Chapter 6: South Nottinghamshire Farmlands Regional Character Area

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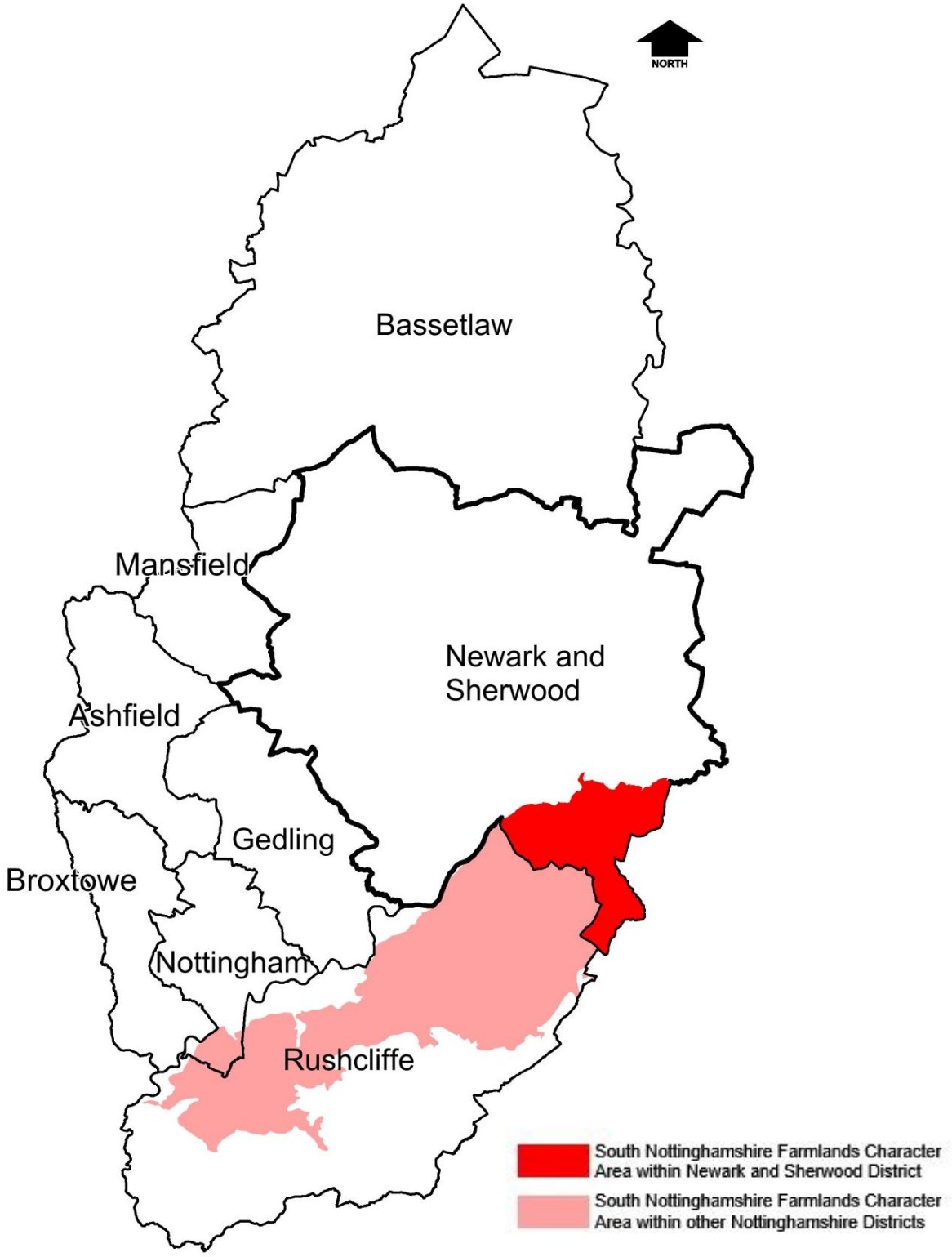


Figure 6.1 South Nottinghamshire Character Area within Nottinghamshire and Newark and Sherwood District

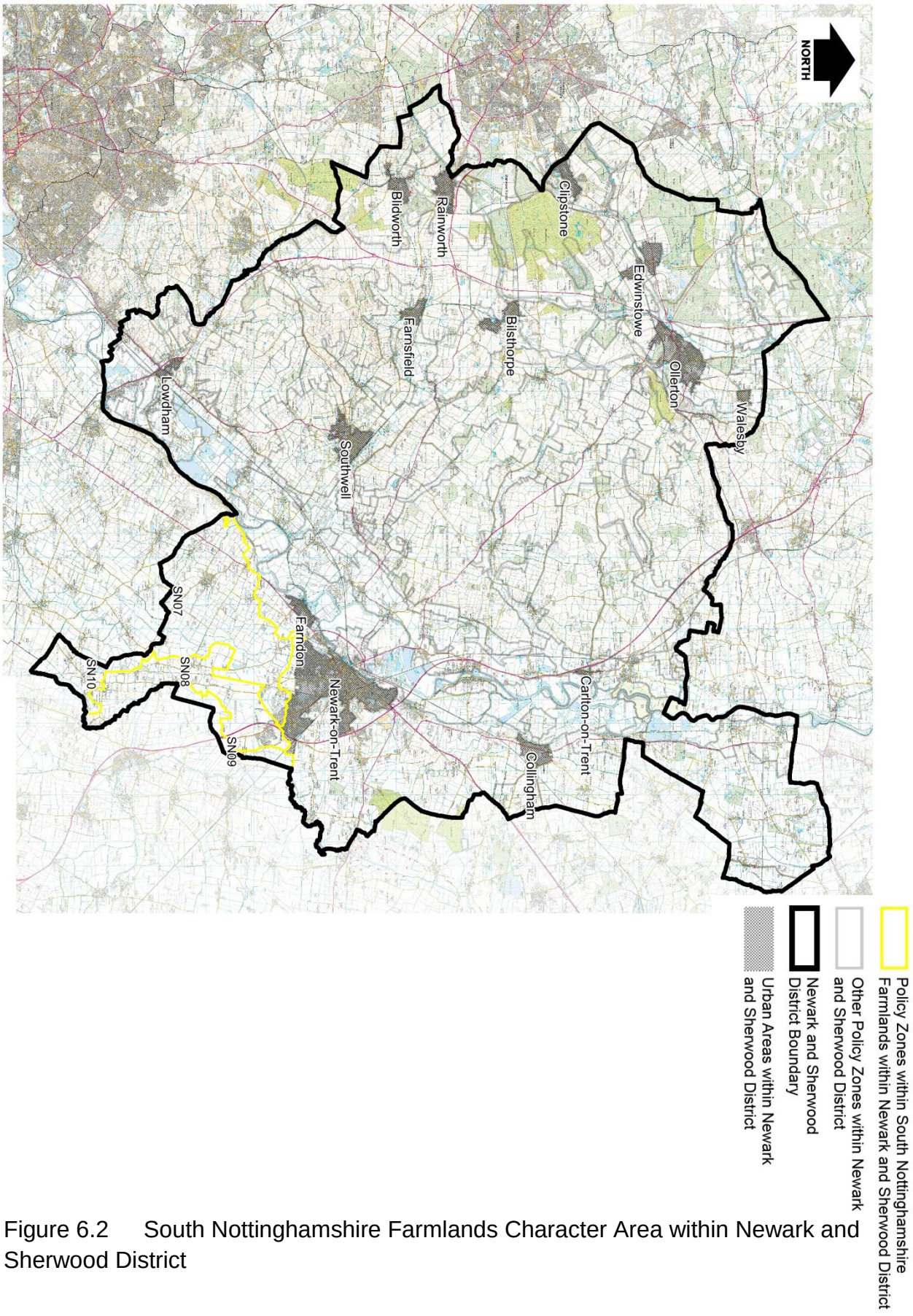


Figure 6.2 South Nottinghamshire Farmlands Character Area within Newark and Sherwood District

6.1 South Nottinghamshire Farmlands: Physical and Human influences

6.1.1 Introduction

The **South Nottinghamshire Farmlands** extend over a relatively large tract of land between the southern edge of the Greater Nottingham conurbation and the urban edge of Newark. The valley of the River Trent forms their northern boundary. To the south behind a line of well-wooded hill and escarpment features, and outside the Newark and Sherwood District lie the higher lands of the **Nottinghamshire Wolds**. The south-eastern boundary of the region is formed by a low escarpment which marks the division with the flat claylands of the **Vale of Belvoir**. **The South Nottinghamshire Farmlands** contain some of the finest quality agricultural land in the County. The drainage and cultivation of the alluvial levels in the south and north-east of the region have served to reinforce this arable tradition. The pre-eminence of arable cultivation is now one of the most important factors in determining the region's overall character: over 80% of the farmland is under arable cultivation.

The extent of the South Nottinghamshire Farmlands Character area within the District of Newark and Sherwood is shown on Figure 6.1

6.1.2 The Shape of the Land

The **South Nottinghamshire Farmlands** are closely associated with a belt of Triassic rocks which lie to the south of the River Trent between Gotham and Newark. These Triassic beds continue in a broad belt to the north of the river, and comprise the largest single geological formation in Nottinghamshire. The main rock type of this formation is the Mercia Mudstone group, comprising a considerable thickness of reddish mudstone containing occasional bands of hard sandstone or "skerries". These are less well-developed than those occurring to the north of the Trent, resulting in a more restrained topography. Gypsum also occurs in quantity, especially in the upper part of the formation, which outcrops between Cotgrave and Newark. This outcrop of gypsum is marked by a number of mines and plaster works. The uppermost beds of the Mercia Mudstone pass into the shaley Rhaetic beds, which give rise to a low escarpment along the south-eastern boundary of the region.

In the **South Nottinghamshire Farmlands**, the Mercia Mudstone forms a subdued, south-eastward sloping escarpment, which dips gently towards the **Vale of Belvoir** and the **Nottinghamshire Wolds**. The highest part of the region is thus along the edge of the Trent Valley, where a line of hills rising to just over 75 metres falls steeply into the broad trench cut by the River Trent in the underlying mudstone. To the rear of these hills, which are particularly prominent between East Stoke and Radcliffe, the land falls away more gradually towards the Rhaetic escarpment. Within this dip slope, alluvium has been deposited in a series of depressions that are believed to have been formed by a lowering of the land surface as a result of gypsum solution in the upper layers of the mudstone. This has created a distinctive topography of low-lying alluvial flats separated by narrow mudstone ridges. These ridges typically rise 5 to 10 metres above the surrounding alluvium and have historically provided dry sites for settlement.

Land to the south of Newark forms part of the Smite/Devon catchment with drainage following the easterly dip slope of the mudstone outcrop. These rivers converge before flowing into the Trent at Newark. The **Alluvial Levels** are drained by a series of dykes and artificial drainage ditches, which have removed the risk of flooding.

Along its extreme eastern margin, the region extends over the Rhaetic escarpment on to the Lias, and includes part of an extensive alluvial flat at Bennington Fen. The small area of Lias is characterised by a level to gently rolling landform, whilst peaty surface horizons are still evident on the low-lying fen. This area may form part of a separate regional character area that is more fully represented within Lincolnshire. The area has been included within the South Nottinghamshire **South Nottinghamshire Farmlands** because it is too small to warrant separate treatment, and because the landscape management priorities are similar.

On Figure 6.2 this area is shown as SN09. As this landscape largely falls within the neighbouring authority refer to the South Kesteven Character Assessment, Trent and Belvoir Vale character area for further information.

6.1.3 Soils

On the Triassic mudstones slightly stoney, sandy loam brown earth soils have developed, along with reddish, fine loamy or fine silty soils. These lie over slowly permeable clayey sub-soils. Deep clayey alluvial soils are widespread on the valley floors of the Smite and Devon and adjoining alluvial flats. Sub-soils are slowly permeable, with groundwater the primary source of waterlogging. Peaty and peaty loam soils were once a feature of the larger alluvial flats but these are now greatly diminished.

6.1.4 Landscape History

The landscape of the **South Nottinghamshire Farmlands** is superficially a creation of the enclosure movement of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, modified to meet the needs of the post-1945 economy and modern farming techniques. Behind this, however, stands over 2,000 years of settlement and land use which have influenced over successive generations the development of today's countryside. Together with the Trent Valley, this region was consistently the most densely settled and economically strong area of pre-industrial Nottinghamshire, from late prehistory to the end of the 18th century.

For a detailed analysis of the South Nottinghamshire Farmlands history refer to Appendix R.

6.2 Landscape Evolution and Change

6.2.1 Introduction

This section examines the main forces that have brought about change and evolution within the **South Nottinghamshire Farmlands** over recent decades. It does this by discussing how the current structure and pattern of land use have developed, paying particular regard to agriculture, woodland, transport, industrial/residential development and mineral extraction. It also considers the trends and pressures that may produce landscape change in the future.

6.2.2 Agriculture

The **South Nottinghamshire Farmlands** contain some of the highest quality agricultural land in the County with slightly over 80% of the farmland under arable cropping. Large parts of the region have historically had a high proportion of land under cultivation; this is particularly the case to the south of Newark where the land is classified as high quality agricultural land by DEFRA. The mudstone soils have permeable topsoils and slowly permeable subsoils producing a risk of temporary winter waterlogging. However, the soils respond well to drainage and the climate is generally favourable. Cereals are the principal crops grown, although a wide range of other crops is also found. Winter cereals are sown in rotation with oilseed rape and short-term grass. Kale, sugar beet and potatoes are sometimes included within the rotation. Spring cultivation is possible in all but the wettest years which enables root crops to be grown. Soil nutrient reserves are naturally good, with rich resources of potassium, calcium and magnesium derived from the underlying mudstone.

Prior to drainage the valley bottoms and alluvial flats of the Devon catchment were almost entirely set to pasture. The slowly permeable soils were often waterlogged, with ground water levels fluctuating in response to changes in the river levels. These areas are now drained, with autumn and spring cereals the dominant arable crop. Root crops are sometimes grown although harvesting difficulties can occur due to the soil wetness. Farms and settlements in the area are located on the drier mudstone sites at the edge of the alluvium, taking advantage of the full range of soil resources.

In many areas arable intensification has altered the fabric of the landscape through the removal of hedges and the creation of large fields to facilitate the use of modern farm machinery. In places this has fragmented the overall unity of the landscape, leaving isolated features such as remnant gappy hedgerows and dead or dying trees set within open arable farmland. Such features not only appear out of scale with their surroundings, but often impart

an impression of dereliction and decline. Although further agricultural expansion is now less likely, declining incomes and continued uncertainty in the short term may result in further intensification of production on existing farmland. In the longer term, new incentives may encourage more environmentally sensitive farming, with perhaps a return to more traditional mixed farming regimes.

In the last decade a number of factors have resulted in a reversal of some of the more damaging aspects of agricultural policy. Of particular significance has been the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which has led to a series of measures designed to reduce the level of agricultural surpluses. The most recent reforms have introduced a new regime which requires farmers compulsorily to set aside 15% of their arable land on a rotational basis. This is already beginning to have an effect on the appearance of the countryside, although at present the temporary nature of the scheme means that opportunities for landscape enhancement are limited. The introduction of a new non-rotational set-aside option, however, does allow some scope for the land to be managed in more environmentally beneficial ways.

6.2.3 Woodland/Tree Cover

The South Nottinghamshire Farmlands is a sparsely wooded region with a woodland cover figure of less than 2%. Most of this woodland is broad-leaved and concentrated in small pockets round villages such as Elston. Elsewhere there is a thin scattering of small woodlands. Dutch elm disease had a major impact upon the landscape during the period 1960-1980, leading to loss of virtually all hedge and roadside elms. Ash and oak are now the dominant hedgerow tree species.

6.2.4 Transportation

Two major roads run through the area; a short section of the A1 to the south east of Newark and a section of the A46 to the south west. The A46 is currently undergoing upgrade work to dual carriageway status and a new route is also being implemented. The A1 runs through a small section of the character area to the extreme north east. These roads provide the main access points to the network of country lanes that serve the many villages and settlements. The road network is heavily used within the commuter belt, to the south and east of Newark.

6.2.5 Urban and Industrial Development

Newark Urban Area (Newark, Balderton and Fernwood) is the major centre within Newark & Sherwood. The pas industrial and residential expansion of the south of Newark has led to the coalescence of outlying villages and the loss of historical settlement pattern and rural character. The settlement pattern in the wider region is one of small rural villages, with the historic market town of Newark-on-Trent lying to the north. Large-scale new development has been relatively well controlled so that the region's rural character, and the historic settlement pattern of small red brick villages, is still intact.

The Newark Urban Area is the main location for services, jobs, retail, education and a focus for transport for most of the District. Reflecting this status the Newark Urban Area is the centre for housing and employment growth within the District, with 9913 dwellings being identified for the Urban Area between 2006-2026. To facilitate this growth a series of site allocations have been made for a range of uses including residential, employment and retail. Significantly this has included sustainable urban extensions to the south and east of Newark and around Fernwood (parts of which are located in the South Nottinghamshire Sandlands).

Whilst they may not be the focus for significant levels of growth it is clear that economic and social factors will continue to exert pressure on rural areas of the District and it is likely that the demand for rural housing will continue to grow, driven by the increasing number of people who want to live in a rural location. The refurbishment and conversion of old farm buildings to high quality residential dwellings is now widespread. If the trend continues there may be further consequences for the future pattern and character of the rural landscape.

Employment development will be directed toward the built-up areas of the District and only acceptable in the open countryside where the need for a rural location and the contribution towards rural employment can be demonstrated. The conversion of existing buildings in rural locations to beneficial uses, diversification of rural businesses where this contributes to the local economy and tourism development / accommodation which meets identified needs are also provided support in local planning policy.

Continued uncertainty in the agricultural sector and declining incomes will ensure that rural tourism and farm diversification play an increasing role in the economy of the area. This is likely to result in the conversion of existing agricultural buildings, and in some cases demands for new built development.

6.2.6 Energy

The power generating industry warrants separate consideration due to its enormous impact on the landscape of the region. There are two functioning coal-fired power stations located in the **Trent Washlands**, Cottam, and West Burton. Their combined output amounts to 20% of the UK's generating capacity. The proximity of productive coalfields, a good water supply, adequate communications and favourable topography were the main economic factors in their siting, coal is now imported from outside the region.

The power stations and associated web of high voltage power lines constitute the most dominant and visually intrusive landscape features within and out-with the **South Nottinghamshire Farmlands**.

6.2.7 Renewable Energy

The United Kingdom is legally bound to meeting challenging targets for the generation of energy from renewable sources (15% by 2020) and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (to 34% below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80% by 2050). A framework of national policy, reflecting the need to increase the supply and usage of energy from low-carbon sources and to ensure that adverse impacts are satisfactorily addressed, has been put in place to help deliver these aims. Significantly, this carries the expectation that applications be approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise, if their impacts (such as that on the landscape) are (or can be made) acceptable. Core Policy 10 'Climate Change' of the Core Strategy and Policy DM4 'Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation' in the Allocations & Development Management Development Plan Document's set out local planning policy on this issue.

Given this policy context there are likely to be future applications for renewable energy developments, such as wind-farms, in the **South Nottinghamshire Farmlands**. These structures have the potential to change the landscape character of the **South**

Nottinghamshire Farmlands, particularly in the more sparsely settled southern areas. The power generation industry will continue, therefore, to be a dominant feature of the region.

6.2.8 **Minerals: sand and gravel**

Gypsum mining has had a significant impact upon the landscape and countryside of the north-eastern section of the region. The minerals industry takes advantage of the Newark gypsum resource, which includes some of the world's finest deposits. Staple and Bantycock Quarries are located to the south of Balderton where they are serviced by the Jericho Works, a major manufacturing centre. A second manufacturing centre is located further south, at Staunton. Opencast gypsum extraction occurred at Kilvington Quarry until it was exhausted by 2004. Production was then transferred to Bantycock Quarry which has been dormant since 1991. British Gypsum state that high purity reserves at Bantycock will be sufficient for 6 years, following exhaustion of Kilvington, and therefore should last until 2015. 98 hectares of land to the south of Bantycock Quarry are allocated for gypsum extraction.

Although the mineral is extracted by opencast methods, the level landform helps to reduce the visual impact of the extraction sites, with the voids hidden from view. The surrounding landscapes, however, have a very open character which affords greater prominence to the overburden storage heaps and manufacturing plant. The general lack of trees and hedgerows along the gypsum outcrop near Newark means that there is scope for reclamation schemes to improve the environment, by including a greater level of planting than was present prior to extraction. The standards of reclamation have improved in recent years, as shown by the excellent restoration of Kilvington Quarry. Restoration is mainly to agriculture, although creation of lagoons of high wildlife value is also common. The high overburden to mineral ratio allows areas to be backfilled to original ground levels. 120 hectares of land are to be added to existing permissions at Bantycock Quarry; no other allocations are made within the forthcoming Minerals Local Plan.

6.2.9 **Climate Change**

Research has identified trends and emerging patterns of global climate change. Within the UK, implications for climate change include:

- Global temperature increases of between 1.8 and 4 degrees centigrade above the 1990s levels by the end of the 21st Century, with UK increases anticipated at 2 to 3.5 degrees by 2080.
- Greater warming in the South and East of the UK, rather than the West and North.
- Increasing temperatures resulting in milder winters and high summer temperatures.
- An increase in sea levels by 26-86 cm, by 2080. Extreme high water incidences 10 to 20 times more frequent, increasing coastal flood risks.
- Changes in rainfall patterns, with wetter winters and drier summers. The greatest changes are anticipated for the South and East of the UK, where summer rainfall could reduce by 50%, and snowfall reduced by 60 – 80% by 2080. **(1)**

These changes have the potential to impact on all other drivers for change in the future. The issues of the most relevance to the landscape character of the **South Nottinghamshire Farmlands** include:

Built Development:

- Increased development on land away from locations such as river corridors and low lying areas that are at risk from flooding.
- Sustainable design and layout of new development to result in less use of water, energy and raw materials.

Infrastructure:

- Pressure for renewable energy infrastructure, such as wind turbines to reduce emissions.
- Demand for new riverine defence works in response to tidal surges and high waves.

Minerals and Waste:

- Reducing the amount of waste land filled and increasing the amount of waste recycled and composted.

Agricultural and Land Management:

- Increased risk of river flooding and loss of land as a result of rising sea levels and coastal erosion.
- Changing weather conditions leading to longer growing seasons and the ability to grow different types of crops.
- The introduction of energy crops to provide an sustainable source of fuel.
- Gradual changes in flora and fauna in response to warmer, wetter conditions and more disturbed weather patterns.

Forestry and Woodland:

- Sustainability of forest tree species may alter due to changes in climatic conditions.
- Lengthy period of drought and dry conditions may lead to an increased risk of upland forest fire.

Tourism and Recreation:

- Increased number of visitors to the countryside due to higher temperatures.

(1) www.defra-gov.uk/environment/climatechange/about/ukeffect

6.3 Species List - South Nottinghamshire Farmlands

The following list includes native tree and shrub species that are commonly found within the **South Nottinghamshire Farmlands** and are suitable for inclusion in planting schemes. These are important for determining the area's regional character. A range of native species may also be appropriate to particular locations or sites. In these cases professional advice should be sought.

All plant material should be of local provenance or at least of British origin. The document 'Using local stock for planting native trees and shrubs' - Forestry Commission - Practice Note August 1999 by George Herbert, Sam Samuel and Gordon Patterson; provides guidance in this respect. A list of suppliers is provided on the Flora Locale website – www.floralocale.org

TREES	Botanical name	Woodlands	Hedges	Hedgerow trees	Wet areas/ stream sides
Alder (Common)	Alnus glutinosa	□			□
Ash	Fraxinus excelsior	■	□	■	□
Cherry (Wild)	Prunus avium	□			
Crab apple	Malus sylvestris	□	□		
Elm (Wych)	Ulmus glabra	□	□	□	
Maple (Field)	Acer campestre	□	□	□	
Oak (Common)	Quercus robur	■	□	■	
Willow (Crack)	Salix fragilis	□	□	□	■
Willow (White)	Salix alba			□	■

SHRUBS	Botanical name	Woodlands	Hedges	Hedgerow trees	Wet areas/ Stream sides
Blackthorn	Prunus spinosa	□	■		□
Dogwood (Common)	Cornus sanguinea		□		
Hawthorn	Crataegus monogyna	□	■	□	□
Hazel	Corylus avellana	■	■		■
Holly	IIex aquifolium	□	□		
Osier	Salix viminalis				□
Privet (Wild)	Ligustrum vulgare		□		
Rosa (Dog)	Rosa canina	□	□		□

■ Dominant species

□ Other species present

6.4 Visual Character of the Landscape

6.4.1 Introduction

This is a tract of rolling lowland landscape dominated by arable cultivation. The area contains some of the highest quality agricultural land in the District and has a very strong arable tradition. Areas of low-lying alluvial land to the south and north east have been drained and agriculturally improved which has reinforced the arable tradition. The settlement pattern has a strong impact on the character of the landscape with large nucleated commuter villages and towns introducing a suburban influence to an otherwise distinctly rural landscape. In the more remote parts of the **South Nottinghamshire Farmlands** the traditional red brick character of the small villages has survived intact. A low level of woodland and regular pattern of medium to large-scale hedged fields has led to much of the landscape diversity and interest being associated with village side pastoral landscapes and isolated pockets of mature parkland.

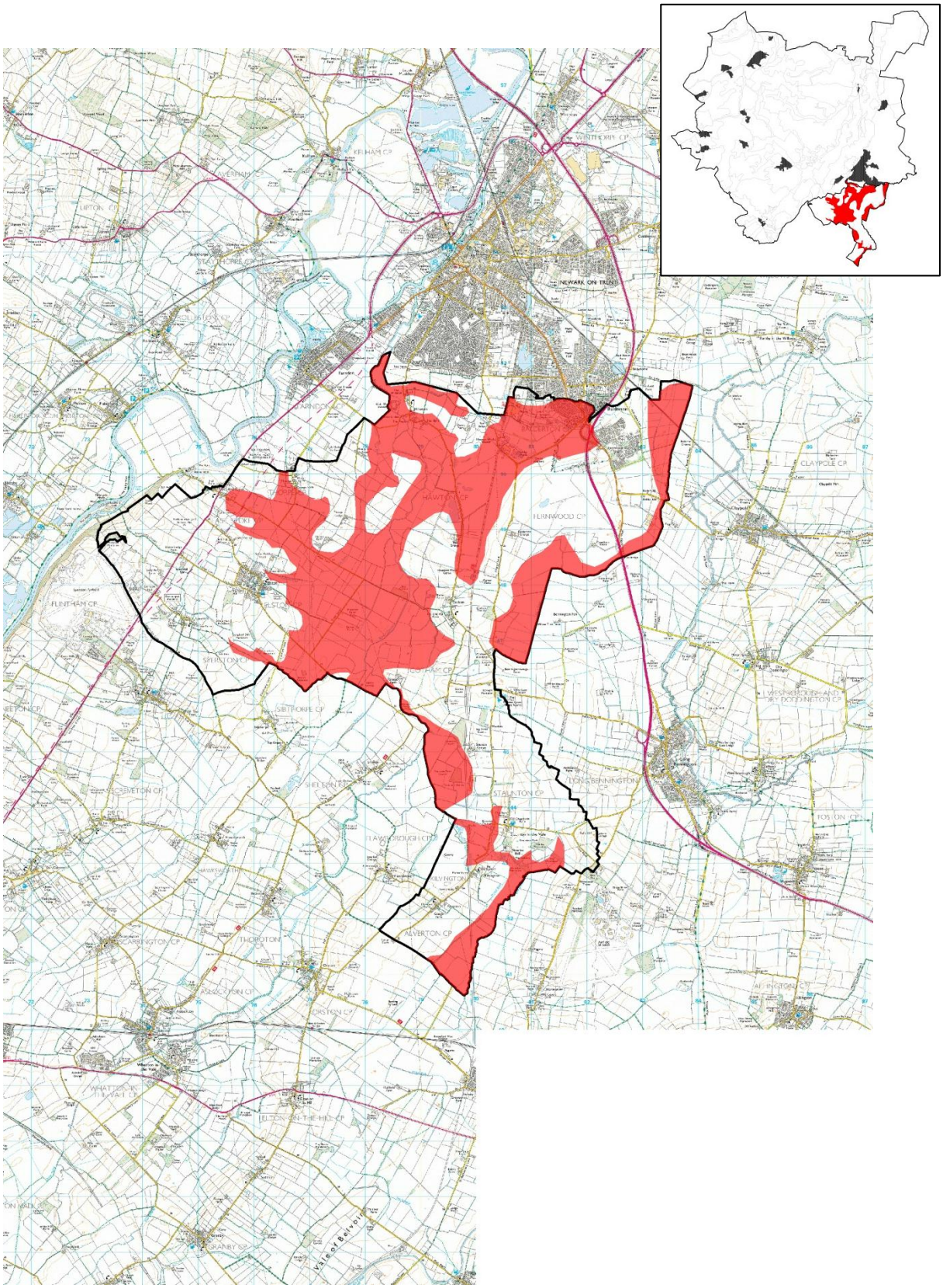
The **South Nottinghamshire Farmlands** can be sub-divided into two distinct landscape types both of which occur in Newark and Sherwood. These are the:

- Meadowlands
- Village Farmlands

These have been classified generically which means that, theoretically, the landscape types could occur at any location within the country where there are similar physical resources and historical patterns of land use. In reality the landscape types possess a distinctively local character, because they share the broad characteristics of the regional character area, or represent a particular aspect of that character.

South Nottinghamshire Farmlands: Meadowlands

Figure 6.3 Location of Meadowlands within South Nottinghamshire Farmlands



This is a flat, low-lying, uninhabited and often inaccessible landscape with a strong sense of space, characterised by open areas of farmland and a remnant pattern of large hedged fields. It has the following characteristic features:

- Flat low-lying topography
- Seasonally wet alluvial and peaty soils
- Open, spacious views, sometimes enclosed by rising ground
- Remnant pattern of large hedged fields defined by thorn hedges or ditches
- Small broad leaved plantations
- Absence of farmsteads or other buildings

Landscape description

These are simple, but distinctive landscapes that have evolved from former areas of moor, fen and open pasture on low-lying alluvial land. The Meadowlands were largely enclosed by the beginning of the 19th century and remained under meadow and pasture until being agriculturally improved after the Second World War. The character of the Meadowlands is now controlled to a large degree by the predominance of arable farmland. One of the key features that distinguish the Meadowlands from the adjacent Village Farmland landscapes is their relatively uninhabited and inaccessible character. There is virtually no settlement within the levels themselves with the isolated farmsteads and villages preferring drier locations on the mudstone, to the edge of the alluvium. This historic settlement pattern reflects the properties of the alluvial and peaty soils, which are naturally prone to waterlogging.

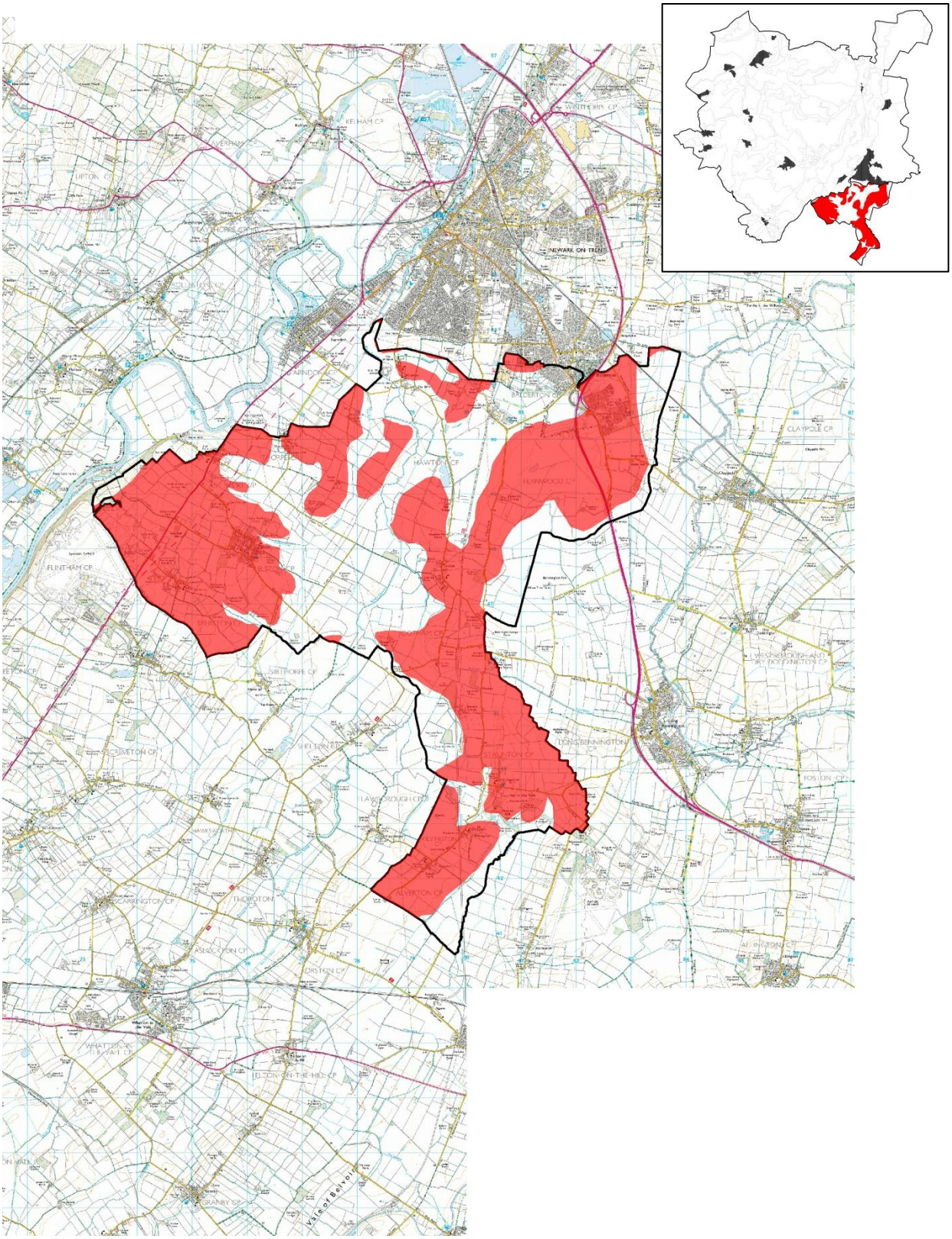
Access to the farmlands is generally along a sparse network of narrow lanes and hedged trackways. The farmsteads adjoining the levels in the north east of the region are served by a number of straight narrow lanes, which run directly across the levels, and also link the small red brick villages on the adjoining mudstone.

Another feature is occasional small geometric plantations and coverts. These sometimes form prominent landscape features, being highly visible across the broad levels. Elsewhere the only tree cover arises from the very occasional and sporadic hedgerow tree, and from trees and shrubs along the many small streams, ditches and dykes that drain the levels.

The Meadowlands are also distinguished by their very broad, open and spacious character. Relatively large areas of the flats have been enclosed by a pattern of medium to large-scale hedged fields. Field patterns are more prominent along the margins of the levels where they are sometimes well defined by ditches and low hawthorn hedges. The flat landform and low level of tree cover allow extensive views and the many pylon lines originating from the power stations in the Trent Valley assume great prominence. In other areas the enclosure pattern has fragmented or become totally lost. In places, the landscape has a distinctive “prairie” style character characterised by open, featureless landscapes with remnant thorn hedges. The Meadowlands in this part of the region flank the Devon which flow in a northerly direction to drain into the Trent close to Newark. The River has low channels that are cut well below the level of the surrounding farmlands which has enabled arable cropping to encroach to the river channel edges over most of their course. Consequently the rivers do not have a strong landscape identity or riparian character.

South Nottinghamshire Farmlands: Village Farmlands

Figure 6.4 Location of Village Farmlands within South Nottinghamshire Farmlands



This is gently rolling agricultural landscape with a simple pattern of large arable fields and village settlements. It has the following characteristic features:

Characteristic features

- Gently rolling topography
- Simple pattern of large arable fields
- Neatly trimmed hawthorn hedges
- Nucleated villages with traditional red brick and pantile roofed buildings
- Suburbanised commuter villages and small towns
- Small-scale pastoral landscapes along village edges

Landscape description

Corresponding with the Mercia Mudstone outcrop lying between Nottingham and Newark, this is a relatively large tract of land that dips eastwards from the Trent Trench to the lower-lying Meadowlands of the Devon catchment. The regular, medium to large-scale field pattern of low, trimmed and often gappy hedgerows is the dominant feature of the landscape. The gently rolling landform and general lack of tree cover allows medium distance views over predominantly arable landscapes of homogenous character. Longer distance views open up eastwards following the fall of the dip slope. The relationship between the solid and drift geology is the overriding factor in determining the structure and character of the landscape in the north-eastern areas of the Village Farmlands. Narrow bands of mudstone stand 5- 10 metres above sinuous channels and broad open flats of alluvium.

Intensive management of the arable farmlands has produced large areas where the field pattern is formed from low, neatly trimmed hawthorn hedgerows. These have often become gappy, although the overall enclosure pattern of medium to large fields is still very much intact. The dominance of arable cultivation and general lack of tree cover creates the

impression of a landscape with a comparatively uniform character and weak “sense of place”. The strength of this impression varies throughout the landscape with the more distinctive and intimate landscapes being found adjacent to settlement.

A varied settlement pattern is evident arising from the series of small nucleated villages, and larger commuter villages. In the more remote areas the smaller, red brick villages often link directly with intimate pastoral landscapes containing small irregular field patterns, species-rich hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees. A profusion of mature garden trees along the village edges also helps to create intimate, well treed landscapes that are well integrated with the surrounding farmlands. Occasionally the pastures contain ridge and furrow. These landscapes have a strong “sense of place” and a unified and harmonious character.

To the north east it is the drier conditions prevailing on the mudstone that have determined the historic settlement pattern. The red brick villages and isolated farmsteads sit on the mudstone, often at the margin of the lower-lying alluvial deposits. On many farms large modern buildings have been erected which are highly visible due to the close proximity of the open alluvial landscapes.

Woodland is not a significant component of the Village Farmlands landscape although locally it does help to break down the rather uniform character. The woodland pattern is formed from a scattered distribution of small-scale, straight-edged blocks of mainly broad-leaved woodland. The sparse distribution of hedgerow trees also compounds the general lack of tree cover. Ash, oak and willow are the main hedgerow tree species with sycamore and horse chestnut more prevalent on the approaches to settlement. Lines of willow along ditch lines and small streams are also a notable feature within the landscape.

The landscape, therefore, is largely rural in character with suburban influences being introduced by the larger settlements. To the south of Newark and Balderton, urban fringe and industrial influences associated with gypsum mining have had a large impact. These influences are heavily etched into the landscape to the south of Balderton where the activities of the gypsum mining industry are made more visible by the open nature of the surrounding farmlands. A number of voids, earth mounds and restored areas are found with associated plant and buildings. Straight residential edges, industrial units, scrap-yards and areas of rough grass lie beyond the gypsum works to form the urban edge of Newark.

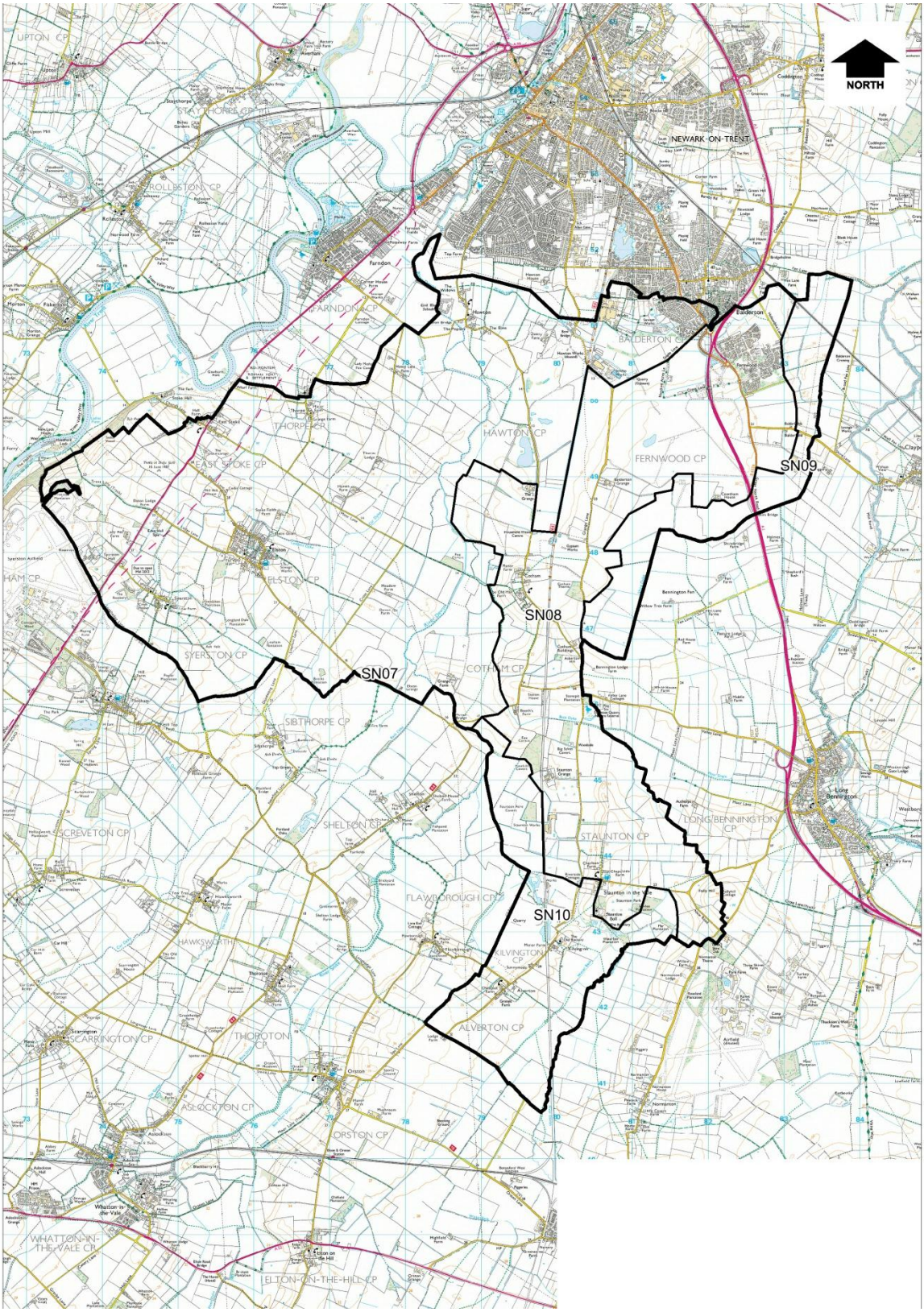


Figure 6.5 Policy Zones within South Nottinghamshire Farmlands

6.5 Landscape Policy Sheet

6.5.1 **Policy Zones Contents Sheet**

South Nottinghamshire Farmlands Policy Zone SN PZ 07: Elston Village Farmlands
Policy: Conserve and Create

The area is located to the south of Newark and Farndon, and encompasses the villages of Syerston, Elston, East stoke, Thorpe, Hawton and part of Balderton (south of Newark). The River Trent forms part of the north-west boundary, whilst the Cotham Dismantled Railway forms much of the eastern boundary. The A46 bisects the area and a number of minor roads cut across the landscape throughout.

Pylons and power lines also intersect the landscape, particularly in the centre of the Policy Zone, running from north to south. Some restored mineral workings are apparent, with newly planted broadleaved woodland, fishing lakes and wetland areas. Some industry is evident to the north-east corner of the Policy Zone, whilst further to the south, the area is dominated by large arable fields with highly fragmented hedgerows and views interrupted by the numerous pylon lines.

The landform is generally flat, with open views out to higher ground, interrupted intermittently by wooded skylines and pylons & power lines. The existence of a relatively strong network of hedgerows and occasional woodland planting mean that views are often intermittent.

Arable farmland dominates the area, with some pastoral fields evident around the vicinity of the settlements. Field scales are generally medium to large when associated with arable land use, and small to medium when associated with pastoral land use. Field boundaries are predominantly formed by generally well maintained Hawthorn hedgerows and sometimes by ditches where hedgerows have been lost. Hedges to the larger scale intensive arable fields are sometimes fragmented or lost in areas, however, those bounding smaller scale pastoral fields are often mature and species-rich. Some horseyculture exists in these pastoral fields, and post and rail fencing and some temporary electric fencing is evident.

- Hedgerows and field margins provide a good network throughout the area, along with riparian links. Along with these vegetation links, there are a number of Biological SINC designations:
- 2/803 – Lowfield Lane Grasslands, Balderton ‘Damp alluvial grasslands’
- 5/2129 – Balderton Works Meadow (II) ‘Notable neutral horse paddocks with a rich flora’
- 2/804 – Balderton Works Meadow (I) ‘A small remnant of species-rich grassland’
- 5/208 – Balderton Dismantled railway South ‘A dismantled railway with substantial areas of grassland and scrub’
- 2/637 – Lowfield Grassland, Balderton ‘A small species-rich remnant of a once notable grassland’
- 5/222 – Hawton Tip grassland ‘A large area of ruderal and base-rich grassland developed on gypsum spoil’
- 5/2258 – The Grange Ditch, Hawton ‘A drain of interest for Water Beetles’
- 5/2168 – Cotham Flash ‘An area of open water and associated habitat of ornithological note’
- 5/2229 – Hawton Old Gypsum Works Ponds ‘Ponds of interest for Water Beetles and Water Bugs’
- 5/2173 – Hawton Works Grassland ‘A large area of grassland with notable plant species’

- 2/974 – Hawton Civil War Front 'A notable pasture community on an archaeological site'
- 2/588 – River Devon (North of Cotham) 'A historically interesting water course with valuable riparian features and a locally diverse aquatic flora'
- 2/971 – Back Dyke Grassland, Cotham 'A species-rich grassland adjacent to Back Dyke'
- 2/749 – Trent Lane Wood 'A small but characteristic area of deciduous woodland'
- 5/345 – Primrose Plantation 'A trentside woodland with notable plant species'
- 2/585 – Flintham Wood 'A well-wooded river bluff'
- 2/694 – River Trent (Gunthorpe to Fiskerton) 'A representative length of the Trent of high wildlife value'
- 2/695 – The Nabbs 'A large and valuable community of gravel colonists and scrub developed on an island in the River Trent'

Isolated woodland occurs throughout the Policy Zone. Of particular note is the area of woodland south of Hawton (Fox Covert) at Pyketts farm, where new planting can be seen as part of restoration works, and include poplars grown for Biomass fuel. Several Industrial sites are located within the area, particularly in the north of the Policy Zone, south of Newark, (Jericho Gypsum Works, Hawson Gypsum Works and Lowfield Works). There is also a sewage works near Balderton.

There are a number of settlements in the Policy Zone including; Syerston, Elston, East Stoke, Thorpe, Hawton and part of Balderton (south of Newark). The majority of these settlements have historic cores with vernacular characters (aside from the more recent development of Balderton). Some infill and peripheral development is evident in the villages, East Stoke and Elston have conservation areas and there are numerous Listed Buildings within the settlements of Hawton, Thorpe, Elston, and Syerston. East Stoke is close to the site of historic battle (Stoke Field 1487) along with the remains of a deserted village surviving as earthworks, one of several Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the area.

A number of threats and drivers for change exist in the area and these include:

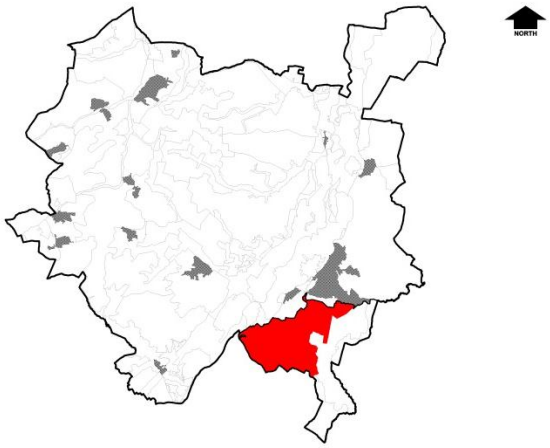
- The construction of the new A46 route through the west of the area is likely to have a highly disruptive impact, with loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Encroachment of horsey culture on existing fields.
- Intensification of arable farming and/or lack of management leading to further fragmentation and loss of hedgerows and consequent loss of existing field pattern.
- Redundant mineral workings provide opportunities for new landscape and vegetation.
- Further residential development, particularly to the fringes of Balderton.
- Further Industrial development.

SN PZ 07 Elston Village Farmlands

PHOTOGRAPH

CONTEXT

NCC Landscape Type: Village Farmlands
Policy Zone: SN PZ 07
Landscape Character Parcel: ES14 and ES15



CHARACTERISTIC VISUAL FEATURES

- Flat and open topography with north-eastern section situated on urban edge.
- Predominantly intensive arable land use, with well- trimmed hawthorn hedgerows to boundaries, often fragmented in places.
- Some pastoral fields and horsey culture, generally in vicinity of settlements.
- Views interrupted by power lines and pylons running east to west through the area, and by the busy A46.
- Predominantly vernacular settlements of Syerston, Elston, East Stoke, Thorpe and Hawton, along with the more recent development of Balderton.
- Historic landscapes, Stokefield battlefield, and several Scheduled ancient monuments.

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Landscape Condition

The Landscape Condition is defined as **moderate.**

The area has a **coherent** pattern of elements composed of predominantly arable fields and isolated farms; there are **some** detracting features, including sewage works, Industrial works, the busy A46 and new A46 under construction, and pylons and pylon lines. Overall this gives a visually **coherent** area. There are a number of Biological SINC designations (2/803 – Lowfield Lane Grasslands, Balderton; 5/2129 – Balderton Works Meadow (II); 2/804 – Balderton Works Meadow (I); 5/208 – Balderton Dismantled Railway South; 2/637 – Lowfield Grassland, Balderton; 5/222 –

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

Condition	**Moderate**
Pattern of Elements:	Coherent
Detracting Features:	Some
Visual Unity:	Coherent
Ecological Integrity:	Moderate
Cultural Integrity:	Variable

Hawton Tip Grassland; 5/2258 – The Grange Ditch, Hawton; 5/2168 – Cotham Flash; 5/2229 – Hawton Old Gypsum Works Ponds; 5/2173 – Hawton Works Grassland; 2/974 – Hawton Civil War Front; 2/588 – River Devon (North of Cotham); 2/971 – Back dyke Grassland, Cotham; 2/749 – Trent Lane Wood; 5/345 – Primrose Plantation; 2/585 – Flintham Wood; 2/694 – River Trent (Gunthorpe to Fiskerton); 2/695 – The Nabbs). There is also the East Stoke and Balderton MLA included in the Policy Zone.

In ecological terms the area provides a **moderate** habitat for wildlife, with a relatively intensive arable land use with good hedgerow networks. Cultural integrity is **variable** in that the field pattern is generally intact, with hedgerows sometimes fragmented, although generally well maintained. A **coherent** area with a **coherent** functional integrity gives a **moderate** landscape condition.

Functional Integrity:	Coherent

Landscape Sensitivity

Sensitivity	**Moderate**
Distinctiveness:	Characteristic
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of Place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of Tree Cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

The Landscape Sensitivity is defined as **moderate.**

The components of the landscape are **characteristic** to the South-Nottinghamshire LCA. The time depth is **historic** (post 1600) giving a **moderate** sense of place overall.

The landform is **apparent** with **intermittent** tree cover giving a generally **moderate** visibility value within the Policy Zone. Views are intermittent due to the networks of generally mature hedgerows. A **moderate** sense of place and **moderate** visibility leads to a **moderate** landscape sensitivity overall.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS – Conserve and Create

Landscape Features

- **Create** new hedgerows and restore existing, seek opportunities to recreate historic field pattern where feasible. Contain new development within historic boundaries.
- Seek opportunities to restore arable land to pastoral and/or include field margins to enhance landscape character and biodiversity
- Enhance tree cover and landscape planting generally, in particular along A46 roadside, to **create** increased visual unity and habitat across the Policy Zone.
- **Conserve** the ecological diversity and biodiversity of the designated SINCs.
- Conserve the historic landscape and its wider setting allowing for greater appreciation and understanding of its heritage assets.

Built Features

- **Create** new development which reflects the local built

Condition

	Low	Moderate	High
Good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
Moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
Poor	CREATE	RESORE & CREATE	RESTORE

Sensitivity

vernacular. • **Conserve** what remains of the rural landscape by concentrating **creation** of new development around existing settlement.	

South Nottinghamshire Farmlands Policy Zone SN PZ 08: Cotham Village Farmlands
Policy: Create

The area is located south of Newark, encompassing part of the busy A1 road in the northern sector of the Policy Zone, stretching down to Staunton in the Vale in the south. Along with the A1, several minor roads also transect the area. The disused Cotham railway/mineral line runs north-south through the Policy Zone, and partially bounds the western edge. The recently developed town of Fernwood is situated to the north-east, whilst the village of Cotham lies at the centre of the area, with a number of farms and isolated houses throughout. The settlement of fernwood is entirely modern, whilst Cotham and the part of Staunton in the vale that fall within the Policy Zone have historic cores, with some modern infill evident. A number of listed buildings exist in this area both in Staunton in the Vale and Cotham

Topographically the area is a low lying, generally flat arable landscape. Open views are often visible, however hedges and pockets of woodland sometimes restrict long distance views. Frequent small to medium scale woodlands are evident particularly in the south. There is also occasional parkland in evidence at Balderton old hospital site and also Staunton Park, Staunton in the Vale.

The intensive nature of land-use in the Policy Zone is evident through the presence of numerous mineral works sites: Staunton Works in the south, Cotham Gypsum Works and Kilvington Quarry. Intensive arable farming is the dominant land use with medium to large scale fields. Some pastoral land and parkland is noted in the vicinity of settlements, particularly near Staunton in the Vale.

Field boundaries are composed predominantly of well-maintained Hawthorn hedgerows. These are often strongly trimmed, fragmented or lost altogether where fields are large and intensively arable. Hedgerows closer to village cores tend to be denser and more species-rich. Some Poplar trees are evident around the industrial works sites. Oak, Ash and Horse Chestnut outgrown trees are often present within mixed hawthorn hedges.

Other vegetation exists within the Policy Zone, with some scrubby field boundaries adjacent to drainage ditches, some riparian vegetation following drains, along with some areas designated as Biological SINCs:

- 2/750 – Mineral Line, Cotham ‘Scrub and base-rich grassland along a disused railway line’
- 1/104 – Cotham Station ‘Species-rich calcareous grassland and scrub developed on an ex-industrial site’
- 1/86 – Staunton Quarry ‘A valuable area of wetland, grassland and scrub communities on base-rich – of botanical and invertebrate zoological interest’
- 2/802 – Staunton Works ‘A disturbed area of land behind the Staunton Gypsum Works with notable botanical and zoological communities’
- 5/226 – Folly Hill Grassland and Pond ‘Notable species-rich meadows, partly tree planted’
- Geological SINC Designations also exist:
- 2/1024 – Bantycock Gypsum Pit, Newark ‘A quarry showing the complete geological succession of the area, from the Mercia Mudgroup (Keuper Marl) through to the Lower Lias, and also the mode of gypsum occurrence’

- 2/1025 – Old Stone Pits, Staunton in the Vale ‘An abandoned quarry containing an interesting spoil heap of fossiliferous Lower Lias Limestone’

A number of threats and drivers for change exist in the area. These include:

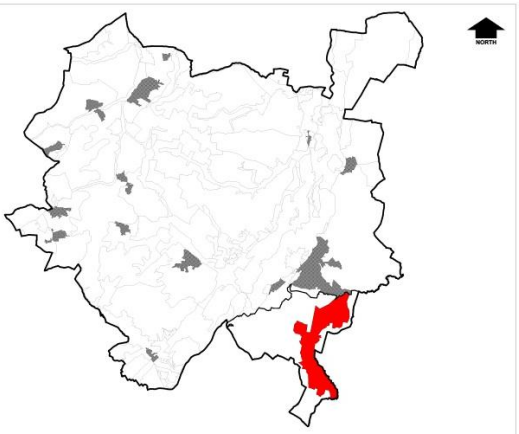
- Increased development of both industrial and residential, especially to the north of the area. Potential for planned settlement of Fernwood to expand.
- Increased intensity of agriculture particularly in the south.
- Loss of parkland and parkland trees.
- Fragmentation and loss of hedgerows, leading to subsequent further field pattern loss.

SN PZ 08Cotham Village Farmlands

PHOTOGRAPH

CONTEXT

NCC Landscape Type: Village Farmlands
Policy Zone: SN PZ 08
Landscape Character Parcel: ES12



CHARACTERISTIC VISUAL FEATURES

- Flat and open topography with northern section situated on urban edge.
- Predominantly intensive arable land use, with well trimmed hawthorn hedgerows to boundaries, often fragmented in places.
- Some pastoral fields and horsey-culture, generally in vicinity of settlements.
- Views interrupted by power lines and pylons running east to west through the area, and by the busy A1 to north-eastern area.

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Landscape Condition

The Landscape Condition is defined as **very poor.**

The area has an **incoherent** pattern of elements composed of predominantly arable fields and isolated farms, landfill sites and industrial works; there are **many** detracting features, including numerous industrial sites, mineral extraction and associated spoil heaps and tips, pylons and pylon lines and busy roads bisecting the area (A1). Overall this gives a visually **significantly interrupted** area. There are a number of Biological SINC designations (2/750 – Mineral Line, Cotham; 1/104 – Cotham Station; 1/86 – Staunton Quarry; 2/802 – Staunton Works; 5/226 – Folly Hill Grassland and Pond). Geological SINC designations also exist (2/1024 – Bantycock Gypsum Pit, Newark; 2/1025 – Old Stone Pits, Staunton in the Vale). There is also part of the Staunton in the Vale MLA included in the

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

Condition	**Very Poor**
Pattern of Elements:	Incoherent
Detracting Features:	Many
Visual Unity:	Significantly Interrupted
Ecological Integrity:	Moderate
Cultural Integrity:	Variable

Policy Zone.

In ecological terms the area provides a **moderate** habitat for wildlife, with a relatively intensive arable land use with good hedgerow networks. Cultural integrity is **variable** in that the field pattern is generally intact, with hedgerows sometimes fragmented, although generally well maintained. A **significantly interrupted** area with a **coherent** functional integrity gives a **very poor** landscape condition.

Functional Integrity:	Coherent

(Where one criterion is 'very poor' or 'very weak', this pushes the policy description into the next lowest category)

Landscape Sensitivity

Sensitivity	**Very Low**
Distinctiveness:	Indistinct
Continuity:	Recent
Sense of Place:	Very Weak
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of Tree Cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

The Landscape Sensitivity is defined as **very low.**

The components of the landscape are **indistinct** to the South-Nottinghamshire LCA. The time depth is **recent** (50 years) giving a **very weak** sense of place overall.

The landform is **apparent** with **intermittent** tree cover giving a generally **moderate** visibility value within the Policy Zone. Views are intermittent due to the networks of generally mature hedgerows. A **very weak** sense of place and **moderate** visibility leads to a **very low** landscape sensitivity overall.

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS – Create

Landscape Features

- **Create** new hedgerows and restore existing, seek opportunities to recreate historic field pattern where feasible. Contain new development within historic boundaries.
- Seek opportunities to restore arable land to pastoral.
- Enhance tree cover and landscape planting generally, in particular along the A1, to **create** increased visual unity and habitat across the Policy Zone.
- **Create** small scale woodland to contain and soften built development, particularly around Fernwood.
- Conserve the ecological diversity and biodiversity of the designated SINCs.

Built Features

- **Create** new development which reflects the local built vernacular.
- Conserve what remains of the rural landscape by concentrating **creation** of new development around existing settlement.

Condition

	Low	Moderate	High
Good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
Moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
Poor	CREATE	RESORE & CREATE	RESTORE

Sensitivity

South Nottinghamshire Farmlands Policy Zone SN PZ 10: Alverton Village Farmlands
Policy: Conserve

The area is relatively compact and extends from east of Shelton to the west of Normanton, encompassing the villages of Alverton, Kilvington and part of Staunton in the Vale. There are very few roads bisecting the area, aside from Grange Lane that connects the villages. The Kilvington Dismantled Railway draws a linear line through the centre of the Policy Zone, running north to south. A relatively large section to the west of the Policy Zone is occupied by a disused Quarry (west of Kilvington), now restored as a nature reserve, including a lake and new planting.

Landform is predominantly flat, being a broad flood plain, with some small undulation occurring in places. Views are long distance to the east towards the Vale of Belvoir, although areas of woodland and mature hedgerows often interrupt views.

The landscape is a mix of arable and pastoral farmland. Arable fields tend to be medium to large scale whereas pasture is contained in smaller fields located near to the villages. Well maintained hedgerows with trees are a common feature and form the majority of the field boundaries. Post & rail and post & wire fencing also feature in places, generally around the pastoral fields.

Woodland is also a feature of the area, where the restoration of the disused quarry exhibits areas of sensitive landscape improvement and recent woodland planting. A number of blocks of mixed woodland are also present along with shelterbelts along field boundaries. Species include Oak, Ash and Horse Chestnut. A number of Biological SINCs are designated throughout the Policy Zone and these include:

- 5/376 – Kilvington Lakes ‘A series of lakes of botanical and ornithological interest around former gypsum workings’
- 5/219 – Kilvington Railway ‘A representative section of dismantled railway with botanical interest’
- 2/842 – River Devon, Staunton ‘A notable length of water course’
- 2/813 – Staunton Park Pastures ‘Two damp grasslands of botanical interest’

There is also part of the Staunton in the Vale Mature Landscape Area designation present in the east of the Policy Zone.

The villages of Alverton, Kilvington and part of Staunton in the Vale that lie within the area are generally of a vernacular nature, all with historic cores. Remnants of a historic landscape exist in the area, particularly in the east around Staunton Hall and Manor farm. A number of Listed Buildings are present within the villages.

A number of threats and drivers for change exist in the area, and these include:

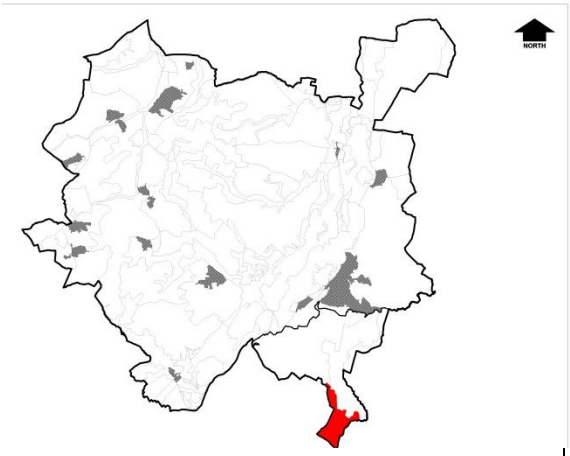
- Increase in residential development within and to periphery of settlements.
- Loss of woodland due to land use change.
- Intensification of agriculture and/or lack of management leading to fragmentation and loss of hedgerows, resulting in loss of field pattern.

SN PZ 10 Alverton Village Farmlands

PHOTOGRAPH

CONTEXT

NCC Landscape Type: Village Farmlands
Policy Zone: SN PZ 10
Landscape Character Parcel: ES16 and ES17



CHARACTERISTIC VISUAL FEATURES

- Flat and open topography due to being broad flood plain.
- Predominantly intensive arable land use, with well-trimmed hawthorn hedgerows to boundaries.
- Also permanent pasture and some horsey culture, generally in vicinity of settlements.
- Pylons and power lines run in the south-west of the Policy Zone.
- Vernacular settlements of Alverton and part of Staunton in the Vale.

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Landscape Condition

The Landscape Condition is defined as **very good.**

The area has a **coherent** pattern of elements composed of predominantly arable fields and isolated farms; there are **few** detracting features, including an electricity sub-station and pylons & pylon lines. Overall this gives a visually **unified** area. There are a number of Biological SINC designations (5/376 – Kilvington Lakes; 5/219 – Kilvington Railway; 2/842 – River Devon, Staunton; 2/813 – Staunton Park Pastures). There is also the Staunton in the Vale MLA included in the Policy Zone.

In ecological terms the area provides a **moderate** habitat for wildlife, with a relatively intensive arable land use with good hedgerow

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

Condition	**Very Good**
Pattern of Elements:	Coherent
Detracting Features:	Few
Visual Unity:	Unified
Ecological Integrity:	Moderate
Cultural Integrity:	Good
Functional	Strong

networks. Cultural integrity is **good** in that the field pattern is generally intact, with hedgerows sometimes fragmented, although generally well maintained. A **unified** area with a **strong** functional integrity gives a **very good** landscape condition.

Integrity:

(Where one criterion is 'very good' or 'very strong', this pushes the policy description into the next highest category)

Landscape Sensitivity

Sensitivity **Moderate**

The Landscape Sensitivity is defined as **moderate.**

The components of the landscape are **characteristic** to the South-Nottinghamshire LCA. The time depth is **historic** (post 1600) giving a **moderate** sense of place overall.

The landform is **apparent** with **intermittent** tree cover giving a generally **moderate** visibility value within the Policy Zone. Views are intermittent due to the networks of generally mature hedgerows. A **moderate** sense of place and **moderate** visibility leads to a **moderate** landscape sensitivity overall.

Distinctiveness:	Characteristic
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of Place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Extent of Tree Cover	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

LANDSCAPE ACTIONS – Conserve

Landscape Features

- Seek opportunities to restore arable land to pastoral.
- **Conserve** the ecological diversity and biodiversity of the designated SINCs.
- **Conserve** hedgerow trees and replace where necessary.
- **Conserve** permanent pasture and parkland area near to Staunton hall, seek opportunities to restore arable land to pasture.

Built Features

- **Conserve** what remains of the rural landscape by concentrating new development around existing settlements of Alverton, Kilvington and Staunton in the Vale.

Condition

	Low	Moderate	High
Good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
Moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
Poor	CREATE	RESORE & CREATE	RESTORE

Sensitivity