Landscape <i>(refer back to the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for this SOAZ)</i>	<i>Please refer back to the 'Key landscape sensitivities to development within the area' set out in the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment.</i>	<i>Please also refer to the 'Landscape Guidance' section of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment undertaken for this SOAZ.</i>
Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much of the SOAZ is made up of planned enclosures, with historic piecemeal enclosures around the edges of Thorpe Arnold. Thorpe Arnold Village in the north of the area contains a number of Listed Buildings. Earthworks are found adjacent to the south west of Thorpe Arnold. Melton Mowbray Conservation Area is located 120m to the west, with limited relationship with the SOAZ. The historical buildings and scheduled monuments in Melton, including the Listed Buildings on site, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is potential to enhance access to, and enjoyment of Thorpe Arnold Village, through connecting new residential areas via footpaths and cycle paths. There may be opportunities to celebrate the heritage of the area through interpretation and art. This could also draw more visitors to the area. Green infrastructure could contribute to the setting of cultural and historic assets, such as Thorpe Arnold, adding to their visitor interest¹². The enclosures around the village of Thorpe Arnold should be protected to retain its historic character and heritage value. The Strategic Area of Separation should also be retained between Thorpe Arnold and Melton Mowbray to retain the village's separate identities and

¹¹ TEP (2011) A Green Infrastructure Strategy for Melton Borough. Prepared for Melton Borough Council.

SOAZ 1: Melton Mowbray (Melton)

	are attractions for visitors to the area ¹² .	character.
Active transport and connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jubilee Way aligns the site to the west and travels south towards Somerby. The route is within an unattractive setting when walking through the industrial estate, and there are with high levels of litter within the River Eye when crossing. National Cycle Route 64 also follows the western edge of the SOAZ. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access should be improved along the River Eye, and supplemented with interpretation of the importance of the river, such as the use of information boards and artwork. Sustainable travel should be encouraged through at the existing employment sites in close proximity to the SOAZ. Roads should be designed to be attractive and safe for pedestrians and cyclists, and off road/ traffic free routes implemented where feasible. A network of natural corridors should be created and improved. These should provide attractive connections to visitor attractions, recreational venues including Melton Country Park, and provide educational opportunities to the Borough's varied community and interest groups¹². Deliver the Priority Green Infrastructure Enhancement Area – The Jubilee Way as laid out in the Green Infrastructure Strategy for Melton Borough¹² to enhance access to the wider countryside.
Recreation and play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a lack of public open space provision within the area. Melton Country Park is located approximately 600 metres to the west of the SOAZ. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New green and open space should be created in areas of deficiency. This includes extending and enhancing sustainable transport and access routes to the Melton Mowbray Country Park, located to the north west of the area¹². Recreational opportunities should be included within the wider strategic and local green infrastructure networks¹². A river park semi-natural green space could be created along the River Eye corridor¹² which should be designed in light of the SSSI designation. The Area of Local Separation to the north west of this SOAZ also has potential to provide a wider range of recreation and active transport functions.
Health, Wellbeing and Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The south-westernmost part of the SOAZ is amongst the 40% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country with regards to health according to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). The remainder of the SOAZ is amongst the 10-50% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country. This was assessed through a suite of indicators, that take into account both mental and physical health. The IMD Living Environment data indicates the northern part of the SOAZ is amongst the 20% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to open space and between open space and recreational areas should be increased. New green and open space should be created in areas of deficiency. This includes extending and enhancing access to the Melton Mowbray Country Park, located to the north west of the area¹² and the potential creation of a semi-natural river park along the River Eye. Where suitable, street trees should be delivered along the roads and within the village in the area, should be increased to reduce airborne PM10 particulates, increase shade and provide cooling through evapotranspiration¹².

¹² TEP (2011) A Green Infrastructure Strategy for Melton Borough. Prepared for Melton Borough Council.

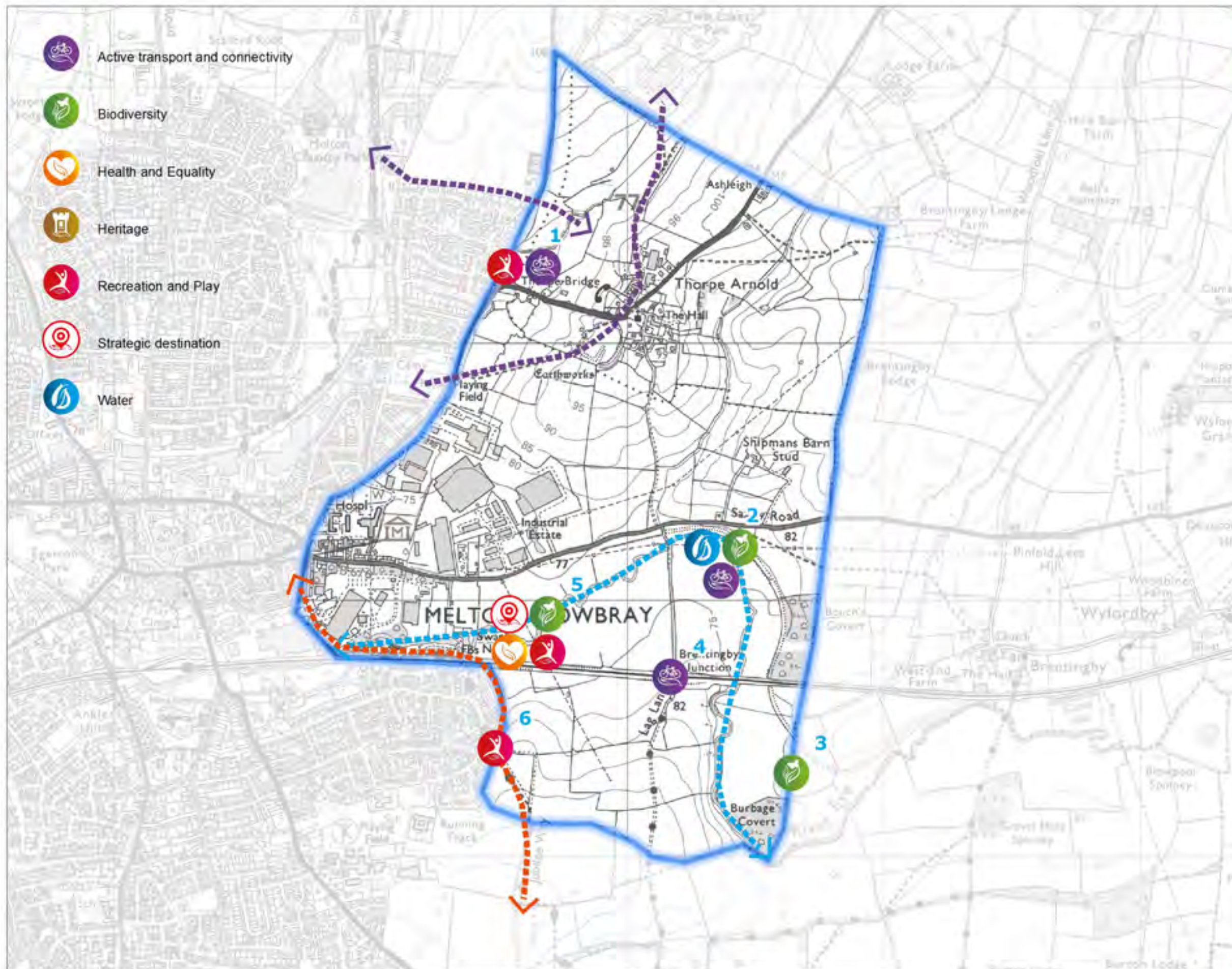
SOAZ 1: Melton Mowbray (Melton)

	most deprived areas in the country with regard to living environment. This was assessed through a range of factors including poor air quality and traffic accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists.	
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Green Infrastructure Opportunities within Strategic Opportunity Assessment Zone: Melton Mowbray

- 1. Melton Country Park Green Way:** (Recreation and play/Active transport and connectivity): Create and enhance off-road pedestrian/cycle links from existing and new communities to Thorpe Arnold village and the countryside beyond, including linkages to Melton Country Park.
- 2. River Wreake and Eye Strategic River Corridor:** (Biodiversity/Active transport and connectivity/Water): Follow Natural England's Strategic Restoration Plan to improve biodiversity and water quality and deliver the River Wreake and River Eye Strategic River Corridor (See Melton GI Strategy) as an active transport route.
- 3. Melton Ecological Network Enhancement:** (Biodiversity): Protect and enhance ecological corridors through woodland and wetland creation and strengthening of the hedgerow network.
- 4. Pedestrian/cycle bridge for Melton:** (Active transport and connectivity): Any new development in this area would need to be delivered alongside new pedestrian/cycle access over the railway line.
- 5. Eye River Park:** (Strategic destination/Biodiversity/Recreation and play/Health and equality): Create a semi-natural river park to provide recreation and access to nature for existing and new communities.
- 6. Jubilee Way access enhancement:** (Recreation and play): Enhance access and signage along Jubilee Way to connect communities to nearby countryside.



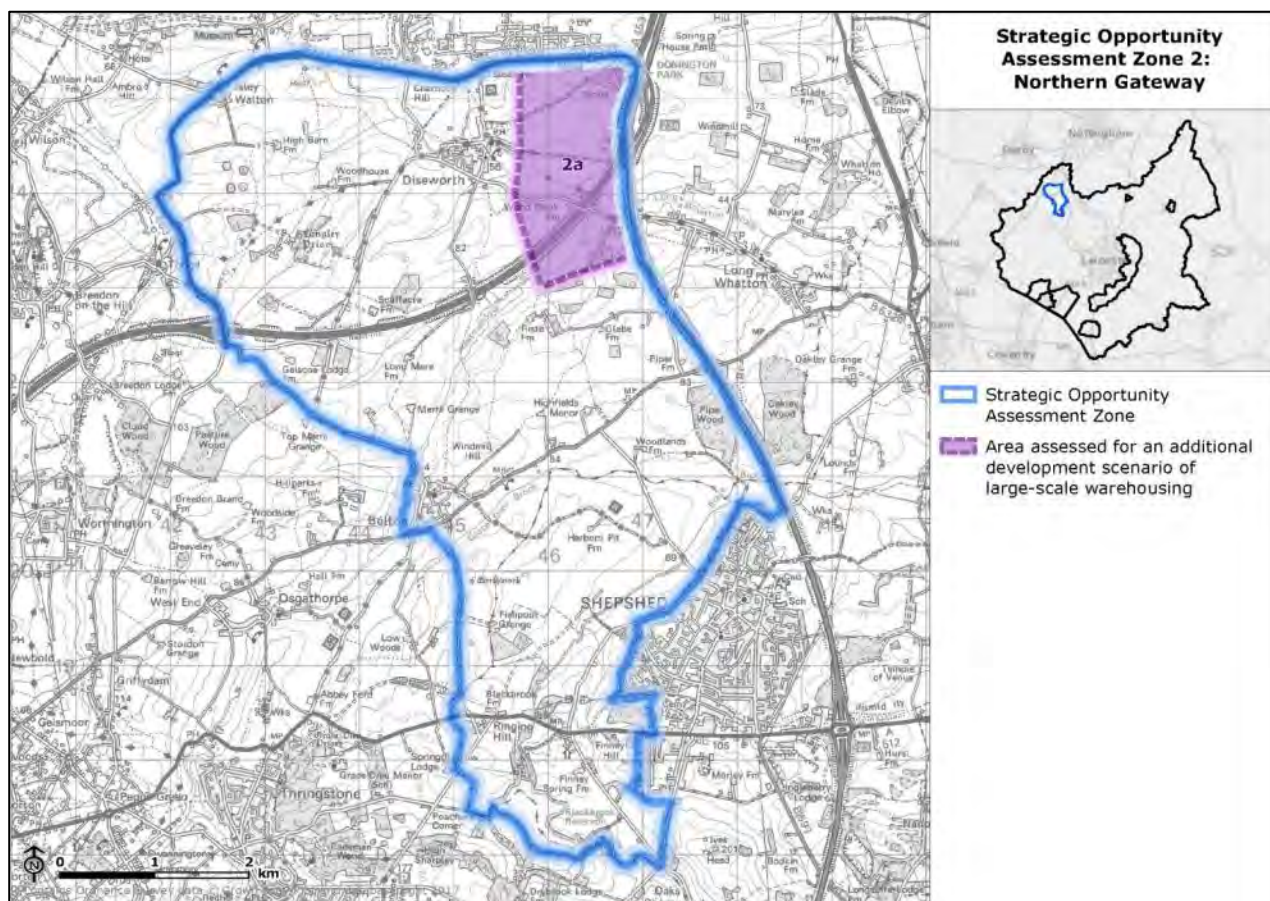
Map Scale @A3: 1:15,000

1

2 km

LUC

SOAZ 2: Northern Gateway (NW Leicestershire and Charnwood)



Summary of SOAZ location and landscape character context

This Strategic Opportunity Assessment Area (SOAZ) falls within the following county-level Landscape Character Areas: Charnwood Forest and Langley Lowlands.

The SOAZ is located to the north and west of Shepshead and to the south of Castle Donington, with the M1 forming the eastern boundary. The A453 outlines the northern and part of the western boundary, which then follows more minor roads around the settlement of Belton. The SOAZ includes Blackbrook Reservoir to the south, before tracing the edge of Shepshead to meet the M1.

Representative photographs



SOAZ 2: Northern Gateway (NW Leicestershire and Charnwood)

Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description and indication of sensitivity	Rating
Physical character (including topography and scale)	The landform within the SOAZ is gently undulating, with steeper areas where it is dissected by small streams. The field pattern comprises small-medium scale enclosures, which tend to be more intricate on the edges of settlements. Some fields have been amalgamated to create larger enclosures. Fields are divided by hedgerows with numerous hedgerow trees (and occasional copses and in-field trees) which introduce small scale features within the landscape, along with areas of woodland and houses visible through the trees.	M
Natural character	Land is used for a mixture of pasture and arable farming, with occasional blocks of woodland including Piper Wood, Whitehorse Wood, Hookhill Wood and Blackbrook Spinney which are all identified as ancient woodland. Blackbrook Reservoir is nationally recognised as a SSSI for the mesotrophic water, plant, fish and bird communities. Within the farmed landscape, naturalistic features including mature hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees and streams (often lined by willows) form linear habitats.	M
Historic landscape character	The HLC indicates that the enclosures within the SOAZ are of mixed origin. Historic piecemeal enclosures are associated with settlements, including distinctive strip fields to the east of Forest Lane. The SOAZ contains earthworks south of Belton which are designated as a Scheduled Monument. The non-registered estate parkland associated with the Grade II* listed Langley Priory is distinctive within the farmed landscape and creates a sense of time depth with gateposts and walls surrounding the estate. The village of Diseworth in the north of the SOAZ is designated as a Conservation Area. The landscape also provides a setting to Tonge Conservation Area (to the west of the SOAZ). Historic churches form the focal point of villages in the SOAZ with the Church of St John the Baptist in Belton and Church of St Michael in Diseworth, both of which are Grade II* Listed Buildings.	M
Form, density and setting of existing development	The SOAZ is located at the north western edge of the town of Shepshed. Despite its elevated location above the Blackbrook valley, the edges of Shepshed are well contained by Tickow Lane and Oakley Road, with the edges also softened by hedgerows and trees and surrounding farmland. New development on the edges of Shepshed is well-contained within the landscape as mature field boundaries have been retained. The small villages of Diseworth and Belton are located within the SOAZ. The rural setting of the villages is important to their identity. Diseworth is located in a dip of the landscape with the edges softened by woodland. Poplars are visible above rooftops. Throughout the rest of the landscape settlement is sparse and is limited to isolated farms. The SOAZ provides much of the separation and distinct identities between the larger settlements of Shepshed and Castle Donington and the intervening rural villages.	M-H
Views and visual character including skylines	Views are variable depending of woodland and topography. Blocks of woodland and hedgerow/in-field trees create frequent wooded skylines, with trees also providing some visual enclosure. Roofs of houses in Shepshed visible on the ridgeline to the south of the SOAZ. Church spires in Belton and Diseworth are prominent features within the undulating, farmed landscape. Views to East Midlands Airport (located to the north of the SOAZ) are	M

SOAZ 2: Northern Gateway (NW Leicestershire and Charnwood)

	limited by topography and woodland; only the air traffic control tower and radio masts are visible. Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station cooling towers are visible to the north. From some vantage points, there are views south to wooded/farmed ridgelines to the south beyond Blackbrook reservoir.	
Perceptual and experiential qualities	The landscape is mostly undeveloped and rural, with high levels of tranquillity, although there are influences from major transport corridors including the M1, A42 and A453 and noise from East Midlands Airport. There is a sense of enclosure in some parts of the landscape, where the landform and trees restrict views. Conversely, some areas feel exposed, where fields are larger and trees less frequent.	M



Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

The landscape is considered to have **moderate** overall sensitivity to residential development and commercial (light industrial) development. This is due to the presence of nearby major transport infrastructure and the nearby urban area of Shepshed, as well as the undulating landform and positive screening effects of existing vegetation (particularly hedgerow trees and woodland) also contribute to these sensitivity scores. However, the historic villages, valued semi-natural habitats including woodland, species-rich hedgerows and streams and sparsely settled rural character with pockets of tranquillity are features which are sensitive to these kinds of development.

The north-eastern part of the SOAZ, east of Diseworth, has also been assessed for large-scale industrial development (warehousing). This part of the landscape has been assessed as **moderate** sensitivity overall for this development type due to close proximity of major transport infrastructure including the M1 and East Midlands Airport, gently undulating landform and tree cover which would enable large warehousing to be effectively hidden within the landscape, providing the guidelines below are followed. However, the close proximity of the Conservation Area at Diseworth, pockets of deciduous woodland and undeveloped character are features of the landscape which would be sensitive to development of this sort.

Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Residential housing (2-3 storeys)			M		
Commercial development (Use classes B1 and B2)			M		
Commercial development (large warehousing) – east of Diseworth			M		

SOAZ 2: Northern Gateway (NW Leicestershire and Charnwood)

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the area

The following attributes and features of the SOAZ would be particularly sensitive to development:

- Historic villages (both within and adjacent to the SOAZ), including Diseworth and Tonge.
- Small-scale strip fields and piecemeal enclosures which are usually associated with the edges of settlements.
- Valued semi-natural habitats including Blackbrook Reservoir which is nationally designated as a SSSI.
- Nationally important heritage features including the earthworks south of Belton.
- The picturesque estate landscape associated with Langley Priory (Grade II* listed) which is distinctive amongst the intensively farmed landscape.
- The spires of historic churches which form distinctive features of skylines and a sense of orientation.
- Generally rural and tranquil character experienced throughout the majority of the landscape.

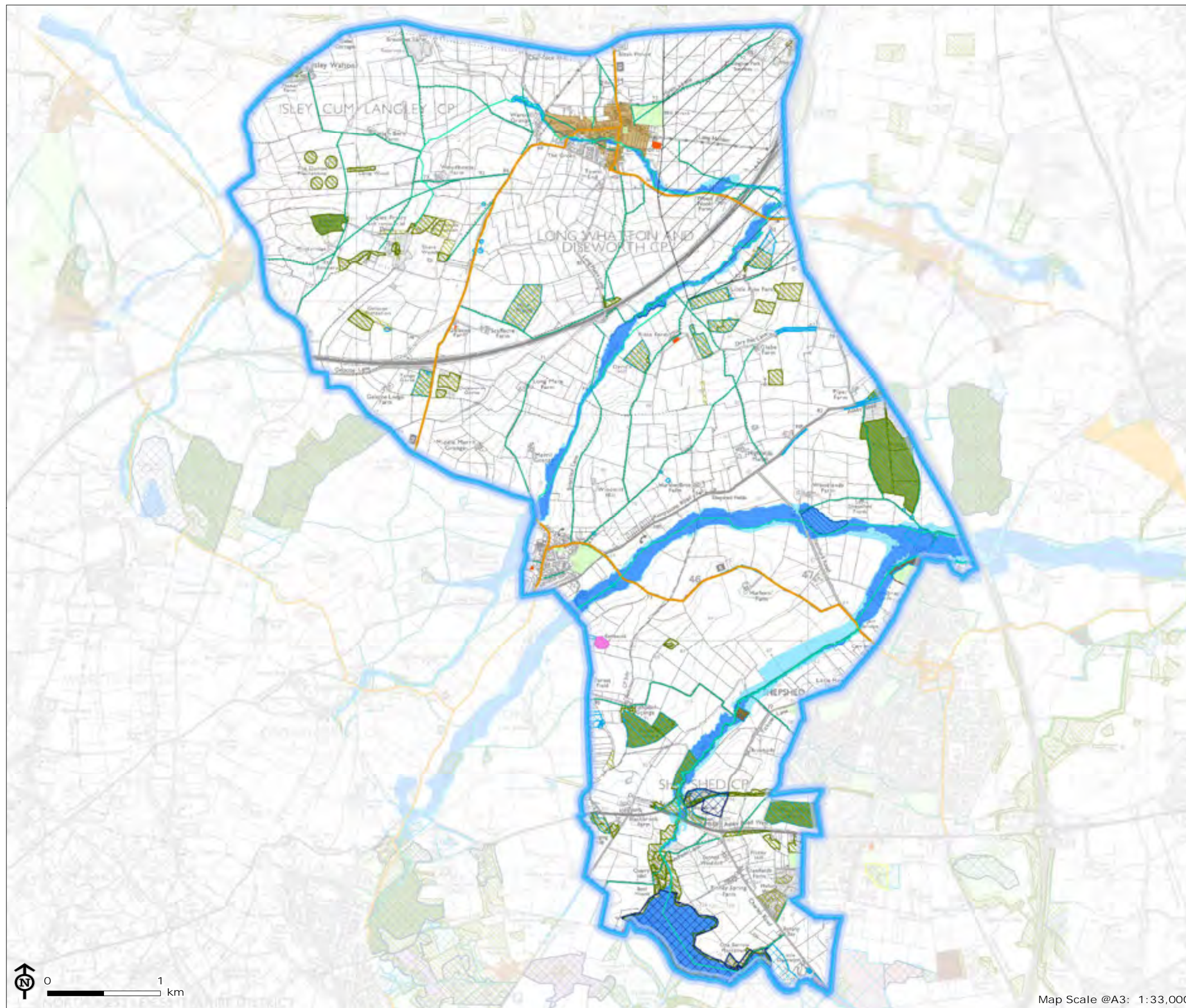
Landscape Guidance

Any new development within this SOAZ should:

- Avoid locations on steep slopes and areas which are visually prominent.
- Retain the remnant small-scale field patterns within the landscape, particularly those associated with settlements.
- Protect the setting of valued heritage features, including archaeological remains and Conservation Areas with many Listed Buildings.
- Respect the form and vernacular of existing settlement within the landscape.
- Retain valued natural features within the landscape, including hedgerows, trees, woodland and streams.
- Protect the distinctive estate landscape associated with Langley Priory and the sense of time-depth.
- Remain in keeping with the settlement form and vernacular of the existing development.
- Plan for its successful integration through sensitive design and siting, including use of sensitive materials and landscape mitigation to enhance sense of place. Include planting to screen large scale buildings and roads to reduce noise and visual impact.
- Retain the sense of separation and setting the landscape provides to existing settlements.

References for further local-level landscape evidence:

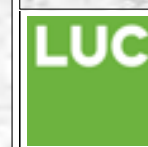
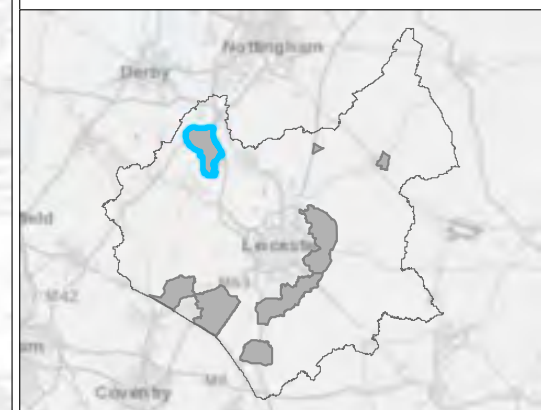
- Borough of Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment (2012)
- North West Leicestershire Settlement Fringe Assessment (2010)



Leicester and Leicestershire Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study

Existing GI Assets and Key Constraints: Northern Gateway SOAZ

- 2: Northern Gateway SOAZ
 - Large-scale warehousing
 - River
 - Flood Zone 2
 - Flood Zone 3
 - Country Park
 - Site of Special Scientific Interest
 - Local Nature Reserve
 - Local Wildlife Site
 - Ancient woodland
 - Registered Park and Garden
 - Conservation Area
 - Scheduled Monument
 - Public Right of Way
 - Cycle Route
 - Open Space
 - Area of separation
- Priority Habitat Inventory**
- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh
 - Deciduous woodland
 - Lowland fens
 - Lowland meadows
 - Traditional orchard



Map Scale @A3: 1:33,000

SOAZ 2: Northern Gateway (NW Leicestershire and Charnwood)

Existing Green and Blue Infrastructure assets, constraints and opportunities

Theme	Existing assets / constraints	Opportunities
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This SOAZ is intersected by a network of brooks and streams (including Black Brook, Grace Dieu Brook, Long Whatton Brook and Diseworth Brook) associated with the River Soar. The surrounding areas are located within Flood Zones 2 and 3, and are unsuitable for built development. Blackbrook Reservoir is the most significant water space within this zone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is potential to restore the river valleys by creating new areas of wetland and grazing meadows along the flood plains. Access could be created at Blackbrook Reservoir to create an appealing waterside destination for access to nature and water activities. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be incorporated into new development to help manage the flood risk that exists across this SOAZ.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designated wildlife sites include a SSSI at Blackbrook Reservoir. There is a sparse network of woodland to the south of Shepshed, which is within the Charnwood Forest initiative area. The far south of the SOAZ is within the National Forest. Land is used for a mixture of pasture and arable farming, with occasional blocks of woodland including Piper Wood, Whitehorse Wood, Hookhill Wood and Blackbrook Spinney which are all identified as ancient woodland. Blackbrook Reservoir is nationally recognised as a SSSI for the mesotrophic water, plant, fish and bird communities. Within the farmed landscape, naturalistic features including mature hedgerows with frequent hedgerow trees and streams (often lined by willows) form linear habitats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing blocks of woodland should be better connected, particularly in the south (part of Charnwood Forest/National Forest area). Habitats should be created to increase connectivity between wildlife sites¹³. Additional tree planting should be undertaken where possible to increase woodland coverage¹⁴. Buffers could be created around the existing designated wildlife sites, and ecological connectivity could be improved through joining up the remnant woodland areas and other associated habitats. There is potential to create better networks of priority habitats (e.g. woodland, meadows and acid grassland). These should incorporate footpaths to enable access to nature and also provide sustainable transport routes to some of the attractive historic villages. The integration of GI features within major developments should be pursued¹⁴. This will enhance and conserve the connectivity of ecological networks. These should follow guidelines set out in the relevant local authority's biodiversity strategy.¹⁵ Any new development in this SOAZ should retain valued natural features within the landscape, including hedgerows, trees, woodland and streams.
Landscape (refer back to the Landscape	<i>Please refer back to the 'Key landscape sensitivities to development within the area' set out in the Landscape</i>	<i>Please also refer to the 'Landscape Guidance' section of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment undertaken for this SOAZ.</i>

¹³ The National Forest (2009) The National Forest Delivery Plan 2009-2014.

¹⁴ The National Forest (2014) The National Forest Strategy 2014-2024.

¹⁵ Draft North West Leicestershire: Ecological Networks

SOAZ 2: Northern Gateway (NW Leicestershire and Charnwood)

Theme	Existing assets / constraints	Opportunities
Sensitivity Assessment for this SOAZ)	<i>Sensitivity Assessment.</i>	
Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are very few designated heritage assets outside of the Conservation Area at Diseworth. There is a circular enclosure south of Belton designated as a Scheduled Monument. The non-designated estate landscape of Langley Priory with associated Grade II* Listed Building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is potential to create better pedestrian/cycle access to some of the attractive historic villages. Promote interpretation of the Langley Priory Estate landscape and explore opportunities for further access as a recreational destination. New residential development could incorporate art features and information to better promote and celebrate the heritage of the area. Promotion of and sustainable transport connections to nearby heritage at Garendon Park should particularly be enhanced¹⁶.
Active transport and connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a reasonable network of rights of way in the north of this SOAZ, but there is less provision in the south. There is some provision of strategic cycle paths, including a Sustrans Route going East-West through Shepshed, and another running North – South through Diseworth. A 'City GI Corridor' linking Leicester, Ansley and Loughborough is proposed in the 6Cs study, which runs through the south of the SOAZ. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access could be created at Blackbrook Reservoir to create an appealing waterside destination for access to nature and water activities. Designated cycle routes should be protected through development, and opportunities to create off road stretches of these routes should be identified where possible. For any new development there is a need to retain access through the SOAZ and also potential to secure funding for pedestrian/cycle access east-west over the M1 motorway, particularly to Loughborough. Enhance existing rights of way networks through ensuring routes are readily accessible and inviting. Ensure that new footpaths are created to connect new communities to the existing network. The SOAZ contains Charnwood Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zone GIEZ-4 and opportunities should be pursued within this to form new pedestrian gateways along the settlement edge of Shepshed¹⁶. Fragmented PRoW networks could be strengthened, particularly between Shepshed and Loughborough¹⁶. Opportunities to improve usability of important green corridors by a variety of users, in particular along Black Brook and the disused Charnwood Forest Railway¹⁶ line.
Recreation and play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is very little formal open space in this SOAZ at present, which reflects its rural nature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the limited accessible open space in this SOAZ, new development will need to incorporate sufficient public open space to serve the population.

¹⁶ Charnwood Borough Council (2016) Charnwood Borough Council Green Wedges, Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones and Areas of Local Separation: Methodology and Assessment Findings Report.

SOAZ 2: Northern Gateway (NW Leicestershire and Charnwood)

Theme	Existing assets / constraints	Opportunities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 6Cs study highlights that there is a deficiency in strategic accessible natural green space in this SOAZ. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are opportunities to enhance access to nature through the creation of new strategic natural green spaces - Blackbrook Reservoir could be a good location for this.
Health, Wellbeing and Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is large degree of inequality relating to health within this SOAZ. Parts of the north-west of the SOAZ are in the 90-100% least deprived category whilst the south-east of the SOAZ adjacent to Shepshed is amongst the 40% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any new residential development would need to consider access over the M1 (east-west), and over the A42, where access (north-south) should be improved. Address inequality and deprivation by targeting GI interventions within areas with relatively more deprived settlements such as to the north-west of Shepshed. Explore opportunities for woodland planting along road corridors to improve air quality by removing particulates.

Leicester and Leicestershire Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study

Green Infrastructure Opportunities within Strategic Opportunity Assessment Zone: Northern Gateway

7. Green Way east from Diseworth over M1: (Active transport and connectivity/Health and equality): Ensure pedestrian/cycle access over the M1 is enhanced in association with any future development.

8. Shepshed to Loughborough Green Way: (Active transport and connectivity/Health and equality): Create and enhance off-road pedestrian/cycle links over the M1, providing appropriate access to locations including Loughborough, historic villages and Garendon Park.

9. Soar River Corridor Restoration and Green Way: (Water/Active transport and connectivity): Reinstate grazing marsh and fens along the floodplain of the Soar tributaries, and ensure access is enhanced, particularly along the Black Brook and create attractive pedestrian/cycle from Shepshed to Belton and beyond.

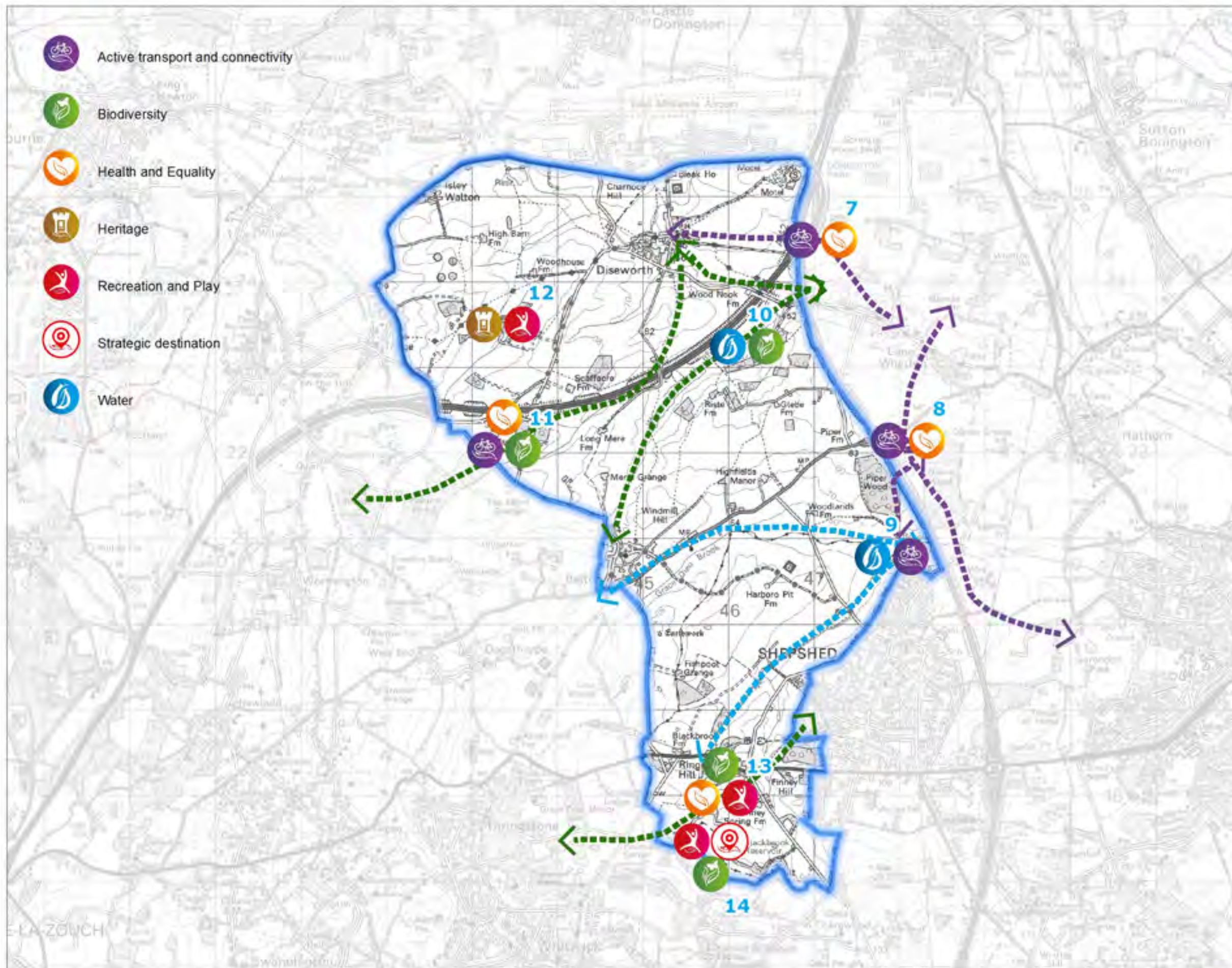
10. Soar River Corridor Restoration: (Water/Biodiversity): Reinstate grazing marsh and fens along the floodplain of the Soar tributaries.

11. North Leicestershire Ecological Network Enhancement: (Active transport and connectivity/Biodiversity/Health and equality): Join up patches of woodland and connect with larger woodland assets outside the SOAZ for recreation and ecological connectivity.

12. Langley Priory public access project: (Heritage/Recreation and play): Promote interpretation of the Langley Priory Estate landscape and explore opportunities for further access as a recreational destination.

13. Shepshed – Thringstone Ecological Corridor: (Biodiversity/Recreation and play/Health and equality): Create new areas of woodland, connecting the existing woods and copses, linking to the National Forest/Charnwood Forest.

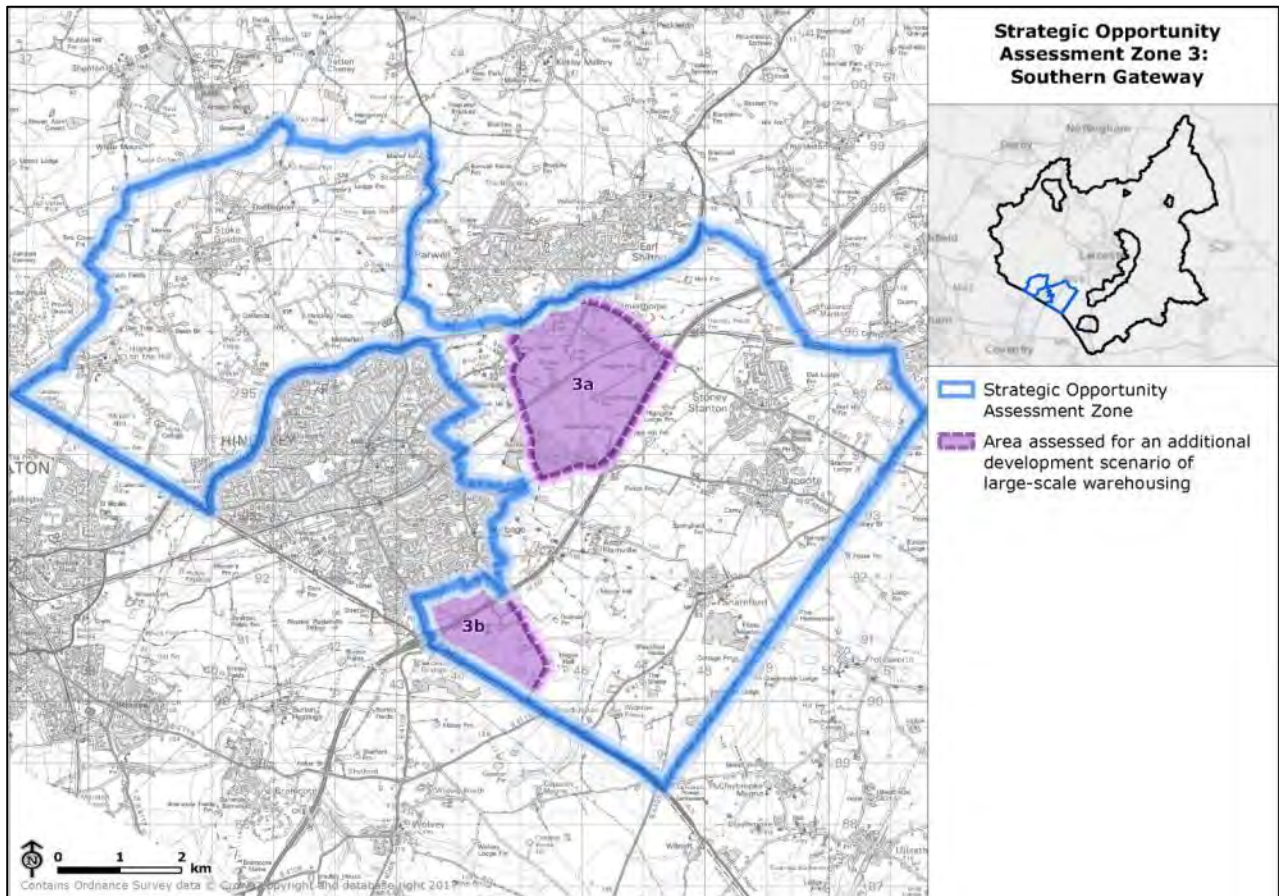
14. Blackbrook Access and Recreation Project: (Strategic destination/Biodiversity/Recreation and play): Enhance access and interpretation to create a new high quality semi-natural open space/destination at Blackbrook Reservoir with new multi-user rights of way from Shepshed.



0 1 2 km
Map Scale @A3: 1:45,000

LUC

SOAZ 3: Southern Gateway (Hinckley & Bosworth and Blaby)



Summary of SOAZ location and landscape character assessment context

This Strategic Opportunity Assessment Area (SOAZ) falls within the following county-level Landscape Character Areas: Upper Soar and Mease/Sence Lowlands.

The SOAZ covers the landscape surrounding Hinckley, bounded to the south/south-west by the county boundary marked by Watling Street Roman road (the modern A5). The eastern boundary is formed by the Fosse Way (also the administrative boundary between Blaby and Harborough districts). To the west, just beyond the SOAZ boundary, is the MIRA Technology Park and proving ground test track facilities. The SOAZ then extends north-eastwards to take in the villages of Stoke Golding, Dadlington and Stapleton, before skirting around the southern edges of Barwell and Earl Shilton. The SOAZ is intersected by the M69 in its eastern section.

Representative photographs



SOAZ 3: Southern Gateway (Hinckley & Bosworth and Blaby)

Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description and indication of sensitivity	Rating
Physical character (including topography and scale)	The landscape is generally open and gently rolling, with isolated pockets of higher land near to the county boundary around Higham on the Hill and Wigston Parva (130m AOD). Flat, larger scale floodplains are associated with the main watercourses including the Soar and Tweed. Small-scale landscape features include low-cut hedges, hedgerow trees, poplar stands, blocks of woodland, individual farms and houses. Fields are medium to large in scale.	M
Natural character	A landscape of mixed, often intensive agricultural land (including equestrian enterprises), with natural features including the Soar and Tweed rivers and tributaries, hedges and hedgerow trees, bands of riparian woodland, scattered ancient and broadleaved woodlands, meadows (including Kendall's Meadow SSSI), semi-improved grasslands and localised heath-grassland-woodland habitats (including Burbage Wood and Aston Firs SSSI and LNR). Former pits form locally valued wetland and open water habitats, scattered across the landscape. The Ashby Canal crosses the western half of the SOAZ, through Hinckley and south into Rugby district, forming an important ecological corridor.	M
Historic landscape character	The village of Aston Flamville and Wigston Parva hamlet are Conservation Areas, as are the historic cores of Higham on the Hill and Stoke Golding which includes a Scheduled hilaew (barrow) and medieval farmstead to the south-west. The Ashby Canal is a Conservation Area along its length, and the SOAZ lies in proximity to the Croft and Burbage Conservation Areas. Other nationally designated heritage features include the Roman town of Venonis at High Cross (which also extends into Warwickshire), located on the Fosse Way. The 13 th century Sapcote Castle is found within the village, though no above-ground remains are visible (land is used as sports/playing fields). The Battle of Bosworth Registered Battlefield extends into the SOAZ (although the site itself is outside). Farmland is a mixture of very large post-war fields and piecemeal enclosures of various shapes. Remnant ridge and furrow is evident in some locations.	L-M
Form, density and setting of existing development	Bands of woodland, hedgerows and the gently rolling topography – with settlements often located on flatter, slightly higher ground (with some newer development spilling down slopes) means that the built form is often well integrated into the landscape. Trees and woodland often rise above development to form wooded skylines, with the frontages and roofs of housing peeping through gaps. The A47 contains the northern and western fringes of Hinckley, from which there is an immediate transition to open countryside. The other settlements have more broken edges and are again fringed by trees, woodland and hedgerows to grade development into its surrounding rural, working agricultural setting. The rural landscape also provides a separation function in a landscape that has seen much 20th century coalescence and expansion of villages from their historic cores.	M
Views and visual character including skylines	Open views are characterised by large-scale farmland with pylon lines, trees and woodland characterising skylines. High hedgerows and bands of woodland can limit the length of views in places (including from roads), but where the landscape opens up – in intensively farmed locations with low hedges – views to wooded ridgelines are characteristic. When looking towards settlements the roofs and often red-bricked frontages of buildings are perceived through gaps in trees.	M
Perceptual and experiential qualities	This is a busy landscape strongly influenced by human activity and development. Away from the busy road and rail infrastructure (particularly the M69, A5, A47 and A447) and the main centres of population, small pockets of relative tranquillity can be found, particularly associated with woodlands.	L-M

SOAZ 3: Southern Gateway (Hinckley & Bosworth and Blaby)

Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

The landscape is considered to have **low-moderate** overall sensitivity to residential development and a **moderate** sensitivity to commercial (light industrial) development. These judgements result from the strong influences of existing development and transport infrastructure on character, including the M69, main rail corridor, several busy main roads and pylon lines, as well as the presence of the large urban areas of Hinckley and Barwell/East Shilton on the doorstep of the SOAZ. The flat/gently undulating topography and positive screening effects of existing vegetation (particularly hedgerow trees and woodland) also contribute to these sensitivity scores.

The area to the south of Burbage, which has additionally been assessed for large-scale industrial development (warehousing), has been assessed as of **moderate-high** overall sensitivity to this development type. This is due to the presence of a distinctive small-scale pattern of strip fields enclosed by species-rich hedgerows to the north of the M69 ("Burbage Fields"), and the separation function this area provides between the residential housing and the motorway. The area to the south/east of the motorway would be of lower sensitivity owing to the pattern of very large-scale intensively farmed fields. Spinneys, ponds and the general absence of development within this part of the landscape present sensitivities, however.

The area to the south of Earl Shilton to the B4669, west of the M69 has additionally been assessed for large-scale industrial development (warehousing). This landscape has been assessed as of **moderate-high** sensitivity overall to this development type due to the presence of nationally and locally important ancient woodland and meadow habitats (including at Burbage Wood and Aston Firs SSSI), wetlands and historic fish ponds around Elmesthorpe, its medium-scale field pattern and strong rural qualities.

Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Residential housing (2-3 storeys)		L-M			
Commercial development (Use classes B1 and B2)			M		
Commercial development (large scale warehousing) – south of Burbage				M-H	
Commercial development (large scale warehousing) – south of Earl Shilton				M-H	

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the area

The following attributes and features of the SOAZ would be particularly sensitive to development:

- Open views across agricultural fields to distinctive wooded skylines.
- Locally valued woodlands and wetlands associated with the Soar, Tweed, their tributaries, the Ashby Canal and former pits/quarries.
- Nationally important grassland habitats at **Kendall's Meadow SSSI** and heath-grassland and ancient woodland habitats at Burbage Wood and Aston Firs SSSI and LNR (also a popular recreational destination).
- A network of species-rich hedgerows and bands of woodland forming valued corridors in the intensively farmed landscape.
- Historic built vernacular and character associated with the Conservation Areas at Aston Flamville, Wigston Parva, Higham on the Hill, Stoke Golding and the Ashby Canal; along with the role the landscape plays as part of the setting of Croft and Burbage Conservation Areas (both beyond the SOAZ boundary).
- Nationally protected historic assets including Sapcote Castle, the barrow and medieval farmstead

SOAZ 3: Southern Gateway (Hinckley & Bosworth and Blaby)

at Stoke Golding, the wider Battle of Bosworth Registered Battlefield, and Venonis Roman town.

- Piecemeal enclosures of historic origin, some with extant ridge and furrow remains.
- The setting provided by the rural, agricultural landscape (including its hedgerow, tree and woodland networks) to development and its separation function between settlements.
- Pockets of relative tranquillity away from major infrastructure, busy roads and urban/industrial development.

Landscape Guidance

Any new development within this SOAZ should:

- Take advantage of the screening effects of existing woodland and hedgerows, protecting existing features and enhancing ecological connections within and around any new development (i.e. through new hedgerow and tree planting using locally prevalent, climate resilient species).
- Protect and where possible enhance (including through new ecological connections) locally and nationally valued habitats, including species-rich hedgerows, broadleaved and ancient woodlands, meadows, semi-improved grasslands and wetlands including the Ashby Canal and former quarries/pits.
- Conserve the setting and integrity of valued heritage assets, including designated sites and historic buildings within Conservation Areas (such as churches forming local landmarks and focal points within settlements).
- Protect the rural working agricultural setting the wider SOAZ provides to development. Avoid siting development on the more open, visible slopes and where ridge and furrow is evident.
- Ensure that areas of separation between settlements are maintained to preserve their distinct identities and that the setting the landscape provides to historic villages is retained.
- Plan for its successful integration through sensitive design and siting, including use of sensitive materials and landscape mitigation to enhance sense of place. Include planting to screen large scale buildings and roads to reduce noise and visual impact.
- Be sensitively sited, aiming to avoid significantly affecting areas of rural character with locally important levels of tranquillity.
- New larger scale development associated with existing developed areas should favour low heights and dark or muted colours.

SOAZ 3: Southern Gateway (Hinckley & Bosworth and Blaby)



The Ashby Canal near Stoke Golding



Elmesthorpe and the southern edges of Earl Shilton visible on a wooded ridgeline beyond cereal fields



New housing development with Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) at Sappcote



Diving Centre at Stoney Cove (former quarry)



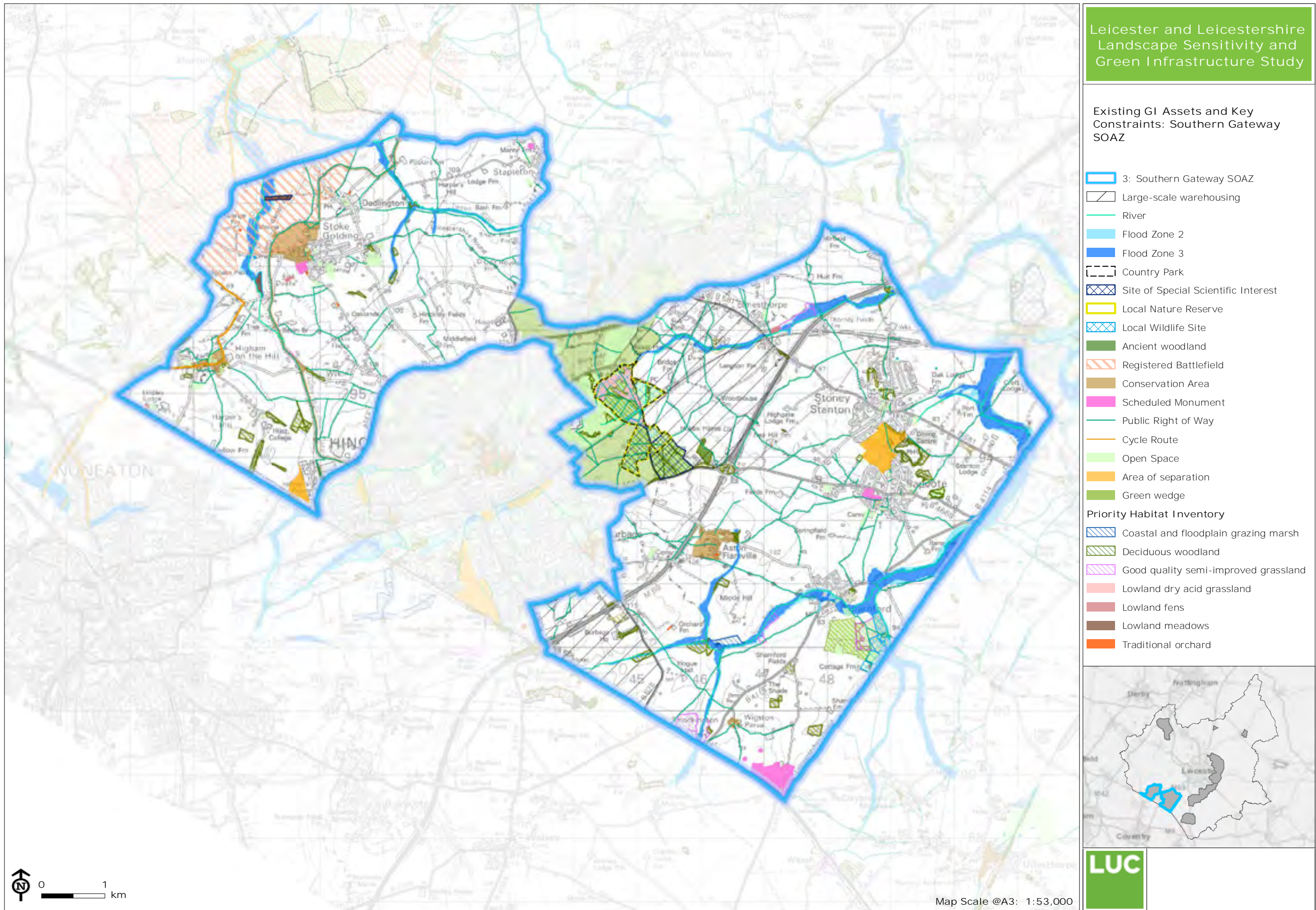
View to the southern edges of Hinckley (Burbage) glimpsed through trees and bands of woodland (pylon line on skyline)



Dog walker at Burbage Common SSSI and Local Nature Reserve

References for further local-level landscape evidence:

- Hinckley and Bosworth Landscape Character Assessment (2017, update)
- Hinckley and Bosworth Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (2017)
- Blaby District Character Assessment (2008)



SOAZ 3: Southern Gateway (Hinckley & Bosworth and Blaby)

Existing Green and Blue Infrastructure assets, constraints and opportunities

Theme	Existing assets / constraints	Opportunities
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a network of rivers across the area, including the River Soar, the River Tweed and associated tributaries, and surrounding land falls within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The Strategic Opportunity Assessment Zone (SOAZ) is intersected by a number of ditches/streams. A number of former quarries now filled with water are located around Stoney Stanton, and form recreational destinations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is potential to restore the river valleys of the Soar and the Tweed, and create better public access. Access to the Ashby Canal and Harrow Brook could be enhanced, and waterway infrastructure should be provided to support a range of water-based activities. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be incorporated into new development to help manage the flood risk that exists across this SOAZ. An example of this is within the proposed Barwell urban extension, which is bisected by an existing stream. A successful example of SuDS incorporated into a recent development is illustrated in the photographs earlier in the profile (Sapcote).
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are few designated wildlife sites within this area, however there are networks of woodland, particularly to the north west and north east of Hinckley, and around Stoney Stanton, generally associated with river valleys. The most significant woodland network is around Burbage Common and Woods, which includes significant areas of ancient woodland and it partially a SSSI. Development would be inappropriate in close proximity to this site, and a buffer of appropriate habitats should be provided where necessary to ensure no negative impact. There is also a SSSI at Kendall's Meadow. Brook Farm Meadow Local Wildlife Site (LWS) is located in the north west, and there are a couple of LWS within Hinckley itself although very few across the wider area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buffers could be created around the existing designated wildlife sites, and ecological connectivity could be improved through joining up remnant woodland, meadow, species-rich hedgerows and semi-improved grassland areas. There are opportunities to enhance the Biodiversity Improvement Area at Brook Farm LWS, to reinstate habitats associated with the River Tweed as well as connecting the patches of woodland through well designed development. New development should incorporate the creation of priority habitats, in consultation with the local authority. Enhance the locally and nationally important biodiversity value of Burbage Common & Woods SSSI. New development around this site may create additional visitor pressure, which should be managed in an appropriate way.
Landscape (refer back to the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for this SOAZ)	<i>Please refer back to the 'Key landscape sensitivities to development within the area' set out in the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment.</i>	<i>Please also refer to the 'Landscape Guidance' section of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment undertaken for this SOAZ.</i>

SOAZ 3: Southern Gateway (Hinckley & Bosworth and Blaby)

Theme	Existing assets / constraints	Opportunities
Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ashby Canal Conservation Area runs through this SOAZ, and significant development would be inappropriate in close proximity to this feature. Many of the smaller villages have Conservation Areas, e.g. at Stoke Golding, Earl Shilton and Higham on the Hill, plus Scheduled Monuments at Sapcote Castle and Moat, as well as Park House south of Stoke Golding (barrow). There is also a Scheduled Monument at High Cross at the south-eastern corner of the zone, around a Roman town at High Cross, and the historic route of the Fosse Way forms the eastern SOAZ boundary. Developments in proximity to these sites will require sensitive design. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is potential to enhance access to, and enjoyment of Ashby Canal for recreation, through connecting new residential areas via footpaths and cycle paths. There may be opportunities to celebrate the heritage of the area through interpretation and art – this could also draw more visitors to the area. Conserve and enhance the rural setting of Stoke Golding and Higham on the Hill. Explore connections to and interpretation of heritage assets via the rights of way network including the Roman Town at High Cross, accessible via the Fosse Way.
Active transport and connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a good network of footpaths across the SOAZ, including the Ambion Way, the Fosse Way and the towpath along Ashby Canal. There is a network of more informal footpaths which provides reasonable coverage around Hinckley, with sparser provision to the south and east. There is a dismantled railway line in the west of this SOAZ, running north from west Hinckley, however it is now very overgrown and the land has been informally occupied by small camps of caravans and other vehicles. Investment would be needed to create an off-road route here. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance existing footpath networks ensuring they are readily accessible and appealing. Many paths are uninviting due to their location by busy roads, near industry or warehousing areas, or due to off-putting signs. There is a need for better signposting and connectivity, including creating cycle routes. Ensure that new footpaths are created to connect new communities to the existing network. The Ashby Canal should be connected to Hinckley centre via footpaths, in line with the Hinckley and Bosworth GI Strategy (Key Intervention 3). The area would benefit from strategic cycle routes, e.g. connecting Hinckley and Nuneaton, as well as secondary cycle routes connecting any new residential areas. Improve access to Burbage Common and Woods for pedestrians and cyclists. The only current cycle access is via the busy B4668 or on the south side of the Nuneaton-Leicester railway line. Take advantage of the disused railway line between Nuneaton and Shenton in growth plans. The rail line provides an important link between Stoke Golding and further north. It also connects up with the strategic asset of the Ashby Canal. Ensure connectivity through the proposed urban extensions in and around the SOAZ e.g. Barwell, Earl Shilton and surrounding urban areas, including access over the M69 motorway.

SOAZ 3: Southern Gateway (Hinckley & Bosworth and Blaby)

Theme	Existing assets / constraints	Opportunities
Recreation and play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is reasonable open space provision within the main urban areas. There are few accessible natural green spaces in the wider countryside, although Burbage Woods and Common and Fosse Meadows are valuable local resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a need to enhance access to nature through the creation of new strategic natural green spaces alongside new development. There could be better promotion of the canal and river corridors, and their recreation opportunities. There is potential to enhance the range of activities and visitor amenities at Burbage Common and Wood, in line with the Burbage Woods and Common Management Plan¹⁷. Enhancements could be made to the Ashby Canal, which provides a strategic pedestrian, and cycle route into Hinckley Town Centre. Enhancement of Burbage Allotments (currently semi-abandoned) should be considered, which lie along a potential east-west recreational corridor linking the Ashby Canal, Sketchley Brook and Burbage Common¹⁸. Conserve and enhance the Hinckley-Barwell Green Wedge, which could be developed into a large-scale recreational asset similar to other plans for green wedges in the country¹⁸. Accessible open space should be provided in new developments within the SOAZ, to limit recreational pressure on existing resources.
Health, Wellbeing and Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most of this SOAZ has moderate levels of health according to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), with south Sapcote indicating the poorest health levels. This was assessed through a suite of indicators, that take into account both mental and physical health. The IMD Living Environment data indicates that a large area in the west of the SOAZ (north-west of Hinckley) has a relatively poor living environment. This was assessed through a range of factors including poor air quality and traffic accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access over the M69 and rail corridors would need to be considered if growth is proposed east of Hinckley. Some areas of this SOAZ may require the alleviation of urban heat island effects through incorporating trees, hedgerows and pocket parks within development. Where suitable, the level of street tree and hedgerow planting should be increased to reduce airborne PM10 particulates, increase shade and provide cooling through evapotranspiration. Address inequality and deprivation by targeting GI interventions within areas with relatively more deprived settlements e.g. south of Sapcote.

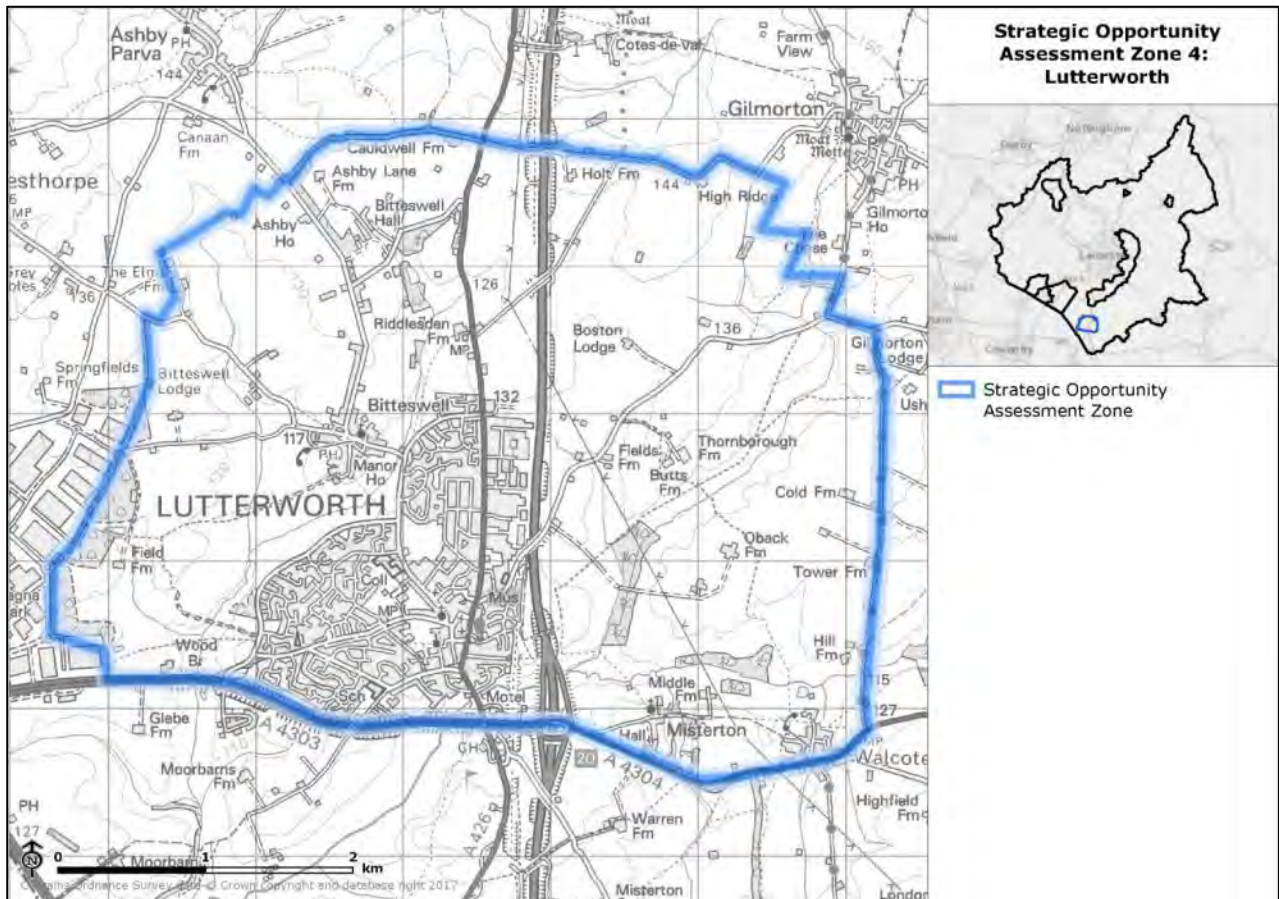
¹⁷ Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (2011) Burbage Woods and Common Management Plan
http://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/downloads/file/2904/burbage_common_and_woods_management_plan_2011-2016

¹⁸ TEP (2008) A Green Infrastructure Strategy for Hinckley & Bosworth. Prepared for Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council.



DBK5 FR-00000000_11UCF08_T108_SOAK_C2_speedgrades_OOP_v3_A3: 04/10/2017 Source: EA, HE, LOC, NE, OS

SOAZ 4: Lutterworth (Harborough)



Summary of SOAZ location and landscape character assessment context

This Strategic Opportunity Assessment Area (SOAZ) falls within the following county-level Landscape Character Area: Lutterworth Lowlands.

The SOAZ wraps around the market town of Lutterworth; its southern boundary formed by the A4304, with the M1 and A426 intersecting north-south through the centre of the SOAZ. The western boundary skirts around the wooded edges of Magna Park, with the SOAZ extending northwards along Cauldwell Lane. The SOAZ's eastern extent traces National Cycle Route 50.

Representative photographs



SOAZ 4: Lutterworth (Harborough)

Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description and indication of sensitivity	Rating
Physical character (including topography and scale)	A gently undulating landscape with some moderately steep slopes associated with minor valleys; elevation reaching a maximum of 140m AOD in the north-east of the SOAZ. Medium sized fields are divided by mature hedgerows, with individual trees and woodland cover forming small-scale landscape elements.	M
Natural character	This is a predominantly pastoral landscape, with some areas of intensive mixed farming. Naturalistic character is provided by the network of mature hedgerows, in-field and boundary trees, spinneys, estate plantings and scattered bands of deciduous woodland; as well as scattered ponds, streams and wetlands including Misterton Marshes SSSI.	M
Historic landscape character	Lutterworth has Saxon origins with a cluster of Listed Buildings within its Conservation Area. Just to the north-west, the historic village of Bitteswell is a Conservation Area—the spire of its Grade II* church forming a local landmark. A number of non-registered ornamental parkland estates provide a sense of time depth, including Misterton Hall, the fringes of Walcote and Bitteswell Hall Park. Tree avenues along approach roads into settlements also evoke a parkland feel. Regular parliamentary enclosures are dominant, along with some very large post-war fields to the west of Bitteswell and in the east of the SOAZ. Piecemeal enclosures of various shapes and sizes are found across the landscape, with ridge and furrow discernible around Bitteswell.	M
Form, density and setting of existing development	Lutterworth is contained by the M1 (to the east) and A4303 (south), flanked to the east by large industrial warehousing and commercial units. The edges of development are contained by roads, with the exception of a new housing development spreading onto flatter ground to the north. The town's edges are softened by woodland and topography, immediately transitioning to surrounding farmland. Bitteswell lies in close proximity to the north-west of Lutterworth, a new housing development on the fringes of the town reducing the (already small) gap between the two settlements. The estate character of the village is emphasised by tree avenues along approach roads and mature trees within the settlement. Its position on relatively flat ground integrates development into the landform. Walcote is similarly nestled into its rural surroundings due to topography and tree cover, including of historic estate origins. Both villages include 20th century housing within or on their fringes. In the west, Magna Park is well screened by woodland – the large warehousing developments only perceived when within its immediate vicinity (including associated noise). The remaining landscape is sparsely settled with scattered farms linked by minor roads and tracks, including occasional very large, modern agricultural buildings well screened by woodland / dips in the landform. It is a strongly rural, working farmed landscape with relict historic landscapes and estate plantings (spinneys, game coverts) contributing to the sense of place and setting of existing development.	M-H
Views and visual character including skylines	Open, rural skylines are largely wooded, with occasional glimpses of housing (often red brick) and pylon lines / wind turbines peeping above the treeline around Lutterworth and in views north from the SOAZ. The prominent tower of St Mary's in Lutterworth (Grade I) is an important landmark, often featuring in long views from higher surrounding land.	M
Perceptual and experiential qualities	This is a landscape of contrasts; with busy infrastructure and dense development in and around Lutterworth in the south of the SOAZ, and a sparsely settled, rural character with important relative levels of tranquillity within the remaining area. A sense of time depth is conveyed through parkland estate relicts and historic buildings within the villages.	M

SOAZ 4: Lutterworth (Harborough)

Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

The SOAZ is judged as of **moderate** overall sensitivity to both residential housing and commercial (light industrial) developments. The presence of existing generally well-integrated housing and industrial developments within the SOAZ (within and close to Lutterworth), large-scale agricultural buildings, and major road infrastructure lessen sensitivity. The gently undulating landform and presence of thick hedgerows and frequent bands of woodland also help integrate development into its landscape setting. However, the strong rural qualities of the wider landscape, with locally important estate characteristics, woodland and wetland habitats, historic buildings within villages (including the Bitteswell Conservation Area) and relative levels of tranquillity away from main roads would be sensitive to change.

Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Residential housing (2-3 storeys)			M		
Commercial development (Use classes B1 and B2)			M		

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the area

The following attributes and features of the SOAZ would be particularly sensitive to development:

- Some moderately steep slopes associated with minor valleys.
- Naturalistic character associated with mature hedgerows, in-field and boundary trees, spinneys, estate plantings and scattered bands of deciduous woodland.
- Wetland habitats including scattered ponds, streams and marsh, including Misterton Marshes SSSI.
- Sense of time depth provided areas of ridge and furrow (particularly around Bitteswell) and ornamental estate landscapes, including Misterton Hall, the fringes of Walcote and Bitteswell Hall.
- The Conservation Area at Bitteswell with a concentration of Listed Buildings, including the Grade II* St Mary's church (a local landmark).
- Development largely contained by woodland, roads and topography; tree avenues along approach roads into settlements reflecting wider estate character.
- **Open wooded skylines and the prominent landmark of Lutterworth's St Mary's church tower** (Grade I).
- The sparsely settled, rural and working agricultural landscape comprising much of the SOAZ – with important relative levels of tranquillity and role as an immediate setting to development.

Landscape Guidance

Any new development within this SOAZ should:

- Utilise the gently rolling topography and dips in the landform to integrate it into the landscape (avoiding steeper, more prominent slopes).
- Take advantage of the screening effects of existing woodland and hedgerows, protecting existing features and enhancing ecological connections within and around any new development (i.e. through new hedgerow and tree planting using locally prevalent, climate resilient species).
- Protect valued ponds and wetland habitats, including Misterton Marshes SSSI.
- Protect the strongly rural, wooded and working agricultural setting the wider SOAZ provides to development. Avoid siting development where ridge and furrow is evident.
- Conserve open wooded skylines and ensure new development does not affect the appreciation of historic features on skylines, including the church spires at Misterton and Bitteswell (both Grade II*) and landmark tower of Lutterworth's St Mary's church.
- **Protect the character, setting and integrity of the landscape's ornamental parkland estates**, including at Misterton Hall, Bitteswell Hall Park and distinctive tree avenues along roads (including approach roads into settlements).

SOAZ 4: Lutterworth (Harborough)



Open fields north-west of Walcote, showing 20th century settlement edge



Floodplain meadows near Misterton (east of M1 junction 20)



New housing development on north-west fringes of Lutterworth



Eastern approach into Bitteswell: tree-lined road with estate character



M1 corridor - fringing mature trees minimise visual impacts

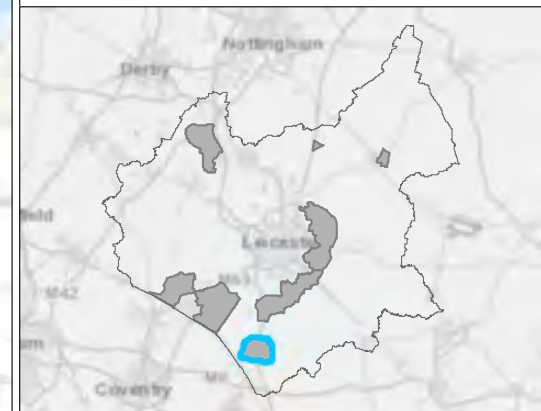


Western fringes of Lutterworth and St Mary's church tower visible on wooded skyline beyond farmed countryside.

References for further landscape evidence:

- Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure assessment profile for the Lutterworth Lowlands Landscape Character Area (LUC, 2017).
- Lutterworth and Broughton Astley Landscape Character Assessment & Landscape Capacity Study (2011)
- Harborough District Landscape Character Assessment (2007)
- Preliminary Landscape Assessment of Alternative Strategic Development Areas (for Harborough District, September 2016)

Existing GI Assets and Key Constraints: Lutterworth SOAZ



SOAZ 4: Lutterworth (Harborough)

Existing Green and Blue Infrastructure assets, constraints and opportunities

Theme	Existing assets / constraints	Opportunities
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The River Swift and its tributaries run through the SOAZ. Narrow parts of the SOAZ along these waterways are within Flood Zone 3. A larger area northeast of Junction 20 of the M1 is within Flood Zone 3. Scattered ponds, streams and wetlands, including Misterton Marshes SSSI are located within the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities to provide additional flood storage attenuation and require new development to incorporate sustainable drainage and source control measures¹⁹. Land adjacent to the waterways and wetlands within the SOAZ should be managed to contribute to reducing flood risk and to provide a habitat for wildlife. Land management along the watercourses should also be targeted to reduce soil loss/diffuse pollution and enhance their functions as natural corridors.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a predominantly pastoral area, with some areas of intensive mixed farming. Bitteswell Brook LWS is located to the west of Lutterworth and Marshy Grassland LWS is located along the River Swift northwest of Walcote. The area contains deciduous woodland priority habitats along the M1 corridor, and to the south west, north west and south east of the area. The eastern part of the area also contains lowland fens, semi-improved grassland, purple moor grass and rush pastures, and coastal and floodplain grazing marsh priority habitats along parts of the waterways. Misterton Marshes SSSI, one of the largest remaining blocks of unimproved wetland habitat in Leicestershire, is located in the east of the area. This is in an unfavourable condition (although recovering). Much of the SOAZ is within an Impact Risk Zone for this SSSI where development such as residential and rural residential development could cause adverse effects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linear features within the SOAZ, such as hedgerows and the woodlands lining the M1 motorway corridor, should be protected and enhanced to provide linkages between habitats. Continue to manage Misterton Marshes SSSI appropriately with grazing by native sheep breeds to improve species diversity on the site. Land management along watercourses should be targeted to enhance their functions as natural corridors. Buffers could be created around the existing designated wildlife sites, and ecological connectivity could be improved through joining up remnants woodlands and hedgerows.

¹⁹ Leicestershire County Council (2015) Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

SOAZ 4: Lutterworth (Harborough)

Theme	Existing assets / constraints	Opportunities
Landscape (refer back to the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for this SOAZ)	<i>Please refer back to the 'Key landscape sensitivities to development within the area' set out in the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment.</i>	<i>Please also refer to the 'Landscape Guidance' section of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment undertaken for this SOAZ.</i>
Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bitteswell Conservation Area is located in the east of the SOAZ and Lutterworth Conservation Area is located in the south. These both contain numerous Listed Buildings. Non-registered relict parkland, tree avenues and estate buildings are present in the areas in locations such as Misterton Hall to the east of Lutterworth, and Bitteswell Hall to the north of Lutterworth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As many of the heritage assets within the area are private, such as Misterton Hall and Bitteswell Hall, opportunities to make these assets publicly accessible should be pursued. Joint heritage and wildlife trails could be created, utilising existing rights of way, providing public access to these assets from Lutterworth. Existing trees, hedgerows and other green infrastructure should be protected and enhanced to retain the settings of heritage features. The character, setting and integrity of the landscape's heritage features should be protected.
Active transport and connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Cycle Route 50 forms the eastern boundary of the SOAZ, Connecting Gilmorton to the north with Swinford to the south. Some existing rights of way are present in the east of the area, connecting Walcote and Gilmorton with Lutterworth. Fewer rights of way are present in the west of the SOAZ. The M1 motorway corridor divides the SOAZ through its centre from north to south. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable transport connections to Lutterworth, especially from the east, should be enhanced. Green corridors such as these could provide buffering from the M1 motorway for air quality and noise. Joint heritage and wildlife trails could be created, utilising existing rights of way, providing public access to these assets from Lutterworth. The proposed Strategic Urban Extension east of Lutterworth should incorporate high quality new green ways for pedestrians and cyclists.
Recreation and play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a good provision of open space in the more urban west of the area but a lack of accessible open space in the east which is more rural. National Cycle Route 50 forms the eastern boundary of the SOAZ. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional open space provision should be made alongside development where there is currently a deficiency, such as in the east of the SOAZ. Joint heritage and wildlife trails could be created, utilising existing rights of way, providing public access to these assets from Lutterworth. A river park associated with the River Swift has been proposed alongside the planned Strategic Urban Extension to the east of Lutterworth.
Health, Wellbeing and Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This SOAZ is amongst the 10-40% healthiest neighbourhoods in the country according to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). The southwest of Lutterworth is the most deprived with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to open space and between open space and recreational areas should be increased. The number of sustainable access routes should be increased and their quality enhanced.

SOAZ 4: Lutterworth (Harborough)

Theme	Existing assets / constraints	Opportunities
	<p>regards to health in the SOAZ. This was assessed through a suite of indicators, that take into account both mental and physical health.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IMD Living Environment data indicates that the SOAZ has a living environment of varying quality. This was assessed through a range of factors including poor air quality and traffic accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists. The easternmost part of the SOAZ is amongst the 20% most deprived, and the northern, western and southern parts of Lutterworth amongst the 10% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country with regard to living environment. The centre of Lutterworth is within an Air Quality Management Area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The level of street tree planting, such as along the roads and within the village in the area, should be increased to reduce airborne PM10 particulates, increase shade and provide cooling through evapotranspiration. Address inequality and deprivation by targeting GI interventions within areas which are relatively more deprived.

26. Magna Park -Lutterworth Green Way
: (Active transport and connectivity):
Enhance existing footpaths to deliver a high quality green way between Lutterworth, Bitteswell and Magna Park.

27. Bitteswell Brook River Corridor
Restoration: (Water/Biodiversity): Reinstate grazing marsh and fens along the floodplain of the Bitteswell Brook river corridor, and create off road pedestrian and cycle access linking west Lutterworth to Bitteswell, and the countryside beyond.

28. Lutterworth Green Way: (Active transport and connectivity/Heritage/Recreation and play): Deliver high quality green way between Lutterworth centre and the countryside to the north.

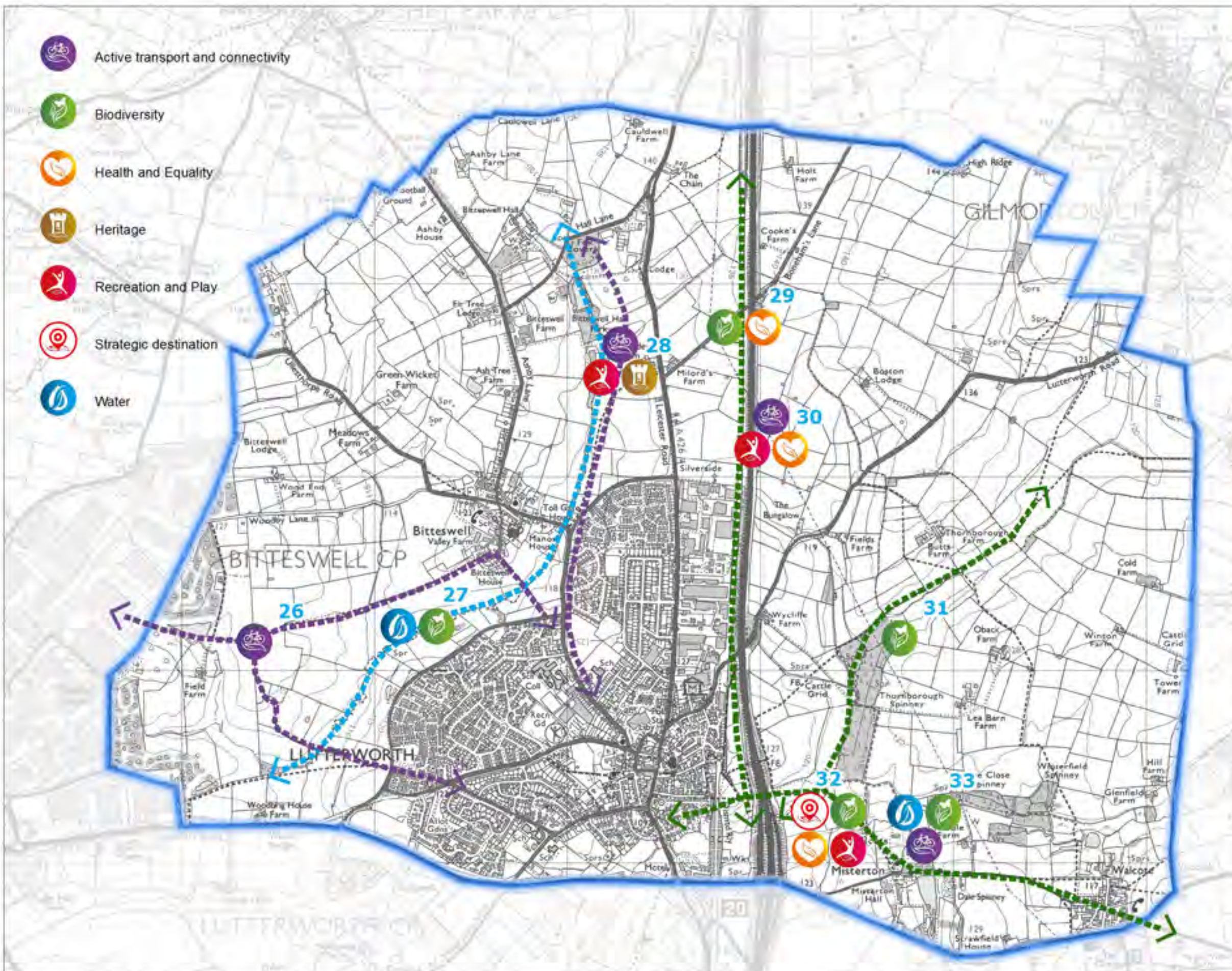
29. Lutterworth M1 Ecological Corridor: (Biodiversity/Health and equality): Connect and enhance linear habitats along the M1 to create ecological corridors and noise buffers.

30. Pedestrian/cycle bridge for Lutterworth East: (Active transport and connectivity/Recreation and play/Health and equality): New development east of the M1 should be delivered alongside new pedestrian/cycle access over the M1, and a creation of a strategic green space.

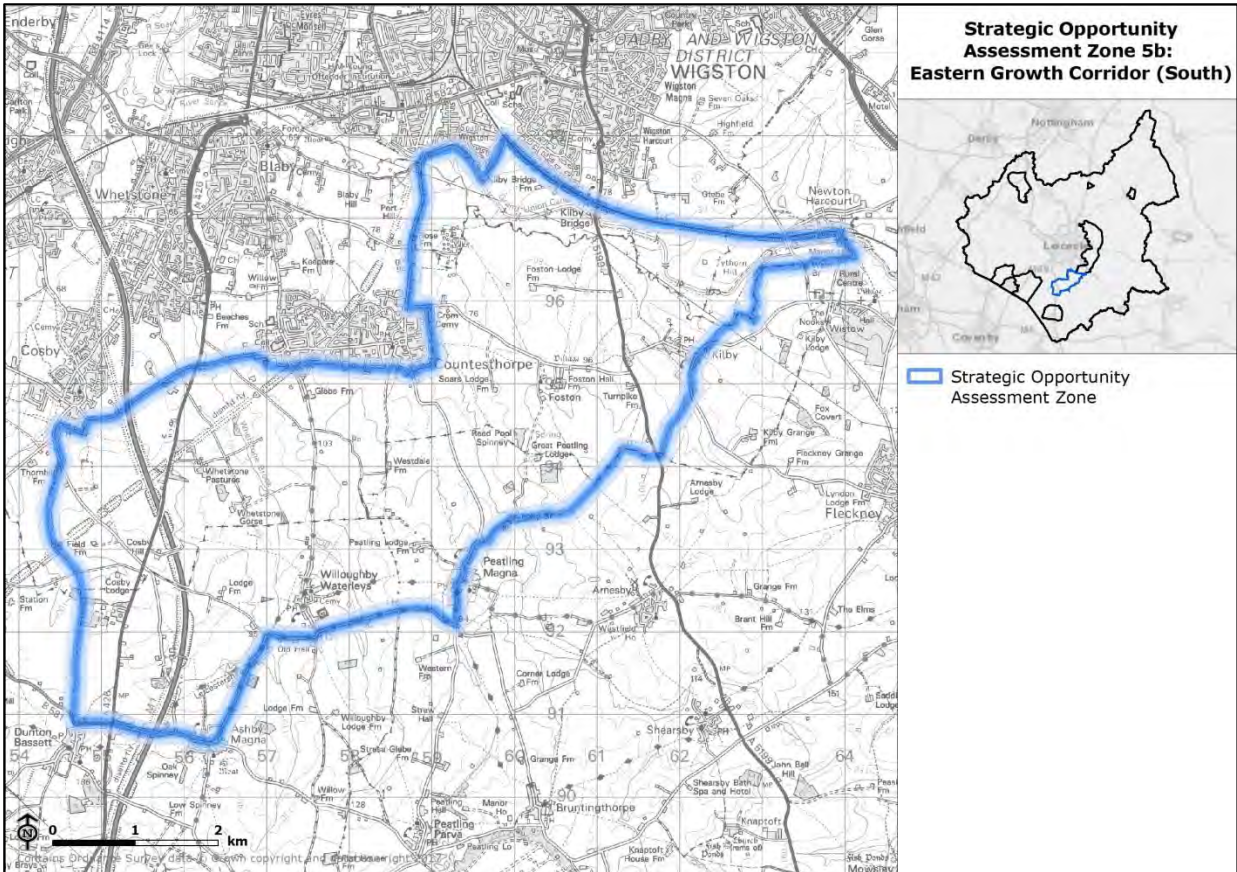
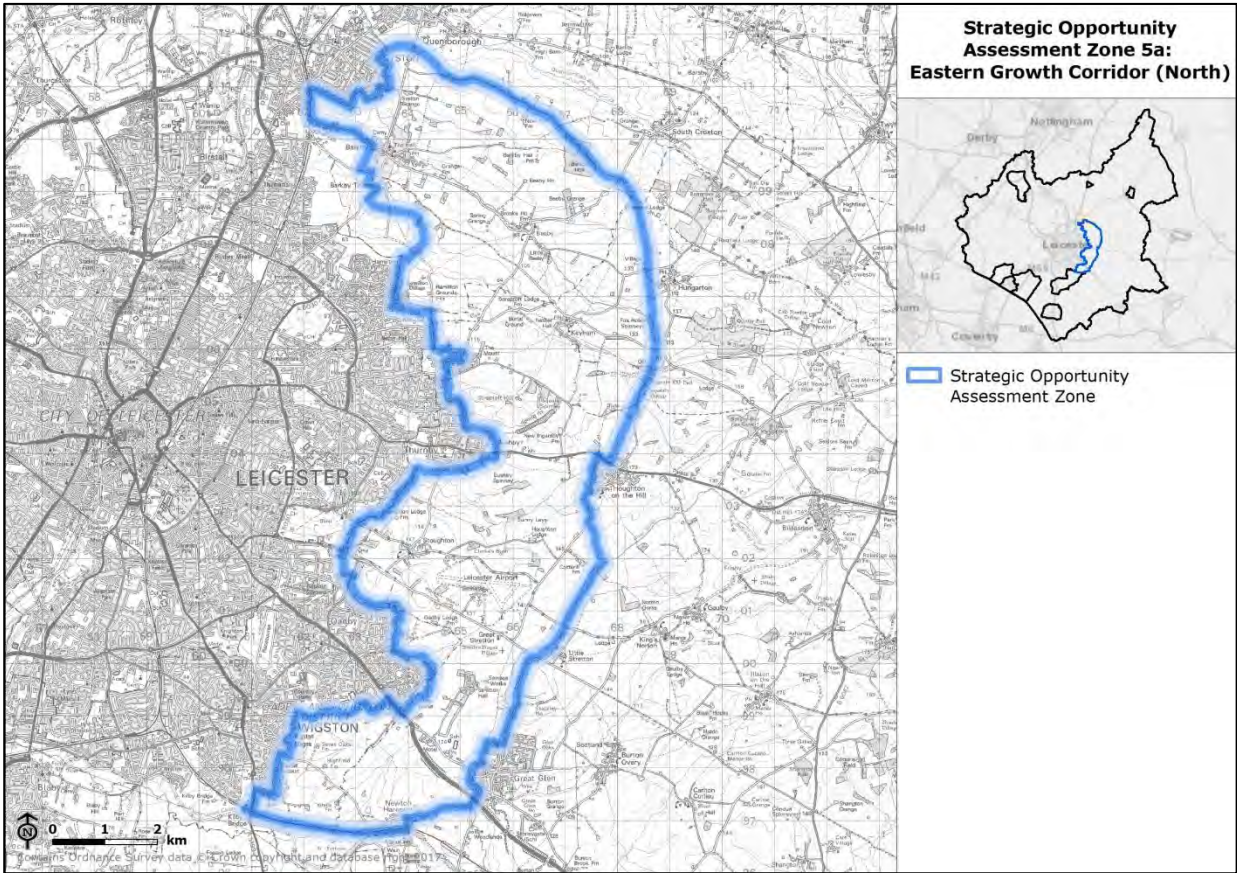
31. Lutterworth – Misterton Ecological Corridor: (Biodiversity): Protect and enhance ecological corridors through woodland and wetland creation. Manage Misterton Marshes SSSI so that its condition continues to improve.

32. Swift Valley Community Park:
(Strategic destination/Biodiversity/Recreation and play/Health and equality): Create a river park running along the River Swift, including high quality accessible green space and restoration of river valley habitats.

33. Lutterworth – Misterton Ecological Corridor: (Biodiversity/Active transport and connectivity/Water): Reinstatement of grazing marsh and fens along the floodplain of the river corridor, and create off road pedestrian and cycle access linking south Lutterworth to Walcott via Misterton Estate.



SOAZ 5: Eastern Growth Corridor (Charnwood, Harborough, Oadby & Wigston, Blaby)



SOAZ 5: Eastern Growth Corridor (Charnwood, Harborough, Oadby & Wigston, Blaby)

Summary of SOAZ location and landscape character assessment context

This Strategic Opportunity Assessment Area (SOAZ) falls within the following county-level Landscape Character Areas: Wreake Valley, High Leicestershire, Lutterworth Lowlands and Upper Soar.

The majority of the northern part of the SOAZ is within High Leicestershire, its northern fringes extending into the Wreake Valley LCA, and a very small part in the south-west corner falling within the Upper Soar LCA. The southern part of the SOAZ is within the Upper Soar and Lutterworth Lowlands LCAs.

The SOAZ wraps around the eastern fringes of Leicester and its fringing settlements, stretching from Syston in the north-east (Charnwood District) to M1 / A426 corridors in the south below Cosby and Countesthorpe (Blaby District).

Representative photographs



Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description and indication of sensitivity	Rating
Physical character (including topography and scale)	<p>Topography varies across the SOAZ. Lower-lying land and valley bottoms including the Sence floodplain are flat/gently undulating and open with large scale fields and a low density of landscape features owing to intensive arable farming.</p> <p>Elsewhere, landform is strongly undulating; dissected by radiating watercourses forming moderate to steep sided valleys separated by broad ridges. Land reaches over 150m AOD close to Houghton on the Hill. Small woodlands, hedgerows and a small-medium field pattern create a contrasting sense of enclosure.</p>	M
Natural character	<p>An often intensively managed landscape dominated by arable farming with pasture on steeper slopes. Locally valued semi-natural habitats include deciduous copses and linear bands of woodland (e.g. fringing the M1, dismantled railway lines and along watercourses – particularly willow), remnant semi-natural grasslands including at Glen Gorse Golf Course and Scraftoft Local Nature Reserve, field ponds, brooks and frequent streams. Pockets of wood pasture are associated with areas of ornamental parkland, often on the fringes of historic villages. The SSSI-designated Kilby-Foxton Canal crosses through the SOAZ between Kilby Bridge and Newton Harcourt.</p>	M
Historic landscape character	<p>The landscape includes a number of villages of medieval origin with Conservation Areas and also provides a setting for the nearby Conservation Areas at Houghton on the Hill and Thurnby & Bushby. Scheduled Monuments include several deserted medieval settlements including Stretton Magna, Old Ingarsby and Hamilton (with nearby Roman villa), as well as Pentlinge just over the southern SOAZ</p>	M

SOAZ 5: Eastern Growth Corridor (Charnwood, Harborough, Oadby & Wigston, Blaby)

	<p>boundary. An estate character is associated with former manors on village fringes (e.g. Barkby, Foston) and the Grade II* Stretton Hall.</p> <p>Much of the farmed landscape comprises re-organised piecemeal enclosures or planned enclosures from the 18th/19th centuries, with straight or slightly curving boundaries. Small planned fields with surviving ridge and furrow often characterise historic settlement edges. Very large post-war fields are associated with intensively farmed land in flatter areas, including the Sence floodplain.</p>	
Form, density and setting of existing development	<p>The majority of the inner boundaries of the SOAZ are formed by the urban edges of the outer Leicester suburbs, with dense development (including new housing estates) fronting directly onto open farmland, with views filtered by mature trees and hedgerows. Pockets of countryside extend from the SOAZ into and between the outer fringes of Leicester, providing a separation function between suburbs as well as a rural setting to development. The urban fringe landscape includes landscaped golf courses at Scraptoft, Glen Gorse and Cosby.</p> <p>Settlement in the wider SOAZ consists of dispersed historic villages often nestled into folds in the landform on lower valley slopes/bottoms; compact in form with buildings well screened by trees within and surrounding the settlements.</p>	M-H
Views and visual character including skylines	<p>Long views are afforded across the SOAZ and beyond from elevated positions, with trees and church spires punctuating the horizon (including the 13th century spire of the Grade II* church of St Peter in Oadby). Pale and red brick housing frontages are visible through gaps in tree cover. Flatter, intensively farmed areas are characterised by expansive open skylines, often featuring views to the urban edge, with rooftops forming skylines. Views within valley bottoms and in more undulating locations are more confined by topography and hedgerow/tree cover.</p>	M
Perceptual and experiential qualities	<p>Perceptions vary according to location – with the sounds and sights of urban development dominating the inner edge of the SOAZ (closest to the Leicester fringes), and movement and noise associated with the railway line and roads cutting through the landscape (the M1, A426, A5199, A6, A47 and a number of busy B-roads). Away from development and infrastructure is a strongly rural landscape dominated by agricultural land uses. A strong time depth and relative sense of tranquillity is associated with traditional villages and areas of parkland estate character.</p>	M



SOAZ 5: Eastern Growth Corridor (Charnwood, Harborough, Oadby & Wigston, Blaby)

Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

The northern part of the SOAZ is assessed as of **moderate-high** sensitivity to both housing and commercial (light industrial) developments. Landscape sensitivity relates to its strongly rural character, its compact historic villages with unifying local vernacular, valued pockets of semi-natural habitat and traditional land uses (e.g. wood pasture and parkland), along with the local occurrence of steep, visible slopes. Locations directly abutting the current urban edge may be less sensitive to new development, providing the guidance below is followed.

The southern part of the SOAZ is considered to have **low-moderate** overall sensitivity to residential development and a **moderate** sensitivity to commercial (light industrial) development. Sensitivity is lessened by the presence of existing development and transport infrastructure, including the main railway line, M1 motorway, several busy A and B roads and the dense urban edge of the outer Leicester suburbs. The large scale, gently undulating/flat and often intensively farmed landscape characterising significant tracts of this part of the SOAZ also lessens sensitivity to development.

Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Eastern Growth Corridor (North)					
Residential housing (2-3 storeys)				M-H	
Commercial development (Use classes B1 and B2)				M-H	
Eastern Growth Corridor (South)					
Residential housing (2-3 storeys)		L-M			
Commercial development (Use classes B1 and B2)			M		

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the area

The following attributes and features of the SOAZ would be particularly sensitive to development:

- Strongly undulating landform away from the flatter floodplain areas with some steep visible slopes.
- Locally valued networks and pockets of semi-natural habitats including hedgerows, linear bands and blocks of woodland, wood pasture, wetlands, ponds and semi-improved grasslands.
- The Local Wildlife Sites at Glengorse Golf Course and Scraftoft (also a Local Nature Reserve), on the doorstep of nearby urban communities.
- Nationally designated habitats associated with the Kilby-Foxton Canal SSSI, also part of the wider Grand Union Canal Conservation Area in recognition of its heritage importance.
- Medieval villages with compact form and strong local vernacular, reflected in numbers of Listed Buildings and Conservation Area designations.
- Areas of historic estate character with traditionally grazed wood pasture, including at Stretton Hall and forming a setting for traditional villages including Barkby and Foston.
- The role the landscape plays as part of the setting of Houghton on the Hill and Thurnby & Bushby Conservation Areas (both beyond the SOAZ boundary).
- Nationally protected historic assets including several deserted medieval settlements, reinforcing a sense of time depth in the wider landscape.
- Piecemeal enclosures of historic origin, some with extant ridge and furrow remains often on the edges of villages.

SOAZ 5: Eastern Growth Corridor (Charnwood, Harborough, Oadby & Wigston, Blaby)

- The setting provided by the rural, agricultural landscape (including its hedgerow, tree and woodland networks) to development and its role in separating discrete suburbs.
- Wooded / treed skylines often featuring views of historic church spires.
- The strongly rural, traditional characteristics of the landscape away from major infrastructure and urban development with locally valued levels of tranquillity.

Landscape Guidance

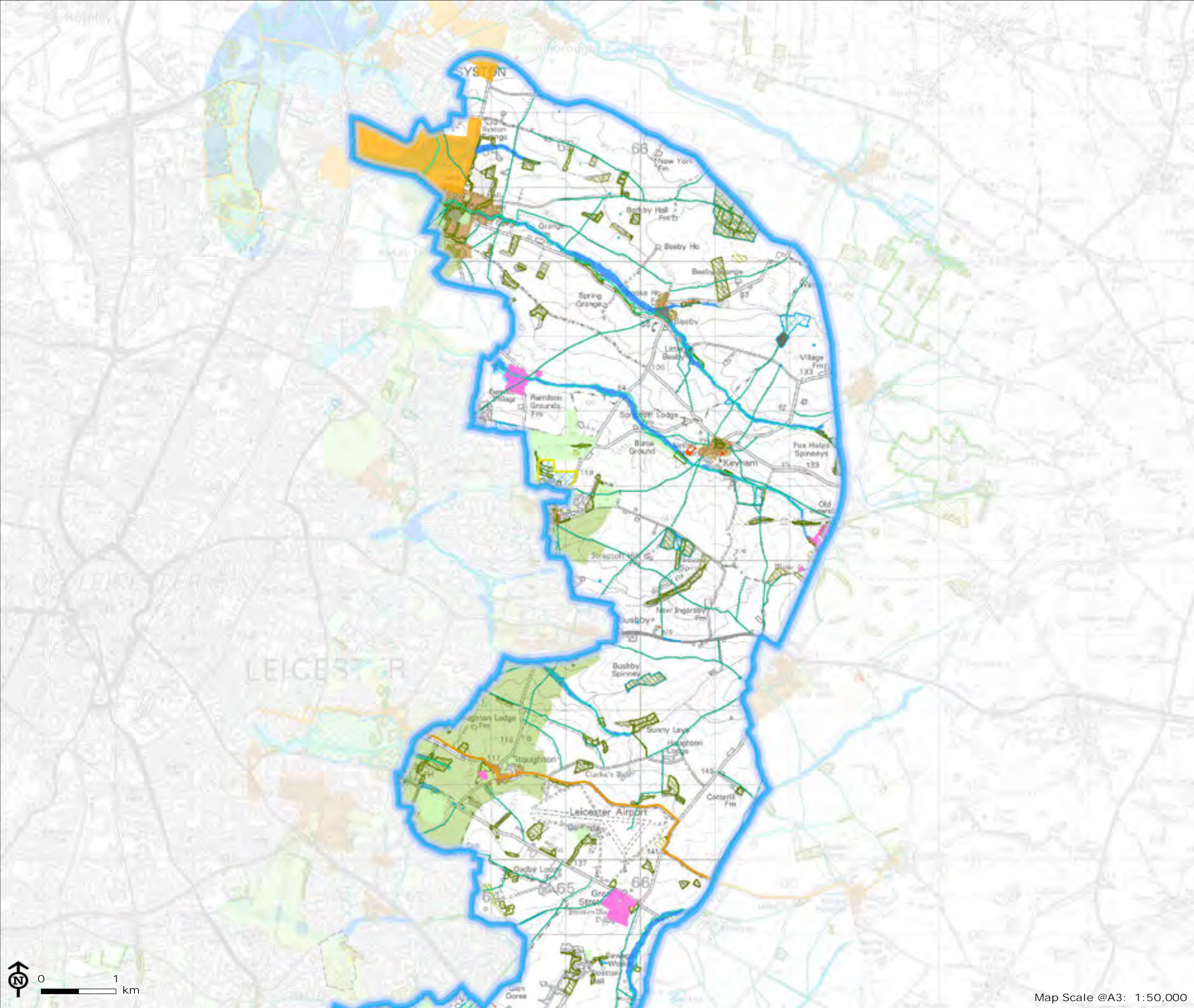
Any new development within this SOAZ should:

- Avoid the steeper, more prominent and open slopes upon which development would be more visible.
- Utilise dips in the landform to minimise visual impacts– in keeping with historic patterns of settlement.
- Take advantage of the screening effects of existing woodland and hedgerows, protecting existing features and enhancing ecological connections within and around any new development (i.e. through new hedgerow and tree planting using locally prevalent, climate resilient species).
- Protect and where possible enhance (including through new ecological connections) locally and nationally valued habitats, including semi-improved grasslands, ponds, wetlands, watercourses (including the Kilby-Foxton Canal SSSI) and wood pasture.
- Conserve the setting and integrity of valued heritage assets, including historic buildings within Conservation Areas (e.g. churches forming local landmarks and focal points within settlements and the wider landscape).
- Avoid locations of small planned enclosures of historic origin and where ridge and furrow is evident. Protect the integrity of remaining areas of estate parkland character.
- Protect the rural agricultural setting the wider SOAZ provides to the suburban edges of Leicester. Ensure that areas of countryside remaining between suburbs are maintained to preserve their distinct identities.
- Plan for its successful integration through sensitive design and siting, including use of characteristic materials, styles and landscape mitigation to enhance sense of place.
- Be sensitively sited and designed, aiming to avoid significantly affecting areas of rural character with locally important levels of tranquillity and sense of time depth.

References for further local-level landscape evidence:

- Harborough District Landscape Character Assessment (2007)
- Leicester PUA Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Capacity Study (2009)
- Borough of Charnwood Landscape Character Assessment (2012)
- Blaby District Character Assessment (2008)
- Oadby and Wigston Landscape Character Assessment (2005)





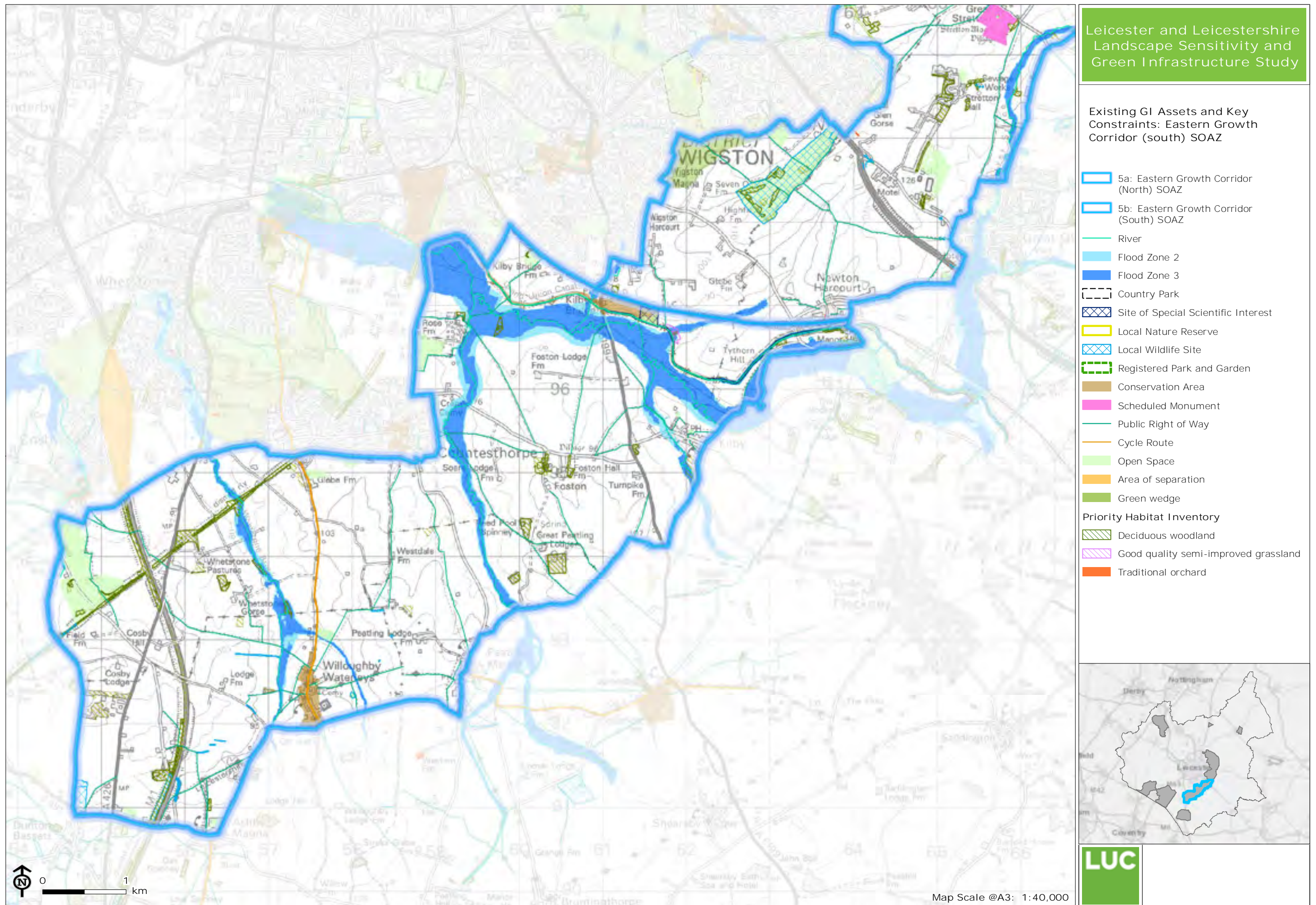
Leicester and Leicestershire
Landscape Sensitivity and
Green Infrastructure Study

Existing GI Assets and Key
Constraints: Eastern Growth
Corridor (north) SOAZ

- 5a: Eastern Growth Corridor (North) SOAZ
- River
- Flood Zone 2
- Flood Zone 3
- Country Park
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Nature Reserve
- Local Wildlife Site
- Registered Park and Garden
- Conservation Area
- Scheduled Monument
- Public Right of Way
- Cycle Route
- Open Space
- Area of separation
- Green wedge
- Priority Habitat Inventory
 - Deciduous woodland
 - Good quality semi-improved grassland
 - Lowland fens
 - Lowland meadows
 - Traditional orchard



Map Scale @A3: 1:50,000



SOAZ 5: Eastern Growth Corridor (Charnwood, Harborough, Oadby & Wigston, Blaby)

Existing Green and Blue Infrastructure assets, constraints and opportunities

Theme	Existing assets / constraints	Opportunities
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tributaries associated with the River Soar run through the northern parts of this area, e.g. between Barkby and Beeby. The immediate surrounding areas are located within Flood Zones 2 and 3, and development is not appropriate here. The River Sence and its floodplain are located within the southern parts of this SOAZ to the east of Stretton Hall. The Grand Union Canal also runs through the south of this large SOAZ, to the north of the River Sence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is potential to restore the river valleys of the Soar by creating new areas of wetland and grazing meadows along the flood plains. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be incorporated into new development to help manage the flood risk that exists across this SOAZ.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of the key biodiversity features is the Kilby-Foxton stretch of the Grand Union Canal, which is designated as a SSSI for 'excellent examples of those characteristically associated with slow-flowing lowland rivers in eastern and central England' (SSSI Citation). There is a sparse network of woodland across the area, which comprises small wooded areas, with the exception of Evington at the edge of Leicester and around Barkby, particularly Barkby Holt (a Local Wildlife Site within Charnwood). There are several LWS within the Harborough part of the zone, including Scraptoft Gorse, Glen Gorse Golf Course (both remnant semi-natural grasslands) Bushby Spinney and Keyham Meadow. Other natural features include field ponds, brooks and streams. There are small areas of wood pasture, often on the fringes of historic villages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buffers could be created around the existing designated wildlife sites, and ecological connectivity could be improved through joining up the few remnant woodland areas, wood pasture, meadows, semi-natural grassland and associated habitats. Potential to create better networks of priority habitats (e.g. woodland, meadows and acid grassland) and access corridors within them to address access to nature and also provide sustainable access to some of the interesting heritage destinations including the Canal and medieval villages. Extend the valuable ecological networks provided by the waterways by restoring natural wetland habitats along the Soar and tributaries.
Landscape <i>(refer back to the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for</i>	<i>Please refer back to the 'Key landscape sensitivities to development within the area' set out in the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment.</i>	<i>Please also refer to the 'Landscape Guidance' section of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment undertaken for this SOAZ.</i>

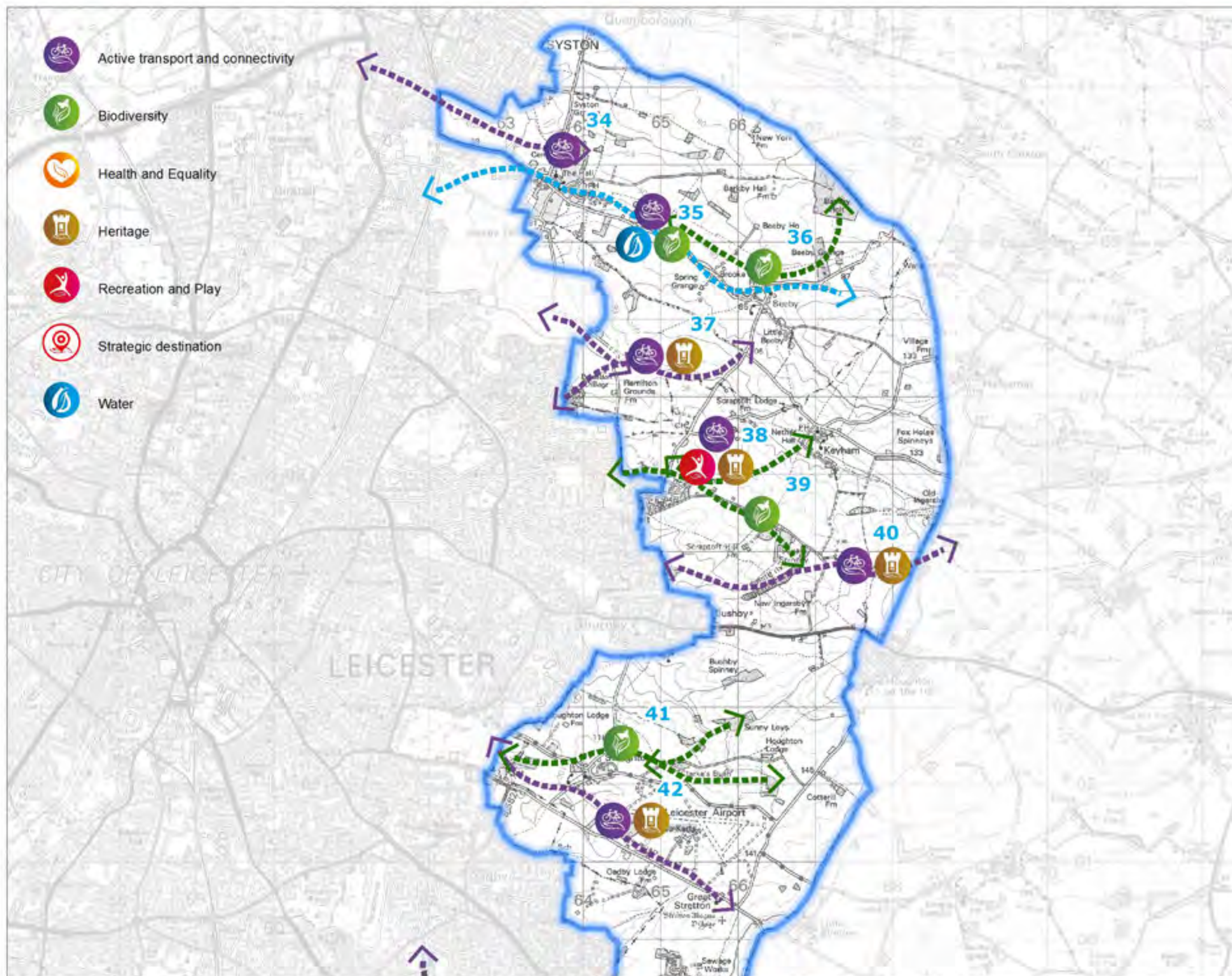
SOAZ 5: Eastern Growth Corridor (Charnwood, Harborough, Oadby & Wigston, Blaby)

Theme	Existing assets / constraints	Opportunities
this SOAZ) Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Grand Union Canal is a notable linear Conservation Area in this SOAZ, along with a number of the historic villages. There are also a number of Scheduled Monuments including the medieval village at Stretton, Old Ingarsby and Hamilton. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New residential development could incorporate art features and information to better promote and celebrate the heritage of the area. There is potential to create better pedestrian/cycle access, connecting existing and future residents to some of the interesting historic sites in this area, including the Grand Union Canal and the medieval villages. Acknowledge historical assets located in the north of the SOAZ. For example, potential to enhance the Roman Villa north of Hamilton Grounds farm which is identified as at risk in the Charnwood Local Plan 2011-2028.
Active transport and connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Grand Union Canal is a good quality green corridor with consistent access along the towpath. There is a sparse rights of way network with better access to the countryside needed from peripheral Leicester suburbs including Evington and Thurmaston. There are some strategic cycle paths, including a Sustrans Route running east to west through the southern part of this SOAZ. There are few strategic rights of way, although the Guthlaxton Trail runs past Leicester Airport. A 'City GI Corridor' linking Leicester, Ansley and Loughborough is proposed in the 6Cs study, which runs through the south of the SOAZ. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future investment could enhance access to the canal through better promotion & signposting, and more frequent access points to the towpath. Create an attractive accessible pedestrian/cycle route from East Leicester to Old Ingarsby Medieval village along the old disused railway route. Create better/more appealing access from town through golf courses at Glen Gorse LWS and Scraptoft – also enhance interpretation of wildlife here. Promote green corridors through Brocks Hill Country Park, through Green Wedges and beyond and via Scraptoft Golf Course and beyond through Keyham. Enhance connectivity along Green Wedges as outlined in Charnwood Core Strategy i.e. Green Wedge 2 which forms part of the River Soar corridor. Strengthening and extending existing footpath networks. Improve connectivity between Watermead Country Park, Thurmaston and Syston in conjunction with regeneration areas identified in the Charnwood Local Plan. Improved linkages between these areas and the city of Leicester are envisioned as part of the North East of Leicester SUE proposal. Ensure that there are appropriate sustainable transport routes which traverse the major roads within the SOAZ, including the M1.
Recreation and play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is very little accessible open space in this SOAZ at present, which reflects its rural nature. The 6Cs study defines much of this SOAZ as an 'Urban Fringe GI Enhancement Zone', and highlights the deficiency in accessible natural greenspace for the residents of Leicester and Blaby. The urban edges of Thurmaston and Hamilton 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the limited accessible open space in this SOAZ, new development will need to incorporate sufficient public open space to serve the new community. There is potential to enhance the appeal of the Grand Union Canal through increased facilities to support recreation (e.g. rowing, canoeing and fishing). Formation of new pedestrian gateways along the edges of Thurmaston and Hamilton, should link to the planned urban extension here, and improve access to the countryside. Improve interrelationship and influence of Watermead Country Park with the

SOAZ 5: Eastern Growth Corridor (Charnwood, Harborough, Oadby & Wigston, Blaby)

Theme	Existing assets / constraints	Opportunities
	within provide little opportunity for recreation and, in places, acts as a barrier to the countryside rather than a gateway. ²⁰	<p>wider neighbourhoods of Birstall and Thurmaston.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conserve and enhance the Green Wedges in Oadby and Charnwood, which could be developed into large-scale recreational assets.
Health, Wellbeing and Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This SOAZ has good to average levels of health the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), with the exception of South Wigston, which is among the 40% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. This was assessed through a suite of indicators, that take into account both mental and physical health. The IMD Living Environment data indicates that a large area in the north of the SOAZ (between Keyham and Hungarton) has a poor living environment. This was assessed through a range of factors including poor air quality and traffic accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists. There is also a pocket of relatively poor living environment on the urban edge of Leicester east of Blaby. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New development in proximity to areas which score poorly on the health or living environment indicators should be designed to help alleviate this deprivation, e.g. through the creation of attractive accessible green space and improved public realm for pedestrians and cyclists. Where suitable, the level of street tree and hedgerow planting should be increased to reduce airborne PM10 particulates, increase shade and provide cooling through evapotranspiration. This should be targeted to areas including along the roads and within the villages in the area.

²⁰ Charnwood Borough Council (2016) Charnwood Borough Council Green Wedges, Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones and Areas of Local Separation: Methodology and Assessment Findings Report.



Leicester and Leicestershire Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study

Green Infrastructure Opportunities within Strategic Opportunity Assessment Zone: Eastern Growth Corridor (north)

34. Watermead Country Park Green Way : (Active transport and connectivity): Create a new high quality green way linking the existing and new communities at Thurmaston and Watermead Country Park

35. Barkby Brook Green Way and River Corridor Restoration: (Water/Biodiversity/Active transport and connectivity): Reinstate grazing marsh and fens along Barkby Brook.

36. Beeby Woodlands Ecological Corridor : (Biodiversity): Join up patches of woodland to connect with larger woodland assets such as Barkby Wood using new planting and connections via the hedgerow network.

37. Hamilton Green Way: (Active transport and connectivity/Heritage): Create an attractive accessible pedestrian/cycle route to and along Melton Brook via Hamilton Medieval Village.

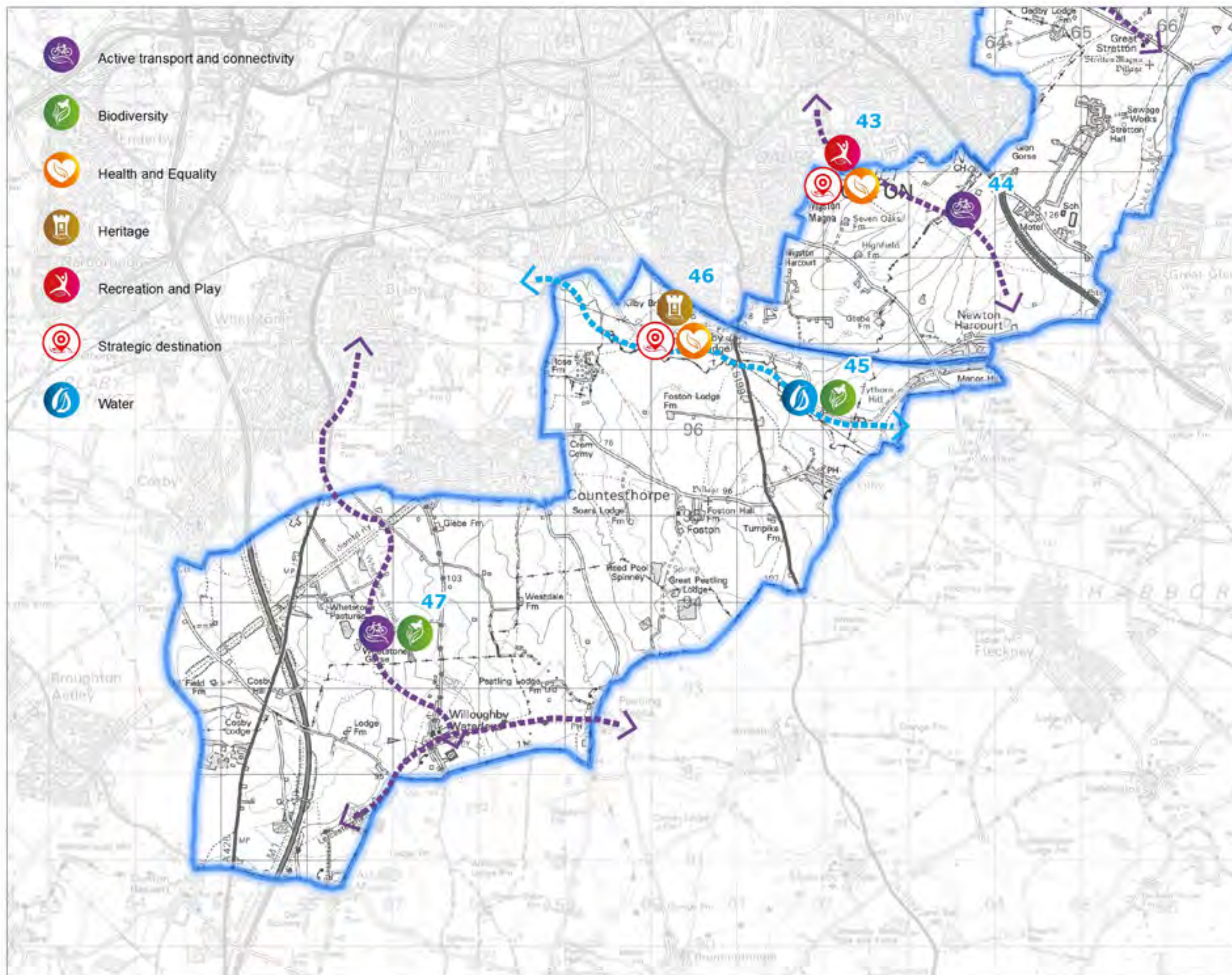
38. Scraftoft Green Way: (Active transport and connectivity/Heritage/Recreation and play): Create an attractive accessible pedestrian/cycle route through Scraftoft urban extension, to Keyham and beyond.

39. Scraftoft Woodlands Ecological Corridor: (Biodiversity): Join up patches of woodland to create ecological corridors in an area with very few semi-natural habitats.

40. Old Ingarsby Green Way: (Active transport and connectivity/Heritage): Create an attractive accessible pedestrian/cycle route from East Leicester to Old Ingarsby Medieval village along the old disused railway route.

41. Stoughton Woodlands Ecological Corridor: (Biodiversity): Join up patches of woodland through new planting and an intact, well-managed hedgerow network to create ecological corridors in an area with very few semi-natural habitats.

42. Great Stretton Green Way: (Active transport and connectivity/Heritage): Create an attractive accessible pedestrian/cycle route to historic villages and heritage features.



Leicester and Leicestershire Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study

Green Infrastructure Opportunities within Strategic Opportunity Assessment Zone: Eastern Growth Corridor (south)

43. Wigston Green Wedge access project : (Strategic destination/Health and equality/Recreation and play): Enhance GI assets within Green Wedge for access to nature and ecological connectivity. Explore potential to create a new strategic destination for outdoor recreation.

44. Oadby and Wigston Green Way: (Active transport and connectivity): Create an attractive accessible pedestrian/cycle route from the city towards Brocks Hill Country Park and beyond.

45. Sence River Corridor Restoration: (Water/Biodiversity): Reinstate grazing marsh and fens along the flood plain of the Sence.

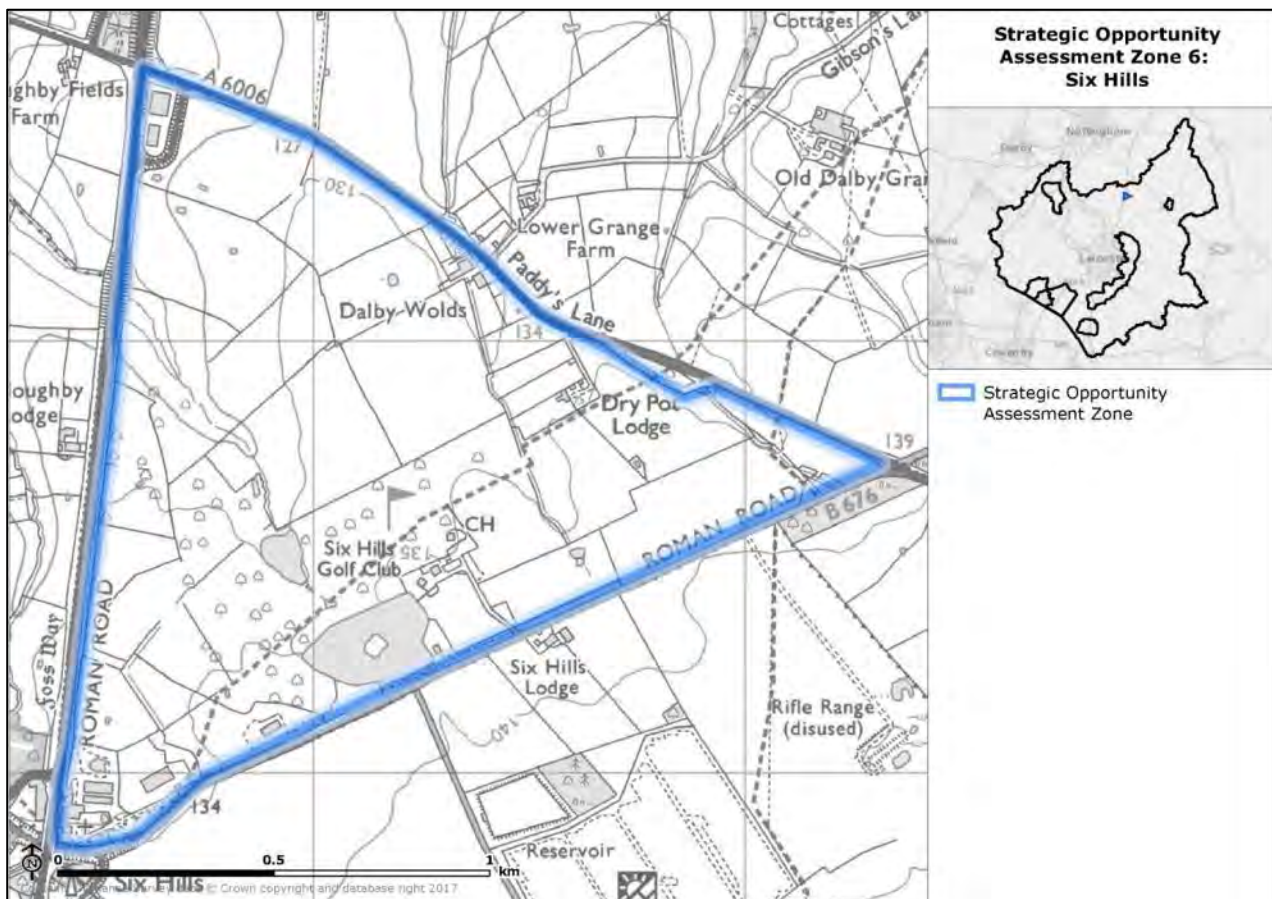
46. Grand Union Canal access and recreation project: (Strategic destination/Health and equality/Heritage): Improve access infrastructure and signage connecting communities to the Grand Union Canal. Enhance facilities to support recreational use of the canal, in consultation with local water sports groups (rowing, canoeing, fishing).

47. Whetstone Brook ecological corridor and access link: (Active transport and connectivity/Biodiversity): Create an attractive accessible pedestrian/cycle route from Blaby along the Whetstone Brook and south the join the Leicester Round footpath at Willoughby Waterleys.

0 1 2 km
Map Scale @A3: 1:45,000

LUC

SOAZ 6: Six Hills (Melton)



Summary of SOAZ location and landscape character assessment context

This Strategic Opportunity Assessment Area (SOAZ) falls within the following county-level Landscape Character Area: The Wolds.

The SOAZ is located approximately 1.5 km north west of Ragdale and 2.2 km south west of Old Dalby and is a triangular area between the A46, A6006 and the B676. Land use within the SOAZ is primarily farmland, with a mixture of arable and pasture land divided into medium scale fields by a network of hedgerows and fences. The southern part of the SOAZ contains Six Hills Golf Course, which contains two lakes and many trees.

Representative photographs



SOAZ 6: Six Hills (Melton)

Description by evaluation criteria

Criteria	Description and indication of sensitivity	Rating
Physical character (including topography and scale)	Land within the SOAZ is relatively flat, with some gentle slopes associated with small watercourses in the west of the area. The farmland is divided into medium-scale fields. Many trees within hedgerows and on the golf course create small-scale features within the landscape, however there are also large farm/industrial buildings occasionally located along the roads surrounding the SOAZ.	L-M
Natural character	There are no features or habitats designated for their nature value within the SOAZ, although it is directly adjacent to Twenty Acre Piece SSSI which is recognised for its acidic clay grassland communities, and residential development within this area would fall within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone. The farmed land is divided into a mixture of pasture and arable fields, which are bounded by hedgerows with many hedgerow trees. There are large numbers of trees and areas of standing water/streams within the golf course, providing a habitat for wildfowl.	L-M
Historic landscape character	The HLC indicates that this area is mostly parliamentary planned enclosure. A Victorian church is located off Six Hills Lane, however the building is not listed. There are no designated heritage features within or in close proximity to the SOAZ. The nearest Conservation Area is at Grimstone which is located approximately 2 km to the east.	L
Form, density and setting of existing development	There is no significant existing development within the SOAZ. Existing buildings are scattered and include farms and their associated outbuildings, as well as a number of employment/warehouse buildings and buildings on the golf course. Structures are mostly located along the roads surrounding the SOAZ.	M
Views and visual character including skylines	Across much of the SOAZ, there are open skylines punctuated by trees, with the trees providing some visual enclosure where they are more frequent. Although it is relatively open, the SOAZ is not prominent within the wider landscape. A telecommunications mast to the south and wind turbines located to the west and north-east are visible on the skyline.	L-M
Perceptual and experiential qualities	The SOAZ is bounded by the busy roads of the A46 dual carriageway, the A6006 and the B676, introducing associated traffic noise. The presence of the golf course creates a human influence within the manicured landscape, though there are numerous naturalistic features. The farmed landscape in the north of the SOAZ is a typical rural landscape, though it does not have a strong sense of tranquillity. There is an open character on the golf course, though it is mostly screened from the rest of the landscape by woodland.	L-M

Evaluation of criteria and landscape sensitivity judgement

The SOAZ is judged as of low-moderate overall sensitivity to both residential housing and commercial (light industrial) developments. The flat landform, existing generally well-integrated industrial developments within the SOAZ, occasional large-scale agricultural buildings, absence of heritage features, lack of visual prominence within the wider landscape and surrounding major road infrastructure lessen sensitivity to development. Features of the landscape sensitive to change include naturalistic features including trees, hedgerows, ponds, streams and lakes, and the rural, undeveloped character of the majority of the landscape.

SOAZ 6: Six Hills (Melton)

Development scenario	Sensitivity				
Residential housing (2-3 storeys)		L-M			
Commercial development (Use classes B1 and B2)		L-M			

Key landscape sensitivities to development within the area

The following attributes and features of the SOAZ would be particularly sensitive to development:

- Naturalistic features within the farmed landscape and the golf course, including numerous trees, hedgerows, lakes, streams and in-field ponds.
- The rural, mostly undeveloped character of the landscape (though this is impacted by traffic noise particularly from the A46 dual carriageway).
- The adjacent Twenty Acre Piece SSSI, which is designated for its nationally important acidic clay grassland communities.

Landscape Guidance

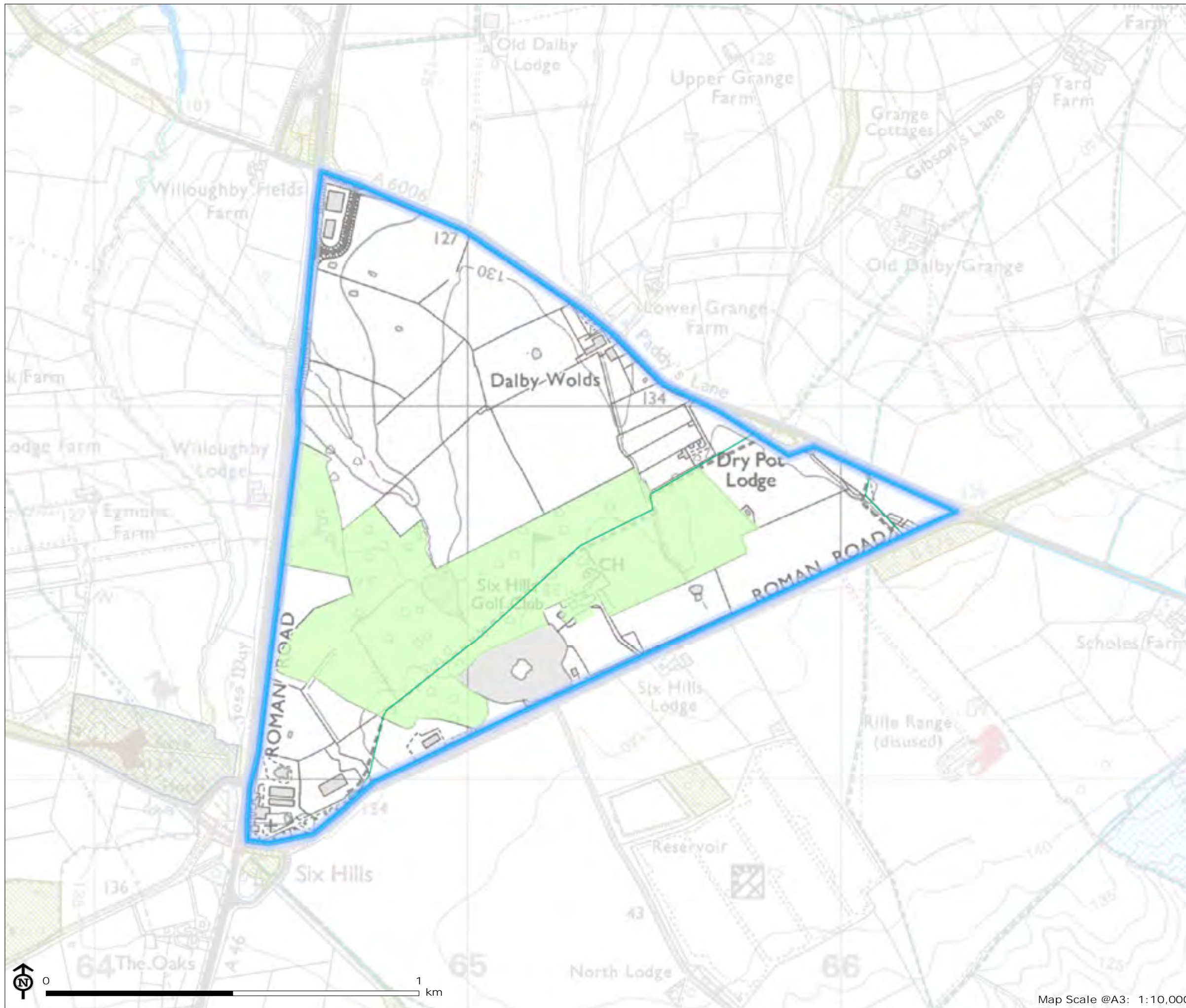
Any new development within this SOAZ should:

- Retain valued natural features within the development design including trees, hedgerows, in-field ponds, streams and lakes.
- Use existing features in the landscape to screen and soften the edges of development.
- Protect the nationally important grassland communities within the adjacent Twenty Acre Piece SSSI (where the Impact Risk Zone covers a large part of the SOAZ).



References for further landscape evidence:

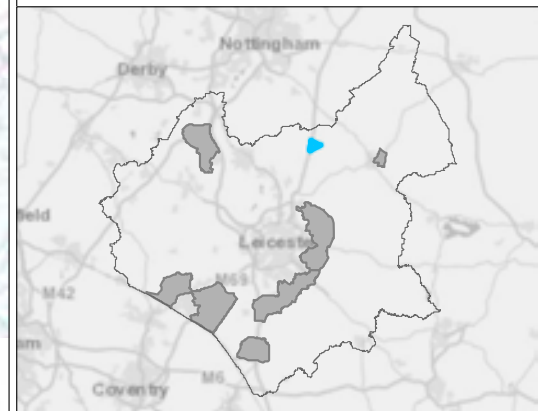
- Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure assessment profile for the Wolds Landscape Character Area (LUC, 2017)
- Melton Borough Landscape & Historic Urban Character Assessment Report (2006)
- Melton Landscape Character Assessment Update 2011 (2011)



Leicester and Leicestershire Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study

Existing GI Assets and Key Constraints: Six Hills SOAZ

- 6: Six Hills SOAZ
- Flood Zone 2
- Flood Zone 3
- Country Park
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Wildlife Site
- Public Right of Way
- Open Space



Map Scale @A3: 1:10,000

SOAZ 6: Six Hills (Melton)

Existing Green and Blue Infrastructure assets, constraints and opportunities

Theme	Existing assets / constraints	Opportunities
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No land within the SOAZ is located within Flood Zones 2 or 3. Several small streams cross the SOAZ, and two lakes are located on the golf course in the south of the area. Several field ponds are found within the farmed landscape. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are opportunities to improve the water quality of the on-site stream as it appears eutrophic. Land management along watercourses should be targeted to reduce soil loss and diffuse pollution, as well as enhance their function as natural corridors²¹. Land adjacent to the on-site stream and ponds should be managed to contribute to reducing flood risk and provide habitat for wildlife²¹. Rainfall should be retained and run-off reduced within development design²¹. Existing areas of water should be retained within development plans. Explore opportunities to provide additional flood storage attenuation and require new development to incorporate sustainable drainage and source control measures²².
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No designated or mapped priority habitats are located within the SOAZ. There are large numbers of trees and areas of standing water/streams within the golf course, providing a habitat for wildfowl and other wetland/aquatic species. Twenty Acre Piece SSSI is located adjacent to the west of site. The western half of the site is within an Impact Risk Zone for this SSSI where developments such as residential and rural residential development could cause adverse effects. The SSSI is in an unfavourable declining condition due to undergrazing and inappropriate scrub control. Additionally, other areas of woodland are located adjacent to the SOAZ. The site is adjacent to the Wolds Escarpment Priority Green Infrastructure Enhancement Area and a Woodland/Lowland Meadows Ecological Network²¹. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linear features on site should be protected and enhances to provide linkages between habitats. Development could provide an opportunity to leverage funding to increase management of the nationally important grassland communities on the Twenty Acre Piece SSSI adjacent to the site to improve its unfavourable condition. There are opportunities to retain valued features including trees, hedgerows, in-field ponds, streams and lakes. Land adjacent to the on-site stream and ponds should be managed to provide habitat for wildlife²¹. Deliver the Priority Green Infrastructure Enhancement Area – The Wolds Escarpment as laid out in the Green Infrastructure Strategy for Melton Borough²¹ to improve habitat connectivity and to enhance woodlands, complementing the programme of woodland improvement and management for wildlife that is being carried out within the woodlands of the Belvoir Estate.

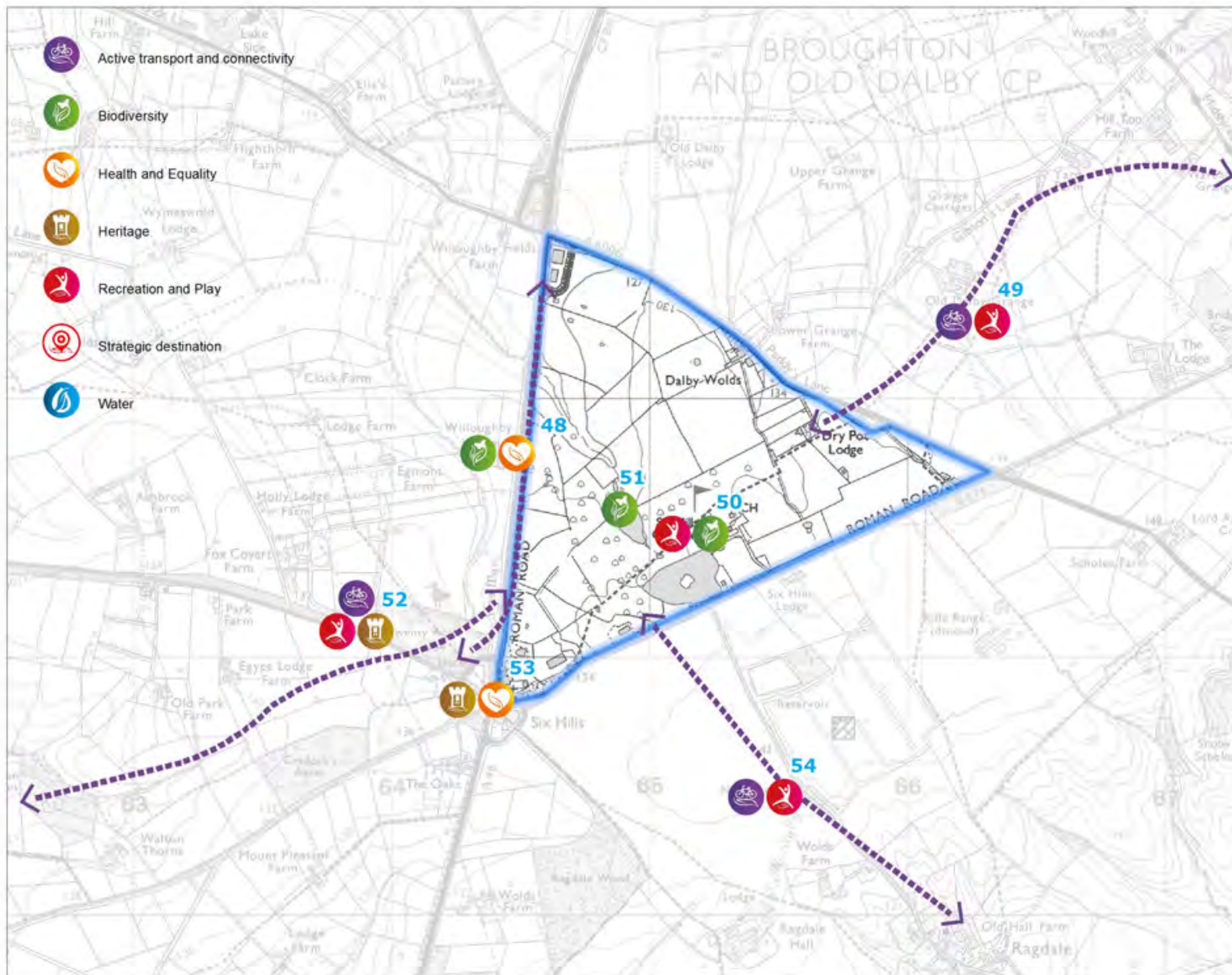
²¹ TEP (2011) A Green Infrastructure Strategy for Melton Borough. Prepared for Melton Borough Council.

²² Leicestershire County Council (2015) Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

SOAZ 6: Six Hills (Melton)

Theme	Existing assets / constraints	Opportunities
Landscape	<i>Please refer back to the 'Key landscape sensitivities to development within the area' set out in the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment.</i>	<i>Please also refer to the 'Landscape Guidance' section of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment undertaken for this SOAZ.</i>
Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no designated heritage features within or in close proximity to the SOAZ. This area is mostly parliamentary planned enclosure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The red-brick Victorian church of St Mary (also used a school until the early 20th Century) is located in the south west of the SOAZ and was constructed in 1837 for the farming community around Six Hills. Although it is not listed, the building should be retained with any new development as part of the area's heritage.
Active transport and connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A footpath crosses the golf course in the south of the SOAZ. There are poor links between the SOAZ and other settlement, existing services and employment centres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As this area is remote from existing settlements, large scale residential development is likely to result in an increase in working-age population and traffic. Sustainable transport links to employment centres (e.g. Loughborough and Melton Mowbray) should be created alongside bus services to these locations and Leicester/Nottingham. Tree planting should be utilised to reduce airborne PM10 particulates²³. The surrounding major roads may provide a barrier to active transport, so the implementation of safe crossings could enable access to the countryside.
Recreation and play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The southern part of the SOAZ is used as a municipal golf course. This provides a recreational resource for golfers in the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain areas of land to be utilised to meet a range of recreational/play needs. Additional recreational opportunities could be provided, where appropriate, as part of the wider strategic and local green infrastructure networks²³. Deliver the Priority Green Infrastructure Enhancement Area – The Wolds Escarpment as laid out in the Green Infrastructure Strategy for Melton Borough²³ to enhance access along the Wolds Escarpment to include signage and ease of use.
Health, Wellbeing and Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This SOAZ is amongst the 20% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country with regards to levels of health according to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). This was assessed through a suite of indicators, that take into account both mental and physical health. The IMD Living Environment data indicates that the SOAZ is amongst the 50% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country with regards to living environment. This was assessed through a range of factors including poor air quality and traffic accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to open space and between open space and recreational areas should be increased. Tree planting should be utilised to reduce airborne PM10 particulates²³ from the adjacent main roads.

²³ TEP (2011) A Green Infrastructure Strategy for Melton Borough. Prepared for Melton Borough Council.



Leicester and Leicestershire Landscape Sensitivity and Green Infrastructure Study

Green Infrastructure Opportunities within Strategic Opportunity Assessment Zone: Six Hills

48. Six Hills Ecological Buffer: (Biodiversity/Health and equality): Create and enhance woodland and hedges to buffer noise from the adjacent road and provide some ecological connectivity with Twenty Acre Piece SSSI.

49. Six Hills – Old Dalby – The Wolds Green Way: (Active transport and connectivity/Recreation and play): Deliver high quality green way between any new development at Six Hills and Old Dalby and the Wolds.

50. Six Hills recreation and play facilities: (Recreation and play/Biodiversity): Create high quality semi-natural open space and play facilities as part of any new development.

51. Six Hills Ecological Network: (Biodiversity): Retain valued features including trees, hedgerows, in-field ponds, streams and lakes.

52. Six Hills – Loughborough Green Way: (Active transport and connectivity/Heritage/Recreation and play): Deliver high quality green way between any new development at Six Hills and Loughborough.

53. Six Hills Church Community Hub: (Heritage/Health and equality): Retain the Victorian church located in the south west of the site for a suitable community use.

54. Six Hills – Melton Green Way: (Active transport and connectivity/Recreation and play): Deliver high quality green way between any new development at Six Hills and Melton Mowbray via Ragdale and the Wreake Valley.



Map Scale @A3: 1:15,000

1

2 km

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