

**Newark and Sherwood
Landscape Character Assessment
Supplementary Planning Document**

DECEMBER 2013

Newark and Sherwood Landscape Character Assessment SPD

Document Passport

Title:	Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document
Status:	Adopted Supplementary Planning Document
Summary:	The Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is a District- level assessment of landscape character which forms part of the wider assessment for the County. Its preparation has followed the County-level methodology and the document provides an explanation of the differences between landscapes that is based around a sense of place, local distinctiveness, characteristic wildlife, and natural features. In identifying specific Landscape Policy Zones (LPZs) and related actions the LCA will play an important role in the planning framework and in decisions over new development.
Date of Adoption:	11 th December 2013
Adopted By:	Economic Development Committee

Consultation

Summary:	The District Council consulted on the document seeking views from local residents, landowners, developers, town & parish councils and other interested parties for a period of 6 weeks from 3 rd October and 14 th November 2011. Following consideration of representations received the Council revised the document and submitted the final version to the Council's Economic Development Committee on the 11 th December 2013 for adoption.
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Availability of Document:

Copies of this document, the accompanying Screening Reports for the Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) are deposited at Kelham Hall (open between 8.45 a.m. and 5.15 p.m. Monday to Thursday and 8.45 a.m. to 4.45 p.m. on Friday) and on the Council's website: <http://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/spds/>. In addition paper copies of the SPD are available to view at Newark, Ollerton and Southwell libraries.

If you have any questions please contact the Council's Growth Directorate on 01636 650000 or planning@nsdc.info

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1.1 Executive Summary

The Landscape Character Assessment was published in 2010. In October 2011 consultation was carried out on the document in order that it could be incorporated into the Newark & Sherwood Local Development Framework as a Supplementary Planning Document. Following the consultation further work was undertaken to address the issues raised by consultee, resulting in this finalised SPD.

1.1.1 Planning context

The European Landscape Convention (ELC) is the first international convention to focus specifically on landscape which was created by the Council of Europe. It defines landscape as:

“An area as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”. (Council of Europe 2000)

The ELC is the first international convention to focus specifically on landscape and was signed by the UK Government in February 2006, and became effective in March 2007. The convention promotes landscape protection, management and planning, as well as European co-operation on landscape issues. The convention applies to all landscapes, towns and villages, open countryside, the coast and inland areas, ordinary and degraded landscapes, as well as those that are afforded protection.

The Convention was reaffirmed as being part of the Defra delivery framework through the Natural Environment White Paper in June 2011.

Landscape Character is defined as:

“The tool that is used to help us to understand, and articulate, the character of the landscape. It helps us identify the features that give a locality its 'sense of place' and pinpoints what makes it different from neighbouring areas.”

(Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland, The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002)

Landscape Character Assessment can be used in many situations, from devising indicators to gauge landscape change to inform regional planning, local development, environmental assessment and the management of landscapes.

1.1.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 28th March 2012

The NPPF provides the context within which sustainable development can be met through the planning system and paragraph 7 lists the economic role, social role and environmental roles that need to be met. The third bullet point is:

- ***an environmental role*** – *contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.*

One of the twelve core planning principles outlined on Page 5, paragraph 17 is bullet point 5

- *take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;*

1.1.3 **Newark and Sherwood Landscape Character Assessment**

The Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is a District- level assessment of landscape character which forms part of the wider assessment for the County. Its preparation has followed the County-level methodology and the document provides an explanation of the differences between landscapes that is based around a sense of place, local distinctiveness, characteristic wildlife, and natural features. In identifying specific Landscape Policy Zones (LPZs) and related actions the LCA will play an important role in the planning framework and in decisions over new development.

Reflecting this importance the LCA has been a key part of the evidence base informing the production of the Core Strategy (CS) and the Allocations & Development Management (A&DM) Development Plan Documents (DPDs). The Assessment has been a significant factor in the making of decisions on site allocations within the A&DM DPD.

Core Policy 13 (Landscape Character) of the Core Strategy sets out that the Local Development Framework (LDF) will introduce a comprehensive landscape assessment of Newark and Sherwood which will identify the landscape character condition and sensitivity of each Landscape Policy Zone. The policy also sets out the expectation that development proposals will positively address the implications of the LPZs and demonstrate that the aims and objectives for that area would be contributed to.

The LCA offers an objective methodology for assessing the varied landscape within Newark and Sherwood and gives a greater understanding of what makes the landscape within the District locally distinctive. This is reflected through the identification of Policy Zones across the 5 Landscape Character Types represented within Newark and Sherwood, shown on Figure 1.1. The Landscape Character Assessment provides the basis for the implementation of Core Policy 13 and as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) of the LDF is capable of being a material consideration with within the planning process.

1.1.4 **Other Landscape Publications**

Other document's which may also be relevant to landscape issues within the District include:

- Southwell Landscape Setting (November 2012);
- Newark & Sherwood Green Infrastructure Strategy;
- Nottinghamshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan; and
- Newark and Sherwood Nature Conservation Strategy.

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These documents are available to view on the District Councils website.

<http://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/evbase>

In addition a Wind Energy Supplementary Planning Document is, at the time of writing, under production with a Landscape Capacity Study being prepared to support this. Further information can be found through the link below.

<http://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/spds/>

1.2 How to use this document

This document describes the landscape character of the Newark and Sherwood District Council administrative area, which consists of 5 different County Character Areas. The report has been structured to enable users not to have to read the whole document to access the information they need, but to be able to go directly to the key information.

Each chapter of the report covers a distinct character area, and describes the broad characteristics of the area. It describes:

- The physical and human influences within the **character area**, (Refer to Appendix R for detailed Landscape History and Appendix I for soil/geology plans)
- The main factors that have brought about change in the **character area**, and considers the trends and pressures that may produce change in the future
- The native species list for the **character area**
- The visual character of the landscape for each **landscape character type**, the main Landscape Character types have been described and policy sheets included which summarise the key characteristics of each **Policy Zone**.

For example, if a user wants to know about the landscape character of an area of land south of Southwell the steps required are:

1. Refer to Figure 1 to determine the Landscape Character Area within which the site falls into (in this case the Mid-Nottinghamshire Farmlands).
2. Refer to Figure 2 the Mid-Nottinghamshire Farmlands Character Area, to check which Policy Zone the site falls into, in this case MN PZ 38. (Species listed under the Mid Nottinghamshire Farmlands list would be suitable as native planting for a site within this area.)
3. Refer to the appropriate character description for MN PZ 38 (Halloughton Village Farmlands) to obtain a summary of the field data collected about the area.

The analysis sheet describes the key criteria which have been used to define the landscape condition, which in this case is *Good*. The Policy Sheet then describes the key criteria that have been used to define landscape sensitivity, which in this case is *Moderate*. These factors have been used to derive a **Landscape Policy** – in this case *“Conserve and reinforce” – actions that conserve distinctive features and features in good condition, and strengthen and reinforce those features that may be vulnerable*. Landscape actions are these listed at the base of the policy sheet, these are divided into actions relating to landscape features and built features.

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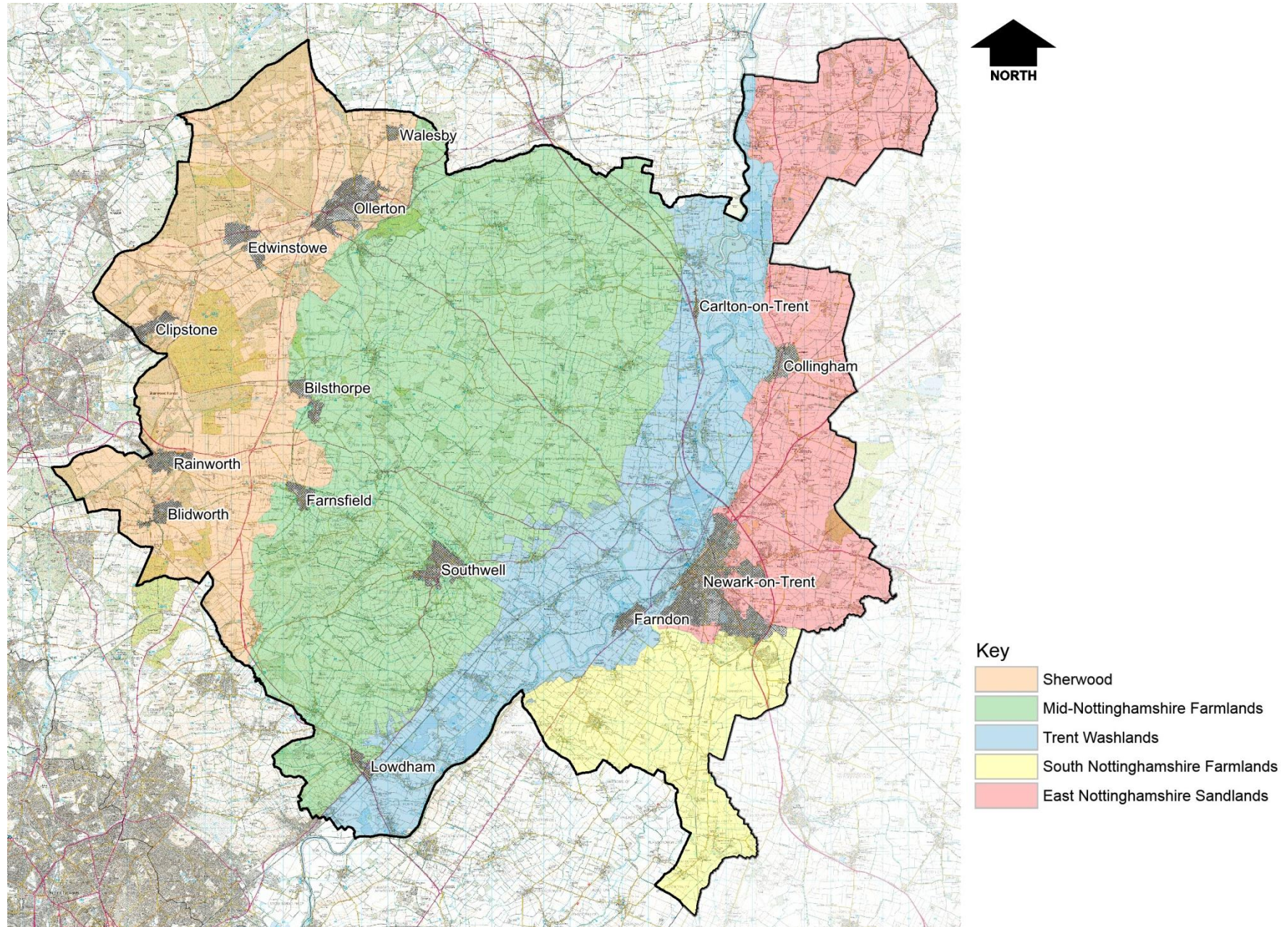


Figure 1.1 Regional Character Areas overlaid on an OS map

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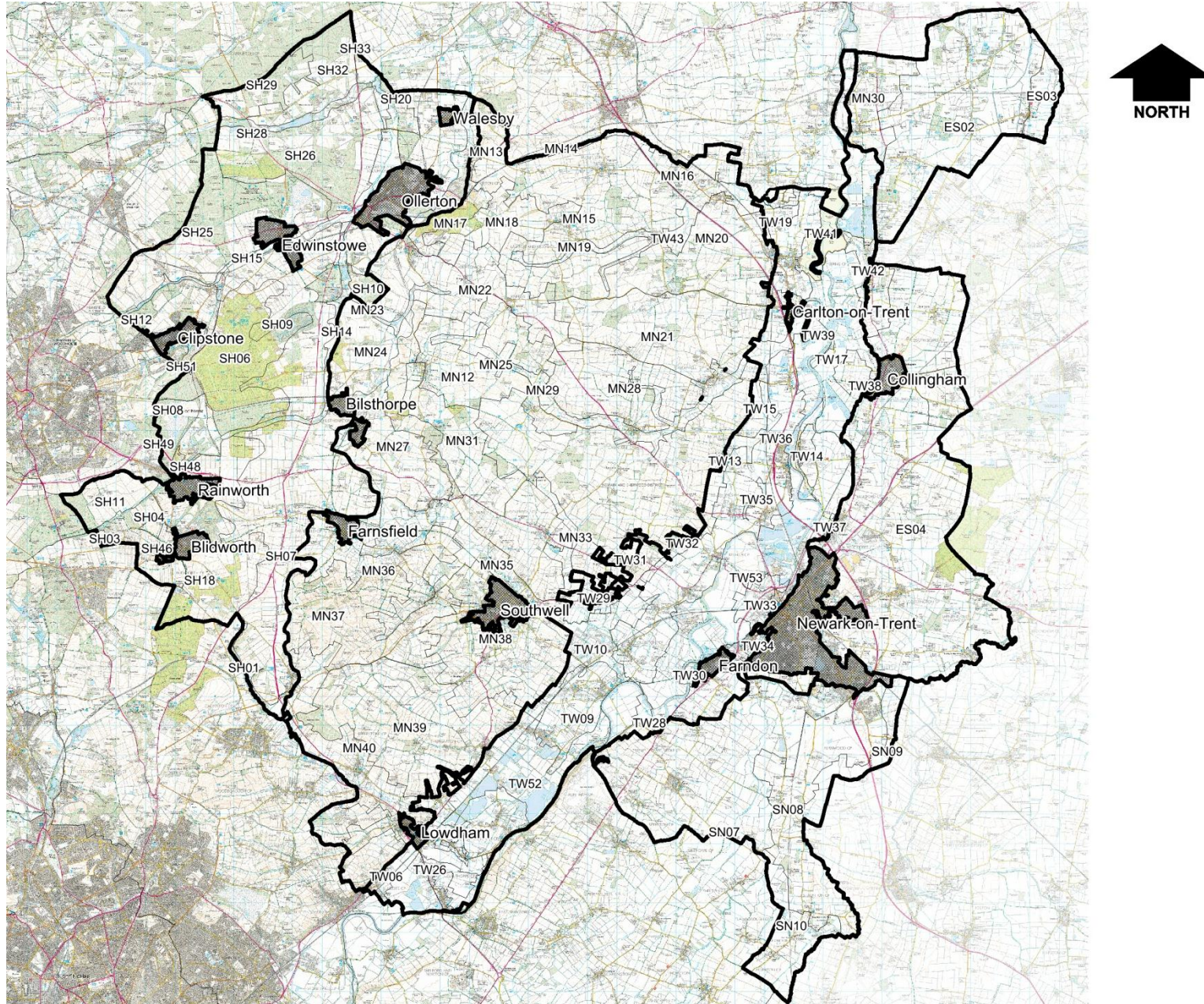


Figure 1.2 Policy Zones overlaid on an OS map

1.3 Policy Zones – Landscape Actions

For each of the Policy Zones a series of Policy sheets has been developed which detail a landscape action for each Policy Zone. The landscape actions are defined as follows:-

Conserve – actions that encourage the conservation of distinctive features and features in good condition.

Conserve and Reinforce – actions that conserve distinctive features and features in good condition, and strengthen and reinforce those features that may be vulnerable.

Reinforce – actions that strengthen or reinforce distinctive features and patterns in the landscape.

Conserve and Restore – actions that encourage the conservation of distinctive features in good condition, whilst restoring elements or areas in poorer condition and removing or mitigating detracting features.

Conserve and Create – actions that conserve distinctive features and features in good condition, whilst creating new features or areas where they have been lost or are in poor condition.

Restore – actions that encourage the restoration of distinctive features and the removal or mitigation of detracting features.

Restore and Create – actions that restore distinctive features and the removal or mitigation of detracting features, whilst creating new features or areas where they have been lost or are in poor condition.

Reinforce and Create – actions that strengthen or reinforce distinctive features and patterns in the landscape, whilst creating new features or areas where they have been lost or are in poor condition.

Create – actions that create new features or areas where existing elements are lost or are in poor condition.

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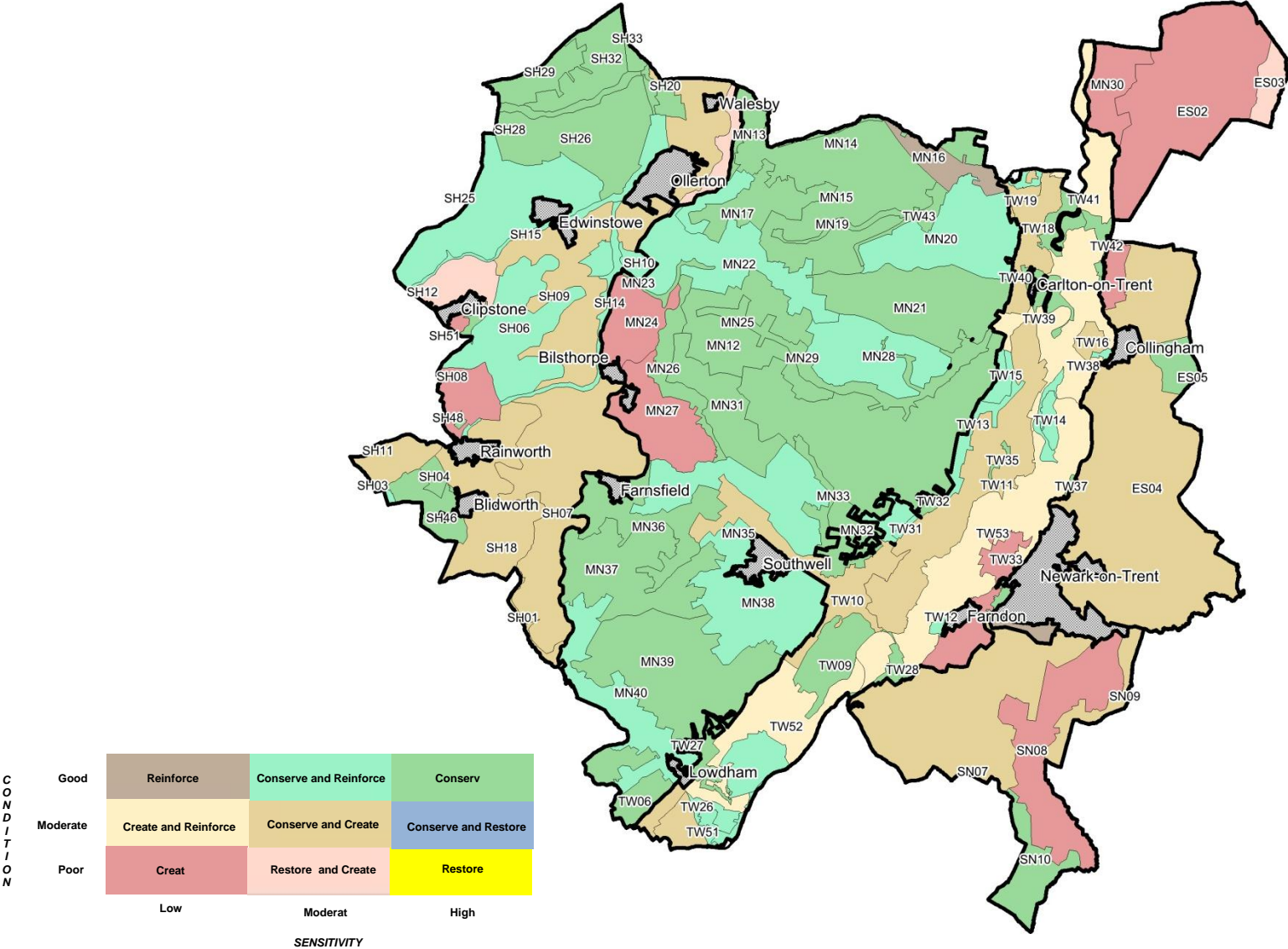


Figure 1.3 Landscape Policy Zones and Landscape Actions for each Policy Zone

Newark and Sherwood Landscape Character Assessment

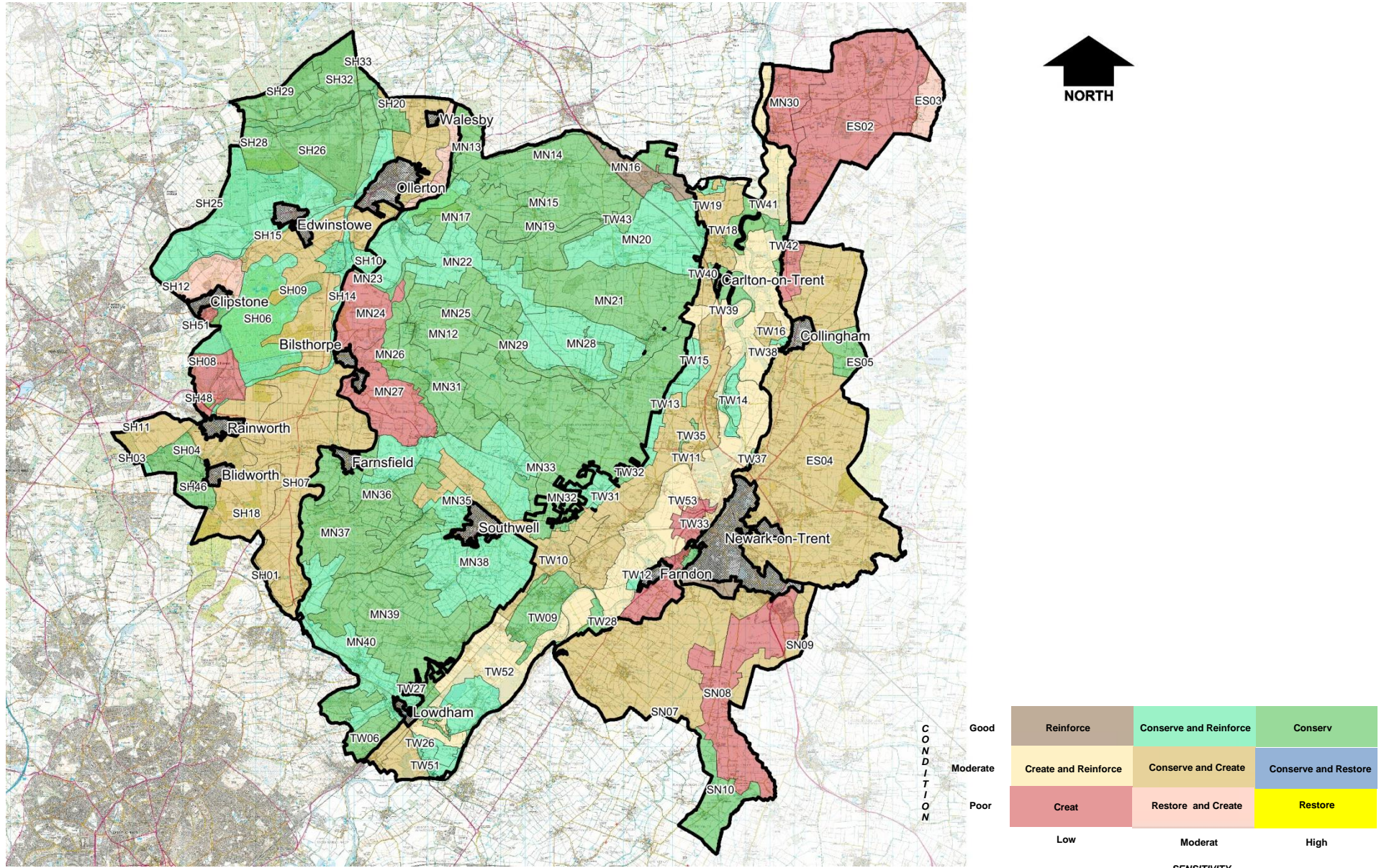


Figure 1.4 Landscape Actions overlaid on an OS map

1.4 Introduction and Methodology

When applied to the landscape, the notion of “character” is not a concept that merely concerns itself with aspects of scenic quality. The character of the landscape derives from a complex interaction of a wide range of physiological and historical phenomena. These include geology, topography, soils, ecology, archaeology, architecture, local customs and culture as well as the pattern of land use, settlement and fields. It is the varied interaction between these factors which produces the local and regional variations in character for which the English landscape is famous. The diversity of that character is a central part of our landscape heritage and vital to people’s appreciation and enjoyment of the countryside.

The landscape that we see today is a product of its historical evolution, reflecting the underlying physical resource and the changing nature of human exploitation of the land. The landscape will, of course, continue to change and evolve, reflecting the changing priorities and demands that society places on it. Over recent decades, however, these priorities and demands have often degraded rather than improved the fabric of the landscape. There is now a general consensus that positive action is needed to reverse this trend, and that this should place a high value on conserving and enhancing the inherent character and diversity of our landscapes.

It is the responsibility of Local Authorities to undertake county and district level assessments of the landscape character. These assessments play an integral role not only within the wider planning framework, offering guidance from the outset with key aims and objectives to help guide development, but during the planning process itself providing a useful tool and checklist for both the local authority and the design team.

This landscape character assessment covers the District of Newark and Sherwood. It relates to the evolving landscape character assessment for the whole of the county of Nottinghamshire and other associated county wide documents including the Nottinghamshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan and the Nottinghamshire Historic Landscape Characterisation. The methodology for Nottinghamshire Landscape Character Assessment, prepared by Nottinghamshire County Council [NCC], has been used to assess the landscape character of Newark and Sherwood. A copy of the full methodology is contained at Appendix A. All information contained at the introductory paragraphs within each of the following 5 chapters is specific to Newark and Sherwood unless stated otherwise.

1.4.1 **Context**

Newark and Sherwood District covers two National Character Areas [NCAs] as defined by Natural England; Trent and Belvoir Vales [48] and Sherwood [49]. At a county level, Regional Character Areas [RCAs] have been defined by Nottinghamshire County Council. While these relate to the NCAs, which cover much broader areas, they do not have exactly the same boundaries and have been created using the ‘Living Landscapes Project’ methodology. This is a GIS based process which is not only associated with the NCA work carried out by Natural England but is an established methodology used by counties across the country, including Derbyshire and Leicestershire both of which border Nottinghamshire. A total of five RCAs fall within Newark and Sherwood; Sherwood, Mid-Nottinghamshire Farmlands, Trent Washlands, East Nottinghamshire Sandlands and South Nottinghamshire Farmlands (Figure 1 shows these character areas in the context of the whole District). Each RCA forms a separate chapter within this Landscape Character Assessment. The RCAs are further divided into Landscape Description Units [LDUs], these are homogenous units within the broader RCAs.

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1.4.2 Landscape Character Assessment

Within each Regional Character Area the LDUs are subdivided into manageable survey units known as Landscape Character Parcels [LCPs]. Each LCP is assessed in terms of its individual landscape character in accordance with the methodology. A photograph which is representative of the character of each LCP is also taken and its location recorded. This information is detailed on the Landscape Character Assessment field survey sheets for each Regional Character Area which are included at the relevant Appendix D,E,F,G,H.

1.4.3 Draft Policy Zones

Following on from the Landscape Character Assessment of each LCP a number of Draft Policy Zones [DPZs] are created using the completed survey information. Key characteristics are tabulated to help determine which LCPs may or may not be grouped together to form a DPZ, for instance LCPs with obvious similarities become one distinct DPZ. The DPZs combine either one or more LCP depending upon the similarities of their attributes. A table showing the derivation of each DPZ for each Regional Character Area is included at Appendix J. [N.B. on the summary tables - under Landform/Landuse/Building Style etc. plain text denotes dominant or prominent characteristics and italics denote apparent or insignificant characteristics.]

1.4.4 Landscape Condition and Sensitivity Assessment

The DPZs are assessed in terms of their Landscape Condition and Sensitivity in accordance with the methodology. This information is detailed on the Landscape Condition and Sensitivity Assessment field survey sheets for each Regional Character Area, which are included at the relevant Appendix M,N,O,P,Q, and forms the basis of the Landscape Policy for each Zone. It is at this stage, once the survey process is complete, that the Draft Policy Zones become Policy Zones.

1.4.5 Policy Zones

A series of Policy Sheets, one per Policy Zone, covering each Regional Character Area within the District of Newark and Sherwood, have been produced and are set out within the relevant chapters 2 – 6, these are supported by a plan showing the resultant Policy for each Zone. Each Policy Sheet includes an overall character summary, specific characteristic features, a matrix and summary of the landscape condition and sensitivity and a representative photograph. Finally, a series of landscape actions is defined for each Policy Zone. An overarching plan of all Policy Zones within Newark and Sherwood has also been produced [Figure 3 and overlaid on an OS map Figure 4].

It should be noted that only the key heritage assets, which contribute to the wider character of landscape, have been described within this document. Users of the document should check with the planning authority's specialist heritage teams on the content, nature and significance of all heritage designation/sites for their area of interest.

Collectively these provide a Policy Framework for the conservation and restoration of Sherwood, Mid-Nottinghamshire Farmlands, Trent Washlands, East Nottinghamshire Sandlands and South Nottinghamshire Farmlands falling within Newark and Sherwood. This framework will help to ensure that landscape character is reflected in the many decisions and actions that affect its continuing evolution. The intention is not to fossilise change, but to provide a context that will enable policy making, planning and landscape management

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decisions to be made which respect and sustain the diversity and character of our countryside.