

Landscape Sensitivity Study Part One: Study Principles and Summary Findings

FINAL REPORT



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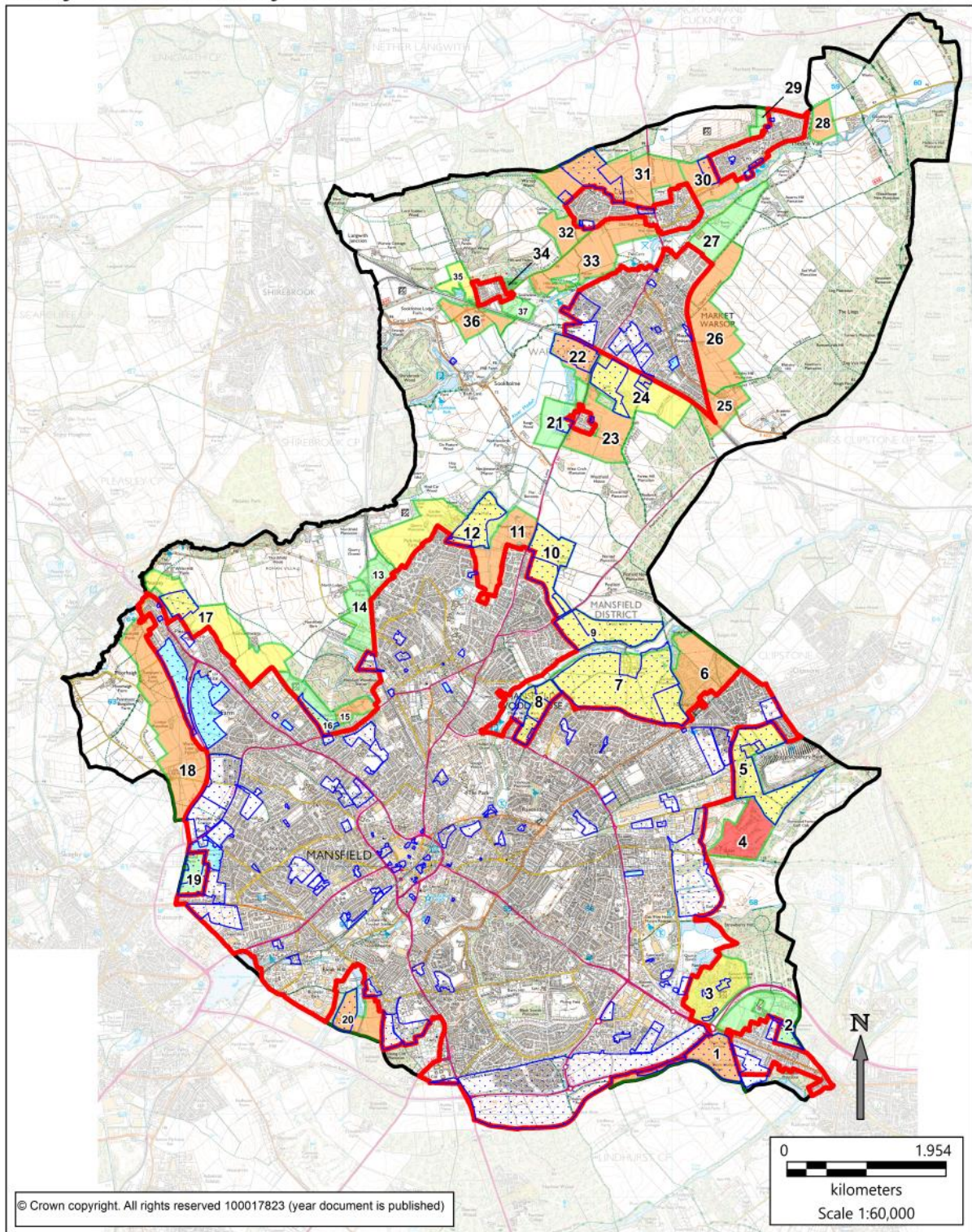
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Report for settlement-edge land in Mansfield is set out in 2 parts. **Part One** (this report) sets out summary sensitivity findings, report context and principles and the detailed sensitivity assessment methodology used.
- A separate **Part Two** report presents the detailed assessment findings, maps and summaries for 37 landscape study parcels identified across the district where development opportunities or pressure may arise.
- The function of the report is to feed into and inform site allocation processes in the review of the adopted Mansfield Local Plan. The findings of the study may also be of relevance in on-going development management functions of the Local Planning Authority.
- The study identifies landscape study parcel sensitivity to change through different development typologies (Housing or Mixed-Use [incorporating 'economic' land use]).
- The study considers sensitivity to change only and does not serve as an indicator of site sustainability, capacity or deliverability.
- Table 1 summarises study parcel sensitivity findings to the specific development typologies associated with each parcel.
- The draft study parcels map (below) indicates the spatial extent and sensitivity values of each parcel across the district.

Table 1: Summary Sensitivity Findings:

Study Parcel Number	Includes or Adjoins Reasonable Alternative Site (HELAA) 2025 N ^o s.	Proposed Use Typology Assessment	LSA Sensitivity Values
1	340, 90	Mixed-Use	High-Medium
2	323	Housing	Medium-Low
3	39a, 39b, 145, 146,	Economic	Medium
4	76, 331	Mixed-Use	High
5	331	Housing	Medium
6	188, 403	Housing	High-Medium
7	188, 403	Mixed-Use	Medium
8	31,53, 30	Housing	Medium
9	187, 67	Mixed-Use	Medium
10	48, 50, 325 (combined)	Housing	Medium
11	325, 376	Housing	High-Medium
12	376	Housing	Medium
13	Nil	Housing	Medium-Low
14	108	Housing	Medium-Low
15	46	Housing	High-Medium
16	46	Mixed-Use	Medium-Low
17	88	Mixed-Use	Medium
18	396	Mixed (adj. Strategic Site)	High-Medium
19	58, 80, 385	Housing	Medium-Low
20	326	Mixed-Use	High-Medium
21	45	Housing	Medium-Low
22	49	Housing	High-Medium
23	Nil	Housing	High-Medium
24	338, 43, 63	Mixed-Use	Medium
25	Nil	Housing	High-Medium
26	Nil	Housing	High-Medium
27	Nil	Housing	Medium-Low
28	Nil	Housing	High-Medium
29	Nil	Housing	Medium-Low
30	51	Housing	High-Medium
31	207, 269	Housing	High-Medium
32	Nil	Housing	High-Medium
33	Nil	Housing	High-Medium
34	Nil	Housing	Low
35	Nil	Housing	Medium
36	Nil	Housing	High-Medium
37	Nil	Housing	Medium-Low

Study Parcel Sensitivity Values



Settlement Boundaries

Mansfield District Boundary

Reasonable Alternative Sites (HELAA 2025)

Reasonable Alternative Sites (HELAA 2025) with Planning Permission

Landscape Sensitivity Values

High **Medium-Low**
High-Medium **Low**
Medium

1. INTRODUCTION, CONTEXT AND STUDY PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 Mansfield District Council (MDC) is undertaking a part review of its Local Plan. The work will update the adopted Mansfield Local Plan 2013 – 2033 in specific limited areas. It will provide a blueprint for development in Mansfield District and set out a vision, spatial strategy, strategic objectives, policies and allocations to guide development for the period 2023-2043.
- 1.2 Early stages of plan preparation consider ‘growth options’ for the plan area in terms of the overall spatial strategy, quantity and distribution of new development. Later stages will consider more specific options for the location of development (including housing and employment sites) and planning policies used in the determination of planning applications.
- 1.3 The Local Plan revisions will consider the need for new housing, employment, retail and leisure and other development and is likely to allocate a range of sites of different scales, locations and mix of proposed uses. At the time of preparing this report the revised plan is expected to have to provide for approximately 3,000 additional new dwellings over the plan period in addition to existing permissions and unimplemented allocations from the Mansfield Local Plan 2013 – 2033. This is subject to final confirmation and remains a fluid situation.
- 1.4 To inform the identification of allocations and consider the need for planning policy revisions, MDC has commissioned various pieces of work as evidence to support the part review of the Local Plan, including this Landscape Sensitivity Study.

What is Landscape Sensitivity, and what is Landscape Sensitivity Assessment?

- 1.5 Key terms pertinent to this study are:

Landscape Sensitivity:- This may be regarded as a measure of the resilience, or robustness, of a landscape to withstand specified change arising from development types or land management practices, without displaying undue negative effects on the landscape and visual baseline and their value – such as changes to valued attributes of baseline landscape character and the visual resource.

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment:- A process that assesses the resilience / robustness of landscape character and the visual resource – and what we value - to a defined change, or changes. It can help decision-makers to understand likely changes and the nature of change should particular actions - development and/or land management scenarios – be taken forward.

- 1.6 A glossary of terms is provided at Appendix 2 to this report (extracted from the latest guidance from Natural England in 'An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management', 2019).

The Purpose and Scope of the Mansfield Landscape Sensitivity Study, 2025

- 1.7 The purpose of this strategic, district-wide Landscape Sensitivity Study is to assist the District Council in making an informed choice of suitable site allocations for housing, employment and mixed-use development in the emerging Mansfield Local Plan. As the Local Plan is in the early stages of preparation, no final decisions have been made about the amount and spatial distribution of development, and therefore appreciation of landscape sensitivity can feed into that process of identifying appropriate allocations at an early stage of plan-making. In addition, the Landscape Sensitivity Study may provide support to development management decision-making in the district.
- 1.8 Whilst the Mansfield Landscape Character Assessment (2010 and 2015 addendum) sets a baseline landscape resource for this Landscape Sensitivity (LS) Study, its larger grain of landscape character areas is such that the more focused study parcels identified in this report utilise the LCA in part only. This study does have regard to the LCA's characteristics and forces for change, and overall landscape management strategies for Landscape Policy Zones (adopted local plan policy NE1) for the landscape character areas in which study parcels fall.

The Type and Assumed Scale of Development Assessed

- 1.9 This Landscape Sensitivity Study appraises the sensitivity of settlement-edge landscapes to **housing** and **mixed-use** (including commercial, business, service and general industrial uses) developments.
- 1.10 New **housing development** is assumed for the purposes of this study to have key attributes associated with conventional, domestic-scale residential development where a site might comprise an appropriate mix of housing choices including affordable and market homes. It is reasonable to expect a mix of single storey, two, two and a half, and three storey properties would come forward as components of contemporary housing development. It is assumed that housing would be typically 8m-15m high, would be sensitively designed and would use traditional or other appropriate materials, building techniques and methods of construction which provide high energy efficiency and resilience to climate change.
- 1.11 Sensitivity assessment for **Mixed-use development** assumes (at least) part commercial, 'economic' (MDC HELAA terminology) focused development types which may or may not include an element of housing (as above). Economic

development refers to commercial, business, service and general industrial uses which are of an appropriate scale and nature such that they could in principle operate without unacceptable impact on local roads, residential amenity and other considerations due to being located adjacent to settlements. It is assumed that economic use buildings would typically be 10m-15m high, well designed and would use contemporary materials, building techniques and methods of construction promoted by the district council which provide high energy efficiency and resilience to climate change.

- 1.12 For development in the Mansfield and Ashfield Regeneration Route (MARR) corridor to the south and west of Mansfield, this study assumes the potential for B8 use class development. In doing so larger building scale is anticipated with very large footprints (in excess of 200m long elevations) and building heights of 25m-35m, as typified by the existing Amazon EMA2 facility north of Sherwood Way South.
- 1.13 Renewable energy, retail or other specific land uses are not addressed by this study.

Mitigation

- 1.14 This Landscape Sensitivity Study considers whether mitigation measures could reduce the impact of development, or identifies locations where such mitigation is unlikely to adequately integrate a development and prevent significant adverse effects on landscape character, views and visual amenity. Consideration is also given to where there may be opportunities for environmental enhancement within a new development scheme by, for example, providing wildlife corridor linkages via green (vegetation) and blue (water) infrastructure. Mitigation is considered in conventional terms of layout, developed site extent, landscaping and structural planting.
- 1.15 Law requires measurable improvements for biodiversity through delivery of new development (Biodiversity Net Gain) by creating or enhancing habitats in association with that development. The Environment Act (2021) provides for a mandatory requirement for new developments to provide 10% biodiversity net gain, either on or off site. Also, the Nottinghamshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy¹ should help prioritise locally appropriate measures for tackling climate change and biodiversity decline, by creating or improving habitats with regard to requirements from new development, including potentially within settlement fringes. For Mansfield these focus on targeted actions to protect and enhance local woodlands, wetlands, meadows, and urban green areas. These measures, along with the outputs of this Landscape Sensitivity study and other considerations should

¹ Nottinghamshire & Nottingham Local Nature Recovery Strategy – Statement of Biodiversity Priorities, November 2025.
<https://nottsnaturerecovery.co.uk/files/Statement%20of%20Biodiversity%20Priorities%20JULY%202025.pdf>

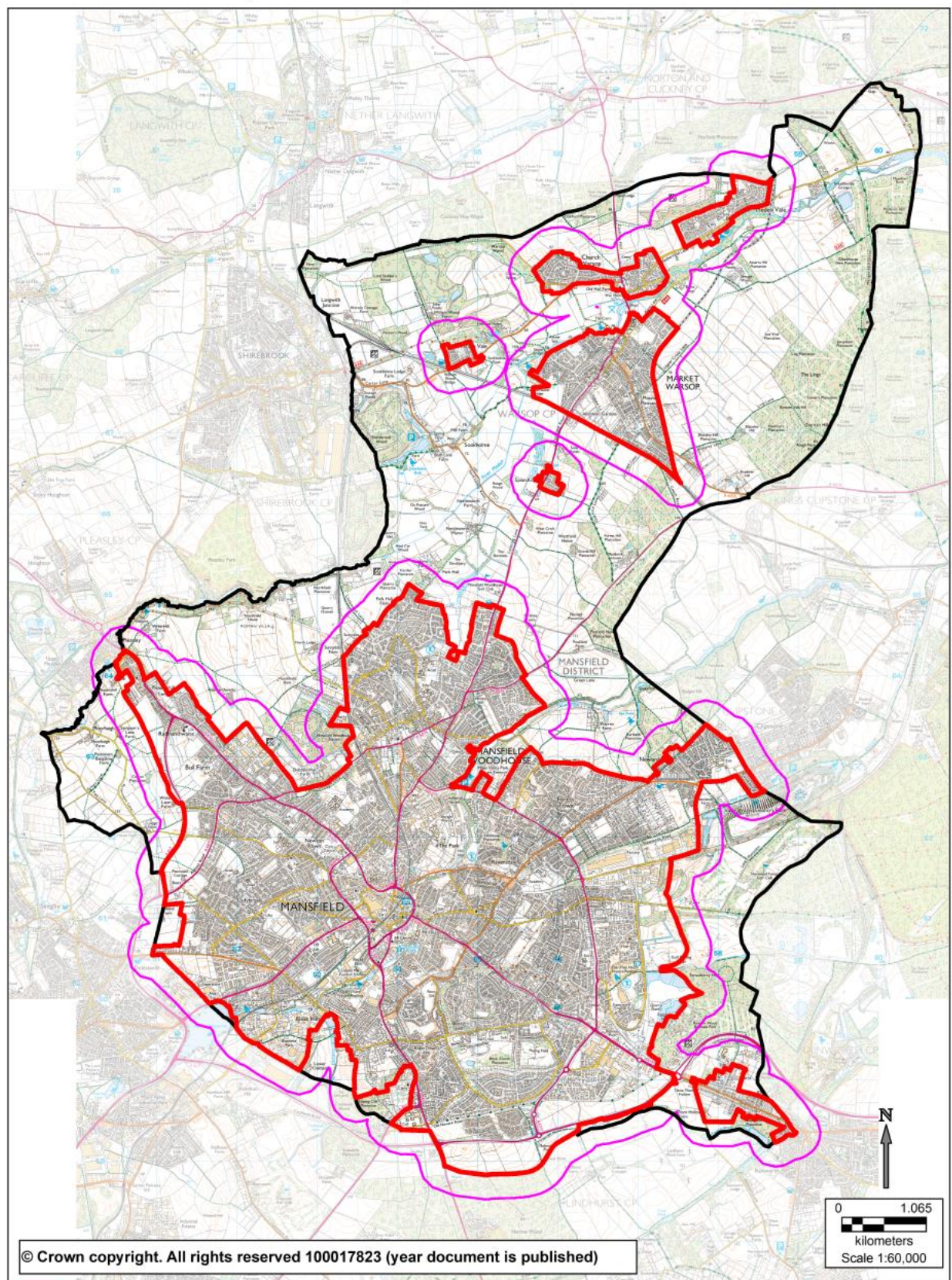
help inform place-based planning, design and management, including mitigation strategies such as advance planting, and assist in the management of change.

Study Area and Identification of Study Parcels

- 1.16 The Landscape Sensitivity Study is spatially focused in its application, reflecting the project resource and recognising where development pressure and opportunities for sustainable growth are likely to arise. The study also responds to the council's long list of *reasonable alternative sites* (RAS) (potential site allocations that are subject to further assessment - including those that are allocated in the adopted LP and/or have planning permission, but not built out at the time of this study), as identified in the Council's 2025 Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA). [for clarity where an allocated site falls within the urban framework of the district it falls outside the scope of this study].
- 1.17 The study is based upon a series of **Study Parcels** of landscape units within which landscape sensitivity to change is assessed. The identification of Study Parcels results from a process of refinement and elimination of areas reasonably unlikely to present acceptable development sites, such that those remaining areas present a focus for assessment of landscape sensitivity. The district-wide study is therefore principally focused on settlement edge sites around the main towns and villages of the district. The edges of settlements are delineated by existing Local Plan policy S2 *urban areas* for Mansfield, Market Warsop and Warsop Parish Villages. This study utilises these boundaries as a baseline but is not concerned with defining detailed proposed changes to these which would be expected to arise subsequent to site allocations process.
- 1.18 This study recognises that a reasonable distance out from the settlement boundaries must be defined beyond which new development is unlikely constitute sustainable development in landscape terms over the next plan period (15 years). In this respect a baseline of 300m depth from the settlement boundary presents a *starting point* from which outer boundaries of study parcels are delineated along identifiable landscape features in the vicinity of that 300m collar identified on the ***Settlement Boundary 300m Study Parcel Area of Search*** map (below). Such features would typically be established development, field boundaries, woodland edges, watercourses, roads or other visible infrastructure. Where identifiable landscape features fall within but close to the 300m collar, the outer parcel delineation will follow those features. **Importantly, where a HELAA RAS overlaps the 300m boundary, its outermost limits would be used to define the parcel outer edge** (and not be limited to 300m), ensuring that all sites which have progressed beyond the initial tests for consideration (a MDC process) are fully considered by this study.
- 1.19 Study Parcel identification then entailed identification of the lateral scope of the 300m collar around the settlements to establish discrete parcels of landscape for

provisional assessment. Professional judgement was used to delineate tracts of land with broadly consistent landscape characteristics, including relationship to the settlement edges to do this. In doing so the grain of study (and the resource attributed to it) as a district-wide strategic assessment of landscape sensitivity influenced the identification of lateral boundaries, including where landscape character area boundaries (2015) indicate change.

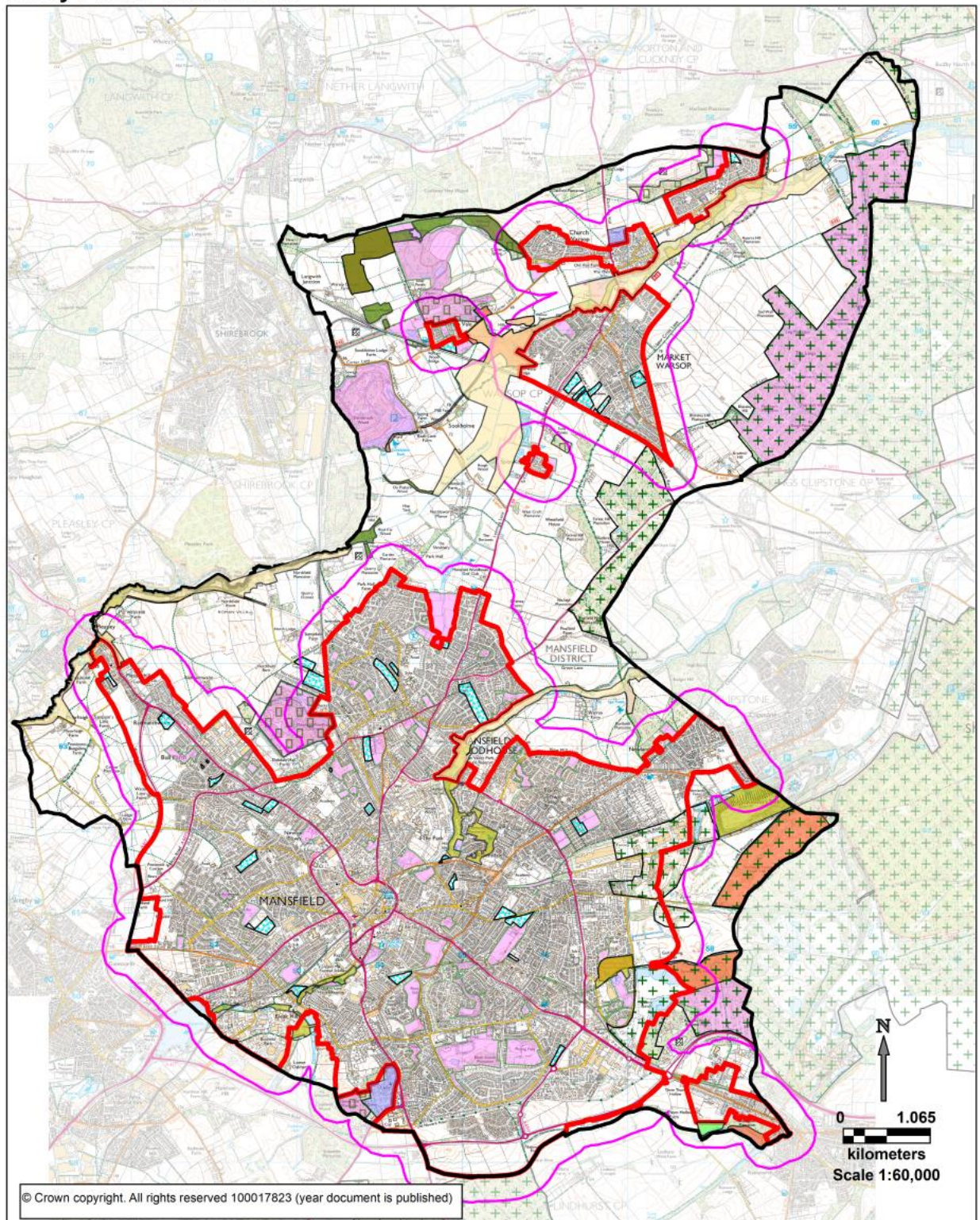
Settlement Boundary - 300m Study Parcel Search Area



Settlement Boundary District Boundary 300m Search Area from Settlement Boundary

- 1.20 This grain of study is less focused than a site-specific Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) would normally be for a specific proposal. Consequently, some Study Parcels cover substantial lengths of settlement edge landscape where characteristics are reasonably consistent. Elsewhere Study parcels are more focused consequent to their relationship with the settlement edge, other landscape features or strong subdividing influences.
- 1.21 On initial identification of parcels, the process presented almost 50 potential areas for assessment. This was beyond the available resource. In consultation with the project team it was agreed that a further sieve process was necessary and reasonable to reduce the number of areas to be subject to full sensitivity assessment. A filtering exercise was undertaken to identify areas which were either highly sensitive to change through development for reasons other than landscape sensitivity alone, and/or were clearly very sensitive on landscape grounds from desk-based exercise. Consequently, the following land uses and or landscapes were excluded from a full landscape sensitivity assessment process:
- Areas beyond Mansfield District Council boundary.
 - Inherently sensitive narrow river corridor Landscape Character Areas (from the Mansfield Landscape Character Assessment 2015 addendum).
 - Cemeteries.
 - Allotments.
 - Mature and semi-mature woodlands.
 - Reclaimed minerals sites – particularly restored colliery spoil heaps (for land contamination, land stability and established landscape restoration/public amenity reasons).
 - Nationally and internationally designated nature conservation sites (ppSPA, SSSI).
 - Undeveloped areas identified as amenity space/landscape restoration/habitat creation under extant planning permissions and/or allocations.
 - Surface water ponds, lakes and reservoirs.
 - Sites with extant planning permission for development.
 - Designated Local Green Spaces (NPPF paragraph 106-108).
 - Public Open Space as part of extant planning permissions.
- 1.22 The ***Study Parcel Constraints*** map (below) shows where areas within a 300m assessment collar have been sieved-out of the landscape sensitivity assessment using the above criteria. Effectively such sites warrant inherent high sensitivity in landscape community value terms, even where some may not present strong character or visual value (but would normally do so). Where a RAS falls across an identified constraint it has been scoped-out of the study parcels for sensitivity assessment.

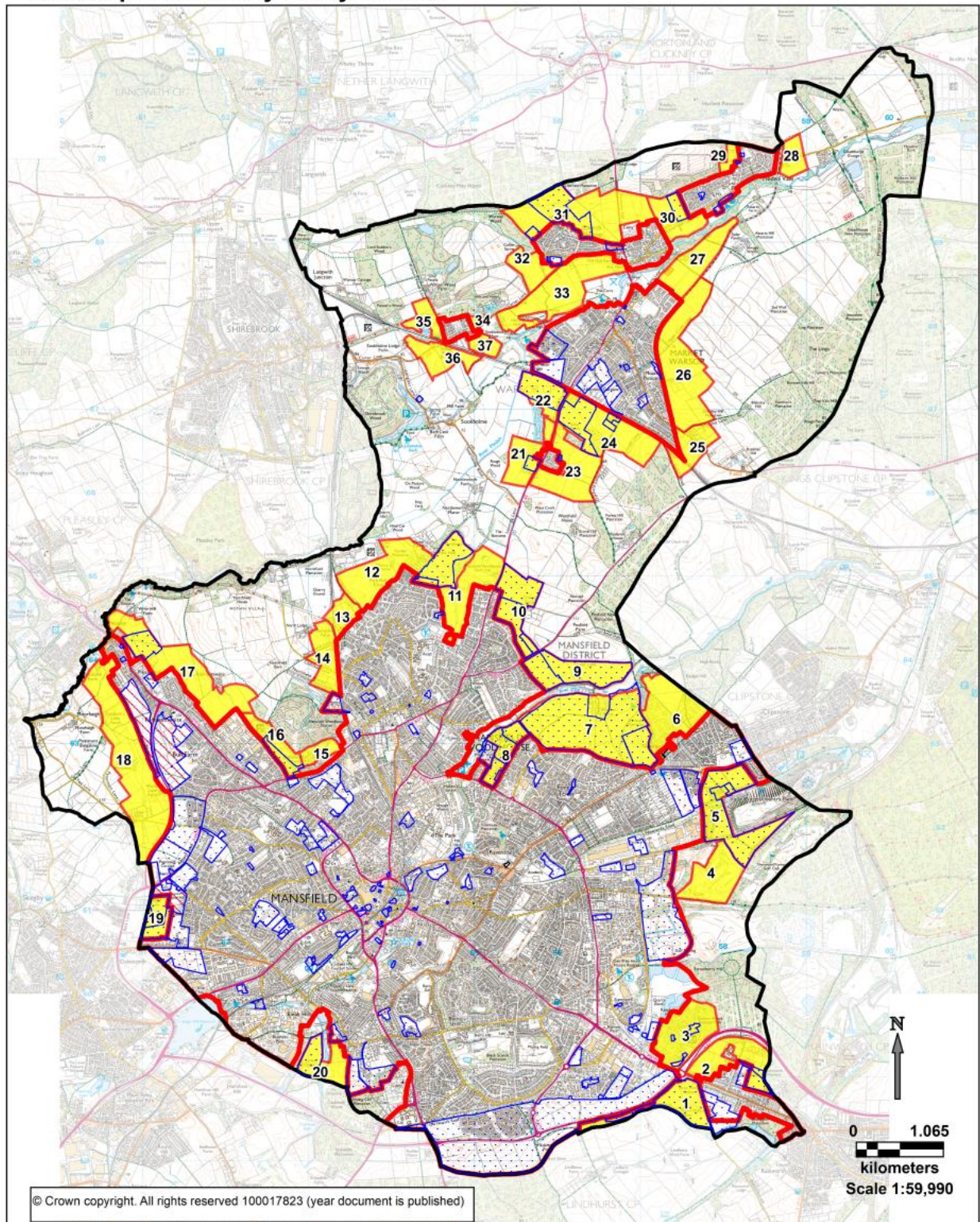
Study Parcel Constraints



- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| District Boundary | Important River Corridor LCAs 2015 | Allotments |
| Settlement Boundary | Designated Community Open Space | Cemeteries |
| 300m Search Area from Settlement Boundary | Site of Special Scientific Interest | Restored Landscapes & Woodland |
| | Potential Special Protection Area | Ancient Woodland |
| | Open Spaces in Approved Development | Local Nature Reserves |

- 1.23 The outcome of this process is a set of 37 study parcels as identified on the ***Landscape Sensitivity Study Parcels*** map (below). All Reasonable Alternative Sites (HELAA 2025) falling outside the settlement boundaries are covered by a study parcel.
- 1.24 The detailed findings for each study parcel landscape sensitivity assessment are set out at **Part Two** of the Landscape Sensitivity Report (separate document).

Landscape Sensitivity Study Parcels



- | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| District Boundary | Settlement Boundary | Landscape Sensitivity Study Parcels |
| Reasonable Alternative Sites (HELAA 2025) | Reasonable Alternative Sites (HELAA 2025) with Planning Permission | |

Current and Future Forces for Landscape Change in Mansfield

- 1.31 Mansfield is a compact local plan area where housing and employment space needs arising from its population should generally be met within the district area. This brings increasing pressure on the urban fringe and greenfield sites to accommodate new built development. An estimated 3,000 additional new homes over those accounted for by the adopted local plan will need to be accommodated by the plan review, of which approximately 2,000 will need to be on greenfield sites.
- 1.32 Whilst brownfield sites will be prioritised for the allocation of homes and employment space, these are unlikely to be able to accommodate all new development needed. The revised Local Plan is likely to need to apportion housing growth between the two towns and the larger villages of the district, which will be likely to require the development of greenfield land and in doing so change to the character of the landscape around these settlements. Change may not necessarily be harmful though; development that is carefully designed for its local context has the potential to bring about environmental enhancement and strengthen local landscape character.
- 1.33 Unplanned, incremental growth within the fringes of rural settlements can result in the loss of distinctiveness and diminished sense of identity and any identified historic settlement character. However, such developments can also provide opportunities to enhance the appearance of the district's towns and villages, particularly at the settlement / countryside interface, through careful consideration of landscape and settlement character, including historic settlement and landscape patterns, to help mitigate the impact of development. Achieving high standards of layout, design and build quality, including the use of local materials, locally distinctive building styles, scale, massing and layouts are established objectives of the current adopted local plan (Chapter 4).
- 1.34 Employment provision is essential to the future prosperity of the district. Landscape can play an important role in attracting new businesses. With a focus on new modern employment activity around Mansfield itself (by allocation in the adopted Local Plan) future employment provision is likely to have a significant impact on landscape character in addition to that arising from new housing. A concentration of commercial and industrial activity on the fringes of the Mansfield and to a lesser extent Market Warsop can have a significant impact on a site's landscape and the landscape of adjoining areas. Careful consideration needs to be given to ensure new employment development is well-sited, planned and designed to minimise impacts on communities and on landscape and settlement character.

2. Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Study Methodology

Overview and Assessment Principles

- 2.1 The preceding chapter sets out the broad principles for where the landscape sensitivity study is focused – its *study parcels*, to inform the future growth of Mansfield and the Council's site allocations work in relation to its local plan review. This section sets out how landscape sensitivity itself has been assessed within the broader study area.
- 2.2 The primary role of the study is to constitute an important part of the landscape evidence base to inform the Council's identification of site allocations within the emerging Mansfield Local Plan, and in doing so help minimise landscape and settlement-edge character impacts of delivering positive, objectively assessment development needs for the district. To do so, this Landscape Sensitivity study follows the current guidance from Natural England in 'An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management', 2019.
- 2.3 Natural England's 2019 guidance provides a consistent approach to assessments of Landscape Sensitivity to inform spatial planning and land management, but stresses that differing circumstances will dictate the exact approach and the nature of the evidence gathered to inform the assessment. The method adopted for this study has responded to the characteristics of the study area, the available study resource and the stage of plan making where potential allocation sites are still emerging.
- 2.4 Landscape Sensitivity is undertaken, often across a large area, with regard to the principle of a particular type of land use change in order to identify key attributes of that particular type of development likely to affect key landscape characteristics and values. This Landscape Sensitivity study provides an up-to-date assessment of land around 6 settlements (of greatly contrasting size and character) to conventional residential and mixed-uses (i.e. where a site includes an element of employment focused development).
- 2.5 In the past such assessments have followed previous guidance where 'landscape sensitivity + landscape value = landscape capacity'. The current guidance takes a different approach, preferring:
- 'landscape susceptibility + landscape value = landscape sensitivity'.
- 2.6 A key approach to the study is to include relevant criteria, determined from core landscape and visual characteristics and values, and to identify indicators of relative susceptibility for each of those criteria. In doing so the study can provide a transparent and robust Landscape Sensitivity assessment as evidence base for the Local Plan Review.

- 2.7 It is important that Landscape Sensitivity under the current approach focuses on landscape sensitivity *only* and does not venture into landscape capacity assessment which is a related but separate and nuanced process dependent on many other factors as well as landscape sensitivity. When dealing with landscape change it is not realistic to simply quantify exactly *how much* of a certain type of development a specific area can accommodate. Many important factors come into play that need to be considered ‘in the round’ of which landscape sensitivity (including professional judgement) is a critical one.
- 2.8 Current guidance to assess sensitivity of settlement fringes to conventional residential and mixed-use development affords significance on the effects on landscape and visual receptors of a known development proposal for a specific site. This reflects the approach of assessment as part of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (often within the context of an Environmental Impact Assessment), in accordance with specific guidance in GLVIA 3 from the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, 2013²).

Landscape Value

- 2.9 The method entails consideration of landscape value to part inform landscape sensitivity. There are no nationally or locally designated landscapes (such as AONB or Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside) in Mansfield and thus landscape value is recognised by consideration of a range of local factors such as sense of place, valued attributes, community values and recreational value. Visual value considerations include general visibility, skylines, types of views and the general visual amenity experienced by receptors.
- 2.10 Guidance is provided within a number of documents on the range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes, including GLVIA 3 and the Landscape Institute’s Technical Guidance Note 02-21³. Insight into what features of the landscape are considered important and worthy of protection locally can be found within the Mansfield Landscape Character Addendum (2015), but also the Council’s development plan documents and Conservation Area Appraisals, with the emerging Warsop Neighbourhood Plan providing insight into community values. These refer to the protection and enhancement of the district’s varied environment including its wooded and heath landscapes, green infrastructure and biodiversity, as well as its limestone building materials, industrial heritage and cultural importance of the coal industry. New development can reflect local character and contribute to

² Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (2013), Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition.

³ Landscape Institute (2021), ‘Assessing landscape value outside national designations’, TGN 02-21.

local distinctiveness and in doing so add to the community value afforded to the Mansfield environment.

Stages of Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

- 2.11 The following stages have been followed in preparation of this Landscape Sensitivity study:
- 2.12 **Stage 1.** Desk study to gather information on the landscape and visual baseline and to identify draft/provisional assessment units / land parcels of landscapes of broadly similar landscape and historic characteristics. Study parcels are defined by the character of the landscape and settlement edge, derived primarily on differences in landform, land use, land cover and field pattern.
- 2.13 Information was gained from a number of sources but in particular:
- Mansfield District Council Landscape Character Addendum (2015)
 - Neighbourhood Plan and Conservation Area Appraisals;
 - Constraints information (provided by MDC), on the historic environment (Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens), biodiversity and geodiversity conservation (ppSPA, SSSI, Local Wildlife Sites, RIGS, Ancient Woodland), and access (public rights of way, recreational trails / routes, cycle routes and public access land);
 - OS maps and aerial imagery;
 - National Character Area (NCA) profiles; and
 - Mansfield Landscape Character Assessment Addendum (2015) including character area key characteristic descriptions, forces for change, and landscape character policy zones (LPZs) to conserve, conserve and create, conserve and reinforce, conserve and restore, restore and restore and create.
- 2.14 Provisional study parcels were identified (see preceding chapter) having regard to broad landscape characteristics but also to ensure they cover the council's long list Reasonable Alternative Sites (RAS) from its HELAA process. In some cases where RAS are more extensive, this requires the outer boundary of the study areas to exceed 300m in depth from the inner settlement boundary.
- 2.15 **Stage 2.** Identification of key attributes of conventional housing and mixed-use (including economic) development types, (see preceding chapter), and development of landscape, visual and value criteria, defining indicators of

susceptibility for each of the criteria. **Table 2** shows the indicative landscape, visual and value criteria with indicators of susceptibility to housing and mixed-use development. The criteria are based on the key characteristics, elements and features likely to be affected by this type of development.

- 2.16 **Stage 3.** Field survey by experienced landscape surveyors (including a chartered Landscape Architect), to confirm the extent of study parcels and to gather information to inform the sensitivity assessment. The study parcels were visited on multiple days during the course of the study between October and December 2025.
- 2.17 **Stage 4.** Assessment of the sensitivity of each study parcel to the key attributes of the type of development being assessed, with reference to the criteria and indicators of relative susceptibility (i.e. relative to the other study parcels within the study area around each settlement) shown in **Table 2**, using a 5-point scale as shown in **Table 3**. Professional judgement is then applied to describe the overall landscape sensitivity (landscape, visual and value) of each study parcel. Narrative is provided to summarise the assessment, including areas of greater or lesser sensitivity within a study parcel, with reference to potential mitigation and enhancement measures including from the relevant Mansfield Landscape Policy Zone (LPZ) and landscape management strategy for that LCA (taken from the Mansfield Landscape Character Assessment Addendum (2015)). Each study area was assessed for sensitivity to either housing development or mixed-use development typologies (where at least a part of the parcel could provide economic related development, with or without an element of housing). The land use typology used for each site was determined by adjacent land uses (where an element of commercial development abuts the parcel) and/ or where HELAA Reasonable Alternative Site proposed use included economic development. Default assessment typology is housing only where these factors are not apparent.

Table 2: Landscape, Visual and Value Assessment Criteria, with Indicators of Susceptibility

Criteria	Indicators of Higher Susceptibility & Value	Indicators of Lower Susceptibility & Value
Landscape Susceptibility		
Landform	• Steep • Rolling • Distinctive, complex • Exposed, prominent, high (where development could be conspicuous) • Presence of hydrological features including rivers, tributaries, streams, ponds, lakes and reservoirs • Including restored colliery spoil tips	• Shallow • Flat or gently falling or gently undulating • Indistinct, simple, featureless • Secluded, low-lying (where development is unlikely to be conspicuous) • Lack of hydrological features
Landscape pattern, landcover & scale	• Small scale, intimate • Intricate pattern or landcover elements	• Large scale, broad • Simple landcover pattern

Criteria	Indicators of Higher Susceptibility & Value	Indicators of Lower Susceptibility & Value
	- Strongly unified, coherent pattern of landcover / landscape elements - Human scale elements present - Intact historic agricultural field pattern - Land restored from past mining or quarrying operations	- Incoherent pattern of landcover / landscape elements - Lacking in human scale elements - Modern modified field pattern e.g. loss of hedgerows - Heavily influenced by past mining or current minerals working
Sense of place, rural character and landscape condition	- Strong evident rural character with few urbanising influences - Good condition with natural / semi-natural features worthy of protection / conservation - Green infrastructure / wildlife / biodiversity corridors providing good connectivity - Historic settlement edge character with strong sense of place - Area important to the setting of historic landscape assets including conservation areas, listed buildings, parkland etc. - Soft settlement edge provides a harmonious, coherent relationship between the built and natural environment	- Weak rural character with urbanising influences - Degraded, poor condition / quality e.g. gappy hedgerows - Lack of landscape features worthy of protection / conservation - Poor green infrastructure / wildlife / biodiversity connectivity - Lack of historic landscape assets - Harsh settlement edge provides a discordant inharmonious relationship between the built and natural environment
Tranquillity	Sense of relative quietness and remoteness away from disturbing influences	Disturbance by modern noisy influences e.g. nearby development and busy roads
Settlement pattern and the nature of the adjoining settlement edge	- Development would be contrary to adjacent or proposed land uses or to the general form/pattern and/or scale of settlement such that it would adversely affect the character of the settlement edge - Nature of the settlement edge is positive/smooth/soft such that existing built form is well integrated into the settlement and surrounding landscape - Landscape providing an important function of physical separation between settlements or green wedge functionality - Landscape lying beyond feature(s) that provide a strong boundary to recognised current or proposed settlement limits e.g. road, railway, watercourse.	- Development would be in keeping with adjacent or proposed land uses or with settlement form/pattern and/or scale and the general character of the settlement edge - Nature of the settlement edge is negative/harsh/abrupt and poorly integrated into the surrounding landscape

Criteria	Indicators of Higher Susceptibility & Value	Indicators of Lower Susceptibility & Value
Visual Susceptibility		
Visibility, intervisibility & types of views	• Open landscapes where there are extensive or important inward and outward views and high intervisibility • Strong visual relationship of the landscape with the settlement edge • Lack of visual detractors such as disused/active mining/quarrying activities and infrastructure, pylons and overhead powerlines, main roads, etc. • Landscapes that contribute to the character and/or setting of adjacent sensitive landscape character areas / landscape policy zones e.g. river valleys, from where outward views are important • Landscapes located on distinctive approaches / gateways to settlements	• Well contained landscapes with limited inward and outward views and low intervisibility • Poor visual relationship of the landscape with the settlement edge • Visually detracting features such as unrestored disused/active mining/quarrying activities and infrastructure, pylons and overhead powerlines, main roads, etc.
Skylines and focal points/landmarks	• Landscapes that are part of undeveloped / rural skylines where development could be conspicuous • skylines forming a backdrop to settlement • Landscapes that lie within views to distinctive / historic focal points / landmarks, or form part of, or have a strong visual link to, a distinctive skyline	• Landscapes not part of undeveloped / rural skylines where development is unlikely to be conspicuous • Skyline does not form a backdrop to settlement • Landscapes that do not lie within views to distinctive / historic focal points / landmarks
Scenic quality	• Landscapes with high scenic quality or which form the setting to such landscapes, e.g. with strong evident rural character, sense of place and intact historic agricultural field pattern, unaffected by modern development or activity	• Landscapes strongly influenced by intrusive man-made structures and human activity which adversely affect landscape integrity and scenic quality
Visual receptors	• Residents at home, views from local communities and people engaged in outdoor recreation such as users of public rights of way are visual receptors most susceptible to change • Many susceptible visual receptors	• People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation (which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape), people at work and travellers / commuters are visual receptors less susceptible to change • Few susceptible visual receptors

Criteria	Indicators of Higher Susceptibility & Value	Indicators of Lower Susceptibility & Value
Landscape Value		
Strength of landscape character and condition	- Legible landscapes exhibiting key characteristic features of the relevant Landscape Policy Zone with a positive character, strong structure (such as intact historic field patterns) and intactness of individual elements (such as hedgerows, trees, walls, parkland) in good physical condition - Landscape Policy Zone action is to 'conserve' ('conserve', 'conserve and reinforce', 'conserve and restore', or 'conserve and create') - Development recognised in the LCA as a threat to the character of the area	- Landscapes exhibiting few key characteristic features of the relevant Landscape Policy Zone with poor legibility due to weak character and landscape structure, and poor-quality landscape elements in poor physical condition - Indicators of landscape value in terms of strength of landscape character and condition are limited such that they should not preclude development - Landscape Policy Zone action is to 'restore' ('restore' or 'restore and create')
Distinctiveness	- Presence of distinctive, rare or unusual features individually or that combine to form strong landscape character and sense of place or identity - Landscapes that make an important contribution to the character or identity of a settlement, including gateways / approaches, and green wedges	- Indistinct or featureless landscapes with weak landscape character and sense of place or identity - Indicators of landscape value in terms of distinctiveness are limited such that they should not preclude development
Natural ecological heritage / biodiversity	Presence of habitats of wildlife / ecological / biodiversity interest that contribute to sense of place, including semi-natural habitats and valued characteristic natural features such as hedgerows and woodland, especially those that form the basis of ecological / nature recovery / green infrastructure networks	No or few indicators of landscape value in terms of natural ecological heritage / biodiversity qualities such that they should not preclude development
Historic / cultural heritage	Presence of historic assets or elements of designed landscapes (e.g. boundary walls, avenues of trees, parkland), landscapes important to the setting of heritage assets (e.g. conservation areas and listed buildings) and landscapes that provide a time depth dimension (e.g. the presence of historic field patterns, historic tracks and farmsteads)	- No or few indicators of landscape value in terms of historic / cultural heritage qualities such that they should not preclude development - No historic legacy

Criteria	Indicators of Higher Susceptibility & Value	Indicators of Lower Susceptibility & Value
	Affords historic legacy that contributes to perceptions of the landscape e.g. with past coal mining industry	
Recreational	Landscapes offering recreational opportunities such as public rights of way and other public access routes and land (including nationally or locally promoted recreational routes)	No or few indicators of landscape value in terms of recreational opportunities such that they should not preclude development
Scenic / aesthetic, perceptual and experiential	- Distinctive or striking patterns of landform or harmonious patterns of landcover - Strong sensorial qualities e.g. perceived naturalness, sense of remoteness or tranquillity - Presence of natural features or other scenic / aesthetic qualities such as strong rural character - Landscapes contributing to distinctive views or landmarks - Open land important to the form and character and setting of the settlement in the landscape, and land that provides a visual separation function as open land between settlements	No or few indicators of landscape value in terms of scenic / aesthetic, perceptual and experiential qualities such that they should not preclude development
Visual Value		
Views of recognised value	- Views of recognised value e.g. in neighbourhood plans or conservation area appraisals (in relation to heritage assets) - Views from locations where there is provision of facilities for their enjoyment (such as parking or interpretive material) - Views that are locally well known and valued by the community	No views of recognised value

- 2.18 It is important to recognise that *professional judgement* is made after consideration of the range of factors and criteria that are often interlinked. The assessment is not based on a simple mathematical summation of assessment levels; some factors will be more important than others in different areas. For instance, the function of an area in maintaining a separation between settlements and maintaining their individual identity may be considered very important (for example in the north of the district) and make it susceptible to landscape change and therefore sensitive to

development even if it is of limited other landscape value. The summary of each assessment table highlights the particular sensitivity of the study parcel.

Table 3: Definition of Levels of Landscape Sensitivity

LEVELS OF SENSITIVITY	DESCRIPTION (informed by susceptibility and value criteria)
High	Landscape and / or visual attributes of the study parcel are very susceptible to change, and / or its values are predominantly high or high / medium, and / or it is unlikely to be able to accommodate the relevant type of development without significant character change or adverse effects. Thresholds for significant change are very low.
High-Medium	Landscape and / or visual attributes of the study parcel are susceptible to change, and / or its values are predominantly medium through to high, and / or it may be able to accommodate the relevant type of development but only in limited situations without significant character change or adverse effects. Thresholds for significant change are low.
Medium	Landscape and / or visual attributes of the study parcel are susceptible to change, and / or its values are predominantly medium / low through to high / medium, and / or it may have some potential to accommodate the relevant type of development in some defined situations without significant character change or adverse effects. Thresholds for significant change lie between low and high (intermediate).
Medium-Low	Landscape and / or visual attributes of the study parcel are resilient and of low susceptibility to change, and / or its values are predominantly medium / low or low, and / or it is likely to be able to accommodate the relevant type of development in many situations without significant character change or adverse effects. Thresholds for significant change are high.
Low	Landscape and / or visual attributes of the study parcel are robust or degraded and are not susceptible to change, and / or its values are predominantly low, and / or it is likely to be able to accommodate the relevant type of development without significant character change or adverse effects. Thresholds for significant change are very high.

- 2.19 It is also important to note that there may be variations in sensitivity within a given study parcel. For instance, a study parcel which is assessed as *medium sensitivity* may have some opportunity for limited or spatially restricted development within it without significant character change or adverse effects. This is specifically defined in the study parcel summary text together with reference to other land within the

- parcel considered to be an area of constraint in terms of landscape and visual factors. For areas of high/medium sensitivity there may be land which has high sensitivity with other parts which may be able to accommodate small scale development in specific areas.
- 2.20 Overall in landscape terms (alone), **high and high/medium** levels of sensitivity are considered to be **a constraint on housing or mixed-use (employment use) allocations** in terms of landscape and visual factors.
- 2.21 In areas with **medium or medium/low** sensitivity **some development** may be acceptable in landscape terms.
- 2.22 In areas with **low sensitivity, development would generally be acceptable** in landscape terms.
- 2.23 **Stage 5.** Preparation of a Draft Mansfield Settlement Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, comprising two parts: Part 1: Introduction and Methodology (this part); and Part 2: Settlement Sensitivity Assessments, reporting the assessment of each settlement within a series of assessment tables for each study parcel and including a map indicating the location of each parcel (recognising that lines on maps are typically in reality zones of transition and sudden changes in character and sensitivity are very rare).
- 2.24 **Stage 6.** Final Landscape Sensitivity Reporting. Consultation on the Landscape sensitivity study will be carried out at the discretion of MDC as part of the wider local plan review process.

Study Findings

- 2.5 Full assessment tables and sensitivity mapping is set out in the accompanying **Part Two: Study Parcel Assessment Report** and summarised in the summary findings at the beginning of this report.

Limitations of the landscape Sensitivity Study

- 2.26 This Landscape Sensitivity study is intended to inform strategic spatial planning and development management decisions in Mansfield district. It provides a strategic assessment of landscape sensitivity around the urban/rural fringes of a number of settlements where development could be considered acceptable in principle. The study will contribute to the identification of opportunities and constraints, and other considerations by the Council including national and local policies, community and stakeholder opinions, etc., to inform place-based decisions on the direction of land use and landscape change.

- 2.27 The extent to which an area is currently, or could in the future, be served well by infrastructure is an important consideration in determining where to locate development, and the type of development that may be suitable. These and other wider considerations will be taken into account by the Council when allocating sites for development but are beyond the scope of the Landscape Sensitivity study, but are not influential on the baseline assessment of study parcel sensitivity to landscape change.
- 2.28 Alongside other considerations the Landscape Sensitivity study should help influence decisions on where, and how much, of what type of development might be located, without undue negative effects on landscape character, views and visual amenity. Importantly, the Landscape Sensitivity study alone should not be used to make a judgement on how much (i.e., the capacity) of a particular type of development may be acceptable in a particular location. The findings of the study should be considered along with all the other factors that influence land use planning, design and management of specific locations.
- 2.29 The Landscape Sensitivity study should help to focus proposals for specific development in areas of lesser landscape sensitivity, where more detailed site-specific information can be obtained and landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) carried out, for example in accordance with Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA 3)⁴. For larger sites this may be undertaken in the context of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) where landscape sensitivity and visual sensitivity together with the assessment of magnitude of change, informs judgements on likely significance of effects of a specific development proposal within a specific landscape.
- 2.30 It is important to note the practical limitations to the study. Field work plays an important part, but in a very small number of cases the location and nature of study parcels means that it has not always been possible to visit and survey every part of each parcel because of access constraints on private land and / or physical constraints. In these situations, aerial/satellite imagery has been more substantially relied upon.
- 2.31 As with any landscape study, this report can only represent a snapshot in time. Landscape sensitivity work uses landscape character assessment as its underpinning resource. Those identified landscape characteristics, elements, features, and visual characteristics help to define the landscape baseline that is likely to be most affected by development, but these can and do change, landscapes are dynamic entities. Change can be directly within a study parcel itself, or out-with the parcel but nevertheless affecting its characteristics and sensitivity. As referred to above, the study does not take into account any planning permissions and changes to

⁴ Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 2013, 3rd Edition.

Neighbourhood Plans after the base date of 1st November 2025 that may affect the study parcels assessed and reported in this study.

GLOSSARY

(based on 'An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management', Natural England, 2019)

Capacity – The maximum amount that something can contain. ****

Elements - Individual parts which make up the landscape, such as, for example, trees, hedges and buildings. *

Feature - Particularly prominent or eye-catching elements in the landscape, such as tree clumps, church towers or wooded skylines or a particular aspect of the project proposal. *

Key characteristics - Those combinations of elements which are particularly important to the current character of the landscape and help to give an area its particularly distinctive sense of place. *

Landscape - An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors. ***

Landscape capacity - The amount of specified development or change which a particular landscape and the associated visual resource is able to accommodate without undue negative effects on its character and qualities. *****

Landscape character - A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse. *

Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) - Single unique areas which are the discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape type. *

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) - The process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape, and using this information to assist in managing change in the landscape. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features that make landscapes distinctive. The process results in the production of a Landscape Character Assessment. *

Landscape Character Types (LCTs) - Distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogeneous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different areas in different parts of the country, but wherever they occur they share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation, and historical land use and settlement pattern, and perceptual and aesthetic attributes. *

Landscape management - Action, from a perspective of sustainable development, to ensure the regular upkeep of a landscape, so as to guide and harmonise changes which are brought about by social, economic and environmental processes. ***

Landscape planning – Strong, forward-looking action to enhance, restore or create landscapes. ***

Landscape policy - An expression by the competent public authorities of general principles, strategies and guidelines that permit the taking of specific measures aimed at the protection, management and planning of landscapes. ***

Landscape Sensitivity - Within the context of spatial planning and land management, landscape sensitivity is a term applied to landscape character and the associated visual resource, combining judgements of their susceptibility to the specific development type / development scenario or other change being considered together with the value(s) related to that landscape and visual resource. Landscape sensitivity may be regarded as a measure of the resilience, or robustness, of a landscape to withstand specified change arising from development types or land management practices, without undue negative effects on the landscape and visual baseline and their value. *****

Landscape Susceptibility - Within the context of spatial planning and land management, landscape susceptibility is the degree to which a defined landscape and its associated visual qualities and attributes might respond to the specific development type / development scenario or other change without undue negative effects on landscape character and the visual resource. *****

Landscape value - The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons. *

Overall sensitivity - A term applied when landscape sensitivity reporting is generalised across the assessment unit (even though it must be accepted that such sensitivity to particular developments is likely to vary within the assessment unit). *****

Sensitive – Quick to detect, respond to, or be affected by slight changes or influences. ****

Susceptible – Likely to be influenced or harmed by a particular thing. ****

SOURCES:

* Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (2013), Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition, Routledge.

** Defra 'An introductory guide to valuing Ecosystem services' (2007).

*** Council of Europe (2000), European Landscape Convention, Council of Europe, Florence, Oct 2000.

**** Oxford University Press (2005), Compact Oxford English Dictionary.

***** Natural England (2019), An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management.