



# Clent and Lickey Hills Area **Landscape Value Study**

June 2019

Prepared by Carly Tinkler CMLI and CFP for CPRE Worcestershire

# Clent and Lickey Hills Area

# Landscape Value Study

Technical Report  
Prepared for CPRE Worcestershire  
June 2019

Carly Tinkler BA CMLI FRSA MIALE  
**Landscape, Environmental and Colour Consultancy**  
46 Jamaica Road Malvern  
WR14 1TU  
carlytinkler@hotmail.co.uk  
07711 538854



people spaces places

Community First Partnership  
The Coach House  
143-145 Worcester Road  
Hagley, Worcestershire  
DY9 0NW  
info@cfpuk.co.uk  
01562 887884

## Document Version Control

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Draft V1	14.06.2019	CL / CT	Issued to CPREW for comment
Draft V1	02.07.2019	CL / CT	Minor edits
Final	08.07.2019	CL / CT	Final version issued to CPREW for publication

## Contents

### Page number

#### Acronyms

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Landscape Value</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Method, Process and Approach</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Landscape Baseline</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Landscape Value Study Results</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Conclusions and Recommendations</b>	<b>116</b>

## Appendices

**Appendix A:** Figures

**Appendix B:** Landscape Value Study Criteria

## Figures

**Figure 1:** Study Area

**Figure 2:** Landscape Value Study Zones

**Figure 3:** Former Landscape Protection Areas

**Figure 4:** Landscape Baseline - NCAs and LCTs

**Figure 5:** Landscape Baseline - Physical Environment

**Figure 6:** Landscape Baseline - Heritage

**Figure 7:** Landscape Baseline - Historic Landscape Character

**Figure 8:** Landscape Baseline - Biodiversity

**Figure 9:** Landscape Baseline - Recreation and Access

**Figure 10:** Key Features - Hotspots

**Figure 11:** Valued Landscape Areas

## Acronyms

Below are the acronyms most frequently used in the report:

AGLV	Area of Great Landscape Value
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
ASNW	Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland
BD	Bromsgrove District
BDC	Bromsgrove District Council
CA	Conservation Area
CPREW	Campaign to Protect Rural England (Worcestershire)
DC	District Council
ECA	Environmental Character Area
GI	Green Infrastructure
GLVIA3	Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3 <sup>rd</sup> Edition
HECZ	Historic Environment Character Zone
HER	Historic Environment Record
LCA	Landscape Character Assessment
LCT	Landscape Character Type
LCP	Land Cover Parcels
LDU	Landscape Description Unit
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LPAA	Landscape Protection Area
LSCA	Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment
LVS	Landscape Value Study
NCA	National Character Area
NDP	Neighbourhood Development Plan
OS	Ordnance Survey
QoLC	Quality of Life Capital
RCA	Regional Character Area
RHPG	Registered Historic Park and Garden
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
VLA	Valued Landscape Area
VP	Viewpoint
WCC	Worcestershire County Council

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background to the Commission

- 1.1.1 In January 2019, the Campaign to Protect Rural England Worcestershire (CPREW) commissioned chartered landscape architect Carly Tinkler, and Community First Partnership (CFP) - a specialist parks, green space and heritage consultancy (see relevant experience below) to carry out a study that would establish levels of 'landscape value' in and around the Clent and Lickey Hills.
- 1.1.2 The aim of the study is to provide the evidence to justify the designation / protection of certain areas of high landscape value through new policies in Bromsgrove District Council (BDC)'s revised District Plan.
- 1.1.3 In order to achieve this aim, CPREW concluded that a Landscape Value Study (LVS) would need to be carried out.
- 1.1.4 The LVS would need to identify and analyse the character and qualities of the Clent and Lickey Hills' landscapes, and draw conclusions about the various areas' levels of landscape value. If any areas were found to be of particularly high value and worthy of policy protection (termed 'Valued Landscape Areas' (VLAs) for the purpose of this commission), the LVS would recommend where the VLA boundaries should be drawn.
- 1.1.5 CPREW's intention is to submit the LVS to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for their consideration.
- 1.1.6 The concept of 'landscape value' and how it is established are explained in the following sections, but in summary, from a planning policy perspective, its relevance to this study is in relation to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)'s paragraph 170.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.1.7 The policy requires '*Planning policies and decisions*' to '*contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment*'. It sets out how this is to be achieved in a list, the first item on which is '*protecting and enhancing valued landscapes*' (para. 170 a)).
- 1.1.8 The NPPF does not define what a 'valued landscape' is; however, it is clear that for a landscape to be considered 'valued' as per para. 170 a), it must score highly in terms of its level of landscape value.
- 1.1.9 Para. 170 a) goes on to say that 'valued landscapes' must be protected and enhanced '*in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan*'.
- 1.1.10 This requirement is explained in more depth in Section 2, but in summary, it means that if a landscape is not statutorily-designated (i.e. it is not a National Park, the Broads, or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), then in order for it to enjoy protection and benefit from enhancement, it must exhibit a level of 'quality', or possess 'qualities', which are identified in the relevant development plan. The LVS would therefore have to consider this matter in relation to Bromsgrove's current District Plan.

## 1.2 Relevant Experience

- 1.2.1 For this commission, CPREW invited tenders from suitably qualified and experienced professionals, who had a good knowledge of the local area.
- 1.2.2 The team carrying out the study is a collaboration between CFP and Carly Tinkler. Both are based in Worcestershire, and CFP are within walking distance of the Clent Hills.
- 1.2.3 CFP has contributed to national research about the parks and green space sector, having led on and carried out much of the research that underpinned the HLF State of UK Parks studies in 2014 and 2016.
- 1.2.4 In terms of Strategic Planning, CFP has carried out green space audits and developed a range of green space strategies over the past 15 years. They are familiar with published guidance in this area and have contributed to national publications. They have recently completed two Green

---

<sup>1</sup> The NPPF was first published in 2012, and was revised in July 2018; unless otherwise stated this report refers to the paragraph numbering in the 2018 version.

- Space Strategies for large authorities in the West Midlands; both projects have included significant GIS-based mapping work as well as large-scale quality assessments.
- 1.2.5 CFP also has extensive experience of applying the Green Flag Award quality assessment criteria to a wide variety of green space types. These criteria are also relevant to, and applied in, landscape and visual value studies, as quality is a factor in making value judgements (see Section 2).
- 1.2.6 CFP's team is led by Ian Baggott BSc MSc Leisure and Tourism, FRSA, MMRS (Managing Director). Ian is one of the leading consultants in the field and has contributed to national publications relating to green space strategies for CABI Space and the Mayor of London, and also the State of UK Parks in 2014 and 2016. He has overseen numerous green space strategies from site audits to designing stakeholder workshops, from community consultation to re-designing service delivery.
- 1.2.7 Ian is assisted by Lizzie Hughes BSc (Hons), a specialist GIS operator with experience of consultation and engagement across the life cycle of projects.
- 1.2.8 Carly Tinkler is a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI), a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (FRSA), and a Member of the International Association for Landscape Ecology (MIALE).
- 1.2.9 She specialises in landscape, environmental and colour assessment, planning, masterplanning and design, and has done so for over 35 years. She was a contributor to the Landscape Institute's *Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* 1<sup>st</sup> edition, and a reviewer of the current 3<sup>rd</sup> edition ('GLVIA3').
- 1.2.10 She is a member of working groups set up by the Landscape Institute and Natural England which include the production of landscape sensitivity and capacity assessment (LSCA) guidance, and consultation comments on the 2018 NPPF and Defra's proposed 'Future for Food, Farming and the Environment' (2018); she also judges awards and competitions for the Institute.
- 1.2.11 Carly advises national governments, NGOs, local planning authorities, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) partnerships, commercial developers and local communities, often representing them at planning inquiries. She has been responsible for the planning, design, co-ordination, management and implementation of many large-scale high-profile schemes in the UK and abroad. She is currently working with several communities on landscape and visual assessments for Neighbourhood Development Plans.
- 1.2.12 For the last few years, the majority of Carly's work has involved making judgements about whether a landscape is 'valued' in the context of the NPPF. She has acted as an expert witness at many public inquiries where this has been the only subject under consideration; in most cases, the inspector / Secretary of State have agreed with her judgements.
- 1.2.13 Carly is familiar with the landscapes of the area, having lived and worked in and around Worcestershire for much of her life.
- 1.2.14 Carly is assisted by Catherine Laidlaw.
- 1.2.15 Cat has over four years' experience of working on a range of landscape projects, including landscape character and visual impact assessments. She has been involved in several landscape and visual studies, some of which were within AONBs and 'valued landscapes'.
- 1.2.16 Cat specialises in carrying out desktop studies, researching a wide range of topics including heritage / historic landscape character; also, in undertaking on-the-ground assessments of landscape and visual quality and value (including Green Flag Award quality assessments).
- 1.2.17 She was the researcher on heritage and interpretation plan reports for parks and green spaces in various locations across England as part of Heritage Lottery-funded projects.

### 1.3 Structure of Report

1.3.1 **Section 2** provides an introduction to the concept of 'landscape value', and summarises the national and local planning policies which are of relevance to it.

1.3.2 **Section 3** explains the methods used for the assessment, the approach to the commission, and the processes followed.

1.3.3 **Section 4** describes the landscape character of the study area, and the key value factors and indicators identified.

1.3.4 In **Section 5**, the results of the value study are explained.

1.3.5 **Section 6** sets out the study's conclusions, and a number of suggested recommendations.

1.3.6 Appendices are as follows:

**Appendix A** contains the figures referred to in the report (see list of figures on Contents pages). Please note that the figures are available as separate documents.

**Appendix B** sets out the criteria used in making judgements about levels of landscape value (can be found at the end of the report).

## 2 Landscape Value

### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 This section provides an introduction to the concept of 'landscape value', and summarises the national and local planning policies which are of relevance to it.
- 2.1.2 At the outset it is important to note that judgements about 'landscape value' include consideration of 'visual value'.
- 2.1.3 The terms are explained in more detail below, but in summary, landscape and visual value are separate entities, albeit they are interrelated.
- 2.1.4 A landscape can have high value regardless of whether anyone can see (or experience) it or not, even if a contributory factor to its high value is 'scenic beauty' (or 'tranquillity').
- 2.1.5 Visual value takes into account recognition of the value attached to particular views by people, and any indicators of the value which is attached to certain views.
- 2.1.6 Section 3 sets out the methods used and criteria applied in making judgements about levels of both landscape and visual value.

### 2.2 'Landscape'

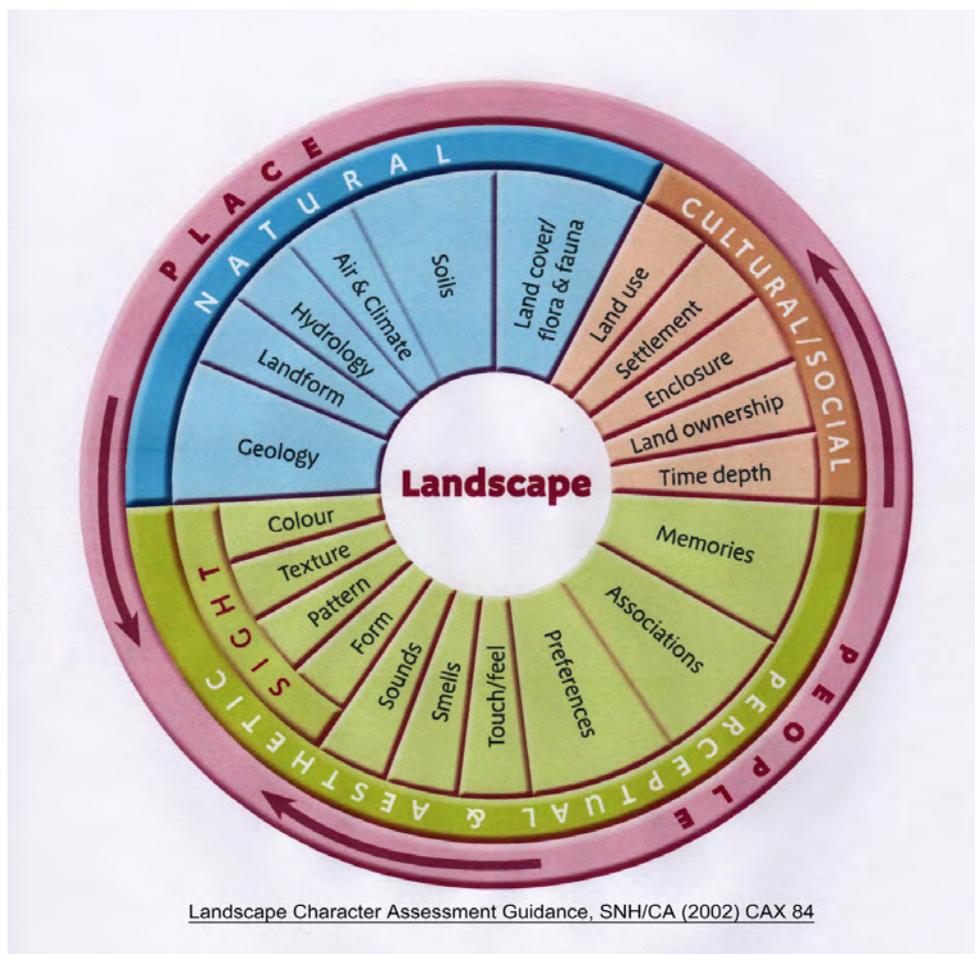
- 2.2.1 Before explaining 'landscape value' / 'valued landscapes' in more detail it is important to understand what exactly is meant by 'landscape' in the context of the terms.
- 2.2.2 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) defines landscape as 'territory'. The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage's publication *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland* (2002) provides the following definition:

*'Landscape is about the relationship between people and place. It provides the setting for our day-to-day lives. The term does not mean just special or designated landscapes and it does not only apply to the countryside. Landscape can mean a small patch of urban wasteland as much as a mountain range, and an urban park as much as an expanse of lowland plain. It results from the way that different components of our environment - both natural (the influences of geology, soils, climate, flora and fauna) and cultural (the historical and current impact of land use, settlement, enclosure and other human interventions) - interact together and are perceived by us (Figure 1.1). People's perceptions turn land into the concept of landscape.'*

*'This is not just about visual perception, or how we see the land, but also how we hear, smell and feel our surroundings, and the feelings, memories or associations that they evoke. Landscape character, which is the pattern that arises from particular combinations of the different components, can provide a sense of place to our surroundings'.*

- 2.2.3 The 2014 version of the 'Figure 1.1' referred to in the 2002 guidance is shown below.

LCA Guidance 2014 Figure 1: What is Landscape?



## 2.3 Landscape Value

- 2.3.1 Understanding 'landscape value' is essential, as it plays a major role in many of the UK's environmental, landscape and social planning policies, for example in the context of NPPF paragraph 170 a)'s 'valued landscapes' (see below).
- 2.3.2 Landscape value is also an integral part of the process of making judgements about levels of landscape and visual sensitivity, capacity, and effects arising from various forms of change / new development.
- 2.3.3 Landscape value has been defined in 'GLVIA3'<sup>2</sup> as '*The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society, bearing in mind that a landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons*'.
- 2.3.4 The Council of Europe has published a useful document<sup>3</sup> which explains the concept of landscape value, and why it is so important. It describes the different types of landscape value, including economic, social and heritage.
- 2.3.5 The function or role that a particular area or site performs in the landscape may also add to its value. As well as the provision of Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services<sup>4</sup>, Green Infrastructure

<sup>2</sup> *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition* (2013) Landscape Institute / Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (usually referred to as 'GLVIA3') - see Section 3

<sup>3</sup> *Naturopa No. 98* (2002) [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/heritage/Landscape/naturopa\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/heritage/Landscape/naturopa_en.asp)

<sup>4</sup> Natural Capital can be defined as follows: '*Natural Capital is the sum of our ecosystems, species, freshwater, land, soils, minerals, our air and our seas. These are all elements of nature that either directly or indirectly bring value to people and the country at large. They do this in many ways but chiefly by providing us with food, clean air and water, wildlife, energy, wood, recreation and protection from hazards.*' (HM Government, 2018, p. 19). The flow of goods and services supplied by Natural Capital is called ecosystem services which are "*the benefits people obtain from ecosystems*" (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005, p. V) such as space for recreation including associated health benefits and flood risk mitigation services. In 2011, the UK Government published its Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP) making a commitment to "*put natural capital at the heart of government accounting*" (HM Government, 2011, p. 36). See for example recent Natural Capital-based Health Economic

- (GI) and so on, a piece of land may be an important open space / gap / buffer / corridor / approach / gateway; it may also make an important contribution to its wider landscape context and setting (including that of valuable features).
- 2.3.6 In 2002, the ELC was published; it places great emphasis on the 'value of landscapes'. The ELC was informed by the landscape character and value assessment work carried out in the UK during the 1980s and 90s, much of which was also published as LCA guidance in 2002.
- 2.3.7 The 2002 LCA guidance explains that:
- 'People value landscape for many different reasons, not all of them related to traditional concepts of aesthetics and beauty. It can provide habitats for wildlife and a cultural record of how people have lived on the land and harnessed its resources. Landscape can have social and community value, as an important part of people's day-to-day lives. It can contribute to a sense of identity, well-being, enjoyment and inspiration. It has economic value, providing the context for economic activity and often being a central factor in attracting business and tourism. Landscape Character Assessment has emerged as an appropriate way to look at landscape because it provides a structured approach to identifying character and distinctiveness as well as value.'*
- 2.3.8 As GLVIA3 points out, 'a landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons'. The problem is that inevitably, judgements have to be made about what is of greatest importance / value, to whom, and why.
- 2.3.9 These value judgements factor in, and must be ratified by, 'common consensus'. Thus, the most highly valuable landscapes and their features / functions / qualities / attributes are of international significance / rarity, and / or of benefit to the planet, and to the largest numbers of people.
- 2.3.10 World Heritage Sites (WHSs) are recognised as being of 'Outstanding Universal Value'. In the UK, AONBs are examples of landscapes which are widely agreed to be highly valuable for their *outstanding* natural beauty, and which thus require protection through national designation and planning policy.
- 2.3.11 Some LPAs have (or had) local landscape designations and policies which specifically protect them - explained further below. However, 'local' - i.e. neighbourhood / community value is also a very important consideration, and one which is often overlooked.
- 2.3.12 At para. 5.26, GLVIA3 states: '*The fact that an area of landscape is not designated either nationally or locally does not mean that it does not have any value*'. A 'small patch of urban wasteland' may be as valuable to some as a National Park is to others, if it is all they have to call and use as a 'landscape'.
- 2.3.13 The 2002 LCA guidance says:
- 'A landscape may be valued by different communities of interest for many different reasons without any formal designation, recognising, for example, perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness; special cultural associations; the influence and presence of other conservation interests... Landscape can have social and community value, as an important part of people's day-to-day lives. It can contribute to a sense of identity, well-being, enjoyment and inspiration. It has economic value, providing the context for economic activity and often being a central factor in attracting business and tourism.'*
- 2.3.14 The community and social value of the landscape matters greatly in land use planning, especially as this value is tied to the important role that Landscape Value plays in Quality of Life (see below). The ELC states:
- 'It is because people have a perception of their territory (definition of landscape) that they are capable of evaluating it, namely, of applying to this area "as perceived by people" value systems which underlie landscape assessment. This evaluation by the population enables people to voice their aspirations, the expression of which in the form of landscape quality objectives is the basic principle of landscape policies and of specific measures with a view to landscape protection, management and planning.'*

*'The landscape also bears within it a system of **social values**, which sometimes have to be highlighted through awareness-raising activities. **The landscape's social values are tied to its importance for quality of life, health, and to its contribution to the creation of local cultures.** [my emphases]*

*'Landscape identification, characterisation and assessment underlie landscape quality objectives. This is why such assessment should be done with the interested parties and population concerned, and not just with specialists in landscape appraisal and operations'.*

- 2.3.15 The potential value of undesignated landscapes is recognised in national and many local plan policies. For example, NPPF para. 170 b) requires planning policies and decisions to *'recognise the intrinsic beauty and character of the countryside'*, and NPPF para. 127 requires developments to *'add to the overall quality of the area'*.
- 2.3.16 Most importantly, the NPPF does not say that a landscape must be designated in order for the planning system to protect it from inappropriate development. This is derived from the core principles of the ELC, and is acknowledged in para. 8.213 of Bromsgrove's 2011 - 2030 District Plan which states: *'it is now recognised that all landscapes matter'*. The Plan follows the principles established by the ELC to use LCA to create a landscape 'gain'.

#### LANDSCAPE QUALITY

- 2.3.17 A landscape may be judged to be of a certain level of 'quality'. It may also possess certain 'qualities'.
- 2.3.18 In landscape and visual assessments, a landscape's 'quality' is factored in to judgements about its value. In terms of NPPF para. 170 a)'s 'valued landscapes', however, it is important to note that 'quality' is only one of many factors which must be considered (see reference to GLVIA3 Box 5.1 below).
- 2.3.19 Bromsgrove District Plan Policy BDP1 Sustainable Development Principles sub-policy 1.4 d) uses the term 'quality', stating that *'In considering all proposals for development in Bromsgrove District regard will be had to... [inter alia] the **quality** of the natural environment including any potential impact on biodiversity, water quality, geodiversity, landscape and the provision of/and links to green infrastructure (GI) networks'* (author's emphasis).
- 2.3.20 Landscape quality can be quantified (see for example the criteria in Table 1 Appendix B, and those used in the Green Flag Award Scheme<sup>5</sup>). However, peoples' opinions about 'quality' vary, and are often 'subjective'. Of course, landscape practitioners routinely have to deal with the issue of subjectivity, especially in relation to quality and consequent value. The 2002 LCA guidance promoted the use of objective, evidence-based character study to determine levels of quality and value, as opposed to the more subjective aspects of value such as 'scenic beauty' which had previously been used as the basis for many landscape designations including AONBs - see below.
- 2.3.21 Methods which have been developed to quantify landscape value objectively include the Quality of Life (QoL) Capital approach<sup>6</sup>. QoL integrates both objective and subjective indicators; it covers a very broad range of life domains and individual values. QoL is multidimensional, with the five key dimensions usually being described as: a) physical wellbeing; b) material wellbeing; c) social wellbeing; d) emotional wellbeing; and e) development and activity.
- 2.3.22 LCA can inform a QoL Capital exercise by indicating the benefits that individual features or areas provide in creating sense of place. Conversely, QoL can be used to assess character areas and their 'services' as well as their capacity to accept change / various forms of development.

<sup>5</sup> <http://greenflagaward.org/judges/judging-criteria/>

<sup>6</sup> QoL approach guidance was developed jointly by the Countryside Agency, English Nature, English Heritage and the Environment Agency to 'provide a consistent and integrated way of managing for Quality of Life' (<https://www.google.co.uk/#q=Quality+of+life+capital+overview+report+2001>). Although this guidance concentrates on the benefits for human Quality of Life that come from the environment, the approach is as valid for social and economic as for environmental benefits. The relationship between QoL and landscape issues is set out in Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland *Topic Paper 2: Links to other sustainability tools*. Essentially characterisation describes, whereas QoL evaluates and derives aims. The two are complementary. LCA can inform a QoL exercise by indicating the benefits that individual features or areas provide in creating sense of place. Conversely, QoL can be used to assess character areas and their 'services' as well as their capacity to accept further development such as housing.

- 2.3.23 Regarding 'landscape quality' specifically, LCA *Topic Paper 6* reminds us that changes to factors such as landscape quality can change the way in which the landscape is perceived. This also affects its value.
- 2.3.24 There are different aspects of landscape quality which need to be considered in landscape assessment. From an LCA perspective, '*Landscape quality (or condition) is based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape, and about its intactness, from visual, functional, and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements which make up the character in any one place.*'
- 2.3.25 'Landscape quality (condition)' is defined in GLVIA3 Box 5.1 as '*A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.*' A landscape's quality is very much related to its 'health'.
- 2.3.26 The term 'quality' in the 'landscape' context also reflects '*... the value that is placed on landscapes which appeal primarily to the visual senses, but this value is not absolute and tends to reflect prevailing ideas about which landscapes are of special value. Although quality is a separate issue from evaluation it is often linked because landscapes of higher quality may be more valued and more likely to be designated.*' [Source: Scottish Natural Heritage]
- 2.3.27 Quality in landscape terms may reflect a place which is considered beautiful because it is unspoilt, or because it is well-managed and cared-for, and the features which make it special are in good condition and intact. It may also be a judgement, varying from person to person, about the aesthetic and / or perceptual quality, or qualities, of the landscape, and how it 'makes them feel'.
- 2.3.28 Levels of landscape quality can be reduced through loss of condition resulting from certain management practices or lack of them, for example: this needs to be factored in to judgements about the landscape's overall sensitivity, albeit with consideration given to whether there is scope for improvement / restoration. However, it is important to note that a landscape may be defined as high quality because it is a wild but very healthy natural habitat or an ancient cultural site, which may not appear conventionally 'beautiful' to the casual observer.

#### LOCAL LANDSCAPE VALUE DESIGNATIONS AND POLICIES

- 2.3.29 Nationally-valuable landscapes such as AONBs are statutorily protected. Until relatively recently, a variety of designations were used by LPAs to protect 'locally-valuable landscapes'. Examples include 'Special Landscape Areas (SLAs), Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLVs), 'Landscape Protection Areas' (LPAAs).
- 2.3.30 However, it is now recognised that value designations made between the early 1900s and early 2000s were based on 'subjective' as opposed to 'objective' criteria, focussing on an area's 'scenic' or 'natural' beauty which stemmed from the 18<sup>th</sup> century obsession with 'visual passion'.
- 2.3.31 The term 'natural beauty' first appeared as a formal phrase in the legislation in the 1907 Act to formally establish the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest and Natural Beauty. It was later enshrined in the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act - the first AONB was designated in 1956. At that time, the meaning of 'natural beauty' was not defined, but it was almost exclusively based on 'scenic beauty'.
- 2.3.32 The AGLV designation was established under the Town and Country Planning Act 1947, the criteria being that the landscape should have 'a particular scenic value'.
- 2.3.33 Over time, however, our understanding of 'landscape' and the importance of 'character' has evolved considerably. It was eventually agreed that the term 'natural beauty' should be redefined, and objective value criteria developed, as beauty is both 'in the eye of the beholder' and only 'skin deep'.
- 2.3.34 Today it is understood and agreed that in relation to landscapes, the term 'natural beauty' goes well beyond scenic or aesthetic value. '*Natural beauty... is to do with the relationship between people and place. It encompasses everything - 'natural' and human - that makes an area distinctive*'<sup>7</sup>.

---

<sup>7</sup> Holdaway, E., *Origins and intentions of 1949 Act: Natural Beauty Bangor: Countryside Council for Wales 2007*; see also Selman, P. and C. Swanwick *On the Meaning of Natural Beauty in Landscape Legislation Landscape Research*. 35 (1): p. 3-26 2010

- 2.3.35 Government guidance relating to AONBs provides a useful non-technical definition: “*Natural Beauty*” is not just the look of the landscape, but includes landform and geology, plants and animals, landscape features and the rich history of human settlement over the centuries<sup>8</sup>.
- 2.3.36 More recently, the government clarified that land is not prevented from being treated as of natural beauty by the fact that it is used for agriculture, woodlands or as a park; or because its physiographical features are partly the product of human intervention in the landscape (S. 99 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006).
- 2.3.37 Clearly, if any new local landscape designations are to be established, they must be based on objective and up-to-date criteria which take these and other factors into account (see Section 3).
- 2.3.38 In the 2004 Bromsgrove District Local Plan, the landscapes of the Clent and Lickey Hills (and other areas) were designated as LPAAAs, and were specifically protected by planning policy.
- 2.3.39 The justification for the policies and reasons for the designation of LPAAAs was set out in para. 13.2, which explains that LPAAAs are ‘*places where the landscape forms an important element of local or even regional importance (these are listed in Appendix 8). Landscape Protection Areas are local designations of areas where it is considered that the character of the countryside and the quality of the landscape merits special protection. Even though schemes may be compatible with Green Belt policy, proposals which ignore the character and quality of the area through ill-considered size, siting, colour, finish or form of development will be resisted. The cumulative impact of potential development will also be taken into account.*
- 2.3.40 In fact, the LPAAAs were based on the AGLVs originally defined in the now archived County Development Plan for Worcestershire (1996 – 2011)<sup>9</sup>, in which they were also protected by policy (Structure Plan Policy CTC.2: ‘*Development which would adversely affect the landscape quality of Areas of Great Landscape Value (as defined on the key diagram) will not normally be allowed*’).
- 2.3.41 The County Development Plan for Worcestershire (1996 - 2011) described the AGLVs as ‘*areas identified as being of regional importance for their landscape. They tend to be areas of high land which are particularly sensitive to landscape change, and are also important areas of working countryside. Their sensitivity to change is to be assessed, along with the rest of the County, as part of the Landscape Character Assessment.*’
- 2.3.42 The areas covered by the former LPAA and AGLV designations are shown on Figure 3 in Appendix A.
- 2.3.43 The 2004 Bromsgrove District Local Plan expanded the area covered by the AGLV designation; for example, para. 13.5 of the 2004 Local Plan describes the uplands of Clent, Waseley, Beacon, Lickey and Weatheroak Hills as ‘*of regional landscape importance*’ and amended the AGLV to link ‘*the main high points of this ridge by their saddles*’.
- 2.3.44 This may have been in response to a ‘Landscape Issues Report’ carried out in 1990 which acknowledged the limitations of the AGLV designations due to their being ‘*based on surveys and concepts about 30 years old and generally include the higher land...leaving the remainder of the County largely without specific landscape protection policies. The result of this approach to landscape protection is that many of the components which make up the richness and diversity of the whole landscape of the County are omitted.*’ (para. 2.8).
- 2.3.45 Over recent years, however - perhaps because of the constraint they may pose to new development - LPAs have been encouraged to abandon local designations based on landscape value. PPS7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas advised against local landscape designations. LCAs were to form the basis for determining the impact of proposals on the landscape.
- 2.3.46 The LCAs now produced by LPAs are quantitative not qualitative. LCAs may record that certain elements and features are rare, consider landscape quality / condition, and make

---

<sup>8</sup> *Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: A guide for AONB Partnership members*, Countryside Commission, CA24, November 2001, p.6

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20015/planning\\_policy\\_and\\_strategy/203/structure\\_plan\\_archived\\_content](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20015/planning_policy_and_strategy/203/structure_plan_archived_content)

- recommendations for conservation, enhancement and management, but on the whole, and as a matter of principle, no value judgements are made.
- 2.3.47 Levels of value are established later, through analysis of the landscape baseline situation identified in LCAs and other studies. Para. 1.12 of the 2002 LCA guidance explained that LCA *'has emerged as an appropriate way to look at landscape because it provides a structured approach to identifying character and distinctiveness as well as value'*.
- 2.3.48 Worcestershire's current LCA was published in 2011, long after the AGLVs and LPAs were designated.
- 2.3.49 In Bromsgrove District, the LPAA designation / policies were finally abolished in 2017, when the 2011 - 2030 District Plan was adopted. The landscape policies in the 2004 Plan were superseded by Policy BDP21 in the District Plan. In para. 8.213 the Council justifies its removal of local landscape designations on the basis that *'it is now recognised that all landscapes matter'*, and the Plan follows the principles established by the ELC to use LCA to create a landscape 'gain'.
- 2.3.50 For example, Bromsgrove District Plan's para. 8.112 notes that Bromsgrove's rural areas *'... are rich in environmental and landscape quality and protecting and enhancing these characteristics is paramount to retaining the District's local character, distinctiveness and value'*.
- 2.3.51 As explained further below, the District Plan's current policies are evidently derived from the 2012 version of the NPPF, and matters such as 'valued landscapes' have been taken into account as required by the planning system; however, at some point the July 2018 revisions to the NPPF will need to be factored in to the Plan. The revisions of relevance to landscape value are the subject of the following section.

#### NPPF PARA. 170 a) 'VALUED LANDSCAPES'

- 2.3.52 Areas which are judged to be of high landscape value and worthy of local designation can also potentially be categorised as 'valued landscapes' in the context of the 2018 NPPF's para. 170 a).
- 2.3.53 It is important to note the difference between 'a landscape of high value' and a 'valued landscape' as they are not interchangeable terms - at least not in a planning policy context, where the latter is used for a specific purpose. However, judgements about whether a landscape is 'valued' or not in the context of national and local / neighbourhood policies are informed by judgements about a landscape's level of value. The fact is that either way, the key issue is whether something is 'valuable' enough to merit landuse planning protection, and how one determines what is and is not 'valuable'.
- 2.3.54 In 2012, the first version of the NPPF was published. It included a policy (paragraph 109) which stated that *'The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: [inter alia] protecting and enhancing valued landscapes'*. Whilst no definition of a 'valued landscape' was given, the term was already widely-used, for example in the 2002 LCA guidance. In this regard, LCA / LVIA were (and still are) usually the best means of determining exactly what is valuable / important, why and to whom, and what its level of value / importance is.
- 2.3.55 In July 2018, the NPPF was revised. The 'old' paragraph 109 is currently 'new' paragraph 170. 'Valued landscapes' are still not defined.
- 2.3.56 It is relevant to note at this point that the NPPF does not differentiate between 'valued landscapes' which are nationally-designated, and those which are not. Designated 'nationally-valued landscapes' include National Parks, the Broads and AONBs, and these are the subject of special protection under specific national (and where relevant, local) policies of their own.
- 2.3.57 Importantly, as highlighted above, the NPPF makes clear that a landscape does not have to be designated in order for the planning system to protect it from inappropriate development.
- 2.3.58 The guidance published for landscape and visual assessments (GLVIA3) deals with the evaluation of levels of landscape value in some depth. Indeed, as more and more planning decisions about the acceptability or otherwise of new development in the countryside hinge on whether an undesignated landscape is 'valued' (within the context of the NPPF) or not, GLVIA3 has become the prime source of reference. 'Box 5.1' in GLVIA3 is a useful starting point for

- setting criteria and making value judgements, listing a '*Range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes*' (see Section 3).
- 2.3.59 Incidentally, many people assume that the term 'valued landscapes' in the title of GLVIA3 Box 5.1 refers specifically to the 'valued landscapes' of the NPPF but this is not the case. Box 5.1 is a summary of what is set out in the 2002 LCA guidance about making judgements about whether a certain area is worthy of high-level designation. Both the NPPF and the 2002 guidance were based on the 2002 ELC.
- 2.3.60 The changes to the 2012 NPPF's 'valued landscape' paragraph 109 may have been in response to the fact that it caused some confusion, and was interpreted in many different ways. The changes are currently being 'tested' as decisions are made based on the revised version, but the new policy is also somewhat ambiguous, and open to interpretation.
- 2.3.61 Whilst there are certain key changes to the policy (see below), '*protecting and enhancing valued landscapes*' is still top of the list in 'replacement' para. 170 a)), and this is still the NPPF's clearly-stated intention.
- 2.3.62 One notable difference between 2012 para. 109 and 2018 para. 170 is that the 2012 version required the '*planning system*' to '*contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment*', whereas the 2018 version requires '*planning policies and decisions*' to do the same.
- 2.3.63 As mentioned above, in the light of the 2012 requirement, many LPAs to which the matter was relevant dealt with landscapes of high local value / 'undesignated valued landscapes' in their local plans, with specific landscape-related policies having clearly been derived from para. 109.
- 2.3.64 For example, para. 4.13 of the 2011 - 2030 Bromsgrove District Plan states, '*Important natural and historic areas and buildings help to create the distinctive character and identity of Bromsgrove District and its settlements. These include the Lickey, Clent and Waseley Hills, canals, ancient woodlands, areas of nature conservation, biodiversity, geodiversity and landscape character, together with Conservation Areas, listed buildings and their settings, all of which will have been **carefully protected, conserved and enhanced***' (author's emphasis).
- 2.3.65 However, a notable difference between the 'old' and 'new' NPPF 'valued landscape' paragraph is that the 2018 version has added a 'bracketed rider' to the 'protection and enhancement' requirement. Now, the protection and enhancement of *valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils* must be '***in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan***' (author's emphasis).
- 2.3.66 This appears to be a partial amalgamation of 2012 paras. 109 and 113.
- 2.3.67 There are no statutorily (i.e. nationally)-protected landscapes such as AONBs within Bromsgrove District, so the first part of the 'bracketed rider' is not relevant, but it is clear. The second part is more problematic.
- 2.3.68 It appears to be saying that in order for landscapes without statutory status to be protected / enhanced, the level of protection should be '*in a manner commensurate with their... identified quality in the development plan.*'
- 2.3.69 Although still unclear, it is possible that the NPPF's intention is to re-introduce local value-based designations.
- 2.3.70 This would certainly help to avoid long, drawn-out arguments at planning inquiries where the parties cannot agree about whether an undesignated landscape should be categorised as 'valued' or not in the context of the NPPF / local plan. However, that aspiration may prove not to be feasible. Most LPAs are so underfunded and short-staffed that they are more likely to decide not to carry out the required studies to designate high-value landscapes at all, regardless of how valuable some of their landscapes and other / associated assets and attributes could potentially be. Furthermore, achieving designated status could take many years.
- 2.3.71 In Bromsgrove's case, the process would have to start with an update to the 2011 LCA, to take into account changes to the baseline situation which have occurred since the surveys were carried out. This would be followed by analysis and judgements about levels of value, the identification of suitable candidate areas for local designation, and consultation. If taken forwards, policies would have to be written, consulted on and examined prior to adoption.
- 2.3.72 The implication of this approach would be that for the foreseeable future, the country's 'second best' landscapes - i.e. the majority - are at risk of unacceptable change and permanent loss, at

- great cost to the environment and people who rely on the functions those landscapes perform, and the important contributions they make to life as a whole. As noted above, *'A service that matters at national level is not necessarily more important than one that matters only locally'*.
- 2.3.73 Importantly, para. 170 a) is specifically aimed at protecting undesigned landscapes. The 2018 NPPF now requires consideration of whether a nationally- or locally-undesigned landscape or site is 'valued' or not to be made through planning policies and decisions: it does not specifically tell planning authorities they must create new designations. If that had been the intention, it would surely have been clearly stated.
- 2.3.74 For the time being at least, if land does not lie within a nationally- or locally-designated landscape, whether or not it is 'valued' in the context of the NPPF must be determined on a case-by-case basis. Judgments should be made with reference to / in accordance with guidance and processes such as those set out in GLVIA3, policies and evidence - such as LCAs - which are in the development plan (along with any other relevant evidence).
- 2.3.75 GLVIA3 para. 5.27 is of assistance in considering how the 'quality' (or 'qualities') of any landscape has been / should be identified in a development plan.
- 2.3.76 It explains that where local designations are not in use, *'Landscape Character Assessments and associated planning policies and / or landscape strategies and guidelines may give an indication of which landscape types or areas, or individual elements or aesthetic or perpetual aspects of the landscape are particularly valued. A stated landscape strategy is usually a good indicator of this'*.
- 2.3.77 Most local development plans now include LCAs, and policies that require applicants to establish levels of landscape value and assess the effects of proposed development in the light of those LCAs.
- 2.3.78 This is indeed the case in the current Bromsgrove District Plan. Under the heading 'Local Distinctiveness', para. 8.191 explains that *'Different elements interacting with each other contribute to the local character of a place. In the macro level, the Landscape Character Assessment and Historic Landscape Character Assessment of Worcestershire define the elements that contribute to the local character in terms of settlement pattern, tree cover, land use and field morphology all underpinned and influenced by inherited and extant historic attributes. In the micro level, elements such as street pattern, building layout, building types, architectural styles and features, building materials, building line, individual trees and green spaces, key buildings, archaeology, boundary treatments also play a role in defining the character of an area. For example, Bromsgrove District is predominantly a 'red brick' area because of the minerals in the local clay'*.
- 2.3.79 One of the other concerns relating to para. 170 a)'s 'bracketed rider' is the use of the term *'identified quality'*, which did not appear in the 2012 version.
- 2.3.80 What exactly is quality? Evidently, the word means different things to different people, and depends on the context in which it is used (it could be called the *'Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance Conundrum'*<sup>10</sup>).
- 2.3.81 In relation to 'landscape quality' in the context of landscape assessment, guidance is clear about the matter, as set out in the Landscape Quality section above. Whilst a degree of subjectivity is inevitable, practitioners must take account of this, and state clearly how they have arrived at their conclusions (for example, some people admire wind turbines, some people abhor them. The practitioner considers this, but ultimately is simply assessing the effects of a tall, 'artificial', moving structure in the landscape, its ultimate function not being especially relevant).
- 2.3.82 In the wider planning policy context, pursuing sustainable development, which is at the heart of national planning policy, involves seeking positive improvements in people's 'Quality of Life', as well as in the 'quality' of the built, natural and historic environment.
- 2.3.83 LPAs expect the reports, plans and other information supporting planning applications to be of 'high quality' so that they can make fully informed decisions.

---

<sup>10</sup> *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* is a novel by Robert Pirsig (first published in 1974) which explores 'the Metaphysics of Quality'. According to Wikipedia, *"Quality," or "value," as described by Pirsig, cannot be defined because it empirically precedes any intellectual construction of it, namely due to the fact that quality (as Pirsig explicitly defines it) exists always as a perceptual experience before it is ever thought of descriptively or academically'*.

- 2.3.84 'Quality of Life' is a term widely used in legislation and planning policy (for example 2018 NPPF paras. 91, 127, 180, 184, and in the definition of Green Infrastructure. Also Bromsgrove District Plan para. 8.213).
- 2.3.85 It is possible that the term 'quality' - in the context of 'landscape' - was selected for 2018 NPPF para. 170 a)'s bracketed rider because it has been in use for some time, for example a) in the ELC (*'evaluation by the population enables people to voice their aspirations, the expression of which in the form of **landscape quality objectives** is the basic principle of landscape policies and of specific measures with a view to landscape protection, management and planning'* (author's emphasis), and b) in various planning policy statements / guidance. It may thus simply have been considered appropriate without anyone realising the confusion it might cause.
- 2.3.86 However, that does not help with clarifying what the term 'quality' - as used in para. 170 a) - was intended to mean in relation to 'valued landscapes'.
- 2.3.87 If the word 'quality' was replaced with the word 'value' it would make more sense, since - as mentioned previously - 'quality' is a factor (albeit one of many) that needs to be considered in judgements about levels of landscape value (see GLVIA3 especially Box 5.1).
- 2.3.88 Perhaps in the NPPF's context, the word 'quality' is meant to mean a 'quality of the landscape' - the term is often used alongside 'landscape characteristic / element / feature / attribute / function' etc.
- 2.3.89 This could make sense, since the landscape 'qualities' of an area are often mentioned in the development plan, especially where they have been objectively identified and assessed through LCA. This is echoed in a recent appeal decision letter<sup>11</sup> which sets out the inspector's consideration of the interpretation of para. 170 a) and conclusion that: *'recognition of the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside would have little practical effect without an assessment of the **particular qualities of the countryside** and the landscape setting where development is proposed and the effect of that development upon them'* (author's emphasis).
- 2.3.90 In summary, 'quality' is such a highly subjective matter that it is perhaps unfortunate it has been chosen as the most appropriate word to use in the context of para. 170 a).
- 2.3.91 However, in this context it should surely be interpreted as 'objective', and not 'subjective'. It is either referring to a particular landscape 'quality' (i.e. characteristic / element / feature etc.); or, it actually was intended to mean 'value'.
- 2.3.92 Either way, the word 'commensurate' which is used in the 'bracketed rider' seems to be indicating that levels of quality vary / some 'qualities' are more 'valuable' than others.

*Now owned by the National Trust, the Clent Hills are a popular and extensive green space*



<sup>11</sup> APP/Z1510/W/18/3207509 decision date 27<sup>th</sup> March 2019

## 2.4 Visual Value

- 2.4.1 As mentioned above, it is important to note that judgements about 'landscape value' include consideration of 'visual value', as they are separate albeit interrelated entities. Certain landscapes may be of high value because of the elements and features they contain. It is likely that if the high-value elements and features are visible, certain views in which they are present would also be categorised as being of high value.
- 2.4.2 Thus, judgements about levels of visual value take into account a) recognition of the value attached to particular views by people, and b) indicators of the value attached to views by visitors, which may include featuring on maps / in guide books, the provision of parking spaces / facilities, and references in literature / art (see GLVIA3 para. 6.37).
- 2.4.3 However, before considering visual value it is essential firstly to identify and analyse the baseline landscape character factors which contribute to visual value. It is true that 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder', which means that in respect of factors such as 'landscape quality' and 'scenic beauty' opinions may differ - as mentioned above, an unmanaged area of scrubland may look untidy, but it may be the site of an ancient monument, or a very healthy rare wildlife habitat.
- 2.4.4 Conversely, high value designations and other features / factors of high value are not always visible on the ground, or visually-obvious - a certain landscape may be the subject of a painting or a musical score, or the site of a famous battle.
- 2.4.5 Analysis of the baseline information helps to explain the 'nature' of the view, which is influenced by matters such as how well-cared for and / or well-used the landscape is, and what its character 'tells' us about the area's sense of place and what it contributes to its local distinctiveness.
- 2.4.6 Other aspects of landscape character, such as aesthetic and perceptual qualities, add to the understanding of the quality, value, function and importance of views.
- 2.4.7 The numbers of people experiencing a view and the reason for the visit is also taken into account, and their sensitivity as 'visual receptors' is established by combining their susceptibility to change, and the value of the view.
- 2.4.8 The criteria used for making judgements about levels of visual value are explained in the following section.

*Popular viewpoints such as Beacon Hill in the Lickeys have high visual value*



## 3 Method, Process and Approach

### 3.1 LVS Method

- 3.1.1 As explained above, CPREW's aim is to provide the evidence that would justify the designation / protection of certain areas of high landscape value through new policies in the revised District Plan.
- 3.1.2 Clearly an objective, evidence-based study would be required as part of the process of trying to achieve this aim, so CPREW commissioned an LVS.
- 3.1.3 The LVS had to identify and analyse the character and qualities of the landscapes in and around the Clent and Lickey Hills, and make judgements about which if any areas were worthy of 'valued landscape' status (within the context of NPPF para. 170 a)).
- 3.1.4 At the start of the commission, the extent and scope of the study were established, and the methods for the assessment agreed.
- 3.1.5 The LVS process is carried out in three stages:  
Stage 1 identifies 'what is there';  
Stage 2 establishes how important 'what is there' is, to whom, and why;  
Stage 3 draws conclusions about whether 'what is there' is worthy of protection / enhancement.
- 3.1.6 In this case, a variety of published methods for carrying out the different types of assessments required have been used and combined in order to provide the evidence-based and objective results which are needed here.
- 3.1.7 The first stage is achieved through Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), following published LCA guidance<sup>12</sup>.
- 3.1.8 In *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* (October 2014), Natural England defines LCA as '*... the process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features (characteristics) that make landscapes distinctive... By setting down a robust, auditable and transparent, baseline, Landscape Character Assessment can not only help us to understand our landscapes, it can also assist in informing judgements and decisions concerning the management of change*'.
- 3.1.9 The 2002 LCA guidance explains that:  
*'Landscape Character Assessment has emerged as an appropriate way to look at landscape because it provides a structured approach to identifying character and distinctiveness as well as value.'*
- 3.1.10 As explained above in It is also important to understand what exactly is meant by 'landscape' in the above context, as explained in Section 2 and represented in the *LCA Guidance 2014 Figure 1: What is Landscape?*.
- 3.1.11 LCA is actually a stand-alone process / study which simply establishes the existing baseline landscape situation without making any 'value-judgements' about what is there. At regional / countywide / district levels the LCA is usually carried out by the LPA, and may be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).
- 3.1.12 LCA is the starting point for other types of landscape assessment, for example LSCA and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) / Landscape and Visual Appraisals (LVAs), and should always be carried out first.
- 3.1.13 The second stage of the LVS process establishes how important 'what is there' is, to whom, and why - in other words, levels of landscape value.

---

<sup>12</sup> *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* (October 2014) Natural England; *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland* The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002); also *Topic Paper 5: Understanding Historic Landscape Character* and *Topic Paper 6: Techniques and criteria for judging sensitivity and capacity* (ditto)

- 3.1.14 Although LSCAs are usually carried out in order to establish whether certain landscapes have the capacity to accommodate certain specified types of change, LSCA techniques are often useful in studies such as these, as they include consideration of landscape (and visual) value.
- 3.1.15 LSCA has been developed in response to the growing need for people, communities and planning authorities to make informed decisions about the allocation of land for future development. It also responds to an increasing public interest in, and awareness of, what the term 'landscape' really means, as shown on *Figure 1 - What is Landscape?* above, and why it is important.
- 3.1.16 However, in this LVS, the process for making judgements about levels of landscape value relies heavily on the Landscape Institute and IEMA's *Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (2013), usually referred to as 'GLVIA3'. GLVIA3 methods are normally only applied when assessing the effects of a proposed development on landscape character and views; however, landscape value levels must be established before effects are assessed, and GLVIA3 methods are therefore invaluable for the LVS process.

## 3.2 LVS Criteria

- 3.2.1 One of the most important parts of the assessment process is setting and applying objective criteria for determining landscape and visual value levels. As mentioned previously, the criteria which were used to establish AGLVs and other locally-designated areas were subjective and out-of-date, and thus were not appropriate for use in the LVS.
- 3.2.2 The criteria used in this LVS are derived from GLVIA3 Section 5 '*Establishing the value of the landscape*' and professional experience, and have been peer-reviewed.
- 3.2.3 Box 5.1 in GLVIA3 is a useful starting point for setting criteria and making value judgements. It lists a '*Range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes*' (as noted in Section 2, the term 'valued landscapes' in the title of Box 5.1 is not intended to specifically refer to the 'valued landscapes' of NPPF para. 170 a)).
- 3.2.4 The 'value factors' are as follows:
- Landscape quality / condition (see Section 2 above)
  - Scenic quality
  - Rarity
  - Representativeness
  - Conservation interests ('... *the presence of features of wildlife... or historical and cultural interest can add to the value of the landscape as well as having value in their own right.*')
  - Recreation value
  - Perceptual (and 'aesthetic') aspects
  - Associations (with people, events etc.).
- 3.2.5 As noted previously, the function or role that a particular area or site performs in the landscape may also add to its value. As well as the provision of Natural Capital, Ecosystem Services, GI and so on, a piece of land may be an important open space / gap / buffer / corridor / approach / gateway; it may also make an important contribution to its wider landscape context and setting (including that of valuable features). Both landscape 'quality' and landscape 'qualities' must be considered in this regard (see Quality in Section 2 above).
- 3.2.6 With regards to visual value, the factors which contribute to the very highest levels of value include:
- Views from, or towards, designated landscapes and / or features of international and national importance e.g. World Heritage Sites (these are of 'outstanding universal value'), AONBs, Scheduled Monuments, Grade I and II\* Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens etc., especially where these contribute to the significance of an asset / feature.
  - View is of outstanding scenic beauty (common consensus e.g. AONB).
  - View makes a highly important contribution to the understanding of landscape function / contribution (landscape 'functions' and 'contributions' can include setting / context (of natural

and historic areas / features, settlements, built form etc.), strategic gaps, buffer zones, corridors / links, patterns e.g. of open green spaces, approaches and gateways).

- View is the subject of planning policy and / or guidance / protection.
- Views from landscapes / viewpoints within highly popular visitor attractions / tourist destinations, and / or from national trails, used by very large numbers of people.
- Views with social / cultural / historic associations (e.g. in art and literature, or an historically-important vista over a battlefield) of international / national importance.

3.2.7 The criteria which were used to determine levels of visual value for this study included many of the above factors but at a regional / local / neighbourhood level. The criteria for high 'local' visual value can be summarised as:

*'High-quality view which reflects the best of the area's characteristic elements, features and qualities. View is a very good representation of the area's strong sense of place and / or local distinctiveness. Few or no visual detractors present in the view. View very accessible / widely enjoyed by local people'.*

3.2.8 More specifically, the criteria for high local visual value include:

- Views from well-used and popular local community / visitor attractions, including long-distance / themed trails, public footpaths, public open spaces / Local Green Spaces, parks, commons etc., used by relatively large numbers of people.
- Views with important local social / cultural / historic associations / memories (including views which inspired the work of artists of all kinds, past and present, of national or local repute).
- Views that are indicative of an area's unique history, special 'sense of place' and 'local distinctiveness', and which reflect its intrinsic character and key characteristics.
- Views and viewpoints that contribute to peoples' 'experience' of life, quality of life, health and wellbeing (physical / mental), education, recreation etc.

3.2.9 The LVS value criteria are broadly based on a 'hierarchy', i.e. a scale that ranges from international / national value to regional / countywide / local and neighbourhood value.

3.2.10 Not all of the criteria listed in the LVS tables need to be met in order for a landscape or view to be categorised as being of high value; they simply indicate the value factors which need to be taken into consideration, and professional judgement must be applied when deciding which ones are relevant.

3.2.11 For example, a view may be valuable due solely to its scenic beauty (albeit there may be several factors that contribute to its 'beauty'); another view may not be considered 'beautiful', but is of high value because the various features within / qualities of the view are very good illustrations of the area's natural and cultural evolution.

3.2.12 As mentioned above, if one or more VLAs were identified, the study would make recommendations for where the VLA boundaries should be drawn. The LVS therefore considered and assessed the boundaries of the old LPAs, as defined in the 2004 Bromsgrove District Local Plan (the LPAA boundaries are shown on Figure 3 in Appendix A), and evaluated whether the boundary line was applicable in the context of the NPPF and 'valued landscapes', or required adjustment.

3.2.13 In principle, judgements about the appropriateness or otherwise of VLA boundary lines took into account factors similar to those used when making judgements about settlement boundaries, in that ideally they should be 'robust' / 'resilient' and 'defensible'. Furthermore, the lines should respect / reflect local landscape, town or villagescape character, patterns and forms and so on, and where possible, should follow existing physical features / boundaries such as roads, watercourses and historic field boundaries (the latter may ultimately need restoring / reinforcing). If this is not possible, the creation of new, locally-appropriate and robust settlement boundary features may be suggested.

- 3.2.14 When an area is being assessed for whether it meets the criterion for national designations such as AONBs and National Parks, Natural England's technical guidance stipulates that the area being evaluated does not need to display a distinctive or cohesive identity.<sup>13</sup>
- 3.2.15 In determining where detailed boundaries should be set for national designations, Natural England considers the following factors:<sup>14</sup>
- **Transitions areas:** rather than a sharp barrier between areas of differing quality, the boundary should be drawn conservatively towards the high quality end of a transition area and exclude areas of lesser quality.
  - **Types of boundary:** boundaries should avoid being overly complex or convoluted, and where possible, be an easily distinguishable permanent physical boundary.
  - **Other administrative boundaries:** where local government boundaries follow suitable lines, it may be administratively convenient to adopt them, although in the majority of cases they will be unsuitable.
  - **Inclusion of settlements:** A settlement should be assessed on its individual merits and particular character, qualities and relationship to adjoining countryside, and should only be included if it lies within a wider tract of qualifying land.
  - **Integrity of settlements:** Towns or villages are not normally divided and split by a boundary. If a settlement acts as a gateway to a designated area, this does not preclude its inclusion with a designation. The division of parishes, however, is an acceptable when drawing a boundary.
  - **Incongruous development:** Unsightly development at the edge of National Parks/AONBs are excluded (unless they are of a transient nature).
  - **Land allocated for development:** Land identified for development, or having planning permission for major developments, is normally excluded from a National Park / AONB, but land should not be included merely to seek to protect it from specific development proposals.
  - **Features of interest:** Areas and features of wildlife, geological, geomorphological, historic, cultural or architectural value which are on the margins should be included where practicable, providing they meet the criteria.
- 3.2.16 While this study is concerned with establishing landscape value at a local level i.e. below the 'blanket' of any national designations, the same considerations with regard to boundaries and the inclusion of non-cohesive landscapes are still applicable.

### 3.3 LVS Approach and Process

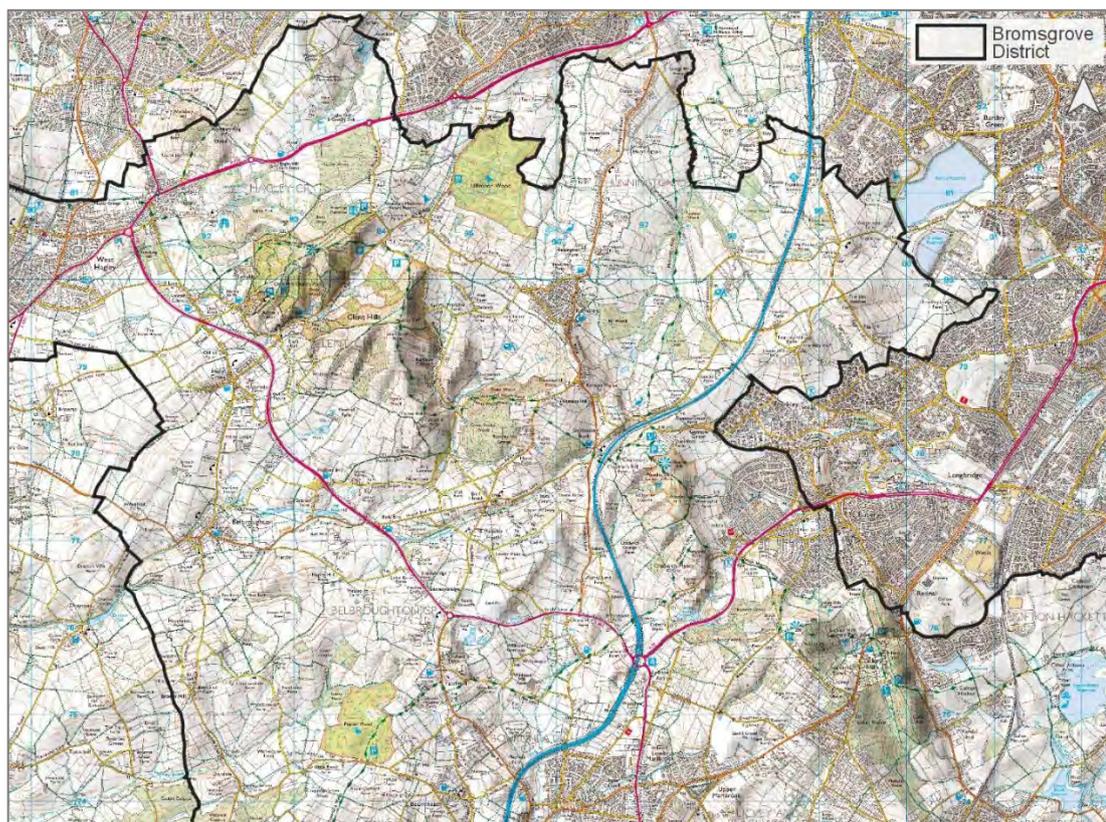
- 3.3.1 In October 2018, when the authors of this study were first approached by CPREW about the commission, they carried out some preliminary, high-level baseline work and desktop research in order to establish the current situation and planning context, and the main issues that were likely to be involved in the LVS.
- 3.3.2 Once commissioned, a meeting was held with the client, which was a useful 'orientation' and information-gathering exercise.
- 3.3.3 Figure 1 in Appendix A, and the image below, show the areas covered by this study. It must be pointed out that apart from one small area, the LVS only considers the value of landscapes within the Bromsgrove District boundary. However, administrative boundaries are not 'iron curtains', and in many cases there is interinfluence / intervisibility, and association / 'borrowing' between landscapes within and beyond the district boundary; this is factored in to the assessments.

---

<sup>13</sup> *Guidance for Assessing Landscapes for Designation* (March 2011) Natural England

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* Appendix 4

### *LVS study area*



- 3.3.4 The study area includes the whole of the previously-designated LPAA which covered the Clent and Lickey Hills and parts of two other old Bromsgrove LPAs, as well as some of the landscapes and townscapes beyond which provide the wider context.
- 3.3.5 In order to understand all the elements, features and factors that contribute to an area's landscape character, it is necessary to carry out research, including reviewing and recording (on maps, schedules and in note-form) relevant background material from sources such as books, reports and studies, historic maps and documents, archives and historians, government and other websites, and the local community.
- 3.3.6 The baseline desktop studies began in early February 2019. They took into account national and / or local landscape-related designations, strategies, policies and guidance; the landscape's natural history and cultural heritage; its character; settlement and landuse patterns; key views; public rights of way; recreation; hydrology; topography; significant vegetation and so on. Landscape 'zones' were established, landscape characteristics identified, and the extent of 'areas of influence' was adjusted as necessary.
- 3.3.7 The desktop studies also included meeting with the CPREW chairman, Dr. Peter King, whose extensive knowledge and research of the area, especially with regard to local history, assisted greatly with the study.
- 3.3.8 The purpose of the next stage of the visual study was to 'test' the mapped desktop baseline findings 'on-the-ground', and refine them in the light of what the landscape revealed.
- 3.3.9 The on-the-ground landscape and visual studies began in late March, and continued throughout April and May. The advantage of the early spring visual assessment is that it represents the 'worst-case' visual scenario i.e. when there is no deciduous leaf cover (in fact, in this area, the situation can last for several months).
- 3.3.10 Winter is also a good time for carrying out the baseline character assessments: at that time of year the landscape's bare bones are exposed, and it is seen at its most elemental. Foliage does not screen, and the play of light and shade upon it does not distract the eye. It should also be recognised that whilst the incidence, proportions and visibility of landscape patterns and colours will vary through the seasons, there is a consistency of many patterns and colours present throughout the year.

- 3.3.11 The visual study involved a combination of driving and walking around the study area's public rights of way (roads, footpaths, bridleways, byways open to all traffic) and visiting Open Access Land, making notes and taking photographs.
- 3.3.12 The majority of the photographs were taken using a Digital Single Lens Reflex (DSLR) camera with the equivalent of a 50mm focal length manual lens, typically with five frames per view. This represents the normal breadth of vision as advocated by the Landscape Institute.<sup>15</sup> However, in some cases - for example to highlight a particular feature or point - other lens lengths were used, and where too dangerous to stop and take photographs, Google streetview images have to be used (if that is the case, it is stated). Photographs are mostly taken at 'eye level' (approximately 1.5m above ground level).
- 3.3.13 The study area was divided into LVS Zones, broadly based on WCC's 'Landscape Description Units' (LDUs - see below) in the LCA. This was to allow the relative value between areas to be compared. Figure 2 shows the LVS Zones.
- 3.3.14 In order to help identify potential areas of value based on the desktop studies, a 'hot-spot' plan was produced - this highlights areas where there are concentrations of designations and other high value features. The results of this exercise are shown on Figure 10. However, further research and assessments were carried out which factored in the area of influence of the designations / features.
- 3.3.15 Other 'intangible' aspects were also factored into the assessment, such as cultural associations and social / psychological associations.
- 3.3.16 Once all the landscape and visual baseline information had been gathered, recorded, processed and analysed, judgements were made about the level of landscape and visual value of each of the LVS zones. Boundary lines were drawn around the areas of highest value and which met the criteria for categorisation as a 'Valued Landscape Area'.
- 3.3.17 Summary schedules were produced for each of the LVS zones. They describe the main designations and features identified, and set out the criteria which were met in terms of levels of landscape quality, landscape value and visual value. The overall level of landscape value is given, and where appropriate, recommendations for VLA status.
- 3.3.18 The studies were completed in late May 2019, and the documents were submitted to CPREW for comment in June.
- 3.3.19 Following comments on the documents and a meeting with CPREW, the findings and conclusions of the study were agreed and approved by the members.
- 3.3.1 The findings of the baseline studies are set out in the next section; in Section 5, the results of the LVS are set out.

---

<sup>15</sup> Advice Note 01/11 Photography and Photomontage in LVIA

## 4 Landscape Baseline

### 4.1 Introduction and Overview

#### Introduction

- 4.1.1 The approach, methods used, and processes followed for this part of the assessment are set out in Section 3 above. In summary, the baseline landscape character assessment identifies 'what is there' (as mentioned previously, it is important to note that judgements about 'landscape value' include consideration of 'visual value'). The information helps to establish 'how important the landscape is, to whom, and why', and is used to determine levels of quality and value.
- 4.1.2 This section begins with a brief description of the area's wider landscape context. It then sets out the findings of the baseline studies, identifying and describing national, regional and local landscape character, landscape-related designations, features, factors, qualities and attributes, as shown on *Figure 1 - What is Landscape?* above. These include heritage assets and historic landscape character, biodiversity, Green Infrastructure, and public and social amenity.
- 4.1.3 See Figure 4: Landscape Designations and Key Features, and Figure 5: Landscape Character Baseline - NCAs and LCTs.

#### Wider Landscape Context

- 4.1.4 The study area is situated in north Worcestershire, within Bromsgrove District - a predominantly rural district but also near to Birmingham and the Black Country. Birmingham city centre is approximately 14km away.
- 4.1.5 The higher ground of the Clent and Lickey Hills dominates the landscape in the study area, with farmland and scattered settlements extending outwards to the south and west. From the Hills, views are possible towards the Cotswolds, the Malvern Hills, the Shropshire Hills, and the Black Mountains in Wales. In contrast to the undulating landscapes to the south, views to the north are dominated by the urban conurbations of Birmingham and the Black Country plateau.
- 4.1.6 Within Worcestershire, the nearest main towns are Redditch c. 14km to the south east; Bromsgrove c. 8km to the south; Kidderminster c. 12km to the south west; and Worcester c. 20km to the south west. Within the Black Country, Halesowen is c. 4km to the north; Dudley is 10km to the north; and Stourbridge is c. 6km to the north west.
- 4.1.7 The area is highly accessible, with the M5 motorway bisecting the study area from north to south. Junctions 3 and 4 are in close proximity to three Country Parks, and their accessibility from the wider area has contributed to their popularity, especially with visitors from Birmingham and the Black Country. The M5 skirts around the west side of the Waseley Hills, but its visibility and sound are largely unnoticeable from the Country Park due to topography and vegetation which screen the motorway. The wider area is also well served with A roads, connecting the larger towns in the region.
- 4.1.8 The Worcester to Birmingham railway line passes through the north west corner of the study area. Hagley station, located in West Hagley, and Barnt Green station in the south, provides further connectivity to the area.
- 4.1.9 The image below illustrates the strong delineation of the urban settlements of Birmingham and the Black Country to the north and east of the study area, and the rural landscapes of Worcestershire, Shropshire and Staffordshire to the west and south.
- The wooded slopes of the Clent and Lickey Hills can also be seen running diagonally from the north west to the south east of the study area.
- 4.1.10 Substantial blocks of woodland, such as Uffmoor Wood, are also clearly visible, as well as linear tracts of woodland that generally run along watercourses.
- 4.1.11 The rural landscapes and varied field patterns are sharply defined against the continuous urban fabric in the north east. The larger-sized arable fields on the sandlands to the west are discernible in contrast to the smaller field sizes around Chaddesley Woods towards the south west of the study area.

Satellite image showing study area's wider context (image © 2018 Google)

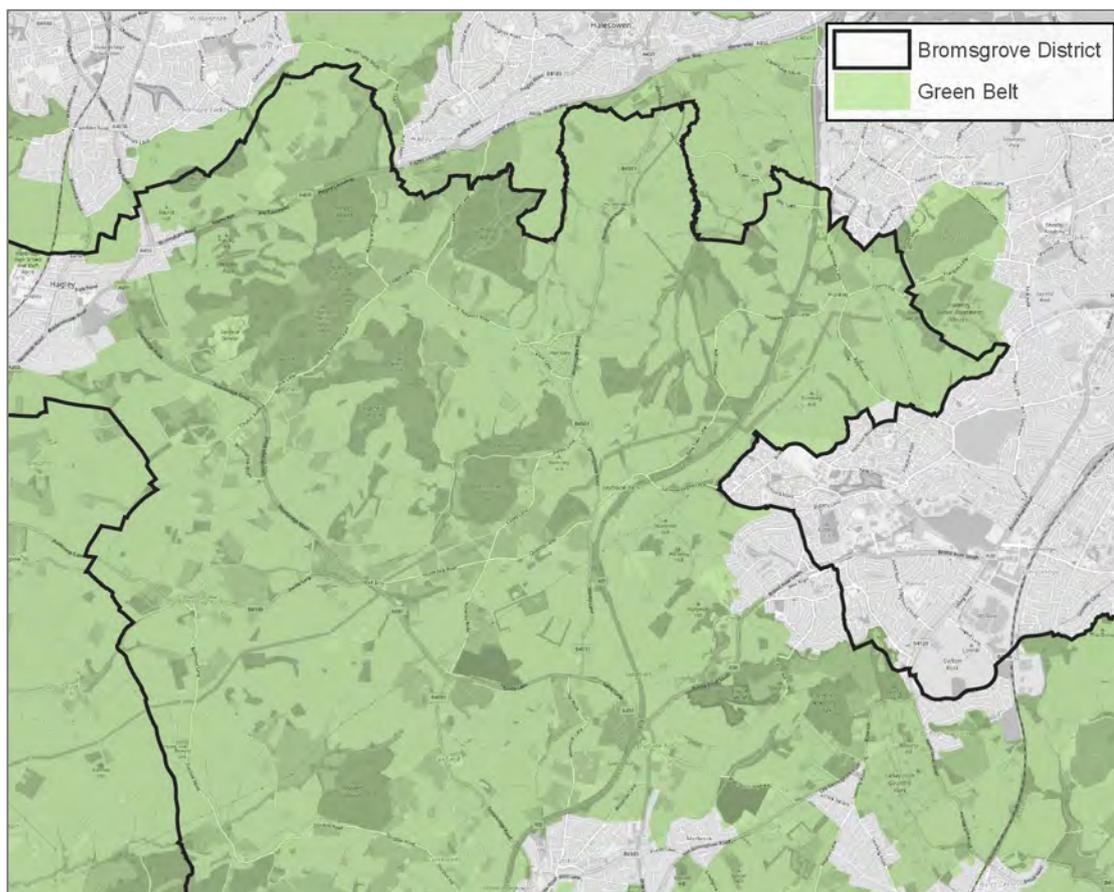


- 4.1.12 Bromsgrove town and the village of Catshill are to the south in the satellite image, and Kidderminster is to the west. Part of 'The Million', a large modern coniferous plantation on former heathland near Kinver, can be seen at the north-western edge of the image.
- 4.1.13 From Birmingham, the M5 crosses south through the study area, passing the west side of Bromsgrove. The M42 runs east to west just below the study area.
- 4.1.14 Differences in landscape character across the area are reflected in the various National Character Areas and Landscape Character Areas that cover the study area (see sections 4.3 and 4.4 below).

## 4.2 Designated Landscapes

- 4.2.1 There are no statutorily protected landscapes within the study area, the nearest being the Shropshire Hills AONB lying c. 25km to the west. However, the majority of the study area does form part of the West Midlands Green Belt. NPPF Para.133 states that '*the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence*'.
- 4.2.2 Although the Green Belt has been noted in this study, Green Belt designation is based on location only and not on landscape quality or value. However, the landscape function of Green Belt as buffer and green gap attributes a certain level of value to the landscape.
- 4.2.3 The diagram below shows the extent of Green Belt, encompassing the vast majority if not all of the rural landscapes in the study area.

### *Green Belt designation within the study area*



## **4.3 National Landscape Character**

- 4.3.1 Nationally, the country is divided into National Character Areas (NCAs)<sup>16</sup>. NCAs are the responsibility of Natural England. They are ‘... areas that share similar landscape characteristics, and which follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries, making them a good decision-making framework for the natural environment.’
- 4.3.2 Importantly, NCA profiles are ‘... guidance documents which can help communities to inform their decision-making about the places that they live in and care for. The information they contain will support the planning of conservation initiatives at a landscape scale, inform the delivery of Nature Improvement Areas and encourage broader partnership working through Local Nature Partnerships. The profiles will also help to inform choices about how land is managed and can change’.
- 4.3.3 The extent of the NCA within the study area is shown on Figure 4: Landscape Baseline - NCAs and LCTS.
- 4.3.4 The majority of the study area’s landscapes are covered by NCA 97 Arden<sup>17</sup>. The north-western corner is covered by NCA 66 Mid-Severn Sandstone Plateau, on the edges of Hagley Park.
- 4.3.5 The profile for NCA 97 summarises the area as comprising ‘*farmland and former wood-pasture lying to the south and east of Birmingham*’.
- 4.3.6 It notes that ‘*This NCA is among the most geologically diverse. This has had a strong impact on the landscape’s character and development and is further reflected in the range of locally and nationally important geological assets across the NCA. There are also many local biodiversity assets*’.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making>

<sup>17</sup> n.b. The ancient Forest of Arden was not in Worcestershire, but mainly further east in Warwickshire. The NCA name ‘Arden’ describes the NCA’s location, rather than associations with the historical Forest. Arden is an old British word meaning “high land”

4.3.7 The profile also notes that the highest point in the NCA is Walton Hill, in the Clent hill range, with its key views looking south-west.

4.3.8 NCA 97's key characteristics which are of relevance to this more localised study and are well-represented in the area include:

- Well-wooded farmland landscape with rolling landform.
- Geologically diverse with rocks ranging from the Precambrian to the Jurassic and overlain by superficial Quaternary deposits.
- Mature oaks, mostly found within hedgerows, together with ancient woodlands, and plantation woodlands that often date from the time of enclosure. Woodlands include historic coppice bounded by woodbanks.
- Numerous areas of former wood-pasture with large, old, oak trees often associated with isolated remnants of more extensive heathlands. Village greens / commons have a strong association with remnant lowland heath.
- Diverse field patterns, ranging from well-hedged, irregular fields and small woodlands that contrast with larger semi-regular fields on former deer park estates.
- Complex and contrasting settlement pattern with some densely-populated areas where traditional settlements have amalgamated to form the major West Midlands conurbation, while some settlements remain distinct and relatively well dispersed.
- Transport infrastructure, the M42, M40, M6 and M5 are major transport corridors that cross the landscapes of this NCA.

*The varied geology and topography of the Lickeys provides a range of views*



4.3.9 The NCA profiles contain specific 'Statements of Environmental Opportunity' (SEOs) for each area, which offer guidance on the critical issues identified, and which can '*... help to achieve sustainable growth and a more secure environmental future*'.

4.3.10 The SEOs that reflect the landscape value of NCA 97 are:

**SEO 1:** Manage and enhance the valuable woodlands, hedgerows, heaths, distinctive field boundaries and enclosure patterns throughout the NCA, retaining the historic contrast between different areas while balancing the needs for timber, biomass production, climate regulation, biodiversity and recreation.

**SEO 3:** Conserve and enhance Arden's strong geological, industrial, and cultural resource to increase public access, enjoyment, recreation and to retain a sense of place and history.

**SEO 4:** Enhance the value of Arden's aquatic features such as the characteristic river valleys, meadows and standing water areas like Bittell Reservoirs, to increase resource protection such as regulating soil erosion, soil quality and water quality.

#### 4.4 Regional / Countywide Landscape Character

4.4.1 NCAs are relevant to this study for the reasons set out above, and it is important that the assessment evaluates whether the landscapes are good representations of landscape character at a national level, which can increase their value. However, the NCA descriptions usually cover large geographical areas, so it is necessary to look at character at a regional / countywide scale.

4.4.2 Within WCC's Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)<sup>18</sup>, the study area is mainly split between Regional Character Areas (RCAs) 'Arden' and 'Mid-Worcestershire Forests'. The boundary between the two RCAs runs along the edge of the southern slopes of the Clent and Lickey Hills ridgeline. A small area in the north west corner, near Hagley Park, falls within 'Kinver Sandlands'. The RCAs group together areas that reflect a perceived common cultural unity.

4.4.3 Derived from the old British word "Ardu", meaning "high land" WCC's LCA<sup>19</sup> describes the RCA 'Arden' as *'relating primarily to that part of the region that lies on the southern and eastern side of the Birmingham plateau'*. The Clent – Lickey ridgeline is described as *'prominent feature'* when viewed from the western lowlands.

4.4.4 The RCA also describes the landscape change for 'Arden'. Although most of 'Arden' and 'Mid-Worcestershire Forests' RCAs were once part of a great swathe of Royal forests, the study area was mostly heathland, forming on drift soils:

*'Remnants of this are now seen in woodlands on acid soils, characterised by sessile oak with heather and bilberry in more open areas...The well drained soils of the Clent Hills have been extensively planted with larch and Scots Pine and large areas of bracken are supplanting acid grasslands...The countryside often had a well wooded appearance due to many oaks in hedgerows.'*

4.4.5 The 'Mid-Worcestershire Forest' RCA is described as being in *'the heart of Worcestershire'* and *'consists of a broad rolling plain stretching from the Malvern and Abberley hills in the west to the Lenches and the Ridgeway along the County boundary with Warwickshire in the east.'*

4.4.6 Feckenham Forest was the largest of the Royal Forests that covered much of the West Midlands. The LCA describes Chaddesley Woods on the southern edge of the study area as some of the best-preserved areas of ancient woodland in the county.

4.4.7 'Mid-Worcestershire Forest' RCA's *'differing patterns of settlement and land use, together with soil and geology differences, are reflected in the variety of landscapes that occur within the region today'*.

4.4.8 This was also noted in the 2004 Bromsgrove District Local Plan which described how: *'North Worcestershire has some of the finest and most varied landscapes in the region. Bromsgrove District has outstanding landscape features formed by the ridges of high land in the north incorporating the Clent, Windmill, Waseley and Lickey Hills. In addition there are extensive areas of water, trees and woodland. Some of the latter are of ancient origin and lie woven in a patchwork quilt of open landscape possessing an older small-scale pattern of fields reflecting the agricultural traditions of past centuries'*.

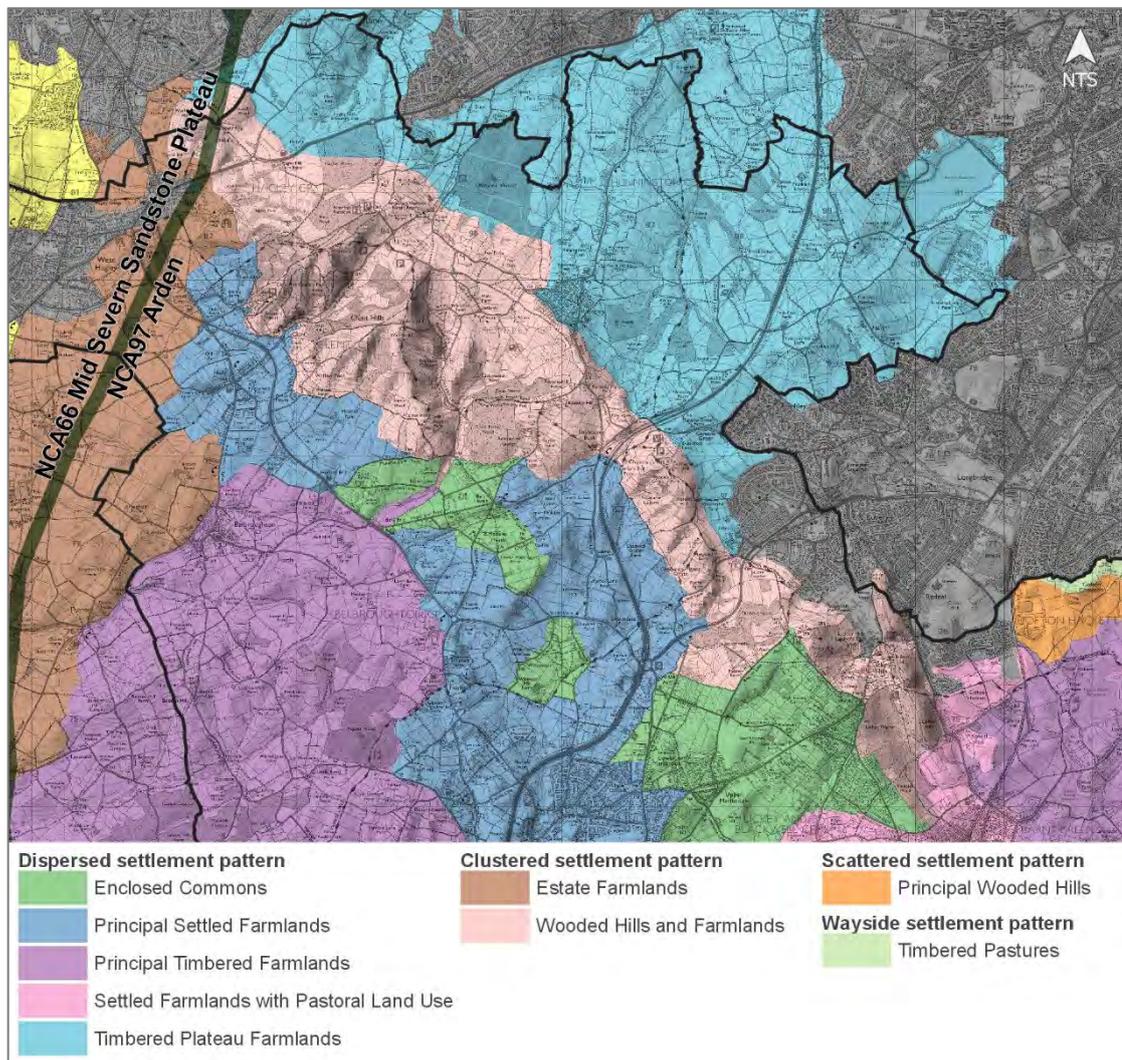
4.4.9 This diversity is reflected in the nine different Landscape Character Types (LCTs)<sup>20</sup> within the study area identified in the WCC LCA. The extent of the different LCTs is shown on Figure 4: Landscape Baseline - NCAs and LCTs, and the diagram overleaf.

<sup>18</sup> *Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance* Worcestershire County Council (October 2011)

<sup>19</sup> *Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance Technical Handbook* Worcestershire County Council (August 2013)

<sup>20</sup> Each LCT is characteristic in its own way, reflecting variations in the natural and human processes which have shaped the landscape. Most of the LCT classifications are 'generic', meaning that the same combination of characteristics (for example 'Settled Valley' or 'Farmed Slopes') can be found in different parts of the country (although the descriptive terms applied may vary as each authority often devises its own); however, some are unique to a certain geographical area.

*Landscape Character Types within the study area*



4.4.10 The main features and elements of the predominant LCTs in the study area are:

Timbered Plateau Farmlands

- Varied, mixed farming landscapes comprising hedged fields, scattered farms, woods and wooded valleys.
- Upstanding plateau of rolling topography dissected by broad valleys - '*landform conveys a sense of strength and dominance which tends to override the pattern of tree cover and fields*'.
- Topography and woodland are key elements, developed from piecemeal woodland clearance.
- Dingles associated with valley streams particularly characteristic.
- Range of open vistas and secluded scenes. Filtered medium / long distance views.
- Ancient woodland character; mixed hedges with scattered hedgerow oaks; veteran trees.

Wooded Hills and Farmlands

- Prominent sloping topography with discrete woodland blocks of ancient character.
- Landscapes '*inherently large scale and strength due to their patterns of substantial woodland blocks and large hedged fields*'.
- Well-defined character with a sense of balance. '*The historic origins of these areas should be recognised and their visual cohesion conserved*'.

- Some upper slopes include areas of permanent pasture with botanical interest.
- Rare LCT within the county. Most substantial example is within the study area. Represented elsewhere in county on south-western slopes of Malvern Hills (near Eastnor), and on slopes of Bredon Hill.

#### Estate Farmlands

- Ordered agricultural landscape with hedgerow boundaries forming semi-regular pattern of medium to large-sized fields.
- Medium-framed views and rolling lowland.
- Large country houses in mature parkland and tree cover associated with large ornamental grounds (e.g. Hagley Hall).
- Specimen and veteran trees. Tree cover and field pattern provide structure and scale.

#### Enclosed Commons

- Open, formal landscape with gentle rolling topography.
- Distinctive hedgerow field boundaries; planned enclosure pattern of straight boundaries. Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) shows that patterns are result of late enclosure from former commons and manorial wasteland.
- Pastoral land use; open farmland landscape.
- Closely related to Sandstone Estatelands - same large regular fields, straight roads and estate plantations.
- The LCT is relatively rare in the county, located within the study area, the Malverns, and near Hanbury.

#### Principal Settled Farmlands

- Small to medium scale, mixed farming landscapes.
- Domestic character in rolling lowland.
- Clusters of wayside dwellings and network of narrow winding lanes with a matrix of hedged fields.
- Located in areas of former Royal Forest that were cleared.
- Woodlands not characteristic.
- Small scale, permanent pasture fields within LCT often significant habitat.

#### Principal Timbered Farmlands

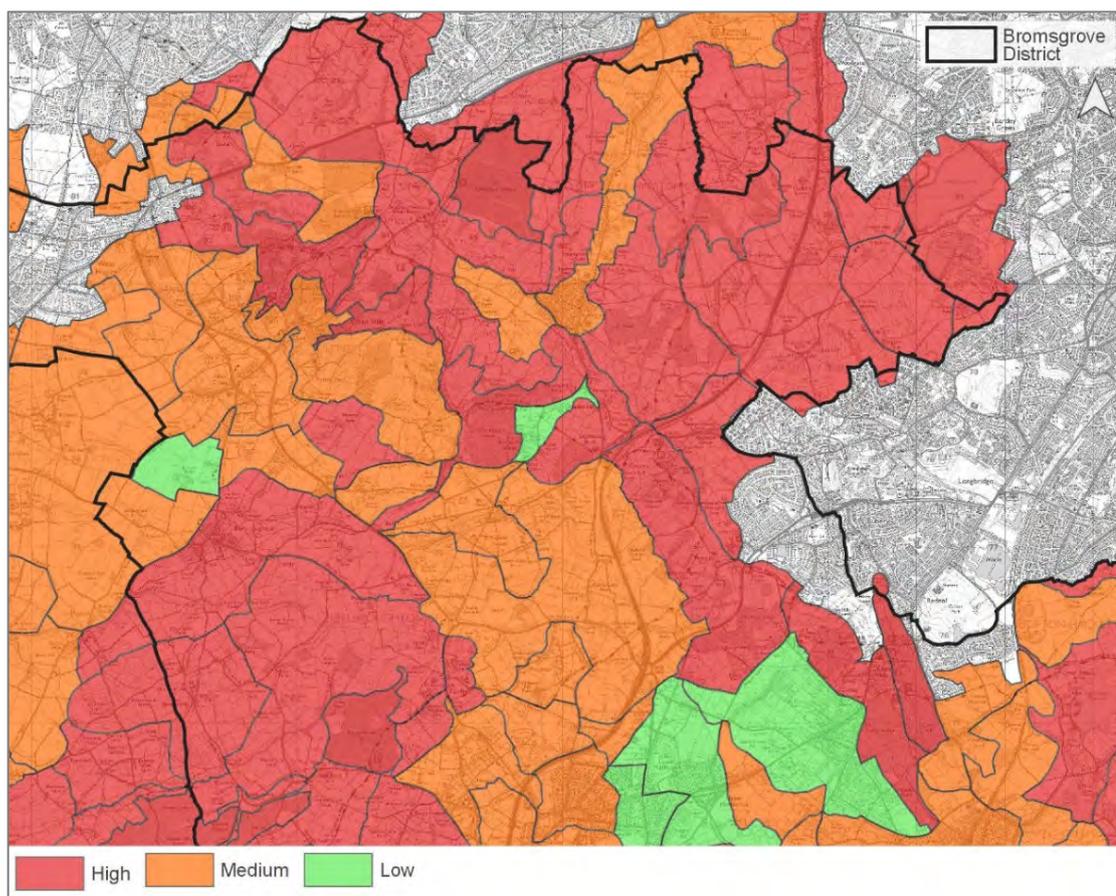
- Small scale, wooded, agricultural landscapes in rolling lowland.
- Organic, piecemeal enclosure pattern, resulting in complex landscapes of irregularly shaped woodland, winding lanes and wayside dwellings and farmsteads.
- Ancient wooded character.
- Tree cover in form of woodlands, hedgerow trees (mostly oak) and stream side trees are key element in landscape. Provides sense of enclosure and filtered views

- 4.4.11 On the whole, the landscapes within the study area are good representations of their 'host' countywide LCTs.
- 4.4.12 The 2011 LCA also entailed more fine-grained studies to identify localised variations in the landscapes covered by the 'mother' LCT. The LCTs were sub-divided into component Landscape Description Units (LDUs).
- 4.4.13 The LCA describes LDUs as a *'representation of a Landscape Type in a specific location. These are the basic building blocks of the landscape and are defined by a combination of six key characteristics relating to geology, topography, soils, tree cover character, land use and historic*

*settlement pattern. LDUs are identified by description and those with similar visual characteristics are grouped into Landscape Types.'*

- 4.4.14 The LDUs were useful in providing basic information about the key characteristics at a more localised scale, and formed the basis of the landscape zones within which levels of landscape value were assessed.
- 4.4.15 Further reference to details of LDUs within WCC's LCA are made in the analysis of local landscape character in Section 4.11 below.
- 4.4.16 The WCC LCA further divides the LDUs into Land Cover Parcels (LCPs). The detailed data on landscape attributes for each LCP was especially useful and relevant to the study (while factoring in changes in land use for some LCPs). As the LCA Technical Handbook explains, the LCPs contain *'landscape features which contribute to the local landscape character and may be extremely important in defining local distinctiveness'*.
- 4.4.17 The WCC LCA assessed the overall condition and sensitivity of the LCPs. In its application of the WCC LCA, BDC's *Green Infrastructure Baseline Report*<sup>21</sup> describes how a *'landscape with a character of high sensitivity is one that, once lost, would be difficult to restore; a character that, if valued, must be afforded particular care and consideration in order for it to survive.'* Because 'value' is factored in to judgements about 'sensitivity', the sensitivity study's findings were factored in to the LVS.
- 4.4.18 The diagram below shows the levels of landscape sensitivity within the study area, as assessed in the 2011 WCC LCA.

WCC LCA (2011) Landscape Sensitivity



<sup>21</sup> *Green Infrastructure Baseline Report* (Summer 2013) Bromsgrove District Council

## 4.5 Designated / Key Landscape Features: Physical Landscape

- 4.5.1 The area's geology, topography and hydrology are diverse and complex. The study area's landscapes are characterised by locally-distinct patterns of contrasting elements and features shaped by nature and culture which provide a wide range of highly-valued resources for visitors and residents, and habitats for flora and fauna.
- 4.5.2 The designated and key physical landscape features relevant to the LVS are summarised below. The extent of the features is shown on Figure 5: Landscape Baseline - Physical Environment.

### GEOLOGY

- 4.5.3 The range of LCTs described above are reflected in the geodiversity of the study area, with several types of rock formations influencing topography, soil and land use.
- 4.5.4 The Lickey Hills alone are made up of five different rock types. The Barnt Green volcanic rock to the south of the Lickey Hills is one of the oldest rocks in the Midlands, dating from c. 488 million years ago.<sup>22</sup>
- 4.5.5 Lickey Quartzite is a sedimentary rock that makes up the whole of the Lickey ridge from Rednall Hill to Cofton Hill, and dates from the Ordovician period (c. 495 million years ago).
- 4.5.6 At the northern end of Bilberry Hill are some darker boulders of quartzite - the result of 'bedding' where sand at the bottom of a shallow sea that once covered the area was cemented together by silica.
- 4.5.7 The Clent and Waseley hill ranges were formed in the Permian period, c. 299 million years ago from fragments of volcanic and sedimentary rocks deposited by flash floods through desert. The Clent Formation runs from the south of Hagley Park to Lickey Warren.
- 4.5.8 The northern part of the study area comprises the Halesowen Formation, formed during the Carboniferous era, c. 359 million years ago, and extends into part of the Black Country.
- 4.5.9 To the south of the study area, the distinctive Bromsgrove Sandstone Formation dates from the Triassic period (c. 252 million years ago).

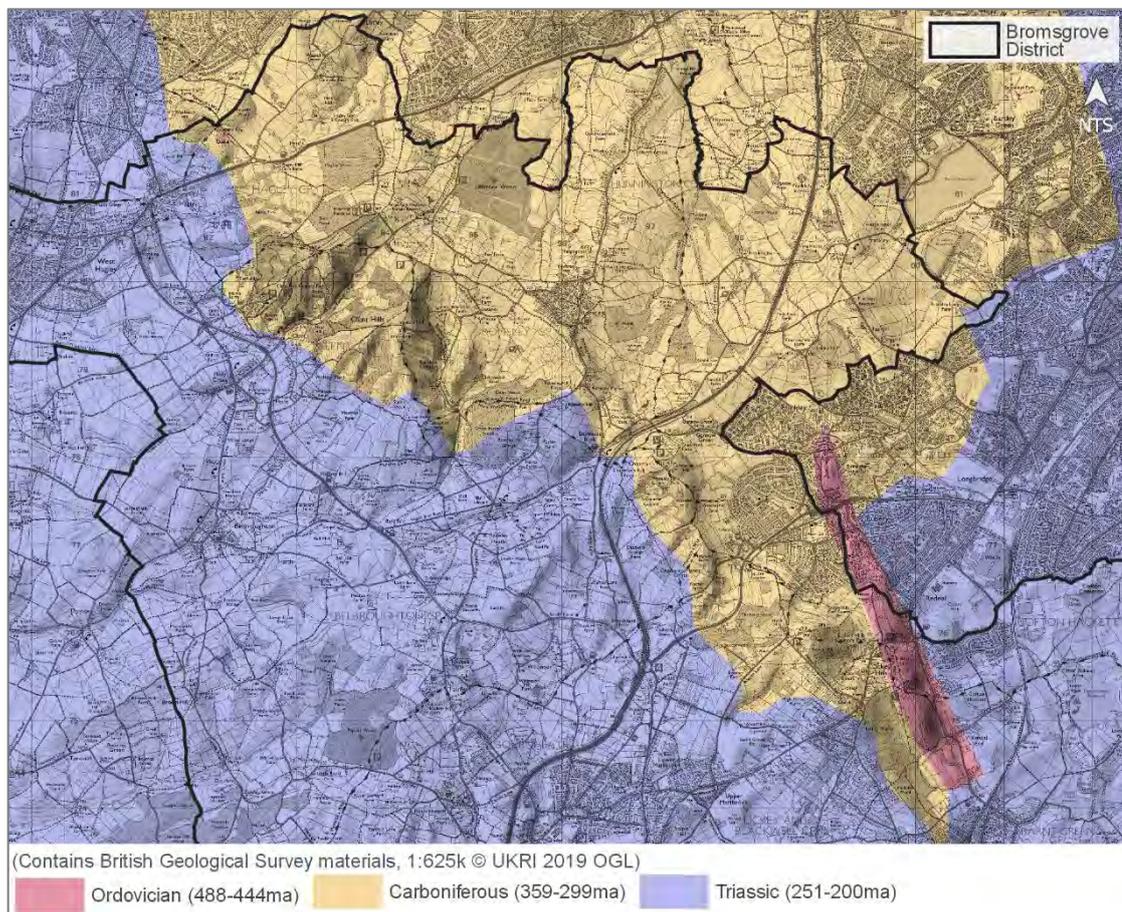
### *Sandstone along Bromsgrove Road in Holy Cross*



<sup>22</sup> [https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20089/parks/406/lickey\\_hills\\_country\\_park/5](https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20089/parks/406/lickey_hills_country_park/5)

- 4.5.10 Local Geological Sites (formerly known as Regionally Important Geological Sites) are non-statutory sites that have been identified as being of importance.
- 4.5.11 Within Bromsgrove District there five Sites: four are within the study area and one is just beyond the southern edge of the area. These sites are:
- Hagley Hall Quarry
  - Lickey Hill Upper Quarry
  - Madeley Heath pit - also a geological SSSI
  - Kendal End Farm
  - Shepley Sandpit and Knoll (c.500m south of the study area).
- 4.5.12 There are other geological features in the study area, including quarries and mineral works. Near Bell Health there is a glacial erratic - a boulder transported by glacial process from Aernig Fawr in Snowdonia.
- 4.5.13 The diagram below shows the age of the bedrock, highlighting the Ordovician age rock units on Bilberry and Rednall Hill in the Lickeys.

*Bedrock age of study area*

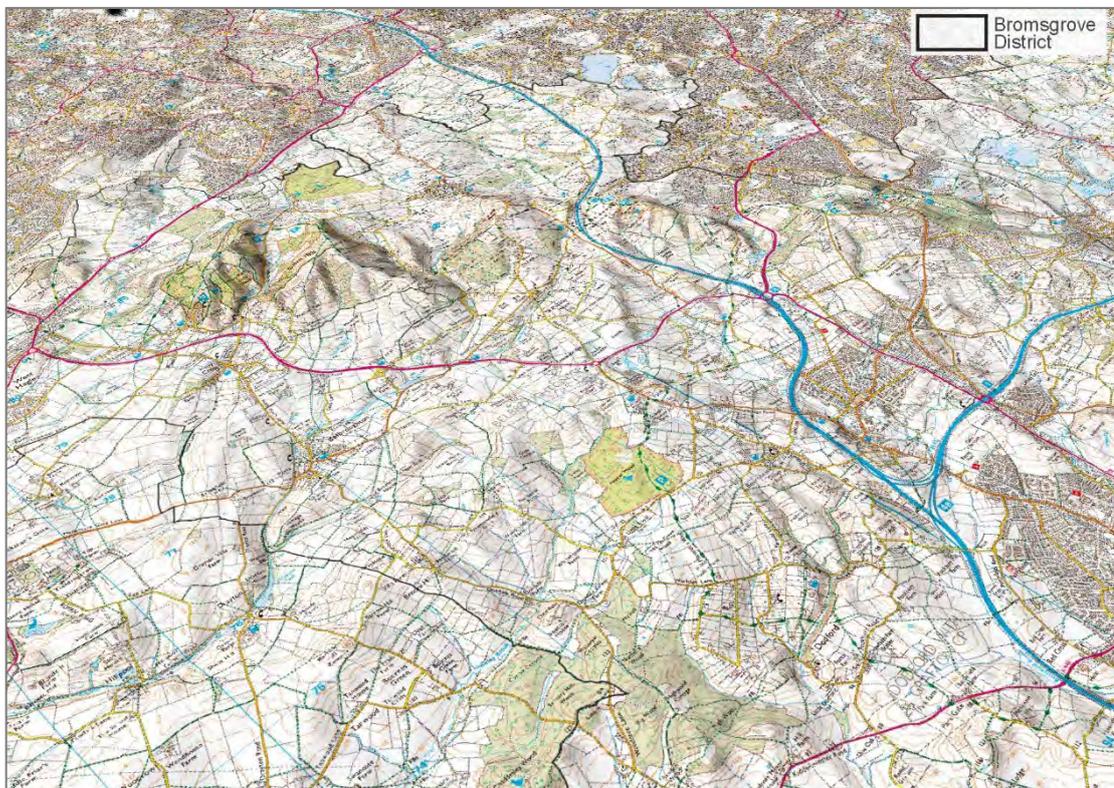


### TOPOGRAPHY

- 4.5.14 The underlying geology of the area results in a varied topography, with the Clent - Lickey hill range forming a significant and distinctive feature in the landscape.
- 4.5.15 The rock of the Clent Hills forms localised 'bowls', creating an undulating landscape that extends southwards into the gently rolling lowlands of north Worcestershire.
- 4.5.16 The north of the study area contains a rolling topography with broad valleys, such as south of Wassell Grove, which become contiguous with the Black Country plateau.

- 4.5.17 The image below illustrates the distinct peaks of the Hills, as well as the valleys formed in the saddles between the ridges, such as Clatterbach Valley in between Adams Hill and Walton Hill. The M5 skirts around the base of Chapman's Hill in the Waseley Hills.

*Digital terrain model, viewed from south west, illustrating study area's topography*



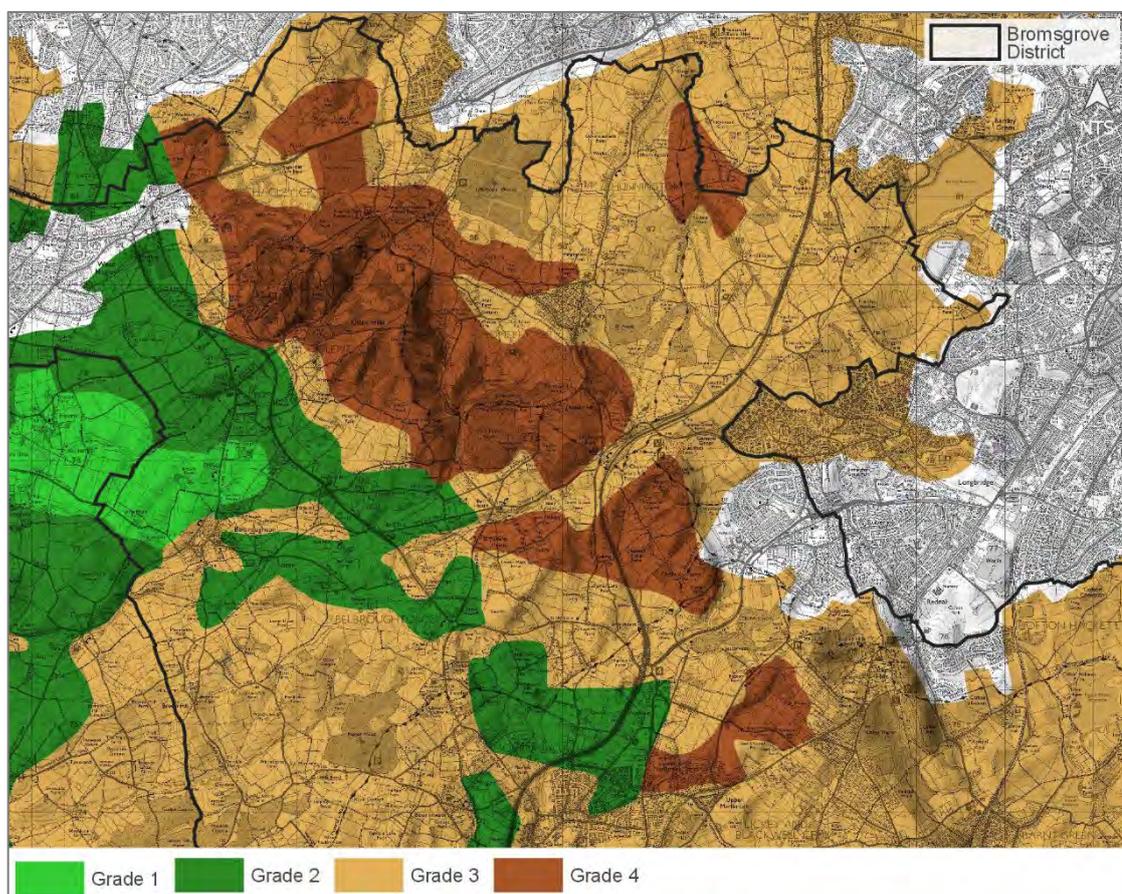
#### HYDROLOGY

- 4.5.18 There are no main rivers in the study area, although the Clent – Lickey hill range is the source of several rivers .
- 4.5.19 The source of the River Stour is in the Clent Hills near St. Kenelm's Church, where a number of other small tributary streams from the Clent Hills feed into it. The River Stour eventually joins the River Severn at Stourport-on-Severn. The River Rea rises north of Waseley Hill and flow into the River Tame, a tributary of the River Trent. Beacon Hill in the Lickeys give rise to the River Arrow's source, which flows southwards and becomes a major tributary of the River Avon.
- 4.5.20 The Clent - Lickey ridge forms part of the main English watershed. Rain falling on the north side of the Hills eventually enters the North Sea; rain on the southern slopes enters the Atlantic Ocean.
- 4.5.21 In addition to the river sources, the underlying geology of the area also gives rise to a number of springs, including a line around the base of the Waseley Hills where two rock types meet.
- 4.5.22 Several brooks and streams flow through the study area, such as Belne Brook in Belbroughton. Some of these have been an important resource in the past, providing power to run mills and forges. Today they provide a diverse range of aquatic and riparian habitats of value to biodiversity.
- 4.5.23 The reservoirs in the east of the study area are significant water bodies. The Upper and Lower Bittell Reservoirs, built at the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, are feeders for the Birmingham and Worcester Canal) – both reservoirs are naturalised and SSSIs. The Bartley and Frankley Reservoirs were built early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to provide drinking water to Birmingham from the Elan Valley Reservoirs in Wales. They are man-made in appearance compared to the Bittell Reservoirs, but still contain ecological interest, and provide visual value and recreational opportunities, especially for those living in Bartley Green and Frankley.

## SOILS

- 4.5.24 The study area contains a range of soils which reflect the varied geology and parent bedrock.
- 4.5.25 Soilscape (England)<sup>23</sup> classifies the soils on the north side of the Clent Hills range as 'Freely draining slightly acid but base rich soils'. The land further east and south, including much of the Waseley Hills and Lickey Hills, is 'Freely draining slightly acid loamy soils', with some areas 'Freely draining slightly acid sandy soils'.
- 4.5.26 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) of the soils in most of the non-urban parts of the study area is Grade 3 (good to moderate). The Clent and Waseley Hills are mostly Grade 4 (poor).
- 4.5.27 The soils south of West Hagley, around Holy Cross, Hollies Hill and south of Belbroughton are Grade 2 (good).
- 4.5.28 The soils around Broome have the highest classification as Grade 1 (excellent).
- 4.5.29 Grades 1, 2 and 3a are the considered the best and most versatile land for agriculture.

*Provisional Agricultural Land Classification 2018 (from Natural England data)*



<sup>23</sup> <http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/>

## **4.6 Designated / Key Landscape Features: Heritage**

4.6.1 The locations of the features listed are shown in Appendix A on Figure 6: Landscape Baseline - Heritage.

4.6.2 The sections on the study area's history and historic landscape character below explain and provide the background context for these features.

### Scheduled Monuments

4.6.3 There are nine Scheduled Monuments in the study area. Four of these are within Bromsgrove District, four are within Birmingham, and one is in Halesowen. They comprise:

- Halesowen Abbey
- Moated site of Frankley Hall
- Standing cross in St Leonard's churchyard, Frankley
- Moated site 700m east of Gannow Green Farm, Frankley
- Weoley Castle, Longbridge
- Hawkesley Farm moated site, Longbridge
- Moated site at Fairfield Court
- Barrow Hill, c. 0.5km south of Drayton
- Wychbury Ring, small multivallate hillfort c. 0.5km south east of Pedmore Hall.

### Listed Buildings

4.6.4 The study area contains many listed buildings / structures. Most of these are Grade II listed, but there are also several Grade I and II\* structures.

4.6.5 There are four Grade I listed buildings / structures in the study area. These are:

- St. Mary's Abbey Ruins, Manor Farm (Halesowen)
- Church of St. Kenelm, Romsley
- Hagley Hall
- Temple of Theseus, near Hagley Hall.

4.6.6 There are 19 Grade II\* structures in the study area, including the Church of St. Leonard in Clent, and the Church of St. Leonard in Frankley. Grade II\* structures associated with Hagley Hall include the Rotunda, and Wychbury Obelisk – a notable landmark in the area.

### Registered Historic Parks and Gardens

4.6.7 Hagley Hall is a Grade I Registered Historic Park and Garden (RHPG), located in the north west of the study area adjacent to the Clent Hills, extending to c.180 ha.

4.6.8 It is one of only two RHPGs in Bromsgrove District – the other is Grade II\* Hewell Grange to the south of the study area.

4.6.9 Features of Hagley Hall RHPG include gardens and pleasure grounds; open grass parkland with occasional mature specimen trees; circuit walk on to the spur-and-valley landscape of the Clent Hills; and walled kitchen garden. Built landscape features in the RHPG include the Rotunda, the folly castle, Palladian Bridge, Wychbury Obelisk, and the Prince of Wales column.

### Conservation Areas

4.6.10 There are five Conservation Areas (CAs) within the study area. These are areas of special architectural or historic interest; the (local) designation gives additional planning controls.

4.6.11 The following settlements all have CAs:

- Barnt Green
- Belbroughton

- Holy Cross
- Clent
- Hagley

4.6.12 There are no CAs in the north east sector of the study area.

4.6.13 Dodford CA lies immediately adjacent to the study area in the south west sector. It differs slightly to the other CAs as it is not a nucleated settlement or village. More detail about Dodford is given below.

*Grade II\* Listed Wychbury Obelisk on Wychbury Ring, a Scheduled Monument*



## 4.7 Historic Landscape Character and Cultural Associations

### Introduction and Overview

- 4.7.1 Heritage and historic landscape character are integral elements of landscape character, and thus of LCA. This was emphasised in para. 170 of the 2012 version of the NPPF: '*Where appropriate, landscape character assessments should also be prepared, integrated with assessment of historic landscape character*', although in the 2018 version, for some reason this recommendation has disappeared.
- 4.7.2 Landscape assessment guidance is also clear about the matter, setting out the range of historic and socio-cultural baseline information which needs to be gathered, analysed and factored in to the findings. It states, '*The history of the landscape, its historic character, the interaction between people and places through time, and the surviving features and their settings may be relevant to the LVIA baseline studies, as well as the cultural heritage topic*'.
- 4.7.3 According to *Topic Paper 5 Understanding Historic Landscape Character*<sup>24</sup>, '*HLC/HLA is most of all concerned to trace the imprint of the past on landscape. Known as 'time-depth' (see Box 1), this is one of the landscape's most important characteristics. It can be defined as "the long-term interaction between human activity and natural processes" [5]. It recognises that the long*

<sup>24</sup> *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland - Topic Paper 5: Understanding Historic Landscape Character* The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002)

*sequence of events and actions that have produced the present environment, and which is visible within the landscape, is the result of human activity as well as natural processes.*

*'A proper understanding of time-depth needs to recognise the various, and often complex, ways in which the landscape has been influenced by past human actions. HLC/HLA focuses on this human perspective and adds a fuller historical dimension to the basic Landscape Character Assessment process.*

*'Time-depth is reflected within HLC/HLA through readily identifiable components like field boundaries, and through less obvious remains of settlement or communications and transport networks. It is also reflected through human influence on vegetation patterns, and in the "hidden", buried evidence of past environments which survives across the landscape in the form of palaeoenvironmental deposits, for instance, or as cropmarks in ploughed land.*

*An important aspect of understanding time-depth is recognising that human influence has occurred, and can be traced, even where the landscape appears natural. It enhances our appreciation of how landscape components have changed through time, or survived through continuity.*

- 4.7.4 Understanding time depth and historic landscape character is important because otherwise, the value and importance of certain features - and qualities / attributes - may be missed, and not factored into judgements about value. Also, although detailed assessments of heritage assets and their significance are beyond the scope of this study, it is important to analyse the data and use the information to build up an understanding of how the area's landscapes and settlements evolved over time.
- 4.7.5 In this case, historic map regression exercises were carried out to establish how and why both the area's landscapes and settlements have evolved as they have, and what relevance this has to current and future landscape-related matters, especially character. A range of maps dating from 1610 onwards (and old aerial photographs) were consulted and compared. It is possible to identify features in the landscape today and trace their history back for many centuries; from this information, their rarity and value can also be determined.
- 4.7.6 Other sources of reference for this section include WCC *Worcestershire Historic Landscape Characterisation* (2012); *The Black Country: An Historic Landscape Characterisation* (2009); *Birmingham Historic Landscape Characterisation* (2015); BDC *Historic Environment Assessment* (2010); and books on local history. Dr. Peter King's research and unpublished booklet, *The Clent Hills: A History and Guide*, was particularly helpful in informing this assessment.
- 4.7.7 The studies noted significant time-depth evident within the study area, and identified a wide variety of historic assets, elements, features and cultural associations. Many of the features listed above and below and shown on Figure 6: Landscape Baseline - Heritage, make important contributions to both landscape character and visual / social amenity, some at a national level, others at a regional and / or local / neighbourhood level. They have been factored in to judgements made about landscape and visual value.

#### **Historic Landscape Character**

- 4.7.8 WCC's 2012 Historic Landscape Characterisation report explains the role of HLC as seeking *'to identify the valued characteristics of the County's landscapes, whether it is field patterns, settlements or other elements, so that they can be effectively managed into the future'*.
- 4.7.9 The Council for British Archaeology's guide, *Historic Landscape Analysis*, explains that while HLC recognises that all landscapes have a historic dimension and must evolve, by identifying specific character areas, an area's relative importance can be determined in terms of its rarity, condition, and cultural associations.<sup>25</sup>
- 4.7.10 As with modern landscape character, the HLC process is a descriptive analysis of the landscape, and value is not normally assigned. However, as the Black Country HLC report explains, the HLC data can be used to assist assigning value in later, more detailed phases.<sup>26</sup>

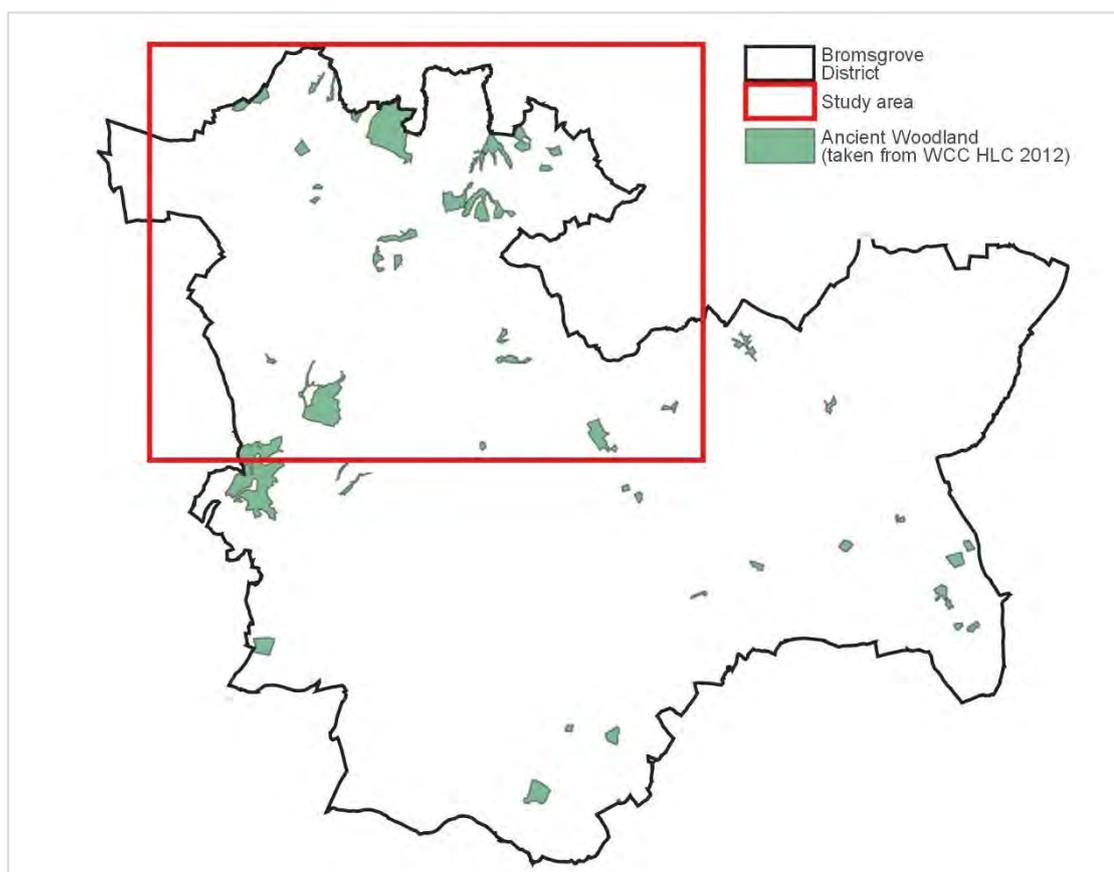
---

<sup>25</sup> Historic Landscape Analysis: Deciphering the countryside Rippon, S. (2004)

<sup>26</sup> *The Black Country: An Historic Landscape Characterisation* Black Country Archaeology Service (2009)

- 4.7.11 The time-depth in the study area is shown on Figure 7 - Landscape Baseline: HLC, and illustrates the degree to which historic landscape features are still present in the landscape today.
- 4.7.12 The study considers the extent of landscape change, and the rarity / susceptibility to change of key features. In comparison to the rest of Worcestershire, the study area shows a similar proportion of land classified as Post-1945<sup>27</sup>, and reflects the predominance of industrial agriculture and subsequent loss of hedgerows and small field patterns in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- 4.7.13 However, relative to the rest of Bromsgrove, the study area has a significant number of parcels of land with medieval features still extant. These include a scatter of ancient semi-natural woodlands (ASNWs) such as Pepper Wood (see diagram below), and medieval nucleated settlements such as Clent and Broome. The study area contains the most significant blocks of ASNW in BD, including parts of Chaddesley Wood which is post-Roman in origin.
- 4.7.14 In the north east sector, combining data from the Black Country and WCC HLC projects shows a relatively contiguous area of post-medieval landscape around Manor Abbey Farm in Halesowen, down towards Romsley, with areas of medieval ASNW.
- 4.7.15 Within Frankley Green there are also medieval ASNWs (Raven Hays Wood and Long Kettles Wood) and remnants of medieval clustered settlements. The Birmingham HLC describes how the Frankley and Bartley Green Reservoirs were built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, on the site of former farms. Cutler's Rough and Bromwich Wood survive as ASNW near the two reservoirs.
- 4.7.16 The east to south sector contains the post-medieval land associated with Chadwich Manor, as well as the more recent landscape changes that comprise the Lickey Hills Country Park and modern settlement expansion.

*Ancient woodland extant in Bromsgrove District*



<sup>27</sup> The WCC HLC reports that 26.75% of the total County area comprises fields that have been amalgamated or reorganised since 1945)

- 4.7.17 The 20<sup>th</sup> century landscapes in Birmingham are mostly residential expansion, but also include the former Austin / Rover Longbridge Motor works and Cofton Park.
- 4.7.18 Much of the south to west sector of the study area is classified as piecemeal post-medieval enclosure. The relatively small scale and complex, irregular landscape pattern that originated from this time can be seen in the present-day Principal Timbered Farmlands LCT described above.
- 4.7.19 The west to north sector shows that much of the Clent Hills Country Park HLC is 20<sup>th</sup> century as a result of woodland planting from the 1950s. There are other blocks of ASNW, as well as a surviving medieval co-axial field system east of Walton Hill Farm.
- 4.7.20 To the north of the sector, the BCC HLC shows how much of the land adjacent to modern housing developments was enclosed by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, either from medieval open fields, or parkland in the case of land near Pedmore Hall.

### **Landscape History and Evolution**

#### **ANCIENT HISTORY**

- 4.7.21 The study area contains one of the most significant hillforts in the county. Wychbury Ring, a Scheduled Monument, is a multivallate Iron Age hillfort, overlooking the Stour valley and located at the western end of the Clent and Lickey Hills range.
- 4.7.22 The WCC Historic Environment Record (HER) describes how, even though the SM (WSM00339) is small in size, it is *'in striking contrast in many respects to the other hill forts comprised in this class...the defences are abnormally strong and of considerable complexity.'*
- 4.7.23 The Historic England SM listing also highlights the heritage value of Wychbury Ring due to the rarity of its hillfort type:  
*'Small multivallate hillforts are rare with around 100 examples recorded nationally...They are important for understanding the nature of settlement and social organisation within the Iron Age period...[Wychbury Ring] survives well and will contain archaeological and environmental evidence relating to its construction, development, social organisation, territorial,, political, strategic and economic significance, longevity, trade, agricultural practices, domestic arrangements, adaptive re-use and overall landscape context'.*
- 4.7.24 Other SMs in the study area and adjacent to it suggest prehistoric activity in the wider area. Several prehistoric finds, such as flint heads in Hagley, Alvechurch and on the Lickey Hills also provide evidence of a long history of activity in the area. The Clent Hills contain earthworks that may be prehistoric, and Bilberry Hill in the Lickey Hills is also potentially an Iron Age hillfort (WSM09666).
- 4.7.25 Barrow Hill SM is a round barrow on a ridge between Drayton Pool and Hockley Brook in the south west of the study area.
- 4.7.26 According to an extract from Historic England's record of scheduled monuments<sup>28</sup>, barrows are *'funerary monuments dating from the Late Neolithic period to the Late Bronze Age... constructed as earthen or rubble mounds, sometimes ditched, which covered single or multiple burials.... Often occupying prominent locations, they are a major historic element in the modern landscape and... provide important information on the diversity of beliefs and social organisations amongst early prehistoric communities.'*
- 4.7.27 Historic England's listing describes how the bowl barrow on Barrow Hill *'survives reasonably well. The monument is an important local landmark and continues to maintain a prominent landscape setting. The monument will include layers and deposits containing important archaeological information relating to the use and construction of the barrow in addition to providing environmental evidence'.*
- 4.7.28 Wychbury Ring and Barrow Hill are good examples of the prevailing influence of prehistoric features on the local landscape despite the urban context.

---

<sup>28</sup> [http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/Metadata\\_for\\_magic/rsm/32358.pdf](http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/Metadata_for_magic/rsm/32358.pdf)

*Wychbury Hill viewed from Clent Hills Country Park*



#### ROMAN PERIOD

- 4.7.29 The study area is highly likely to have close associations to Roman activity in the wider area, indicated by Roman roads that run through or close to the study area (shown on Figure 6: Landscape Baseline - Heritage).
- 4.7.30 Rose Hill is adjacent to a Roman road that passed over the Lickey Hills, connecting Droitwich to the fort at Metchley, c. 2km north east of the study area boundary (adjacent Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Edgbaston). Droitwich was located on the main route between the Bristol Channel, Worcester and Birmingham, and the Roman road through the study area would have been used to transport salt<sup>29</sup> and other goods between the camps at Worcester, Droitwich and Metchley.
- 4.7.31 Another Roman road is located adjacent to the western boundary of the study area. It passed through Chaddesley Corbett, and connected Droitwich to the fort at Greensforge, near Wall Heath, c. 7km north west of the study area.

#### 5<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> CENTURIES

- 4.7.32 Most of the study area falls within the early English kingdom of Hwicce, which later became subordinate to Mercia - the Saxon kingdom which covered the Midlands. The toponym *Hwicce* still survives in the name of Wychbury Hill.<sup>30</sup>
- 4.7.33 In *A Short History of Clent*, John Amphlett explains how '*the character of the country is disclosed to us by the great prevalence of the termination 'ley' in the names of places in the neighbourhood*'.<sup>31</sup> 'Ley' or 'leah' is an Anglo-Saxon word for a woodland clearing or glade, for example, Hagley, Frankley, Romsley and Farley.
- 4.7.34 The origin of the place-name Clent is less clear than others in the area, although it may be cognate to Old Swedish *klinter*, or Old Norse *klettr*, meaning 'a rocky hill'.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> Droitwich was one of the main sources of salt production since prehistoric time due to the brine along the Salwarpe River. The Roman occupation of the town was known as "Salinae", meaning "Salt Works" ([www.droitwichspa.com/history.shtml](http://www.droitwichspa.com/history.shtml)).

<sup>30</sup> In Worcestershire, also Droitwich and Wichenford [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_Worcestershire#Anglo-Saxon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Worcestershire#Anglo-Saxon)

<sup>31</sup> *A Short History of Clent* John Amphlett (1907)

<sup>32</sup> *Worcestershire Place-Names* Anthony Poulton-Smith (2003)

- 4.7.35 Although the name 'Clent' may have come later, Amphlett describes how during the Saxon period the Clent Hills '*must have been in much the same condition that they are now, bare, grass-grown summits covered on their sides with gorse*'.
- 4.7.36 The legend of St. Kenelm and its close association with the Clent Hills originates from this period. Kenelm inherited Mercia in 821 but was murdered while hunting on the Clent Hills (instigated by Kenelm's sister). According to the legend, when his body was recovered, a spring broke forth, and his martyrdom is marked by the 12<sup>th</sup> century Grade I listed St. Kenelm Church in Romsley parish (see below). The spring behind the chapel is the source of the River Stour, and was frequented by pilgrims from the time of Edward I to the Dissolution due to its association with St. Kenelm.
- 4.7.37 Other early-Medieval features in the area include the deserted settlement 'Belne" (WSM00227) near Bell Hall in Belbroughton, and Pepper Wood, which is also an ASNW and SSSI, on the south west edge of the study area.

*Plaque next to the spring behind St. Kenelm's Church*



#### 11<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> CENTURIES

- 4.7.38 The Domesday Book shows Clent as head of one of the hundreds<sup>33</sup> of Worcestershire, and was soon afterwards amalgamated with other hundreds to form the Halfshire Hundred which covered the greater majority of the study area.<sup>34</sup> Eastern sections of the study area, such as Frankley and Cofton Hackett, were part of Came Hundred, which was also amalgamated into Halfshire Hundred.
- 4.7.39 The study area lay between two royal hunting forests - the Forest of Kinver to the north west, and Feckenham Forest to the south and west. The latter was enlarged by Henry II and extended

<sup>33</sup> The term 'hundred' was first recorded in the laws of Edmund I (939-46) as a measure of land and the area served by a hundred court. The Hundred Ordinance, which dates to the middle of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, provided that the court was to meet monthly, and thieves were to be pursued by all the leading men of the district. The name of the hundred was normally that of its meeting-place. Over time, the principal functions of the hundred became the administration of law and the keeping of the peace. Hundred boundaries were independent of both parish and county boundaries, although often aligned, meaning that a hundred could be split between counties, or a parish could be split between hundreds. The importance of the hundred courts declined from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and most of their powers were extinguished with the establishment of county courts in 1867.

<sup>34</sup> *The Clent Hills: A History and Guide* (unpublished) Peter King

- northwards to include part of Belbroughton, with the Belne Brook being its northern boundary as far as Madeley.
- 4.7.40 Although much of the study area was not part of any Royal Forest, it is likely that the woods around Clent Hill were once part of a swathe that joined Uffmoor Wood.<sup>35</sup>
- 4.7.41 The Lickey Hills were a 'hay' or hunting enclosure, within Feckenham Forest before 1300. As well as being filled with deer, rabbits were introduced. These were kept in large enclosures, giving rise to Lickey Warren and Warren Lane.
- 4.7.42 Deer parks were also created from ancient woodland. Hagley Park was originally a medieval deer park at the edge of Clent Hill, as well as one in Illey, and a small park in Frankley, near to the present day Frankley Reservoir.
- 4.7.43 The common land, or waste of the manor, gave manorial tenants rights to pasture (or other commoners' rights) on the land. Some of these areas of common land are still present in the landscape today, such as on the Clent Hills, but most were enclosed in later centuries, largely as a result of parliamentary enclosure.
- 4.7.44 There are several deserted medieval settlements within the study area such as Chadwich, and some of the hamlets and small nucleated settlements are possible shrunken medieval villages, such as Hartle, south east of Belbroughton.
- 4.7.45 Perhaps the most significant of these deserted villages is 'Kenelmstowe' in Romsley, which grew around the chapel of St. Kenelm. Within the WCC HLC, the land around St. Kenelm's chapel is categorised as a medieval interrupted row settlement, and earthworks, house platforms and hollow ways of Kenelmstowe remain in the landscape.
- 4.7.46 Most of the villages in the study area are nucleated settlements that originated in the medieval period, including Clent, Broome, Hagley, and Belbroughton.
- 4.7.47 The Grade II\* listed Cofton Hall and Fairfield Court are both medieval country houses.
- 4.7.48 One of the most significant archaeological features in the study area is the SM and Grade I listed remains of Halesowen Abbey. The manor of Halesowen was granted to Peter des Roches by King John in 1214 to establish a religious house. The abbey was founded in 1215, and the abbot's park created in 1290. The Abbey was dissolved during the Dissolution in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century.
- 4.7.49 The *Halesowen Abbey Conservation Management Plan*, commissioned by English Heritage in 2013 describes the Abbey as '*a nationally important medieval asset*'.<sup>36</sup> More detail about the Abbey remains and its landscape setting today is given in Section 4.11.
- 4.7.50 Although the area within which the manor of Halesowen and the Abbey lay were part of Shropshire until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it would have been closely connected to the other landscapes in the study area by land use (farming) and activity (such as milling), with the St. Kenelm pilgrimage route running through.
- 4.7.51 Within the study area, the WCC HER shows a great deal of ridge and furrow - earthworks resulting from medieval ploughing methods. Fields that show evidence of ridge and furrow are mostly located in the north east and south west, where the HLC shows extant post-medieval features and therefore any earthworks are less likely to have been levelled by modern intensive agriculture and field amalgamation.
- 4.7.52 Belbroughton and other parishes in the southern part of the study area were part of an ongoing project to record and assess the survival of ridge and furrow in 64 parishes in Worcestershire.<sup>37</sup> As a consequence, a larger proportion of ridge and furrow is recorded in these areas. This would suggest that other ridge and furrow earthworks potentially remain unrecorded elsewhere in the study area.
- 4.7.53 Although these earthworks have no formal protection, the WCC HER webpage for the Ridge and Furrow Survey Project explains how they '*form an important part of the landscape character in Worcestershire and the identity of local areas*'.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, Historic England has already

---

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *Halesowen Abbey Conservation Management Plan*, Greig, I, Eaton, M, and Palmer S C ,Archaeology Warwickshire (2013)

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.explorethepast.co.uk/2018/11/ridge-and-furrow-earthworks-in-worcestershire/>

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*

scheduled several areas of ridge and furrow, and states, 'Given the enormous losses of ridge and furrow to agricultural intensification since the 1970s, protection of more examples may well be warranted'.<sup>39</sup>

- 4.7.54 Ridge and furrow are often discernible in the landscape, and show up on satellite images. The Google Earth image below shows ridge and furrow earthworks, running north to south, in a field east of Hurst Farm, near Belbroughton.

*Satellite image showing ridge and furrow earthworks in Belbroughton (image © 2018 Google)*



*The remains of Halesowen Abbey next to Manor Abbey Farm, viewed from a footpath near to the A456*

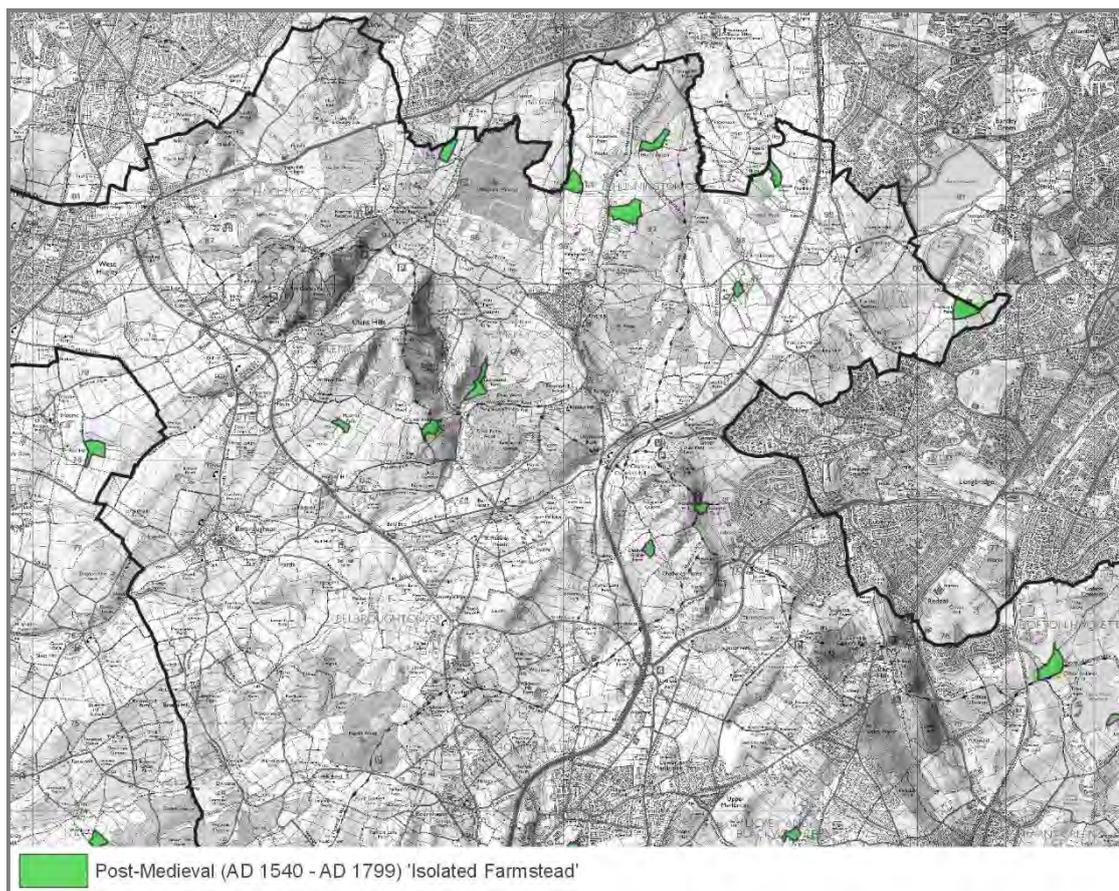


<sup>39</sup> Historic England 2018 *Agriculture: Scheduling Selection Guide*. Swindon. Historic England [HistoricEngland.org.uk/listing/selection-criteria/scheduling-selection/](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/selection-criteria/scheduling-selection/)

### 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> CENTURIES

- 4.7.55 After the dissolution of the monasteries between 1536 and 1541, Henry VIII granted the site of Halesowen Abbey to Sir John Dudley. The manor of Halesowen was eventually sold to John Lyttelton in 1558, who had also bought the manor of Hagley in 1564.
- 4.7.56 Many of the open fields in the area were enclosed during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This is reflected in the HLC, with post-medieval piecemeal enclosure still evident in some of the field patterns today, particularly in the south west, and around Waseley Hill for example.
- 4.7.57 The WCC LCA (see Section 4.4 above) shows these enclosures are still evident in the landscape today through the LCT 'Enclosed Commons' near Madley Heath, Wildmoor, and Lower and Upper Marlbrook. Bournheath and Barnt Green were also areas of enclosed common land, although the landscape patterns have been obscured or destroyed by subsequent development.
- 4.7.58 Squatter settlements would also have originated from this piecemeal enclosure of common land, such as on Adams Hill.<sup>40</sup>
- 4.7.59 The diagram below shows the farmsteads dating from the post-medieval period that are recorded as still extant in the WCC HLC, although many are likely to have originated earlier. For example, Cofton Richards was a medieval manor and would have had a farm since the medieval period.
- 4.7.60 WCC's Farmsteads and Landscapes Project<sup>41</sup>, explains the value of farmsteads, particularly traditional farm buildings of 19<sup>th</sup> century and earlier, since they '*make a fundamental contribution to local distinctiveness and a sense of place, through their varied forms, use of materials*'.

#### *Extant post-medieval farmsteads*

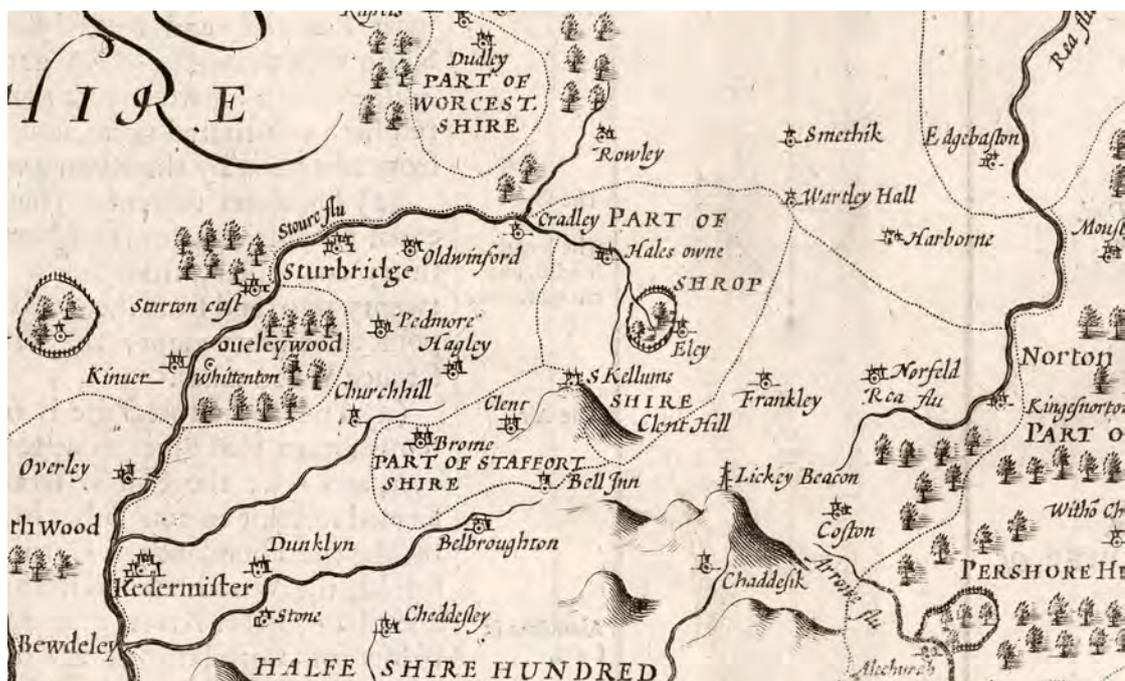


<sup>40</sup> The Clent Hills: A History and Guide (unpublished) Peter King

<sup>41</sup> Worcestershire Historic Farmsteads and Landscape Project (April 2012) WCC and English Heritage

- 4.7.61 The *Worcestershire Farmsteads Guidance* sheet for the Bromsgrove District<sup>42</sup> also explains the significance of farmsteads that have retained their historic form since they *'make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness, whether they are designated as heritage assets or not.*
- 4.7.62 The majority of study area is encompassed by the 'Royal Forest of Feckenham and north east' Farmstead Character Area in WCC's Farmsteads and Landscapes Project, and is described as having:
- '...high densities of small to medium scale farmsteads associated with the early post medieval, piecemeal enclosure. High numbers of 18<sup>th</sup> century and early timber framed houses and working buildings, relating to medieval and later patterns of dispersed settlement which mostly relates to intricate networks of lanes. These include moated sites of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and earlier. A significant concentration of shrunken medieval village sites and extensive evidence for post-medieval dispersed settlement relating to the piecemeal enclosure of former open fields. Paradoxically there are a significantly lower proportion of designated assets throughout this area than in the remainder of the county.'*
- 4.7.63 The landscapes of the study area played a role in national politics in 1605 when the 'Gunpowder Plot' conspirators fled across the region and took refuge in several houses in Worcestershire. From the south they passed through Lickey End, Catshill, Bell Inn and Clent, with two of the conspirators given refuge at Hagley Park by two relatives of the owner, Sir John Lyttelton, including, Humphrey Lyttelton, who was later executed<sup>43</sup>.
- 4.7.64 King Charles II may have also passed through the study area in 1651 during his retreat after the Royalist defeat at the Battle of Worcester, travelling in disguise from Bentley through the Black Country, having his horse reshod at Bromsgrove.
- 4.7.65 The extracts below, from John Speed's 1610 map of Worcestershire, shows the main settlements, routes and foci in the study area in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Bell Inn (now Bell End, although Bell Inn survives as a Grade II listed building), Belbroughton, Frankley, Chadwich, Broome, Clent, Coston, Hagley and Pedmore were all significant settlements during this period.
- 4.7.66 The extract also shows the source of the River Stour near St. Kenelm, and the source of the River Rea in the Lickeys.

*Extract from John Speed's 1610 map of Worcestershire (© 2000 permission from Cartography Associates under Creative Commons License)*



<sup>42</sup> *Worcestershire Farmsteads Guidance: Farmsteads in Bromsgrove District* (date unknown) WCC and English Heritage.

Available at: <https://public.worcestershire.gov.uk/sites/archaeology/Reports/SWR23107.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.explorepast.co.uk/2013/11/gunpowder-treason-and-plot-and-the-lytteltons/>

### 18<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

- 4.7.67 The 18<sup>th</sup> century saw several country houses and historic parks and gardens constructed in the study area.
- 4.7.68 In *Historic Gardens of Worcestershire*, Timothy Mowl proposes the prevalence of parks and gardens in North Worcestershire at this time was because of the area's location: *'the whole area around Clent and Belbroughton was Birmingham's equivalent to London's Chiswick: a desirable housing area for the wealthy as they fled from smokes and fumes.'*<sup>44</sup>
- 4.7.69 The registered and unregistered historic parks and gardens that originated in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and make up this distinctive clustering within and adjacent to the study area include:
- Hagley Hall
  - The Leasowes
  - Clent Grove
  - Field House
  - Broome House
  - Church House
  - Castle Bourne
- 4.7.70 The image below from 1732 by Birmingham surveyor, William Westley, illustrates Birmingham's growing urbanisation and built form against the backdrop of the rolling countryside of the Clent and Lickey Hills which can be seen in the background.

*'The East Prospect of Birmingham' by William Westley, 1732*<sup>45</sup>



- 4.7.71 One of the most significant of these country houses is Hagley Hall, which is now a Grade I listed RHPG. Set within a landscaped deer park, the present Hall was built in the fashionable Neo-Palladian style in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century by the architect Sanderson Miller.
- 4.7.72 George Lyttelton began landscaping the grounds in the Picturesque style in 1751, and many of the follies and features are listed structures, such as the Temple of Theseus and the Rotunda. Some of the pine clumps which are so characteristic of the area may originate from the 1750's landscaping of the Park.
- 4.7.73 Hagley Park was one of the most written-about gardens of its time.<sup>46</sup> The Historic England RHPG listing describes how *'the site was well favoured for the development of landscape scenery, having wooded valleys, streams and to the north of the Hall rising ground giving fine*

<sup>44</sup> *Historic Gardens of Worcestershire* Timothy Mowl (2006)

<sup>45</sup> Image available at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_Birmingham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Birmingham)

<sup>46</sup> *A Survey of Historic Parks and Gardens in Worcestershire* R. Lockett, Hereford and Worcester Gardens Trust (1997)

*views of the Malvern Hills, Wychbury Hill (which forms the northern extremity of the park) and the Black Mountains of Wales’.*

- 4.7.74 A number of the listed buildings within the study area originate from the 18<sup>th</sup> century such as Field House (Grade II\*) listed, and Cofton Hall (Grade II listed) in Cofton Hackett.
- 4.7.75 The Leasowes is an 18<sup>th</sup> century Grade I RHPG lying c. 700m north east of the study area boundary. Historically it was contiguous with the landscapes south of The Leasowes, although now it is separated by residential developments. The Leasowes was designed by the poet William Shenstone between 1743 and 1763, from farmland he had inherited. Born in Blakedown, Shenstone was one of the earliest practitioners of landscape gardening.
- 4.7.76 Shenstone described his designed, pastoral landscape as a ‘ferme ornée’ (ornamental farm) and became an important influence on the development of the English Landscape Style. The Dudley MBC webpage for The Leasowes describes it as ‘*of major historic significance, ranking in importance with such landscapes as Blenheim and Stowe.*’
- 4.7.77 Beyond the parks and gardens, other landscape changes during this period include the increased use of the Belne Brook in Belbroughton. The brook originally powered Belbroughton’s grain mills, but it was increasingly being used to power forges and grind metal. The Belbroughton Scythe Works were established in 1750 and became a key industry in the village. until the Works closed in 1968.
- 4.7.78 Some of the main roads through the study area were turnpiked during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>47</sup> The road between Bromsgrove and Birmingham, which followed the historic Roman road and passes over the Lickey Hills, was turnpiked in 1725, and the road to Dudley (through Romsley and Halesowen) by the same Act.<sup>48</sup>
- 4.7.79 In the 1787 *Cary’s New and Correct English Atlas*, the Clent Hills are described as one of ‘*the most remarkable places in the county*’.
- 4.7.80 The extract from Cary’s 1801 map of Worcestershire below shows the main routes, villages and towns at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. What are now the A456 and A491 were important roads even at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as well as Rose Hill through the Lickeys. The canal network is also shown on the map, including the Worcester to Birmingham canal near Cofton Hackett.

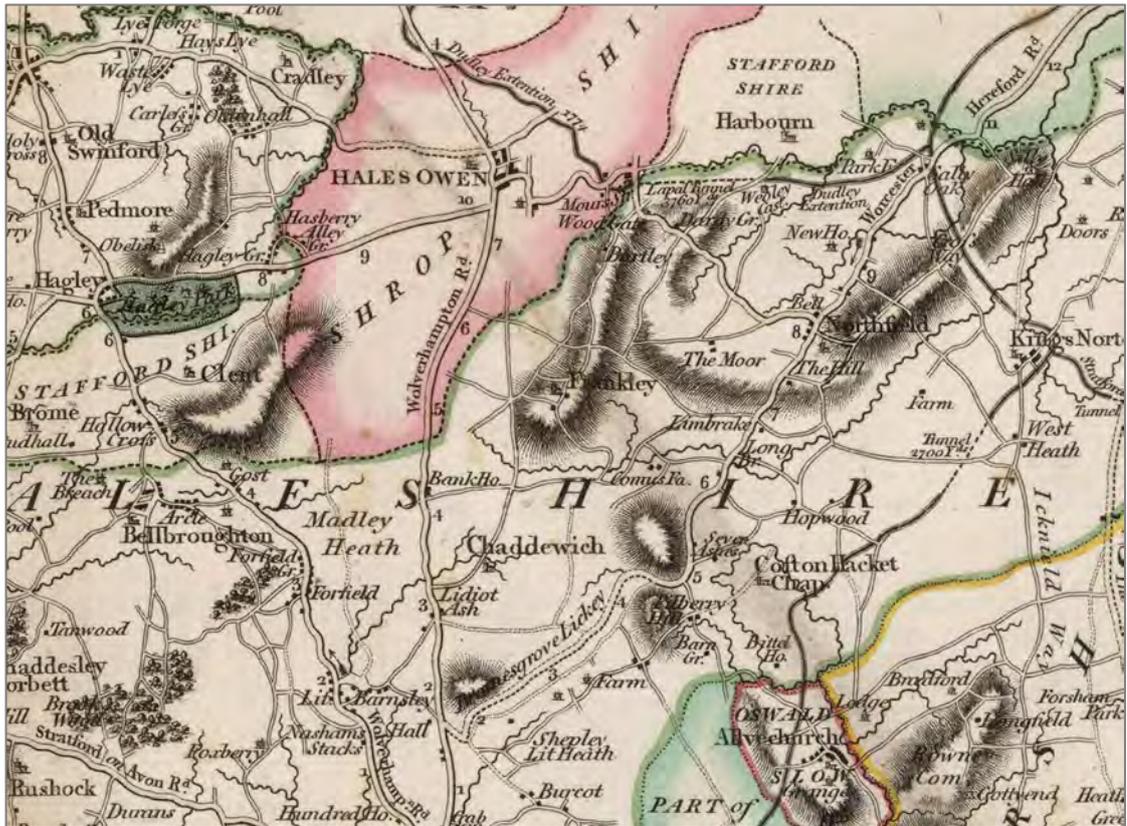
*Hagley Hall and parkland*



<sup>47</sup> Turnpike trusts were bodies set up by Parliament with powers to collect road tolls for maintaining principal roads that linked major centres of population by highways.

<sup>48</sup> ‘Some roads out of North Worcestershire’ in *Transactions of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society* Vol.20. Dr. P. W. King (2006)

Extract from Cary's 1801 map of Worcestershire (© 2000 permission from Cartography Associates under Creative Commons License)



18<sup>th</sup> century view from the Halesowen Abbey remains towards The Leasowes (c. 1750)<sup>49</sup>



<sup>49</sup> Image available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:View from the ruined Halesowen Priory towards The Leasowes \(c. 1750\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:View_from_the_ruined_Halesowen_Priory_towards_The_Leasowes_(c._1750).jpg)

### 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

- 4.7.81 Parliamentary and piecemeal enclosures created a great deal of landscape change across the study area during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Areas of former common land such as at Wildmoor and Madley Heath were enclosed; the rectilinear field patterns of parliamentary enclosure are still evident in these areas today.
- 4.7.82 With the Industrial Revolution and the urbanisation of Birmingham and the Black Country, the Clent and Lickey Hills area became an increasingly popular destination. A number of guidebooks, including William Timming's *A Guide to the Clent Hills* (1834) and William Harris' *Clentine Rambles* (1845), would have contributed to their popularity.
- 4.7.83 The expansion of the railways increased the accessibility of the Hills, particularly with Hagley station being just a few kilometres away from Clent Hill, and they became the focus of many bank holiday outings.
- 4.7.84 The increased use of and subsequent pressure on Clent Hill in particular, resulted in the formation of a group of 'Conservators' to control what was perceived by some as disorder. An application to the Inclosure Commissioners was made in 1879 and the Conservators were granted the award in 1881. Their application stated that:
- 'The proximity of the common to the manufacturing district of south Staffordshire and Worcestershire causes it to be a very favourite resort of pleasure seekers and of late years their number has largely increased. At present, there is no means of controlling the very large crowds that assemble on bank and other holidays, and in consequence many abuses abound unchecked and the scene is one of wild disorder... By the appointment of conservators as a central authority, it is hoped the neighbourhood will be made more orderly and the attraction of Clent Hill as a pleasure resort for respectable people increased. Nor is there at present any authority by which the common can be beautified or even maintained.'*<sup>50</sup>
- 4.7.85 Neighbouring local authorities, whose urban populations benefited from access to Clent Hill, contributed to funding the Conservators between c.1880 – 1959. These included Dudley, Brierley Hill, Quarry Bank, Halesowen and Stourbridge. John Amphlett became the Conservators' chairman, and held the post for 21 years. Byelaws (such as no galloping) were made. Permits were also issued to those hiring out animals and selling goods on the Hills, in an attempt to control 'behaviour'.
- 4.7.86 Some of the distinctive clumps of Scots pine trees in this area probably date from the time when the Conservators began managing the Hills.

*Pine tree clumps are highly characteristic of the Clent Hills*



<sup>50</sup> *The Clent Hills: A History and Guide* (unpublished) Peter King

- 4.7.87 Although an important tourist destination, the main function of the common land on the Clent Hills during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (and into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century) was still for farmers to graze livestock.
- 4.7.88 The study area was still largely a rural, farming landscape in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with dispersed and wayside settlements. The arrival of the railways and the station at Hagley provided easier access to Birmingham. West Hagley consequently grew from the more prosperous leaving the industrialised areas for a healthier environment.
- 4.7.89 Halesowen was still a relatively modest market town, surrounded by agricultural fields. The patchwork of farms, such as the land around Halesowen Abbey, fed a growing Birmingham.
- 4.7.90 The south east of the study area saw a considerable degree of landscape change during the 19<sup>th</sup> century as Birmingham grew and the railways arrived. Land that was owned by the Earl of Plymouth was sold for development and consequently Barnt Green was established.
- 4.7.91 With the increasing expansion of settlements, the Birmingham Society for the Preservation of Open Spaces purchased Rednal Hill and handed it to the City in trust in 1888; the Society also arranged for Pinfield Wood and Bilberry Hill to be leased on a peppercorn rent. As with the Clent Hills, the Lickeys became an increasingly popular visitor attraction and easily-accessible greenspace for those living in the Birmingham conurbation.
- 4.7.92 The value of the Lickeys to those in the urban areas is described by Elihu Burritt in his *Walks in the Black Country* from 1868:
- '...no hills more grateful and delightful for airing one's body and soul...such happy picnic rendezvous, especially for men, women and children of the mine and forge district... These remarkable hills...supply Birmingham and other large towns far and near with bilberries of the finest size and flavour. So, any summer day in the year when the sun shines upon them, these hills are set to the music of merry voices of boys and girls, and older children who feel young on the purple heather at 50. Then the scenery from these tops embraces a vast sweep of fertile and beautiful country.'*<sup>51</sup>
- 4.7.93 Burritt also gives a sense of the tree cover that still characterises the area today, describing how the Hills are *'belted with genuine Scotch firs and larches'*.<sup>52</sup>
- 4.7.94 Construction of the Upper Bittell Reservoir began in the 1790s, and was completed in 1837. It was built to feed the Worcester and Birmingham Canal - an important transportation route for trade and goods. Six years later the Birmingham and Gloucester railway was built alongside the canal, making its use for transporting goods largely redundant.
- 4.7.95 In 1848, 280 acres of the Dodford estate, bordering the south west of the study area, was bought by the Chartists movement. The Chartists created five villages (Dodford was the last) to settle working-class families from the cities in the countryside with enough land to make a living. The planned settlement is now a CA .
- 4.7.96 Although the scythe industry had been more widespread in the region, it became particularly focused on Belbroughton in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and many of the buildings in the CA date from this time.
- 4.7.97 The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw more country houses and parks and gardens built in the study area, often on the site of much earlier manor houses. These include:
- Clent Hall
  - Yew Tree House
  - The Birches
  - Broome House
  - Bell Hal

---

<sup>51</sup> *Walks in the Black Country* Elihu Burritt (1868) quoted in <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/nostalgia/carl-chinns-memories-lickey-hills-5686220>

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

4.7.98 The extract below from the OS First Edition 1831 map shows the study area prior to the introduction of the railways and the expansion of Birmingham in the east. Many of the woodland blocks are still present today.

*Extract from OS First Edition 1831 map, Sheet 54*



*Long straight lanes and high hedges along a grid structure give the planned settlement at Dodford a strong sense of enclosure*



20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

- 4.7.99 Further expansion of settlements, as well as major infrastructure building and changing farming methods, resulted in the 20<sup>th</sup> century seeing perhaps the greatest amount of landscape change.
- 4.7.100 The Clent Hills' importance as a tourist destination - largely used by people living in Birmingham and the Black Country - continued into the 20<sup>th</sup> century; increasing leisure time available for workers probably contributed to the increase in visitor numbers.
- 4.7.101 The postcards below and overleaf from the turn of the century illustrate the popularity of the area, and the recreational and scenic attributes enjoyed and valued by visitors.

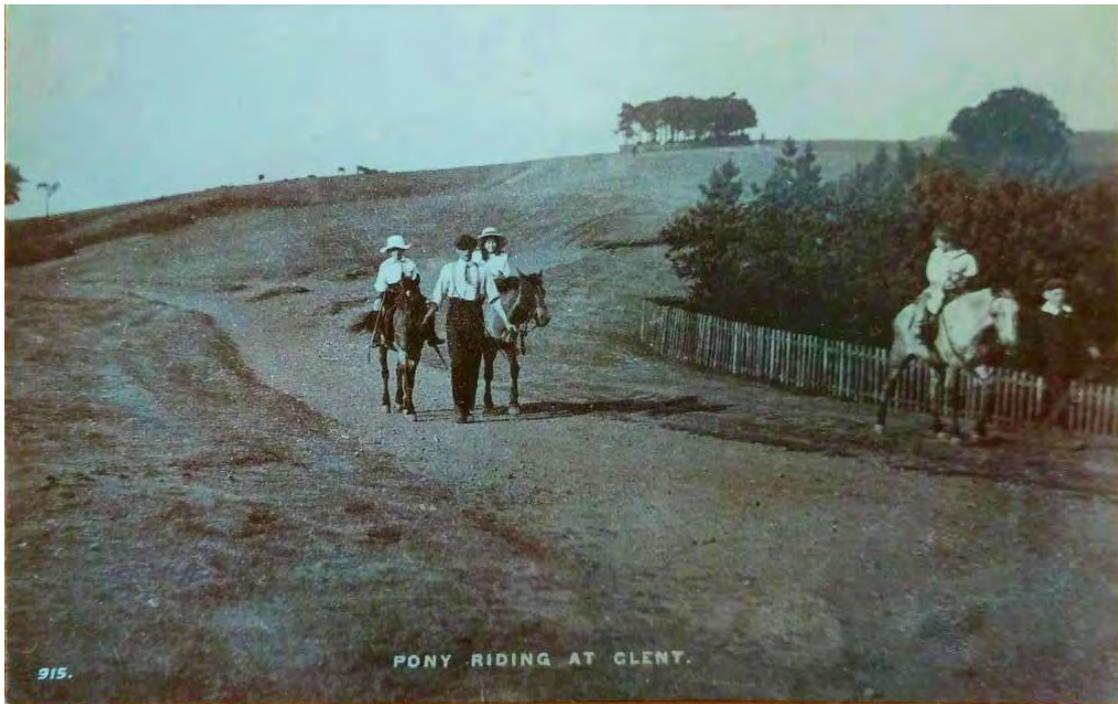
*Early 20th century postcard of the Clent Hills*



*Early 20th century postcard of the Clent Hills*



*Early 20th century postcard showing pony riding and Scots pine circles*



*Early to mid-20th century postcard of Adams Hill*



- 4.7.102 The Conservators continued to manage the Hills until 1959. Although Walton Hill was not included as part of the land managed by the Conservators, in 1933 Clent Parish Council asked the then Bromsgrove Rural District Council to bring about regulation of the common, who consequently made a scheme for regulating the common.
- 4.7.103 In 1904 and 1906, members of the Cadbury family donated several tracts of land, including Beacon Hill and land at Rednal, to Birmingham Council. The freehold of Bilberry Hill and further land around Cofton Hill and Lickey Warren was acquired by the City from the Earl of Plymouth in 1913. The Rose Hill Estate was bought by members of the Cadbury family and presented to the City in 1919, restoring free public access across the Lickeys.

- 4.7.104 In the late 1920s, an endowment from a local manufacturer was made for the Council to acquire further land at Low Hill Farm, opposite the expanding Longbridge Austin car factory. This was intended for 'the recreation and pleasure of the people', and in the 1930s it was renamed Cofton Park.<sup>53</sup>
- 4.7.105 The Cadbury family had bought large tracts of land to the south of Birmingham for a similar purpose, i.e. to protect it from development. These included parts of the Chadwick Manor Estate, with areas that would later form part of Waseley Country Park.
- 4.7.106 The Rednal tram terminus was at the end of the former Birmingham tram network and took holidaymakers and day-trippers from the inner city to the Lickey Hills until it ceased operating in the 1960s, and was replaced by bus services.
- 4.7.107 The construction of Frankley Reservoir was completed in 1904 and was an ambitious project to bring water from the Elan Valley in Wales. As water supply demands increased for Birmingham, the Barley Reservoir was built in 1930.
- 4.7.108 The Austin Motor Company was founded in 1905 by Herbert Austin who set up the works in the then small village of Longbridge. It later became the Austin Aero Company and the factory was mobilised during both World Wars to produce munitions. During World War One, guns and carriages were repaired at the Austin factory and were then transported to the Bilberry Hill Gun Proof Range to test the repaired equipment. Built in 1917, the range was in and around the Warren Lane Quarry.
- 4.7.109 The expansion of settlements, particularly in Barnt Green, Catshill, Rubery and West Hagley, continued in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the east of the study area, new housing estates at Weoley Castle, Northfield and Longbridge were built, although the land around Frankley and Halesowen still remained largely arable farmland until the mid to later 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*Wheat harvest in Frankley Green, 1953 (© University of Birmingham under Creative Commons License)*



<sup>53</sup> <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/nostalgia/carl-chinns-memories-lickey-hills-5686220>

- 4.7.110 Romsley also remained largely unchanged, retaining its linear settlement pattern until the 1970s when the triangular network of roads was infilled with a housing development.
- 4.7.111 With the increased mechanisation industrialisation of agriculture post-1945, many of the fields were amalgamated and reorganised. The WCC HLC shows this especially occurred in the west of the study area, near Broome, Belbroughton and south of Clent, and around Romsley and Hunnington.
- 4.7.112 Grazing also declined post-1945, so that in the 1960s no commoners registered their grazing rights on Clent Hill.
- 4.7.113 One of the most significant landscape changes for the study area during the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the building of the M5 motorway in the 1960s. Along with further modern expansion of settlements and infill in the latter decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this resulted in the study area's present-day strong delineation between rural and urban environments.
- 4.7.114 The Clent Hills (managed by the Conservators), Walton Hill (managed by BDC) and wood and lands from the Amphlett estate were handed over to the National Trust in 1959. Alongside other improvements, the new Management Committee began to restore the woodlands
- 4.7.115 Hereford and Worcester County Council took over management of the Clent Hills in the 1970s, and in 1974 the Hills became a Country Park. The Lickey Hills became a Country Park in 1971 and the visitor centre was completed in 1990. Waseley Hills was designated as a Country Park in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY

- 4.7.116 The 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen the Country Parks continue to be highly popular and important recreational facilities.
- 4.7.117 Both Lickey and Waseley Hills Country Parks have gained Green Flag status in recent years, demonstrating their high-quality facilities.
- 4.7.118 New housing developments, albeit on a smaller scale to the large developments in the 1970s, have been built in the first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Farmland still continues to be one of the main land uses in the study area.
- 4.7.119 Vehicle assembly stopped at the Longbridge plant in 2016, and part of the site has been redeveloped for housing

#### *New housing development near Cofton Church Lane*



### **Cultural Associations**

- 4.7.120 William Shenstone was born in 1914 at Harborough Hall, east of the study area, and would become one of the earliest practitioners of landscape gardening through his work in the grounds of The Leasowes estate.
- 4.7.121 Visitors to The Leasowes included Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and John Wesley.
- 4.7.122 Several notable cultural figures visited Hagley Hall's house and park, including the poet Alexander Pope.
- 4.7.123 Sanderson Miller, who designed Hagley Hall in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, was a pioneer of Gothic revival architecture.
- 4.7.124 A E Housman, most famous for *A Shropshire Lad*, was born at Bournheath in 1859.
- 4.7.125 A water garden in the gardens at Field House near Clent was designed by the influential garden designer and horticulturalist Gertrude Jekyll c. 1914.
- 4.7.126 The author J R R Tolkien lived in Rednal when he was 12 years old. Tolkien and his brother spent the summer exploring the Lickey Hills, the landscapes of which had an influence on his later writing.

*The Lickey Hills landscapes influenced the author J R R Tolkien*



## **4.8 Designated / Key Landscape Features: Natural Assets and Functions**

- 4.8.1 The designated and key natural assets, and their extent, are shown on Figure 8: Landscape Baseline - Biodiversity.

### **Biodiversity**

- 4.8.2 'Biodiversity' issues are an important factor in judgements about landscape value. GLVIA3 notes that '*... the presence of features of wildlife... can add to the value of the landscape as well as having value in their own right.*'
- 4.8.3 In its guidance document A Handbook on Environmental Impact Assessment (4<sup>th</sup> edition 2013), Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) sets out its belief that '*...all landscapes, everywhere, are important as [inter alia] ...an environment for plants and animals, the condition of which directly affects biodiversity conservation.*'
- 4.8.4 The baseline information which needs to be gathered and considered in landscape assessments is set out in LCA guidance; the list includes 'literature on wildlife' such as relevant Natural Area

Profiles, Biodiversity Action Plans, local Phase 1 habitat and other surveys (but note that on-the-ground ecological surveys are beyond the scope of this study and landscape assessment generally).

- 4.8.5 The key information is summarised below:
- i. 17 individual Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in the study area
  - ii. 11 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)
  - iii. Priority Habitat Inventory (PHI) and Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat sites
  - iv. Ancient Semi-natural Woodlands (ASNWs)
  - v. National Forest Inventory (NFI) (GB) areas
  - vi. Local Wildlife Sites, included Special Wildlife Sites (SWSs) and Local Geological Sites.
  - vii. The Wildlife Trust also manage a Nature Reserve at Penorchard Meadows.
- 4.8.6 As noted in the historic landscape section above, the study area contains several large blocks of ASNW such as Uffmoor Wood, Ell Wood, and Pepper Wood. These are also categorised in WCC HLC as ASNWs of Medieval origin.
- 4.8.7 The various watercourses in the area offer diverse aquatic and terrestrial habitats which make an important contribution to both local and wider biodiversity value. They provide vital connections to the wider ecosystem, and their protection and appropriate management is essential. The Water Framework Directive (WFD)<sup>54</sup> introduced a holistic approach to the management of water quality, and established a system for the protection and improvement of all aspects of the water environment, including water quality and ecological quality. The default objective under the WFD was for 100% of water bodies to achieve 'Good' status, and the original Directive required all inland and coastal waters to reach at least "Good" status by 2015 - at the time of writing it was not known whether this target had been met.
- 4.8.8 The reservoirs on the eastern side of the study area are significant water bodies and provide valuable habitats. The Bittell Reservoirs are SSSIs, and Bartley Reservoir contains Priority Habitat areas along its northern side.
- 4.8.9 Inevitably, erosion and loss of habitats such as woodlands, hedgerows, orchards, ponds and unimproved grasslands have resulted in the essential connectivity between them being broken in places. These habitats are also highly valuable elements and features in the landscape; their erosion and loss leads to erosion of landscape character and qualities.
- 4.8.10 There are differences in levels of management from area to area which affect the potential for biodiversity. Intensive farming methods, horse-keeping and other similar activities reduce opportunities for flora and fauna and thus ecological value; conversely, unmanaged habitats, or ones which are managed for biodiversity, are likely to be highly valuable.

#### **Significant Vegetation**

- 4.8.11 The term 'significant vegetation' is used here to describe predominantly mature tree cover and intact hedgelines which form noticeable and often highly characteristic features in the landscape.
- 4.8.12 Google Earth is used in the first instance, as this makes it much easier to identify the vegetation and draw it onto the baseline maps; the information is then verified during the on-the-ground surveys. Other significant vegetation noted on the plans (see Figure 8) includes the designated / key features noted in Biodiversity above.
- 4.8.13 The modified Google Earth image below shows the distribution of woodland, and field patterns formed by hedgerows; it also highlights areas where hedges are intact or eroded / lost.
- 4.8.14 The significant sized blocks of woodland include ANSW and more recent plantations – both of which contribute to the green infrastructure of the area (see below). These woodlands include Uffmoor Wood, Pepper Wood, Chaddesley Wood, Great Farley Wood, Lickey Warren and

---

<sup>54</sup> The Water Framework Directive Programme is now the Water Environment Improvement Fund Programme and Natural Flood Management Programme

Hagley Wood. There are also smaller areas of woodland and dingles along watercourses, such as Lwiland Wood and Long Saw Croft, east of Romsley.

*Modified Google Earth image illustrates distribution of significant vegetation*



### **Green Infrastructure**

- 4.8.15 'Green infrastructure' (GI) is '*...the planned and managed network of green spaces and natural elements that intersperse and connect our cities, towns and villages. GI comprises many different elements including biodiversity, the landscape, the historic environment, the water environment (also known as blue infrastructure) and publicly accessible green spaces and informal recreation sites.*'<sup>55</sup>
- 4.8.16 GI 'assets' are physical / natural / historic / recreational features and elements; GI functions are the roles the assets play. GI makes an important contribution to judgements about Landscape Value.
- 4.8.17 GI functions include the provision of:
- Access, recreation, movement and leisure
  - Habitats for, and access to, nature
  - Landscape setting and context for development
  - Energy production and conservation
  - Food production and productive landscapes
  - Flood attenuation and water resource management
  - Cooling effects.
- 4.8.18 Amongst its many benefits, GI has a vital role to play in peoples' health and wellbeing. According to WCC's GI Strategy, residents who live near nature generally cope better with the stress of everyday life and are considered happier than those who do not have easy access to green spaces. '*Proximity to greenspace is generally associated with increased levels of physical activity. This effect is particularly marked in the under 25's, who are more likely to be obese if they do not have access to greenspace. Regular participation in physical activities has been*

<sup>55</sup> Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy 2013 – 2018 (WCC)

*shown to improve physical and mental health. Increasing physical activity through access to high quality greenspace has the potential to save the NHS £2.1 billion a year... The green infrastructure approach therefore integrates consideration of economic, health and social benefits to ensure that delivery against both environmental and socio-economic objectives is central to the planning, management and delivery of these spaces.'* [Ibid]

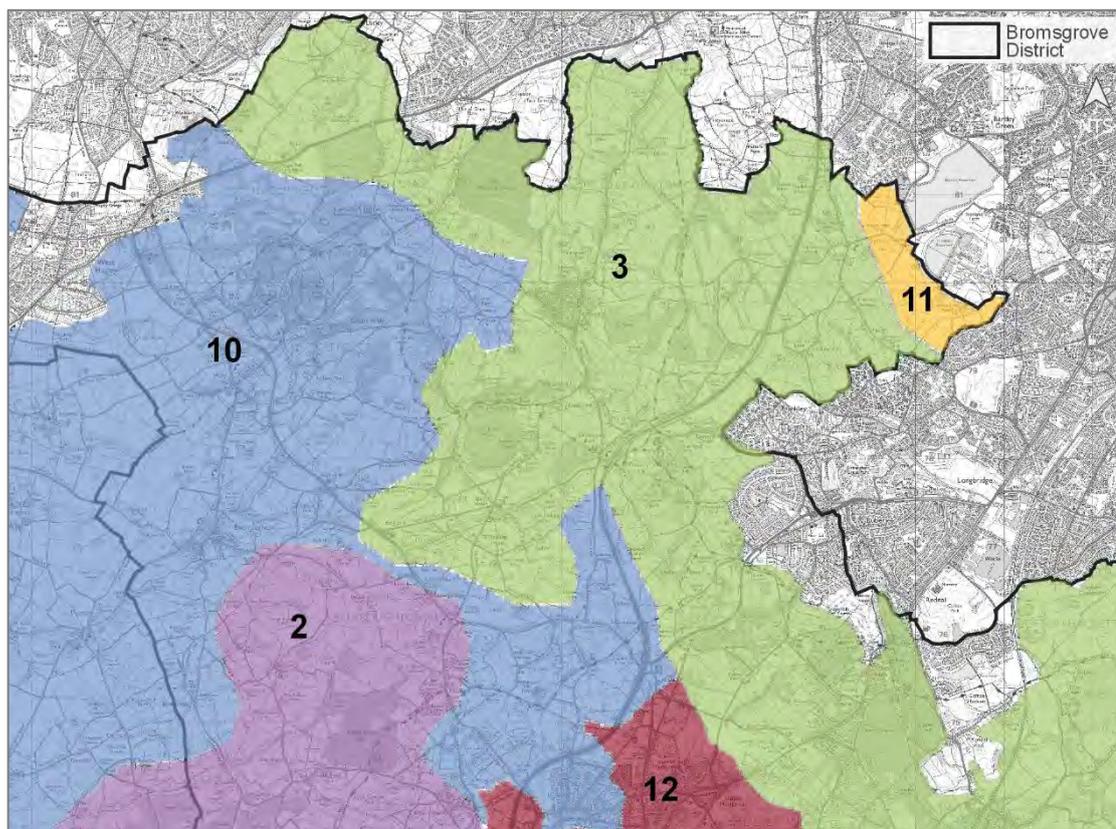
- 4.8.19 GI can improve the community's experience and understanding of natural and historic places. Integrating access to green spaces with natural, cultural and heritage value into peoples' everyday lives can help to develop a connection with the local area and increase community participation. It can provide learning opportunities, reduce crime and encourage social activity. Education involving the natural environment and green spaces can positively influence the functioning of communities through reducing anti-social behaviour, increasing self-esteem and improving skills.
- 4.8.20 It can also benefit the natural and historic environment by creating and enhancing biodiversity, connecting wildlife corridors and networks, protecting and enhancing landscape character, and improving the quality of rivers and streams as well as conserving and enhancing heritage assets such as historic landscapes and archaeological features, and improving the setting of historic buildings and monuments.
- 4.8.21 The landscape character assessment effectively includes and describes many of the area's GI assets, so they are not specifically mentioned here. However, GI should form an integral part of planning for the future (it is an important aspect of both national and local planning policy), and should be the subject of focused studies if and when required, especially as part of detailed character and / or value studies, and planning applications.
- 4.8.22 For reference, some examples of GI assets in both the local and wider study areas include:
- Natural and semi-natural rural and urban green spaces - includes forest, woodland and scrub, orchards, grassland / meadow, wetlands, open and running water, bare rock / geological habitats (for example quarries) and often, brownfield land.
  - Parks and gardens - urban and country parks, formal / public and private gardens, institutional grounds (for example schools and hospitals).
  - Amenity green spaces - civic spaces, formal / informal recreation spaces, play areas, outdoor sports facilities, domestic gardens, community gardens, village greens, commons.
  - Allotments, orchards, suburban and rural farmland.
  - Cemeteries and churchyards.
  - Green and blue corridors – watercourses (including their banks and floodplains), riparian woodlands, hedgerows, main line / dismantled railways, highway trees / avenues, road verges, paths and trackways.
  - Sites of nature conservation value / importance (statutory and non-statutory) including SSSIs, LWSs and PHI sites; also LGSs.
  - Green spaces (designated / undesignated) selected for historic significance, scenic beauty, recreation, wildlife, tranquillity etc.
  - Archaeological, historic and cultural sites / features.
  - Functional green spaces such as sustainable drainage schemes (SuDS) and flood storage areas.
  - Built structures – living roofs and walls, bird and bat boxes, roost sites.
- 4.8.23 The Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Partnership has developed Environmental Character Areas (ECAs) for the county, setting out the GI characteristics and priorities for each area<sup>56</sup>. The ECAs in the study area are shown on the map below.

---

<sup>56</sup> Available at:

[http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20015/planning\\_policy\\_and\\_strategy/487/profile\\_documents\\_for\\_environmental\\_character\\_areas](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20015/planning_policy_and_strategy/487/profile_documents_for_environmental_character_areas)

*Worcestershire’s Environmental Character Areas*



4.8.24 The key characteristics and priorities of the ECAs, as summarised in Appendix D of the Worcestershire GI Strategy 2013 – 2018 are as follows:

ECA	Quality	Priority	Overall Approach
2. Severn Valley North	High	Restoration of Severn floodplain	Average: Protect and enhance environmental quality / invest in socio-economic enhancements
3. North Worcestershire Hills	High	Maintain wooded character, linking and buffering existing sites. Provision of strategic asset for access and recreation.	Good: Protect and enhance environmental quality / invest in socio-economic enhancements
10. Hagley Hinterland	Medium	Maintain and restore habitat connectivity. Protect and restore acid grassland and wooded habitats.	Good: Protect and enhance environmental quality / maintain socio-economic status
11. Hollywood & Wythall	Medium	Protect and restore historic pattern of small enclosures.	Average: Restore environmental quality / support socio-economic enhancements.
12. Bromsgrove – Redditch Corridor	Medium	Protect and restore the ancient countryside character.	Average: Restore environmental quality / support socio economic enhancements.

4.8.25 Areas where the approach is to 'Protect and Enhance' are considered in the 2013 - 2018 Strategy as having the greatest existing GI value.

4.8.26 The GI and significant vegetation in the study area also provide important links to the GI in the wider region. The 2013 – 2018 Strategy identified Waseley Country Park, the Clent Hills and Lickey Hills as Strategic GI Assets, highlighting their role on a county and sub-regional scale, both in terms of their habitat provision and their recreational value. More detail about the recreational value of the GI assets is given in the following section.

*Bluebells on the Clent Hills (often an ancient woodland indicator)*



*Bilberry heathland is being restored on Bilberry Hill in the Lickeys*



## 4.9 Designated / Key Landscape Features: Public and Social Amenity

- 4.9.1 This section summarises the various key destinations, features and attractions which contribute to the public and social amenity of people living in and around the Clent and Lickey Hills area, and those who visit it. It describes the opportunities that exist for access along various paths, trails and routes, and for both formal and informal recreation.
- 4.9.2 The open spaces and footpaths in particular are a very valuable community asset, providing access to most if not all of the GI assets listed above, and contributing to the health and well-being and quality of life of local people.
- 4.9.3 Many of the features and spaces are also used / visited by people from outside the area, including tourists, and thus they make an important contribution to the local economy.
- 4.9.4 However, the nature of some of them, and the activities which take place, can also give rise to both temporary and permanent adverse effects on landscape character and visual / social amenity. For example, the popularity of the Country Parks has resulted in significant congestion and car parking issues during weekends and holiday periods.
- 4.9.5 The key public and social amenity features are shown on Figure 9. Where relevant, they are described in more detail in the local landscape character descriptions in Section 4.11.

### Recreation and Access

- 4.9.6 The three Country Parks in the study area offer a highly valuable recreational resource to those living in Worcestershire, Birmingham and the Black Country, and contain a multitude of natural and GI assets.
- 4.9.7 The Worcestershire GI Strategy describes the attraction of the Lickey, Clent and Waseley Hills as follows:

*'[They] attract about 1.25 million visitors each year. These visitors come from within the county but there are also strong cultural associations and traditions which attract visitors from Birmingham and the Black Country. Visitors are concentrated around the visitor centre, car park and formal recreation facilities but further from these centres there are still opportunities for enjoying quiet and isolation.'*

*Beacon Hill in the Lickeys provides a large open, recreational space with views across to Birmingham*



- 4.9.8 The Country Park accreditation demonstrates that these areas are inclusive, accessible, easy to navigate, and are natural and / or semi-natural landscapes (less than 5% of the area is built on).
- 4.9.9 Waseley Hills and Lickey Hills Country Parks have also attained Green Flag awards.
- 4.9.10 Although located within BDC, Lickey Hills Country Park is managed by Birmingham District Council, having been given to the people of Birmingham in 1888. It is one of the oldest, and the second largest park managed by the Council.
- 4.9.11 Part of Woodgate Valley Country Park is situated in the north east corner of the study area, and extends into Bartley Green and Quinton in Birmingham. Historically it is related to the landscapes south of Halesowen Abbey, characterised by the patchwork of farms that once fed Birmingham.
- 4.9.12 When compared to other visitor attractions in the West Midlands, the significance and popularity of the Country Parks in the wider region is clear. Visit England's annual visitor number estimates for West Midlands' destinations are:

<b>Destination</b>	<b>Annual Visitor Numbers</b>
Sutton Park	2000000
Cannon Hill Park	1000000
<b>Clent and Walton Hills</b>	<b>&lt;1,000,000 (2008 est)</b>
Beacon Park	900000
The Trentham Estate	719829
Sandwell Valley Country Park	500000
<b>Lickey Hills Country Park</b>	<b>500000</b>
Kingsbury Water Park & Nature Reserve	350642
<b>Woodgate Country Park</b>	<b>300000</b>
Cannock Country Park	278067
<b>Waseley Hills Country Park</b>	<b>250000</b>
Ryton Pools Country Parks	189445
Biddulph Grange Gardens	111700
Birmingham Botanical Gardens and Glasshouses	110142
Hartshill Country Park	54981
Go Ape! Tree Top Adventure - Cannock Forest	44858
Burton Dassett Country Park	41214
Arley Arboretum	34380
The Weir Garden	32432
Pooley Fields Heritage Centre	23887
Go Ape! Tree Top Adventure - Wyre Forest	20495
Hergest Croft Gardens	10286
Hill Close Gardens	9000
Old Court Nurseries & Picton Garden	4800
Ivy Croft	500

- 4.9.13 Other significant recreational assets in the study area are:

- Halesowen Golf Range
- Cofton Park
- Bittell Reservoirs
- Barnt Green Sailing Club
- Lickey Hill Golf Course

- Pepper Wood
  - Chaddesley Woods Nature Reserve.
  - Hagley Golf and Country Club
  - Uffmoor Wood
- 4.9.14 The study area is well-served by a network of public footpaths. Many of these are likely to follow historic trackways, such as pilgrimage routes via St. Kenelm to Halesowen Abbey, or to key foci of activities such as farmsteads and village centres.
- 4.9.15 Two long-distance trails pass through the study area. The North Worcestershire Way, between Bewdley and Birmingham, follows the whole of the hill range from Clent to Lickey. The Monarch's Way trail celebrates the escape route (without being the precise route) of King Charles II, crossing the study area from north to south and passing through Waseley Hills Country Park.
- 4.9.16 The area also has several bridleways, including one crossing the Clent Hills.
- 4.9.17 There are numerous themed walks, for example the Landscape and Geology Trail on Lickey Hill<sup>57</sup>, and the Barnt Green Circular Walk<sup>58</sup> which takes in the Upper and Lower Bittell Reservoirs, as well as Cofton Hill.
- 4.9.18 Open Access land is mainly associated with the three Country Parks.
- 4.9.19 Other areas of Open Access land are small areas of Registered Common Land, such as Sling Common, the woodland west of Hollies Hill, and Gannow Green. These still provide important localised, accessible areas of informal recreation, along with other smaller areas of green space such as playing fields and allotments.
- 4.9.20 As well as Clent and Walton Hill, the National Trust own other areas of land in the study area. The land that is 'Always Open' is shown on Figure 9. Historical reference and significance of National Trust land ownership in the area is described above in the Historic Landscape Character section and below in Local Landscape Character. More detail about National Trust land can be accessed on the Trust's Land Map website.<sup>59</sup>

*Themed walking trails on the Lickeys*



<sup>57</sup> <http://www.earthheritagetrust.org/pub/publications/explore-trail-guides/guide-descriptions-explore-trail-guides/13-lickey-hill/>

<sup>58</sup> [http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/directory\\_record/3372/barnt\\_green\\_circular\\_walk](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/directory_record/3372/barnt_green_circular_walk)

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/follow-the-history-of-our-places-with-land-map>

### **Aesthetic and Perceptual Qualities**

- 4.9.21 The aesthetic and perceptual qualities of a landscape's character (see above Figure 1 - What is Landscape?) play an integral part in understanding its value, susceptibility to change, and sensitivity.
- 4.9.22 Aesthetic qualities include a landscape's patterns and shapes, its scale, texture, colour, balance and so on. Clearly there is a degree of subjectivity in determining what is 'pleasing' to the eye or what is 'discordant'.
- 4.9.23 Factors such as light, noise, smell and movement can be measured; however, qualities which are 'sensual' and 'emotional' cannot easily be quantified. Perceptual qualities include noise / tranquillity, smell, touch, sense of remoteness, movement / busyness, quality of light, scenic beauty, associations and memories.
- 4.9.24 The study area contains a wide range of often contrasting aesthetic and perceptual qualities. This is unsurprising given that much of the study area contains a mixture of urban and rural land uses, and is a hinterland to Birmingham and the Black Country.
- 4.9.25 The long history of visitors to the Hills and outlying areas indicates a wider consensus of the area's 'positive' aesthetic and perceptual qualities. The long-distance and panoramic vistas, particularly on the summits, have a high aesthetic and perceptual value for visitors. Views to the west give the impression of endless rolling countryside towards Shropshire and Wales. Views to the north and east, across Birmingham and the Black County, are equally impressive, giving the viewer a sense of the landscape change - from deeply rural and tranquil to densely urban and busy - that has occurred over the last few centuries.

*Far-reaching panoramic views to the west from the Clent Hills*



- 4.9.26 The close juxtaposition of rural and urban is arguably a defining feature of views from / towards the study area. Also, for many, the Country Parks and other 'unspoilt' green spaces provide an opportunity to physically and metaphorically 'step outside' of their congested urban environment and experience the qualities of the wider landscapes which form the context of the towns and cities within which they live.
- 4.9.27 In addition, the constant changes in seasons and weather - including direction of the wind, the position of the sun and the light conditions - ensure that every day, the views and experiences are different.
- 4.9.28 Beyond the main summits there is a mixture of aesthetic and perceptual qualities that are also reflected in the LCTs. For example, the ridgeline of the Hills means there is little intervisibility

between Belbroughton and the urban areas to the north and east. This is typical of the distinctive Principal Timbered Farmlands LCT, with its small-scale, relatively 'intimate' views created by the winding lanes and filtered by hedgerow trees.

- 4.9.29 This is in contrast to the pronounced topography of the Timbered Plateau Farmlands in the north of the study area, where the range of open vistas in all directions give a sense of its proximity to the urban areas. However, there are also contained views along the valleys and lanes which give a sense of ruralness, for example, along Illey Lane and around Wassell Grove.

*Small-scale, enclosed rural view along Shut Mill Lane*



- 4.9.30 The settlements which are CAs are locally-distinctive and have a strong sense of place; they usually have very positive aesthetic and perceptual qualities, especially in terms of historic landscape character / built form. More detail about the CAs within the study area is provided in the Local Landscape Character section below.
- 4.9.31 There are some detractors in the area, including:
- Major transport corridors, in particular the M5, but also the A491 and A456.
  - Large, modern farm complexes and associated infrastructure / operations / activities, especially complexes with industrial / business units and warehouses.
  - Poor management of landscape elements and features (and wildlife habitats), leading to erosion / loss of characteristic landscape textures and patterns).
  - In rural areas intensification of use / urbanisation / domestication / erosion / clutter / paraphernalia along roads and residential garden boundaries / in gardens. 'Horsiculture' and associated clutter detracts from / erodes landscape character in several places.
  - Uncharacteristic tree species.
  - Overland power cables and telecommunications towers.
  - Mineral works.
- 4.9.32 There are also a number of highly visible landmarks which contribute to creating a sense of place, and feature in mid and long – distance views, and include Wychbury Obelisk, Nimmings Wood and Frankley Beeches.
- 4.9.33 Given the study area's scale, proximity to urban areas, the range of landscape types and the significant transport corridors, it is unsurprising that levels of landscape quality and condition vary substantially. It should be noted, however, that there are areas where the rural landscapes

are very well-managed and apparently in good health, with intact hedges, diverse woodland and grassland habitats, and tidy farmsteads / other complexes.

*Looking towards Longbridge from Bilberry Hill, Lickey Hills Country Park*



*Although highly popular, the Country Parks still provide quieter and less populated spaces*



## 4.10 Key Landscape Functions

4.10.1 The majority of the study area functions as an extensive strategic gap / buffer between the dense, busy urban spaces of Birmingham and the Black Country, and the 'deeply' rural environments to the south and west.

4.10.2 Other specific landscape functions in the study area include:

- Numerous open and accessible green spaces, e.g. Country Parks
- Extensive public footpath network (also several bridleways)
- Context and setting of historic areas / features, e.g. Wychbury Hill, Halesowen Abbey, Hagley Hall
- Context and setting of settlements, especially where designated CAs such as Holy Cross, Clent and Belbroughton
- GI functions
- Gateways and approaches, e.g. Rose Hill.

4.10.3 The study area also has certain connections and roles to places outside the study area. These are described in the next section.

*The study area contains a wide range of land uses and functions including farming and major transport infrastructure*



## 4.11 Local Landscape Character

4.11.1 Although an important factor in the baseline assessment, the national / regional / countywide landscape character areas and types described in the sections above cover broad geographical areas which share similar characteristics. Clearly, within each area / type there are likely to be considerable local variations which must be understood and factored into the baseline studies to facilitate judgements about which areas are to be included in a VLA.

4.11.2 In this case, the term 'local' refers to the parts of the landscapes in the study area which have interinfluence with the key designations and features identified above and shown on Figures 4 to 9.

4.11.3 A landscape's 'area of influence' is partly determined by its 'visual envelope', i.e. the places from which the given area is visible, but it also takes into account the physical characteristics and

wider functions of a particular landscape area or type, the extent of which is not necessarily determined by visibility.

- 4.11.4 This section analyses, synthesises and where relevant, augments the baseline information set out in the sections above.

### **Local Landscape and Visual Context**

- 4.11.5 For ease of reference the study area was divided into geographical sectors, starting with North to East and continuing in a clockwise direction, as shown on Figure 3. The descriptions below follow the same order.

#### **NORTH TO EAST SECTOR**

- 4.11.6 North east of the Clent and Lickey Hills range, the landscapes transition into to the rural plateaued farmlands of Illey and Frankley, the latter forming the context of, and a strong boundary to, the conurbations of the Birmingham and Black Country plateaux.
- 4.11.7 From Romsley Hill at c. 275m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), the land falls to c. 140m AOD along the bridleway east of the Abbey remains, before rising slightly to c. 170m AOD near Lapal Farm.
- 4.11.8 Although across different administrative boundaries, the rural character of the landscapes around Halesowen Abbey and Illey is contiguous with the landscapes further south. This is mainly due to the HLC and historic land use, and the landscape's role in the setting of Halesowen Abbey, which can be experienced in views from the north across the study area.
- 4.11.9 The Halesowen Abbey Conservation Management Plan states that the monument is '*of national importance and exceptional significance*', and highlights the function of the landscapes of the study area in the physical and visual setting of the Abbey:
- 'The Premonstratensian objective of choosing a site in a relatively remote location can still be appreciated today when the monument is seen in its wider setting from the north, when the view south is towards the undeveloped Green Belt...To the west the sports track impinges on the setting, but the wooded slopes help to mask development further to the west, and to the east is open countryside...The northwards setting is in complete contrast, being entirely urban north of Manor Way and bearing no resemblance to the original rural landscape...Looking from the north at the structural remains in and around the farm buildings at the core of the scheduled area, the site can be seen in its rural context; this aspect is important because it is the view that is seen when approaching the site from Manor Way and the built-up area on the public footpath.'*<sup>60</sup>
- 4.11.10 The network of public footpaths around Illey and the Abbey can be seen on historic OS maps, suggesting long-established routes across the landscape to farmsteads and other features. Today the footpaths provide an important recreational function for those living in the nearby conurbations, giving easy access to rural environments and views across to the south (see images below).
- 4.11.11 Although the busy A456 dual carriageway lies to the north, it has little intervisibility with the landscapes of the sector. It is, however, a boundary and abrupt delineator between the extensive urban environment to the north, and the historic rural landscapes to the south.

---

<sup>60</sup> Halesowen Abbey Conservation Management Plan April 2013 Ian Greig (commissioned by Historic England)

*Mid-20th century postcard with view from the north east looking south*



*Contemporary view from the north east looking south (image courtesy of Mick Freer)*



- 4.11.12 The area of influence of the rural landscapes in this sector extends to Leasowes Park and Woodgate Country Park, further north and east respectively. Even though they are not intervisible and are now physically separated by residential developments and the M5, they are closely connected to the landscapes in this sector by their HLC and historic land use, as well as their GI and biodiversity functions.
- 4.11.13 Although in most areas its visibility is limited, the M5 is a major detractor in the sector. It also separates the otherwise neighbouring farmland of Frankley Green.

- 4.11.14 Frankley Green is an enclosed hinterland, with the conurbations of Frankley and Bartley Green to the north east and south, and the M5 to the west. As a result, it contains a juxtaposition of rural and urban features: arable fields; PHI habitats; new residential developments; a SM; and the reservoirs and associated works. Egghill Lane, once a small country lane, is now a relatively large and fast-speed road.

*View from near Egghill Lane looking north east across Frankley Green*



*Bartley Reservoir provides an accessible recreational area on the edge of Birmingham*



- 4.11.15 In the west of the sector, Romsley and its environs lie on the footslopes of the Clent Hills. Romsley village itself is mostly 1970s infill between Dark Lane and Bromsgrove Road. The former linear pattern is therefore no longer evident, and its character is very much of a modern

residential area. Its elevation on the footslopes at c. 240m AOD at the south end of the village allows for views across the plateau to the north, as well as views to the south.

- 4.11.16 East of the village, the landscape is arable farmland with several ASNWs, including linear belts along watercourses. These are PHI sites, and along with the dismantled railway line, provide a number of habitats.

*Views to the north and east from the modern infill in Romsley*



#### EAST TO SOUTH SECTOR

- 4.11.17 A large proportion of the land cover in the east to south sector is urban or suburban. The conurbations of Rubery and Longbridge to the north east lie on relatively flat ground beneath the ridgeline of the Waseley Hills and Lickey Hills Country Park. Lickey and Bant Green are on more undulating ground on the footslopes south of the Lickey Hills.
- 4.11.18 While the whole of the Clent - Lickey ridgeline is a local landmark, the Lickey Hills and their unique geology have a strong and very particular association with the neighbouring conurbations.
- 4.11.19 This is visually, physically and psychologically / symbolically due to the proximity of the Lickeys to those living in south west Birmingham. They also offer the opportunity for panoramic views across the urban environment which has its own unique history - for example the former Longbridge plant.
- 4.11.20 Despite the predominance of built-up areas, the sector has a great deal of ecological interest / value concentrated along the Waseley and Lickey hill ranges. Also, both Country Parks have received Green Flag awards, indicating the high level and quality of management and their high value as outdoor recreational spaces.
- 4.11.21 The Upper and Bittell Reservoirs, both SSSIs, add considerably to the ecological value of the south-eastern parts of the study area.
- 4.11.22 Together, Cofton Common, land off Cofton Church Lane, and the Lickeys, function as a green gap between the discontinuous urban fabric of Birmingham and the rural North Worcestershire landscape.
- 4.11.23 Although in close proximity to Birmingham, Cofton Hackett largely retains a rural character. A diversity of landscapes is contained within a relatively small parish, including the south end of the Lickeys, rolling farmland, inter-war housing estates, and historic farmsteads.

- 4.11.24 The North Worcestershire Way passes through the parish and across Cofton Common where the slightly elevated position provides views south across the Bittell Reservoirs.
- 4.11.25 Some parts of the parish have retained post-medieval field patterns. Although areas of Cofton Common have had hedgerows removed as a result of post-1945 field amalgamation, the Common retains some historic character via the distinctive distribution of former hedgerow trees (see image below and also apparent on aerial images), and the partially-extant 18<sup>th</sup> century farmstead at Cofton Richards farm (WCC HER WSM03175).

*View north across Cofton Common from the North Worcestershire Way, near Cofton Richards Farm*



- 4.11.26 The Lickey Hills have interinfluence with, and contribute to a strong sense of place in, Lickey and Blackwell. Largely suburban in character owing to inter-war housing developments, the parish is still very well-wooded. The Scots pine trees, particularly along Rose Hill, link the area to the Lickeys. Rose Hill also functions as a gateway to the Country Park.

*Rose Hill is one of the main approaches / gateways in the area*



- 4.11.27 There is a distinct change of character towards Lydiate Ash, with flatter, more open ground and features related to major road infrastructure (i.e. M5 and A38). The M5 is a major detractor in this part of the sector in terms of noise, visual amenity and erosion / loss of rural / historic character and other qualities.
- 4.11.28 However, despite the M5, the land below Waseley Hills Country Park is of moderate to high quality. Most of the west slopes of the Waseley Hills and Chadwich Manor estate are owned by the National Trust. The Grade II\* listed late 17<sup>th</sup> century Chadwich Manor is not publicly-accessible, but the house and surrounding landscapes have significant historical and ecological value.
- 4.11.29 The farmland west of the M5 is of lower quality, with loss of field boundaries and subsequent lack of landscape and ecological value / interest.

*View looking south from the North Worcestershire Way off Redhill Lane. Chadwich Manor is on the left and the M5 is on the right.*



#### SOUTH TO WEST SECTOR

- 4.11.30 The majority of this sector has a rural character comprising gently rolling farmland. The landscape is relatively low-lying: Belbroughton village lies at c. 115m AOD. The Clent / Waseley / Lickey hill range creates a natural boundary, resulting in almost no intervisibility or interinfluence with the areas to the north and east, particularly the Birmingham conurbations.
- 4.11.31 The A491 has historically been an important and main route through the study area. However, since the 1970s when part of it became a dual-carriageway, and a bypass around Holy Cross was built, it now physically and visually disconnects the landscapes either side of the road.
- 4.11.32 To the east of the A491 the former commons of Bell Heath, Madeley Heath and Wildmoor contain the straight roads and rectilinear field boundaries associated with 19<sup>th</sup> century parliamentary enclosure. Landscape quality and condition is generally lower in these parts of the sector due to large / enlarged arable fields with little ecological value. Views and visual value are also variable. While there are some views with high or moderate scenic beauty, detractors include overland pylons, the M5, incongruous modern farm buildings and 'horsiculture'.
- 4.11.33 Rural industrialisation in the form of the sand and gravel pits at Stoneybridge, and warehouse / workshop units at Wildmoor Mill Farm also gives this area of land near the M5 and around the A491 a utilitarian character, with areas of low scenic quality.

*View west from Chadwich Lane in Madley Heath has high visual value with few detractors*



*View north east from Chadwich Lane. The motorway is discernible in the distance.*



- 4.11.34 The Local Geological Site on Madley Heath is a regionally-important feature. Although not publicly-accessible, the extensive network of public footpaths across all three former commons reflect their historic land use and access.
- 4.11.35 Further south and west in the sector there is a significant amount of historic and ecological value. Belbroughton's CA has numerous listed buildings, as well as the PHI sites along the Belne Brook that once powered the mills and forges in the village. Although there have been some 20<sup>th</sup> century changes and developments, the village is still characterised by the post-

medieval nucleated cluster settlement pattern, and the now-listed buildings give rise to a strong sense of place.

- 4.11.36 The field patterns around Belbroughton have largely been eroded, with hedgerows removed and fields amalgamated and reorganised in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The levels of landscape quality around the village are variable as a result of the effects of intensive agriculture and horsiculture. The area of influence of the higher quality historic village core and other historic features in the parish are therefore contained and limited.

*'Horsiculture' near Belbroughton*



- 4.11.37 Partly outside of BDC but with a shared landscape character, the landscapes around Broom Hill and Dordale have retained much of their HLC. A large proportion of the heritage value in the sector is contained in these areas. Pepper Wood and Chaddesley Wood are significant blocks of ASNW, and have a relatively wide area of influence. Along with the undulating topography, these ancient woods contribute to the high scenic value of views to the west from the Clent and Waseley Hills.
- 4.11.38 The post-medieval field patterns are still extant in areas, particularly around Broom Hill (in Belbroughton), and there is also a large amount of ridge and furrow present in this area as recorded in the WCC HER.
- 4.11.39 The Barrow Hill SM illustrates the interinfluence between the Malvern Hills and the Clent and Lickey ridgeline. It is the highest point within Chaddesley Corbett parish, and an important local feature. It is possible that the Bronze Age community chose the barrow's position because of the views it allowed towards the Malverns to the south west, and the Clent and Lickey Hills to the north east.
- 4.11.40 In contrast to the mix of urban and rural elements in other parts of the study area, the south-western part of this sector is distinctly rural with few detractors. The key landscape characteristics of the Principal Timbered Farmlands and Estate Farmlands make an important contribution to middle-distance views of the rolling Worcestershire countryside from the hill range. The small scale of these landscapes, with narrow country lanes, enclosed views and wooded character, also contribute to the setting of the Chartist planned village of Dodford on the southern edge of the study area.
- 4.11.41 Towards Broome and further east, the scale is larger, with medium-scale views across open arable fields with ordered boundaries towards the Clent and Lickey Hills. These views illustrate the woodlands and tree cover at the south of the sector.

*View across arable fields near Broome, looking east towards the Clent Hills*



#### WEST TO NORTH SECTOR

- 4.11.42 The Clent Hills in the west to north sector form the tallest range in BDC and are an important landmark in the region. Walton Hill is the highest point at 316m AOD, providing highly scenic panoramic views across Worcestershire and towards Wales, as well as north across the Birmingham and Black Country plateau.
- 4.11.43 Like elsewhere in the study area, particularly the south east, there is a juxtaposition of rural and urban features.
- 4.11.44 The Hills have a high amount of ecological interest / value, including SSSIs south of Calcot Hill and at Penorchard Meadows, and a Local Geological Site at Hagley Hall Quarry. The Clent Hills also have important historical associations in the region, with evidence of a long history of being settled, the SM on Wychbury Hill, their connection to the legend of St. Kenelm, and the Grade I listed building and RHPG at Hagley Hall.
- 4.11.45 The hill range is an excellent example of the Wooded Hills and Farmlands LCT, being inherently large in scale with woodland blocks and areas of permanent pasture. The Hills contain a mix of land uses, including farming, and relatively modern woodland plantations. There are also several well-managed and high-quality recreational routes and facilities.
- 4.11.46 The topography of the Hills creates localised 'bowls' which provide medium-scale views of a pastoral, traditional character, and a sense of remoteness in comparison to the far-reaching long distance views at the popular key viewpoints on top of the Hills.
- 4.11.47 As with Rose Hill, through the Lickeys, St. Kenelm's Pass is an historic approach through the Hills, leading to the 'gateway' of the Grade I listed Church of St. Kenelm. Still a relatively narrow country road, St. Kenelm's Pass retains a rural character as it travels through the Clatterbach Valley with the wooded slopes of the Hills either side. A number of footpaths (including the North Worcestershire Way) and bridleways also provide access to the Hills.
- 4.11.48 Beyond the hill range, the footslopes of the Clent Hills are characterised by small, dispersed settlements in the form of hamlets and villages such as Clent and Holy Cross, both of which have CAs and a number of listed buildings / structures. Clent and Holy Cross have experienced only minor changes to their settlement patterns since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and their historic buildings and character, along with the distinctive sandstone rock used as a building material, create a strong sense of place in both settlements.

*The valleys or 'bowls' on the lower levels of the Clent Hills have a more enclosed character compared to the far-reaching vistas at the top of the ridgeline*



- 4.11.49 Clent's listed buildings and mature specimen trees, such as Lebanon cedar in the grounds and gardens of the houses, give the settlement a distinct historic character. Located at the foot of the hills, there is limited visibility out of the village to the wider area, but its tree cover, including blocks of woodland, and the vegetation in the unregistered historic parkland at Sunfield / Clent Grove give Clent a wide area of influence.
- 4.11.50 The A491 runs below the Hills but is for the most part not visible in key views from higher ground. However, from lower ground the road creates a boundary that separates the complex and undulating landscapes of the Hills from the open flatter ground towards Broome.
- 4.11.51 Although the A491 follows an historic road, its size and bypass around Holy Cross limits the settlement's area of influence, even though it shares a similar character, history and landscape with Clent. However, it is still connected to the Hills by St. Kenelm's Pass and its historical associations with St. Kenelm Church at Romsley.
- 4.11.52 West of Holy Cross, the landscape begins to flatten, and the field sizes become larger and more organised as they extend into the Broome sandlands. The large arable fields have little ecological value due to the loss of hedgerows and habitats. However, the farming landscape contributes to the rural views from the Hills and to the rural setting of Hagley and West Hagley as distinct from the Black Country conurbation immediately north.
- 4.11.53 The groupings of Scots pine trees on the Hills are highly characteristic of the whole Clent - Lickey hill range. Some of the groupings on the Clent Hills may have been planted during the landscaping of Hagley Park in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and later by the Conservators. Today they frame views, create enclosed spaces on the exposed hills, and make a significant contribution to the Hills' landscape character.
- 4.11.54 The beech wood above Nimmings Car Park is also a prominent landscape feature, visible in views towards Clent from higher levels in Worcestershire.
- 4.11.55 From the Clent Hills Country Park, the landscape remains undulating and wooded as it drops northwards into Hagley Park and to the historic parkland around Hagley Hall at c. 150m AOD. The A456 is a significant detractor that separates Wychbury Hill and Obelisk from the rest of the RHPG. Although, there has clearly been a route running between the hills from Kidderminster to Birmingham for many centuries (the name 'Hagley Causeway' near Hagley Wood suggests antiquity). However, the dual carriageway has little intervisibility with the Country Park, giving a sense of a continuous landscape.

*Scots pine trees on the Clent Hills*



- 4.11.56 There is a high degree of interinfluence between the Country Park, Hagley Park, and Wychbury Hill and Obelisk: all contribute to their respective settings at the northern end of the hill range, as well as being important features in key views.

*View from Clent Hills Country Park across Hagley Park and towards Wychbury Hill*



- 4.11.57 The fields around Wychbury Hill and north of Hagley function as a green gap between North Worcestershire and the Black Country. Although landscape quality and character have been eroded, particularly adjacent to settlements for example along Pedmore Lane, they still contribute to the rural setting of Hagley Hall and Wychbury Hill.

*The rural northern slopes of Wychbury Hill adjacent to the modern housing estates along Pedmore Lane*



- 4.11.58 From Wychbury Hill towards Lutley the landscape is rolling and comprises mostly large open arable fields. Although modern in land use, the tree cover at Hagley Golf Club to the east of Wassell Grove Lane retains the ASNWs that run along the small valley and watercourse (Lutley Gutter), containing PHI sites and a SWS.
- 4.11.59 Identifiable on 18<sup>th</sup> century maps, Wassell Grove Lane also retains its historic character with sparsely dispersed wayside dwellings including the historic farmstead and unregistered park and garden at Wassell Grove Farm. The landscape around Wassell Grove is of variable quality with a mixture of land uses and land cover including ecologically-rich areas, ancient woodland, PHI habits, intensive agricultural and well-used recreational facilities.
- 4.11.60 As a hinterland between the suburbs of Lutley, Cradley and Hayley Green, and bounded by the A456 to the south, Wassell Grove functions as a significant green gap and buffer zone. This is especially apparent in views from the Clent Hills where the open arable fields provide a transition from the wooded slopes to the Black Country conurbation.
- 4.11.61 The photograph below illustrates the function of the semi-structured farming landscape near Lutley as a transitional area between the natural land cover of the Hills and the man-made urban environment, as well as providing a green gap between the suburbs of the historic towns of Stourbridge and Halesowen.

*Agricultural fields near Lutley provides a transitional landscape between the rural and urban*



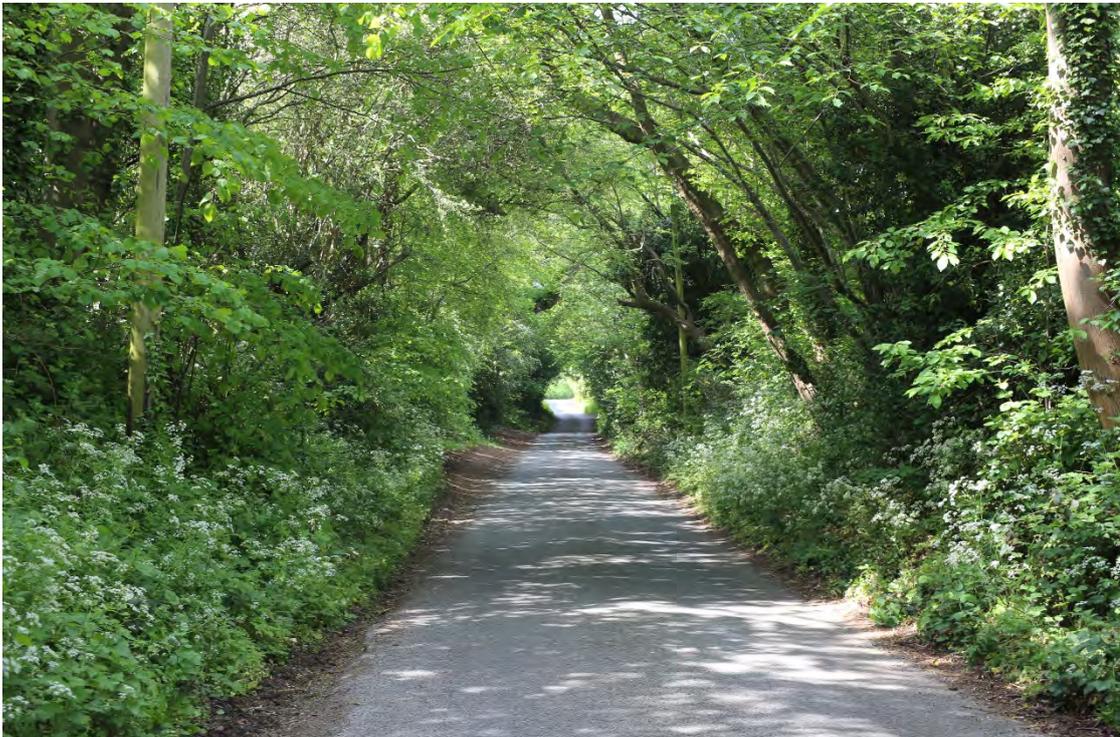
- 4.11.62 North east of the Hills' ridgeline, the wooded footslopes are small-scale, comprising a matrix of historic field patterns, modern woodland planting and country lanes. Blocks of woodland such as Uffmoor Wood and Hagley Wood are significant features in views and have a wide area of influence.
- 4.11.63 From lower ground there is little intervisibility with the built-up areas to the north of the A456, which creates a hard boundary between rural and urban. As a result, the landscapes west of Uffmoor are distinctly rural in character. They also contain several features of historic value such as ancient woodland, St. Kenelm's church, and ridge and furrow.

#### **4.12 Landscape Baseline Study Summary**

- 4.12.1 The baseline study concluded that on the whole, the landscapes of the study area are feature-rich and complex. They display a wide diversity of character areas and types, land uses, functions, qualities and attributes, many of which are greatly - and often negatively - influenced by the proximity of large-scale urban environments.
- 4.12.2 Conversely, the rural landscapes also strongly influence the urban areas, and they are often of high quality and in good health.
- 4.12.3 The urban and rural features are sometimes distinctly separate, sometimes in juxtaposition, sometimes hybridised, and sometimes interrelated and complementary. This in itself is one of the study area's defining characteristics, effectively forming a transition zone between 'densely urban' and 'deeply rural'.
- 4.12.4 There are several key features and designations that are of national and regional importance, and the study area has played a significant role in the landscape history and evolution of the region. These are now reflected in contemporary landscape functions, particularly as the edgeland between rural Worcestershire and the Birmingham and Black Country conurbation.
- 4.12.5 The underlying geology has created the distinctive Clent - Lickey hill range and a landscape character that is rare within Worcestershire. Consequently, the Clent and Lickey Hills have become an important visual feature and landmark. The unique geology has also resulted in a concentration of Local Geological Sites in the north of BD which are regionally (and nationally) important.
- 4.12.6 The varied topography and land cover provide the foundations for significant areas of biodiversity value. These are mainly concentrated along the hill range, but also elsewhere, particularly where there are blocks of ancient woodland.

- 4.12.7 Similarly, whilst the whole of the study area contains heritage features, there are concentrations in certain parts (as reflected in the HLC) and lack in others (especially where modern industrial agriculture is practised or settlement expansion has taken place).
- 4.12.8 The presence of three Country Parks, as well as Woodgate Park to the north east, indicates the accessibility and important recreational function of the study area. Extensive public footpath networks also provide access to the rural environments from neighbouring urban areas, often retaining historic routes and connections to foci.
- 4.12.9 Although the M5 and A roads are major detractors, they do make the study area accessible from the wider region, contributing to the Clent Hills' popularity and high visitor numbers.
- 4.12.10 The assessment of the local landscape character of the study area found areas of interinfluence, for example, between settlements, significant vegetation and key viewpoints. While certain areas may not contain many or any designations or features, the assessment found that some landscapes may still contribute to an understanding of the wider landscape function or setting of features.
- 4.12.11 Identifying what is in the study area and its importance allows for landscape quality and value to be assessed against the criteria in Appendix B. The following section contains the results of the assessment.

*The study area contains both winding country lanes and major infrastructure such as the M5*



## 5 Landscape Value Study Results

### 5.1 Landscape Value Study Results Introduction

- 5.1.1 The study area was divided into landscape zones, adapted from and broadly based on WCC's Landscape Description Units. This allowed for the relative value of the individual areas to be assessed and compared on the basis of the landscape and visual baseline study results, with reference to the value criteria in Appendix B. Professional judgement was also applied.
- 5.1.2 In summary, the LVS found there were clearly defined areas of high landscape value. These have been recommended as 'VLA candidates' in any future landscape protection policies.
- 5.1.3 Other areas have been recommended as 'Buffer Zone VLA candidates'. These areas were mainly assessed as having a level of landscape / visual value that did not merit a VLA recommendation, but the landscape functions and / or interinfluence with other areas was still highly significant and important.
- 5.1.4 The 'high value' factors and indicators were drawn from the baseline study findings. As explained above, the baseline studies identify 'what is there'; through systematic analysis and synthesis of the information, judgements are made about how important 'what is there' is, to whom and why.
- 5.1.5 Although not statutorily designated, many of the study area's landscapes are valuable at a national level, displaying several of the 'host' NCA's key characteristics. Examples include:
- i. Valuable woodlands, hedgerows, heaths, distinctive field boundaries and enclosure patterns
  - ii. Strong geological, industrial, and cultural resource
  - iii. A sense of place and history
  - iv. Valuable aquatic features such as the characteristic river valleys, meadows and standing water areas like Bittell Reservoirs.
- 5.1.6 Many of the landscapes are also valuable at a regional / countywide level. Bromsgrove District's 2004 Local Plan stated that: *'North Worcestershire has some of the finest and most varied landscapes in the region. Bromsgrove District has outstanding landscape features formed by the ridges of high land in the north incorporating the Clent, Windmill, Waseley and Lickey Hills. In addition there are extensive areas of water, trees and woodland. Some of the latter are of ancient origin and lie woven in a patchwork quilt of open landscape possessing an older small-scale pattern of fields reflecting the agricultural traditions of past centuries.'*
- 5.1.7 Value is attributed where landscapes are good representations of the LCT / LDU, and also if the area's LCT is rare (examples of rare LCTs within the study area include Wooded Hills and Farmlands, and Enclosed Commons).
- 5.1.8 There are parts of the study area where the landscapes display great time depth, with evidence of activity / settlement dating from the Late Neolithic period.
- 5.1.9 A large number of high value historic landscape features and heritage assets were identified throughout the study area. Significant examples include:
- i. Nine scheduled monuments including Wychbury Ring Iron Age hillfort which is one of the most significant in the county, and a nationally-rare example of the type
  - ii. Four Grade I and nineteen Grade II\* listed buildings
  - iii. One Grade I and one Grade II\* registered historic park and gardens
  - iv. Five Conservation Areas
  - v. Several semi-natural ancient woodlands.
- 5.1.10 Many areas / features of high ecological value are present in the area, providing a wide diversity of habitat types; there are also valuable geological sites. Significant examples include:
- i. Seventeen individual SSSIs
  - ii. Eleven Local Nature Reserves
  - iii. Four Local Geological Sites (one of which is also a Geological SSSI).

5.1.11 Generally, the landscapes where settlement is scattered or absent are of higher quality. Levels of quality tend to drop in areas nearer settlements and on the urban fringes as a result of the effects of intensification of use (agriculture, horticulture and recreation), with subsequent erosion / loss of many natural / cultural features and traditional land cover. Quality also tends to deteriorate along the main roads and around some of the farmsteads, particularly those which have diversified into industrial-scale activities.

5.1.12 Areas with high heritage and ecological value tend to also be high quality landscapes - especially the Country Parks - showing high levels of management and care, and natural / semi-natural environments in very good form and health, along with a strong sense of place.

*Ancient woodland at Chaddesley Woods has multiple layers of landscape value*



5.1.13 The study concluded that broadly, the study area's landscapes are 'transitional'. Whilst the majority display negative urban influences of various kinds and to varying degrees, they have also retained the essence of their rural, historic and sometimes ancient character. This in turn positively influences the urban areas.

5.1.14 Today few 'deeply' rural and tranquil landscapes remain in the study area, only small remnant 'pockets' which have escaped the pressures of urbanisation and industry at least for the time being. Where they exist they are highly valuable assets / resources for several reasons:

- i. In terms of character, they are valuable for their rarity, intactness and integrity
- ii. They are generally in good environmental health (cleaner air, water and soils than elsewhere in the area)
- iii. They have positive aesthetic and perceptual qualities and high levels of scenic quality
- iv. Many people visit them to experience a sense of peace, where one can escape from the 'rat-race' for a while. Thus, they make an important contribution to health and wellbeing
- v. The levels of 'natural capital' and subsequent levels of value are higher than in other parts of the study area
- vi. They contain many of the area's most important GI assets, and the GI functions the areas perform include forming key links to GI assets in the wider region.

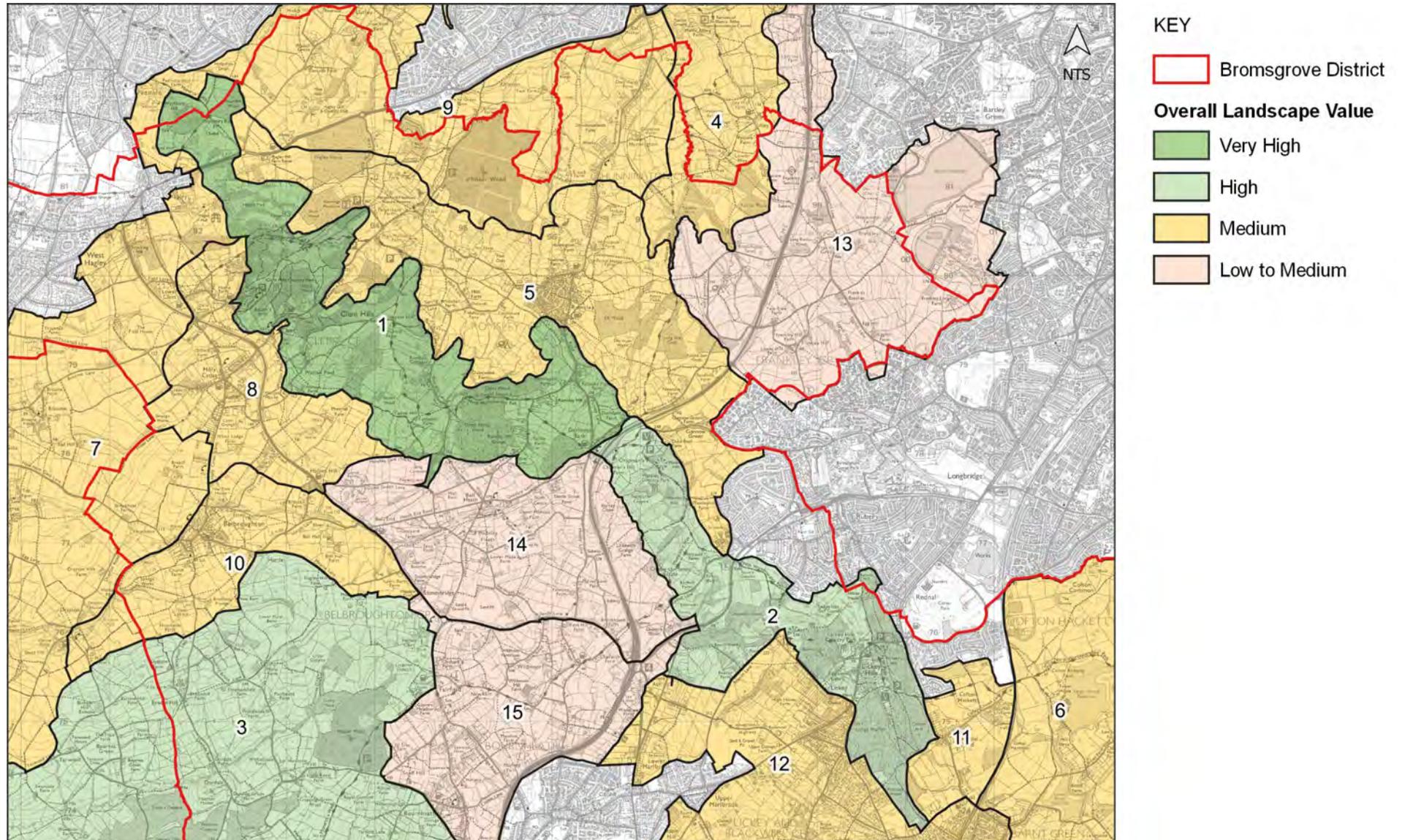
5.1.15 The study also concluded that on the whole, areas with the highest levels of visual value were associated with those of highest landscape value.

- 5.1.16 The summary schedules which follow describe the main designations and features for each landscape zone, and set out the criteria in Appendix B that were met in terms of levels of landscape quality, landscape value and visual value. The overall level of landscape value is then given, along with recommendations for VLA status where appropriate.
- 5.1.17 In some cases the zones were subdivided, where only certain parts of the zone merited recommendation as a VLA or Buffer Zone VLA candidate.
- 5.1.18 The study found that the highest areas of landscape value were around the three Country Parks, in the 'Lickey Hills' and 'Clent Hills' zones. 'Woodcote Green' (particularly the areas of woodland) and 'Illey' were also identified as particularly high value zones. These are very different in character and location, but both have highly valuable landscape functions, as well as containing a number of key features.
- 5.1.19 The majority of the zones were assessed as having a medium landscape value overall, although certain areas within them are VLA candidates, for example, if they contain nationally-important designations or contribute to the setting of neighbouring features.
- 5.1.20 'Frankley Farmlands', 'Bell Heath' and 'Bourneheath' were judged to have a landscape value of low to medium. These zones still contain key features and / or certain landscape functions, but have a limited number of features, are of less significance, and / or have a limited area of influence.
- 5.1.21 In some areas it would be beneficial for more localised and granular studies to be carried out, that would identify neighbourhood-scale levels of landscape value that are beyond the scope of this commission. The NDP process is particularly applicable in these cases. See Section 6 for more detailed recommendations.
- 5.1.22 The table overleaf summarises the LVS findings, and the summary schedules for each landscape zone follow. The diagram below shows the location of the LVS Zones and corresponding LVS Zone numbers in the summary schedule.
- 5.1.23 The VLA recommendations are shown on Figure 11 in Appendix and at the end of the summary schedules below.

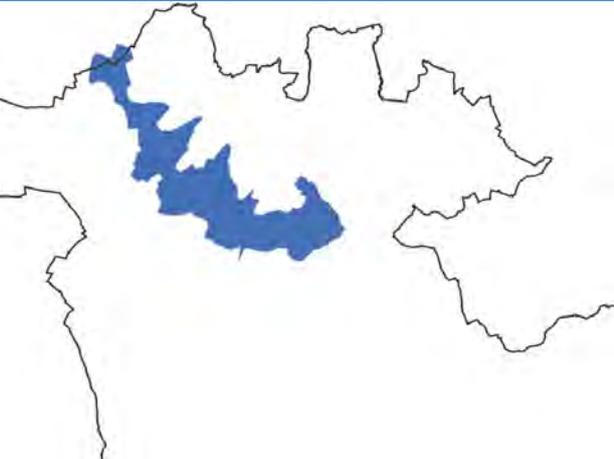
**Table 1: LVS Summary of Findings**

LVS Zone No.	LVS Zone	Landscape Quality	Landscape Value	Visual Value	Overall Landscape Value
1	Clent Hills	High	High to Very High	High to Very High	<b>Very High</b>
2	Lickey Hills	Medium to High	Very High	Very High	<b>Very High</b>
3	Woodcote Green	High	High to Very High	High	<b>High</b>
4	Illey	High	High	High	<b>High</b>
5	Romsley Footslopes	Medium to High	High	High	<b>Medium</b>
6	Bittell Reservoirs	Medium	High to Very High	Medium to High	<b>Medium</b>
7	Broome Sandlands	Medium	Medium to High	High to Very High	<b>Medium</b>
8	Holy Cross	Medium	Medium to High	Medium to High	<b>Medium</b>
9	Lutley Claylands & Pedmore	Medium	Medium to High	Medium to High	<b>Medium</b>
10	Belbroughton	Medium	Medium	Medium to High	<b>Medium</b>
11	Cofton Hackett	Low to Medium	Medium to High	Medium to High	<b>Medium</b>
12	Lickey & Blackwell	Medium	Medium	Medium	<b>Medium</b>
13	Frankley Farmlands	Low to Medium	Medium	Medium	<b>Low to Medium</b>
14	Bell Heath	Low to Medium	Medium	Medium	<b>Low to Medium</b>
15	Bourneheath	Low	Low	Medium	<b>Low to Medium</b>

Overall landscape value



## 5.2 LVS Landscape Zone Summary Schedules

1. CLENT HILLS	Landscape Character
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCA: Representative – contains several elements</li> <li>• LCT: Highly representative</li> <li>• WCC LDU condition (2007): majority Good</li> <li>• WCC LDU sensitivity (2007): variable, Low to High</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Quality</b>	
<p><b>High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very good representation of the landscape area / type</li> <li>• Very attractive landscapes which are of high value nationally and can be defined as highly scenic</li> <li>• Areas with components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition, in very good condition</li> <li>• Very good scenic integrity</li> <li>• Strong sense of place</li> <li>• Few atypical or incongruous features or detractors</li> </ul>	
<b>Landscape Value</b>	
<p><b>High to Very High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High concentration of key features and designations</li> <li>• Significant wider landscape / visual function e.g. context / setting of heritage asset</li> <li>• Presence of internationally and / or nationally-designated areas / features of landscape, nature conservation, archaeological, historic, geological and / or other importance e.g. SACs, SSSIs, Scheduled Monuments, Grade I and / or II* listed buildings, Registered Historic Parks and Gardens, Local Geodiversity Sites</li> <li>• Very good representation of landscape area / type / characteristics and / or uncommon</li> <li>• Very good aesthetic and perceptual attributes and qualities e.g. high degree of scenic beauty, fine / key views, distinctive sense of place, high degree of wildness / remoteness, tranquillity</li> <li>• Few detractors present (A456 most significant detractor, below Wychbury Hill)</li> <li>• The quality / qualities of, and / or features in, the landscape are likely to be one of the main reasons for the visit</li> <li>• Important contribution to wider public amenity, access and recreation e.g. long-distance / themed trails, well-used public rights of way</li> <li>• Important wider, or significant local Green Infrastructure assets</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Heritage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SM (Wychbury Hill)</li> <li>• Hagley Hall RHPG</li> <li>• Eight listed buildings including Grade I Temple of Theseus and four other Grade II* structures associated with Hagley Park</li> </ul>	<p><u>HLC</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recent woodland and field amalgamation on parts of hills</li> <li>• Post-medieval landscape around Hagley Hall</li> </ul>
<p><u>Biodiversity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parts of two SSSIs near Romsley Hill</li> <li>• Extensive NFI</li> <li>• Extensive PHI, including Wood Pasture and Parkland</li> <li>• SWSs</li> <li>• Watercourses</li> <li>• Significant GI assets</li> </ul>	<p><u>Recreation &amp; Access</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Trust Always Open land</li> <li>• Clent Country Park</li> <li>• Extensive public footpath network</li> <li>• North Worcestershire Path long distance trail</li> <li>• Popular key viewpoints and panoramic, far-reaching views</li> <li>• Significant health and wellbeing opportunities</li> </ul>

Landscape functions

- Topography and rarity of LCT in county create strong sense of place and exerts a wide area of influence
- Gateway and approaches, e.g. St. Kenelm's Pass

Visual Value

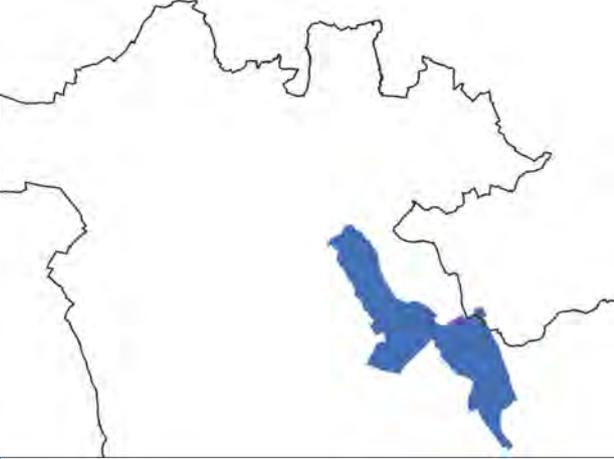
- High to Very High value
- Views from landscapes / viewpoints within highly popular visitor attractions / tourist destinations, and / or from national trails, used by very large numbers of people
- Views from, or towards, designated landscapes and / or features of international and national importance
- View makes a highly important contribution to understanding of landscape function / contribution
- View is of high scenic beauty and high quality

**Results and recommendations**

Overall landscape value for zone: **Very High**

Recommendations

Whole of zone **VLA candidate**

2. LICKEY HILLS		Landscape Character
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCA: Highly representative – especially geodiversity</li> <li>• LCT: Very good representation</li> <li>• WCC LDU condition (2007): Good</li> <li>• WCC LDU sensitivity (2007): High</li> </ul>	
Landscape Quality		
<p><b>Moderate to High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas with components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition, in very good condition</li> <li>• Very good representation of the landscape area / type</li> <li>• Very good scenic integrity</li> <li>• Strong sense of place</li> <li>• Some atypical or incongruous features or detractors (i.e. M5)</li> </ul>		
Landscape Value		
<p><b>Very High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High concentration of key features and designations</li> <li>• Significant wider landscape / visual function</li> <li>• Presence of internationally and / or nationally-designated areas / features of landscape (e.g. Local Geodiversity Sites)</li> <li>• Exceptional representation of landscape area / type / characteristics and / or rare</li> <li>• Exceptional aesthetic and perceptual attributes and qualities e.g. significant scenic beauty, iconic views, very distinctive sense of place.</li> </ul>		
<p><u>Heritage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two Grade II Listed buildings within zone</li> <li>• Grade II* Chadwich Manor adjacent</li> <li>• CA at southern end of zone</li> <li>• Unregistered parks and gardens – Waseley Hills and Lickey Hills Country Parks</li> <li>• Site of Roman road and trackway</li> <li>• Cultural associations (e.g. Tolkien)</li> </ul>	<p><u>HLC</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some areas of medieval ASNW</li> <li>• Matrix of HLC types elsewhere, including post-medieval piecemeal enclosure and 20<sup>th</sup> century replanted Ancient Woodland</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Biodiversity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One Local Geological Site within zone; another adjacent at Kendal End Farm</li> <li>• LNRs</li> <li>• Extensive NFI sites</li> <li>• SWSs</li> <li>• Diverse PHI</li> </ul>	<p><u>Recreation &amp; Access</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waseley Hills and Lickey Hills Country Parks – both have Green Flag awards</li> <li>• Public footpaths</li> <li>• North Worcestershire Path long-distance trail</li> <li>• Key viewpoints and vistas on Hills' summits</li> <li>• National Cycle Network route</li> <li>• Significant health and wellbeing opportunities for nearby Birmingham conurbation</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Landscape functions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buffer zone and topographical boundary between urban conurbation and rural</li> <li>• Topography and rarity of LCT in county create strong sense of place and exerts a wide area of influence</li> <li>• Gateway and approaches, e.g. Rose Hill</li> </ul>		

Visual Value

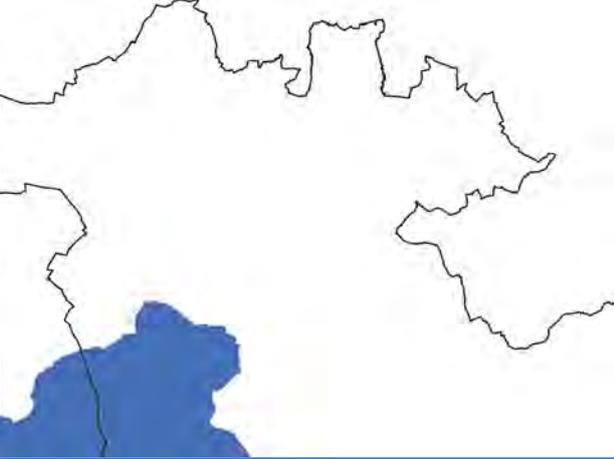
- Very High
- View makes a highly important contribution to understanding of landscape function / contribution
- Views from landscapes / viewpoints within highly popular visitor attractions / tourist destinations, and / or from national trails, used by very large numbers of people

**Results and recommendations**

Overall landscape value for zone: **Very High**

Recommendations

All of zone **VLA candidate**, except area around Lickey Hills Golf Course which is a **Buffer Zone VLA candidate** due to landscape function.

3. WOODCOTE GREEN		Landscape Character
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCA: Representative – contains several elements</li> <li>• LCT: Good representation</li> <li>• WCC LDU condition (2007): Good</li> <li>• WCC LDU sensitivity (2007): High</li> </ul>	
Landscape Quality		
<p><b>High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very good representation of the landscape area / type</li> <li>• Strong sense of place</li> <li>• Few atypical or incongruous features or detractors</li> </ul>		
Landscape Value		
<p><b>High to Very High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of internationally and / or nationally-designated areas / features of landscape, nature conservation, archaeological, historic, geological and / or other importance e.g. SACs, SSSIs, Scheduled Monuments, Grade I and / or II* listed buildings</li> <li>• Significant wider landscape / visual function e.g. context / setting of heritage asset, contribution to character of settlement of international or national importance</li> <li>• Significant Green Infrastructure assets</li> <li>• Very good representation of landscape area / type / characteristics and / or uncommon</li> <li>• Very good aesthetic and perceptual attributes and qualities e.g. high degree of scenic beauty, fine / key views, distinctive sense of place, high degree of wildness / remoteness, tranquillity</li> <li>• Negligible / few detractors present</li> </ul>		
<p><u>Heritage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two SMs</li> <li>• Nine listed buildings / structures including Grade II* Fairfield Court</li> <li>• Dodford CA immediately south of study area</li> <li>• Several ridge and furrow sites</li> </ul>	<p><u>HLC</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-Roman and medieval ASNW, including remnants of Feckenham Forest</li> <li>• Large proportion of zone retains post-medieval field patterns.</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Biodiversity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seven SSSIs</li> <li>• PHI</li> <li>• ASNW</li> <li>• NFI sites</li> <li>• SWSs</li> </ul>	<p><u>Recreation &amp; Access</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public footpath network</li> <li>• Monarch's Way long-distance trail</li> <li>• Significant health and wellbeing opportunities</li> <li>• Recreation value of Pepper Wood and Chaddesley Woods</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Landscape functions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscape is important element in setting of heritage and biodiversity features within zone and in areas adjacent to it.</li> </ul>		
<p><u>Visual Value</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High value</li> <li>• Views from within, or towards, designated landscapes and / or features of regional or countywide importance</li> <li>• View is of high scenic beauty and high quality</li> <li>• View makes an important contribution to understanding of landscape function / contribution</li> </ul>		

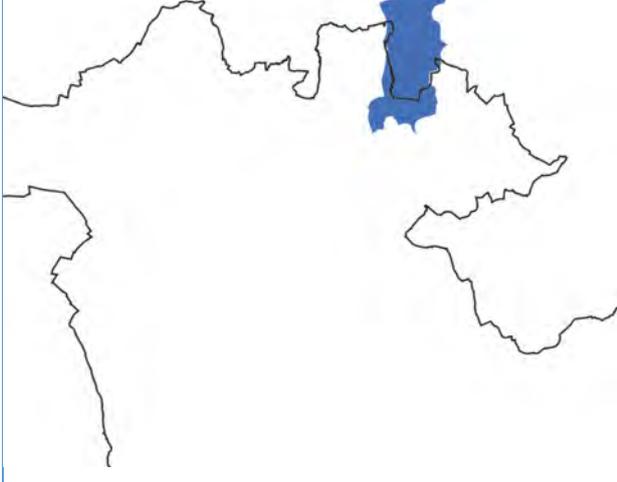
## Results and recommendations

Overall landscape value for zone: **High**

### Recommendations

Majority of zone is a **Buffer Zone VLA candidate**. Southern part of zone including and near woodlands is a **VLA candidate**.

NB some parts of zone are outside BD

4. ILLEY		Landscape Character
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NCA: Representative – contains several elements</li> <li>LCT: Very good representation, especially in the south, e.g. dingles and open vistas</li> <li>WCC LDU condition (2007): Moderate / Good</li> <li>WCC LDU sensitivity (2007): Medium / High</li> </ul>	
Landscape Quality		
<p><b>High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Areas with components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition, in very good condition</li> <li>Very good representation of the landscape area / type</li> <li>High level of management, or care, or natural / semi-natural environment in very good form and health</li> <li>Very good scenic integrity</li> <li>Strong sense of place</li> </ul>		
Landscape Value		
<p><b>High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presence of regionally / countywide-level designated areas / features, e.g. NFI, PHI</li> <li>Important wider, or significant local, landscape / visual function e.g. context / setting of heritage asset, contribution to character of settlement of regional importance, green gap, buffer zone etc.</li> <li>Landscapes in very good condition and / or of high quality as defined by appropriate criteria</li> <li>Important cultural associations</li> <li>Very good representation of landscape area / type / characteristics and / or uncommon</li> <li>Very good aesthetic and perceptual attributes and qualities e.g. high degree of scenic beauty, fine / key views, distinctive sense of place, high degree of wildness / remoteness, tranquillity</li> <li>Negligible / few detractors present</li> <li>The quality / qualities of, and / or features in, the landscape are likely to be one of the main reasons for the visit</li> <li>Important contribution to wider public amenity, access and recreation e.g. long-distance / themed trails, well-used public rights of way, Heritage Coast, Public Open Space / Local Green Space. May be protected by / subject of planning policy</li> <li>Important wider, or significant local Green Infrastructure assets</li> </ul>		
<p><u>Heritage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grade I Listed Halesowen Abbey</li> <li>SM</li> <li>Cultural associations (i.e. William Shenstone)</li> </ul>	<p><u>HLC</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large area of post-medieval field enclosures extant</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Biodiversity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Varied PHI, including Traditional Orchards</li> <li>NFI</li> <li>Significant areas of ASNWs</li> <li>SSSI (Illey Pastures)</li> <li>NFI sites</li> <li>Special Wildlife Sites</li> <li>Watercourses</li> <li>Significant vegetation – green and blue GI connections</li> </ul>		

#### Recreation & Access

- Extensive public footpath network
- Monarch's Way long-distance trail
- Viewpoints and vistas across to 'Clentine Countryside'
- Health and wellbeing opportunities

#### Landscape functions

- Gateway to rural environment via footpaths
- Landscape important element for setting of Halesowen Abbey ruins and SM
- Green gap
- Buffer zone

#### Visual Value

- High value
- Views from within, or towards, designated landscapes and / or features of regional or countywide importance (e.g. Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV), Country Parks, Conservation Areas, Grade II listed buildings, National Trust land etc.), especially where contributing to the significance of an asset / feature
- View is of high scenic beauty and high quality
- View makes an important contribution to understanding of landscape function / contribution
- Views from well-used and popular visitor attractions / tourist destinations, including long-distance / themed trails, Heritage Coasts, Public Open Spaces / Local Green Spaces, used by relatively large numbers of people
- Views with social / cultural / historic associations of countywide importance

### Results and recommendations

Overall landscape value for zone: **High**

#### Recommendations

Whole of zone **VLA candidate**.

Majority of zone lies outside BD. Zone is important hinterland and has high interinfluence with landscapes to the south. Opportunity to preserve and enhance HLC and setting for SM.

5. ROMSLEY FOOTSLOPES		Landscape Character
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCA: Representative – contains several elements</li> <li>• LCT: Very good representation</li> <li>• WCC LDU condition (2007): variable, from Poor to Good</li> <li>• WCC LDU sensitivity (2007): variable, Medium to High</li> </ul>	
Landscape Quality		
<p><b>Moderate to High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas with components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition, in very good condition</li> <li>• Very good representation of the landscape area / type</li> <li>• High level of management, or care, or natural / semi-natural environment in very good form and health</li> <li>• Strong sense of place</li> <li>• Some loss of, or change to, intrinsic sense of place</li> <li>• Some atypical or incongruous features or detractors (i.e. M5)</li> </ul>		
Landscape Value		
<p><b>High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of regionally / countywide-level designated areas / features</li> <li>• Important wider, or significant local, landscape / visual function e.g. context / setting of heritage asset, contribution to character of settlement of regional importance, green gap, buffer zone etc.</li> <li>• Landscapes in very good condition and / or of high quality as defined by appropriate criteria</li> <li>• Important cultural associations</li> <li>• Very good representation of landscape area / type / characteristics and / or uncommon</li> <li>• Very good aesthetic and perceptual attributes and qualities e.g. high degree of scenic beauty, fine / key views, distinctive sense of place, high degree of wildness / remoteness, tranquillity</li> <li>• Important contribution to wider public amenity, access and recreation e.g. long-distance / themed trails, well-used public rights of way</li> <li>• Important wider, or significant local Green Infrastructure assets</li> </ul>		
<p><u>Heritage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three listed buildings/ structures, including Grade I St. Kenelm’s Church</li> <li>• Deserted medieval village of Kenelmstowe – earthwork remains.</li> <li>• Some ridge and furrow present</li> </ul>	<p><u>HLC</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant area of post-medieval field enclosure and medieval ASNW east of Romsley village.</li> <li>• Majority of zone post-1945 field amalgamation with some smaller areas of post-medieval field enclosure.</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Biodiversity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three SSSIs</li> <li>• PHI</li> <li>• ASNW</li> <li>• NFI sites</li> <li>• Special Wildlife Sites</li> <li>• Waterbodies</li> <li>• Part of LNR (Waseley Hills Country Park)</li> <li>• Penorchard NR</li> </ul>		

#### Recreation & Access

- National Trust Always Open land (below Hagley Wood); Limited access to Nimmings Wood car park
- Part of Waseley Hills Country Park
- Public footpaths
- Monarch's Way trail
- Small areas of Open Access Land, e.g. Gannow Green
- Health and wellbeing opportunities

#### Landscape functions

- Transition area between topography of the Hills and plateau to the north
- Setting of Grade I Listed St. Kenelm's Church
- Gateway to the Hills and National Trust land, especially in the north, e.g. St. Kenelm's Pass to Clent Hills; Gannow Green to Waseley Hill Country Park

#### Visual Value

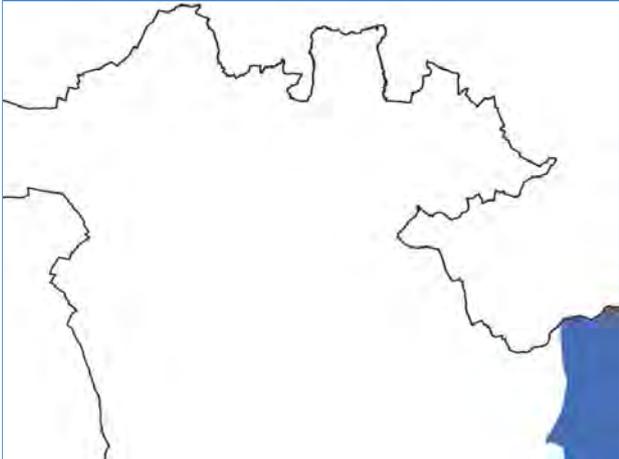
- High value
- Views from within, or towards, designated landscapes and / or features of regional or countywide importance (e.g. Country Parks, Conservation Areas, Grade II listed buildings, National Trust land etc.), especially where contributing to the significance of an asset / feature
- View is of high scenic beauty and high quality
- View makes an important contribution to understanding of landscape function / contribution
- Views from well-used and popular visitor attractions / tourist destinations, including long-distance / themed trails, Heritage Coasts, Public Open Spaces / Local Green Spaces, used by relatively large numbers of people

### Results and recommendations

Overall landscape value for zone: **Medium**

#### Recommendations

Majority of zone is a **VLA candidate**. Romsley village settlement excluded, but potential for an NDP to restore and enhance landscape features that have been eroded by modern development. Areas to the north and south of Romsley village are **Buffer Zone VLA candidates**. Area north of Gannow Green also **Buffer Zone VLA candidate**, primarily due to landscape function and setting for Country Park.

6. BITTELL RESERVOIRS		Landscape Character
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NCA: Representative – contains some elements</li> <li>LCT: Some representation of LCTs</li> <li>WCC LDU condition (2007): variable, from Moderate to Good</li> <li>WCC LDU sensitivity (2007): variable, Medium to High</li> </ul>	
Landscape Quality		
<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Areas with components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition, in very good condition</li> <li>Strong sense of place</li> <li>Good to fair representation of the landscape area / type</li> <li>Some atypical or incongruous features or detractors</li> <li>Mix of low and high quality environments in fair to poor, or very good form and health</li> </ul>		
Landscape Value		
<p><b>High to Very High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moderate concentration of key features and designations</li> <li>Presence of internationally and / or nationally-designated areas / features of landscape, nature conservation, archaeological, historic, geological and / or other importance e.g. SACs, SSSIs</li> <li>Very good aesthetic and perceptual attributes and qualities e.g. high degree of scenic beauty, fine / key views, distinctive sense of place, high degree of wildness / remoteness, tranquillity</li> <li>The quality / qualities of, and / or features in, the landscape are likely to be one of the main reasons for the visit</li> <li>The quality / qualities of, and / or features in, the landscape are likely to be one of the main reasons for the visit</li> <li>Important wider, or significant local Green Infrastructure assets</li> </ul>		
<p><u>Heritage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listed buildings/ structures at Bittell Farm</li> <li>Historic farmsteads</li> </ul>	<p><u>HLC</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mostly 20<sup>th</sup> century field amalgamation to the north</li> <li>Post-medieval and 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure elsewhere</li> <li>Modern expansion to the south</li> <li>Upper Bittell Reservoir 19<sup>th</sup> century; Lower Bittell Reservoir post-medieval</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Biodiversity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two SSSIs</li> <li>NFI</li> <li>PHI</li> <li>ASNW</li> <li>SWS</li> <li>Waterbodies and water courses</li> <li>Significant GI connections, especially blue GI</li> </ul>	<p><u>Recreation &amp; Access</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public footpaths</li> <li>North Worcestershire Path</li> <li>Sailing club</li> <li>Views across reservoirs</li> <li>Health and wellbeing opportunities</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Landscape functions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Green gap</li> <li>Buffer Zone and transition zone between urban and rural areas</li> </ul>		

#### Visual Value

- Moderate to High value
- Views from roads and long-distance trail across reservoirs
- View is of high scenic beauty and high quality
- View makes an important contribution to understanding of landscape function / contribution
- Views from within, or towards, undesignated landscapes and / or features of local importance

#### **Results and recommendations**

Overall landscape value for zone: **Medium**

#### Recommendations

Upper and Lower Bittell Reservoirs are **VLA candidates**. Areas to the north and west of reservoirs are **Buffer Zone VLA candidates**.

7. BROOME SANDLANDS		Landscape Character
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCA: Representative – contains several elements</li> <li>• LCT: Good representation</li> <li>• WCC LDU condition (2007): variable, from Moderate to Good</li> <li>• WCC LDU sensitivity (2007): variable, Low to High</li> </ul>	
Landscape Quality		
<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good landscape containing areas that, although still attractive, have less significant and more common landscape features</li> <li>• Good to fair representation of the landscape area / type</li> <li>• Areas of some value for their landscapes, components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition but showing signs of erosion and loss, in good to fair condition</li> <li>• Some atypical or incongruous features or detractors</li> </ul>		
Landscape Value		
<p><b>Moderate to High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of regionally / countywide-level designated areas / features</li> <li>• Important local landscape / visual function e.g. context / setting of heritage asset, contribution to character of settlement, green gap, buffer zone etc.</li> <li>• The quality / qualities of, and / or features in, the landscape are likely to be one of the main reasons for the visit (to the north)</li> <li>• Important contribution to wider public amenity, access and recreation e.g. long-distance / themed trails, well-used public rights of way, Heritage Coast, Public Open Space / Local Green Space. May be protected by / subject of planning policy</li> <li>• 'Everyday' landscapes (ELC)</li> <li>• Some detractors present</li> </ul>		
<p><u>Heritage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several listed buildings / structures, particularly around Broome and Hagley Hall</li> <li>• Listed buildings include Grade I Hagley Hall; Grade II* listed St. John the Baptist Church, The Old Dairy near Hagley Hall, and Field House</li> <li>• Part of Hagley Hall RHPG within northern part of zone</li> <li>• Three unregistered historic parks and gardens</li> <li>• Small part of Clent CA to the north and Belbroughton CA to the south</li> </ul>	<p><u>HLC</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large proportion of zone is modern field amalgamation</li> <li>• Post-medieval parkland around Hagley Hall, and areas of parliamentary enclosure</li> <li>• Broome medieval nucleated settlement</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Biodiversity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scattered PHI sites including Wood Pasture and Parkland, and several Traditional Orchards</li> <li>• Part of SWS to the south</li> </ul>	<p><u>Recreation &amp; Access</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public footpaths</li> <li>• North Worcestershire Way and Monarch's Way long distance trails in northern part of zone</li> </ul>	

Landscape functions

- Landscape and LCT form part of setting for Hagley Hall and parkland to the north
- Access to footpaths and open space from West Hagley
- Green gap to the north

Visual Value

- High to Very High value
- Views from, or towards, designated landscapes and / or features of international and national importance (e.g. Registered Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monuments, Grade I or II\* Listed Buildings etc.) especially where contributing to the significance of an asset / feature
- Views from well-used and popular visitor attractions / tourist destinations, including long-distance / themed trails, used by relatively large numbers of people
- Views with social / cultural / historic associations of countywide importance (at Hagley Hall)

**Results and recommendations**

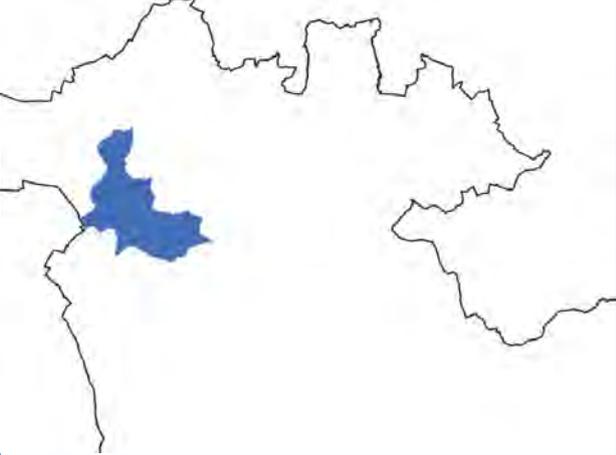
Overall landscape value for zone: **Medium**

Recommendations

Area around Hagley Hall is a **VLA candidate**.

Potential for an NDP to identify more localised and non-designated areas of value within zone, particularly given historic nature of settlements in zone.

NB Some areas of zone lie outside BD

8. HOLY CROSS		Landscape Character
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCA: Representative – contains some elements</li> <li>• LCT: good representation</li> <li>• WCC LDU condition (2007): Good</li> <li>• WCC LDU sensitivity (2007): variable, Medium to High</li> </ul>	
Landscape Quality		
<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good landscape containing areas that, although still attractive, have less significant and more common landscape features</li> <li>• Areas of some value for their landscapes, components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition but showing signs of erosion and loss, in good to fair condition</li> <li>• Good to fair representation of the landscape area / type</li> <li>• Some loss of, or change to, intrinsic sense of place</li> <li>• Some atypical or incongruous features or detractors (i.e. A491)</li> </ul>		
Landscape Value		
<p><b>Moderate to High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of regionally / countywide-level designated areas / features</li> <li>• Important local landscape / visual function e.g. context / setting of heritage asset, contribution to character of settlement, green gap, buffer zone etc.</li> <li>• Good to fair representation of landscape area / type / characteristics but common</li> <li>• Some detractors present</li> <li>• Important contribution to local public amenity, access and recreation e.g. well-used public rights of way, green open spaces, common land</li> </ul>		
<p><u>Heritage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several listed buildings including Grade II* Church of St. Leonard</li> <li>• Clent and Holy Cross CAs</li> <li>• Unregistered historic park and garden (Clent Grove / Sunfield)</li> </ul>		<p><u>HLC</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medieval and post-medieval settlements</li> <li>• Mostly parliamentary enclosures and modern field amalgamation</li> </ul>
<p><u>Biodiversity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scattering of PHI sites, including Traditional Orchards</li> <li>• NFI</li> <li>• Watercourse</li> </ul>		<p><u>Recreation &amp; Access</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Footpaths</li> <li>• Small area of Open Access land at Hollies Hill</li> </ul>
<p><u>Landscape functions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forms part of landscape setting for Clent Hills Country Park (despite A491) as well as heritage assets within zone.</li> <li>• Approach to footslopes of Hills along Church Avenue, towards St. Kenelm's Pass.</li> </ul>		
<p><u>Visual Value</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderate to High</li> <li>• Views from within, or towards, designated landscapes and / or features of regional or countywide importance (e.g. Country Parks, Conservation Areas, Grade II listed buildings, National Trust land etc.), especially where contributing to the significance of an asset / feature</li> <li>• View makes a moderate contribution to understanding of landscape function / contribution</li> </ul>		

## Results and recommendations

Overall landscape value for zone: **Medium**

### Recommendations

North west part of zone: **VLA candidate.**

Area west of Odnall Lane and north of Walton House: **Buffer Zone VLA candidate.**

Rest of zone has a lower density of key features and designations, with a limited area of influence. However, more localised and granular studies to establish levels of value at a neighbourhood scale could be carried out through NDPs, and policies developed to ensure their protection (in addition to the protection provided by Holy Cross CA).

9. LUTLEY CLAYLANDS & PEDMORE		Landscape Character
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCA: Representative – contains several elements</li> <li>• LCT: good representation</li> <li>• WCC LDU condition (2007): variable, from Moderate to Good</li> <li>• WCC LDU sensitivity (2007): variable, Medium to High</li> </ul>	
Landscape Quality		
<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good to fair representation of the landscape area / type</li> <li>• Good to fair level of management, environment in good to fair form and health</li> <li>• Good to fair scenic integrity</li> <li>• Some atypical or incongruous features or detractors</li> </ul>		
Landscape Value		
<p><b>Moderate to High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of regionally / countywide-level designated areas / features</li> <li>• ‘Everyday’ landscapes (ELC)</li> <li>• Presence of undesignated, ‘informally’ designated and / or locally-important areas / features of landscape, nature conservation, archaeological, historic, geological and / or other interest</li> <li>• Important local landscape / visual function e.g. context / setting of heritage asset, contribution to character of settlement, green gap, buffer zone etc.</li> <li>• Landscapes in good to fair condition and / or of moderate quality as defined by appropriate criteria but good potential for improvement</li> <li>• Some detractors present</li> <li>• Important contribution to local public amenity, access and recreation e.g. well-used public rights of way, green open spaces, common land</li> <li>• Good local Green Infrastructure assets</li> </ul>		
<p><u>Heritage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three listed buildings/ structures</li> <li>• Unregistered historic park and garden (Wassell Grove)</li> <li>• Adjacent Wychbury Ring (SM)</li> </ul>	<p><u>HLC</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uffmoor Wood medieval ASNW (mostly replanted)</li> <li>• Other smaller remnants of medieval ASNW in zone</li> <li>• Mostly post-medieval enclosure and modern field amalgamation / reorganisation</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Biodiversity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part of two SSSIs</li> <li>• Extensive NFI</li> <li>• ASNW</li> <li>• Penorcharde Nature Reserve</li> <li>• Variety of PHI sites</li> <li>• Green and blue GI assets</li> </ul>	<p><u>Recreation &amp; Access</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public footpaths</li> <li>• Hagley Golf Club</li> <li>• Old Halesonians Association</li> <li>• Health and wellbeing opportunities, especially for nearby Halesowen and Stourbridge conurbations</li> <li>• Recreation value of Woodland Trust-owned Uffmoor Wood</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Landscape functions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green gap and buffer zone between urban areas and high quality landscapes further south</li> <li>• Buffer</li> </ul>		

Visual Value

- Moderate to High value
- View is of moderate scenic beauty and moderate quality
- Views from within, or towards, designated landscapes and / or features of regional or countywide importance
- View makes an important contribution to understanding of landscape function / contribution

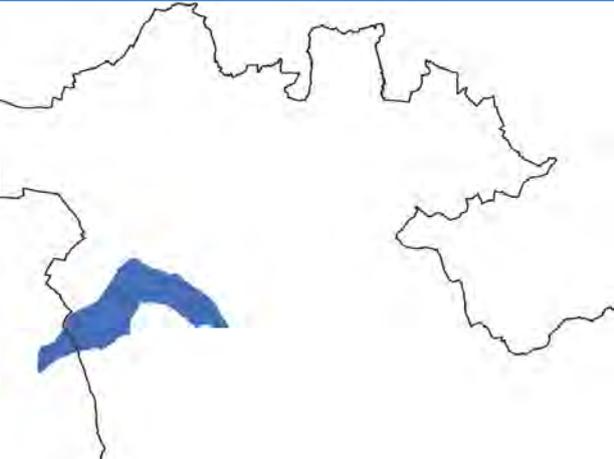
**Results and recommendations**

Overall landscape value for zone: **Medium**

Recommendations

Majority of zone is **Buffer Zone VLA candidate** due primarily to landscape function.

Area south of A456 and around Uffmoor Wood are **VLA candidates**.

10. BELBROUGHTON	Landscape Character
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCA: Representative – contains several elements</li> <li>• LCT: Some representation</li> <li>• WCC LDU condition (2007): Good</li> <li>• WCC LDU sensitivity (2007): High</li> </ul>
<b>Landscape Quality</b>	
<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong sense of place within historic village core. Some loss of, or change to, intrinsic sense of place elsewhere in zone.</li> <li>• Areas of some value for their landscapes, components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition but showing signs of erosion and loss, in good to fair condition</li> <li>• Good to fair scenic integrity</li> <li>• Limited representation of the landscape area / type</li> </ul>	
<b>Landscape Value</b>	
<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of undesignated, 'informally' designated and / or locally-important areas / features of landscape, nature conservation, archaeological, historic, geological and / or other interest</li> <li>• Important local landscape / visual function e.g. context / setting of heritage asset, contribution to character of settlement, green gap, buffer zone etc.</li> <li>• The quality / qualities of, and / or features in, the landscape are unlikely to be one of the main reasons for the visit, but make a positive contribution to the experience</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Heritage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant number of listed buildings / structures, including Grade II* Church of Holy Trinity and Chapel near Bell Hall</li> <li>• Belbroughton CA</li> <li>• Three unregistered historic parks and gardens</li> </ul>	<p><u>HLC</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mostly parliamentary enclosure and 20<sup>th</sup> century field reorganisation</li> </ul>
<p><u>Biodiversity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some PHI (Deciduous Woodland)</li> <li>• SWS</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Recreation &amp; Access</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public footpaths</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Landscape functions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although some parts of LCT eroded, landscape is important element in setting of village and CA</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Visual Value</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderate to High Value</li> <li>• Views from within, or towards, designated landscapes and / or features of regional or countywide importance, especially where contributing to the significance of an asset / feature</li> <li>• View makes a moderate contribution to understanding of landscape function / contribution</li> <li>• Views from locally-popular recreation areas / green open spaces / public rights of way, but not used by many visitors</li> </ul>	
<b>Recommendations</b>	

Limited landscape value features in the context of this study. More localised, detailed studies and initiatives for example through an NDP would help identify neighbourhood-scale 'valued landscape' assets.

11. COFTON HACKETT		Landscape Character
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCA: Limited representation</li> <li>• LCT: Very good representation</li> <li>• WCC LDU condition (2007): variable, from Poor to Good</li> <li>• WCC LDU sensitivity (2007): variable, Medium to High</li> </ul>	
Landscape Quality		
<p><b>Low to Moderate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good landscape containing areas that, although still attractive, have less significant and more common landscape features</li> <li>• Areas of some value for their landscapes, components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition but showing signs of erosion and loss, in good to fair condition</li> <li>• Good to fair representation of the landscape area / type</li> <li>• Some atypical or incongruous features or detractors</li> <li>• Signs of urbanisation and / or erosion, characteristic landscape elements and features degraded and / or lost</li> </ul>		
Landscape Value		
<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some key features / designations, but limited area of influence</li> <li>• Important local landscape / visual function e.g. context / setting of heritage asset, contribution to character of settlement, green gap, buffer zone etc.</li> <li>• Some detractors present</li> <li>• The quality / qualities of, and / or features in, the landscape are unlikely to be one of the main reasons for the visit, but make a positive contribution to the experience</li> <li>• Good local Green Infrastructure assets</li> </ul>		
<p><u>Heritage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five Listed Buildings, including Grade II* Church of St. Michael and Cofton Hall</li> <li>• Section of CA to the south west</li> </ul>	<p><u>HLC</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pinfields Woods medieval ASNW, and medieval HLC around Cofton Hall</li> <li>• Reservoir south of Cofton Park is post-medieval</li> <li>• Some 1914 -1945 settlement expansion and post-1945 field amalgamation elsewhere</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Biodiversity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Geological Site at Kendal End Farm</li> <li>• Some Deciduous Woodland PHI</li> <li>• NFI sites</li> <li>• SWSs</li> <li>• Waterbody</li> </ul>	<p><u>Recreation &amp; Access</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part of Lickey Hills Country Park to west of zone</li> <li>• Public footpaths North Worcestershire Path long-distance trail</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Landscape functions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green gap</li> <li>• Buffer zone and transition zone between urban and rural areas</li> <li>• Approach / gateway to rural from suburban landscape along Cofton Church Lane and North Worcestershire Path</li> </ul>		

Visual Value

- Moderate value
- Views from within, or towards, undesignated landscapes and / or features of local importance
- View makes a moderate contribution to understanding of landscape function / contribution

**Results and recommendations**

Overall landscape value for zone: **Medium**

Recommendations

Area south of Cofton Hill / west of Kendal End is a **VLA Candidate**.

Majority of zone not included as a VLA candidate, but zone covered by Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett NDP. Some neighbourhood-scale features of value such as Local Green Spaces are protected by NDP policy.

12. LICKEY AND BLACKWELL		Landscape Character
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCA: Some representation, particularly diverse field patterns and contrasting settlement patterns</li> <li>• LCT: Some representation, especially below Beacon Lane</li> <li>• WCC LDU condition (2007): Moderate</li> <li>• WCC LDU sensitivity (2007): variable, Low to Medium</li> </ul>	
Landscape Quality		
<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good to fair representation of the landscape area / type</li> <li>• Some loss of, or change to, intrinsic sense of place</li> <li>• Some atypical or incongruous features or detractors (e.g. mineral works)</li> <li>• Signs of urbanisation and / or erosion, characteristic landscape elements and features degraded and / or lost</li> </ul>		
Landscape Value		
<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderate concentration of key features and designations between Monument Lane and Alvechurch Highway; and within Barnt Green CA.</li> <li>• Important local landscape / visual function e.g. context / setting of heritage asset, contribution to character of settlement, green gap, buffer zone etc.</li> <li>• Good to fair aesthetic and perceptual attributes and qualities e.g. moderate degree of scenic beauty, local key views, moderate sense of place, moderate degree of wildness / remoteness, tranquillity</li> <li>• The quality / qualities of, and / or features in, the landscape are unlikely to be one of the main reasons for the visit, but make a positive contribution to the experience</li> </ul>		
<p><u>Heritage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four Grade II listed buildings / structures (including Obelisk)</li> <li>• CA to south of zone</li> <li>• Lickey Grange an unregistered park and garden but only partly remains</li> <li>• Course of Roman road and historic turnpikes</li> </ul>	<p><u>HLC</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mostly 20<sup>th</sup> century field amalgamation / subdivision and modern expansion</li> <li>• Medieval ASNW on Round Hill</li> <li>• Areas of former common land</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Biodiversity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PHI – mostly Deciduous Woodland; two Traditional Orchard sites</li> <li>• ASNW</li> <li>• NFI sites</li> <li>• SWSs</li> </ul>	<p><u>Recreation &amp; Access</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited public footpath network</li> <li>• National Cycle Network route</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Landscape functions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green gap</li> <li>• Approach along Old Birmingham Road towards Rose Hill</li> </ul>		

#### Visual Value

- Moderate value
- Area south east of Beacon Lane contributes to setting of Beacon Hill and quality of views looking west from Beacon Lane
- Views from within, or towards, undesignated landscapes and / or features of local importance

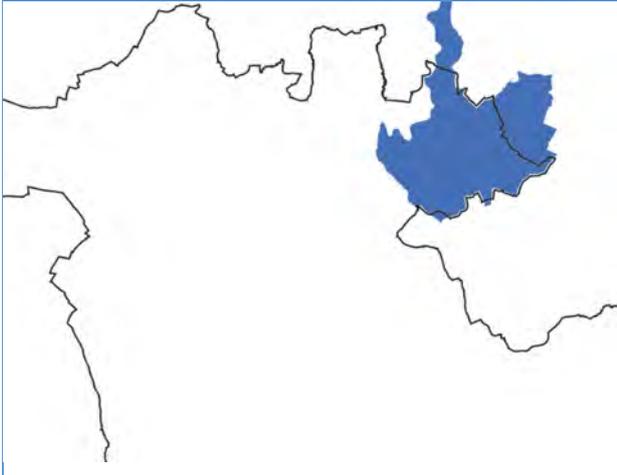
#### **Results and recommendations**

Overall landscape value for zone: **Medium**

#### Recommendations

Land north of Alvechurch Highway is a **Buffer Zone VLA candidate**, mainly due to role in views towards the Lickeys at footslopes of the Hills.

The zone is covered by Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett NDP, and some neighbourhood-scale features of value such as Local Green Spaces are protected by NDP policy. There is also protection in the form of Barnt Green CA in the south of the zone.

13. FRANKLEY FARMLANDS		Landscape Character
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NCA: Representative – contains several elements</li> <li>LCT: Some representation, especially in the north</li> <li>WCC LDU condition (2007): Good</li> <li>WCC LDU sensitivity (2007): High</li> </ul>	
Landscape Quality		
<b>Low to Moderate</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good landscape containing areas that, although still attractive, have less significant and more common landscape features</li> <li>Areas of some value for their landscapes, components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition but showing signs of erosion and loss, in good to fair condition</li> <li>Good to fair representation of the landscape area / type</li> <li>Good to fair scenic integrity</li> <li>Some loss of, or change to, intrinsic sense of place</li> <li>Signs of urbanisation and / or erosion, characteristic landscape elements</li> <li>Several atypical or incongruous features or detractors</li> </ul>		
Landscape Value		
<b>Moderate</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Important local landscape / visual function e.g. context / setting of heritage asset, contribution to character of settlement, green gap, buffer zone etc.</li> <li>Landscapes in good to fair condition and / or of moderate quality as defined by appropriate criteria but good potential for improvement</li> <li>Important local cultural associations</li> <li>Good to fair representation of landscape area / type / characteristics but common</li> <li>Good to fair aesthetic and perceptual attributes and qualities e.g. moderate degree of scenic beauty, local key views, moderate sense of place,</li> <li>Some detractors present</li> <li>Important contribution to local public amenity, access and recreation e.g. well-used public rights of way, green open spaces, common land</li> </ul>		
<p><u>Heritage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two Listed buildings/ structures, including Grade II* St. Leonards Church</li> <li>SM (moated site of Frankley Hall)</li> <li>Frankley Waterworks</li> </ul>	<p><u>HLC</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Post-medieval field enclosures in the north, with close associations with Woodgate and Halesowen Abbey.</li> <li>Reservoirs first half C20</li> <li>Area east of M5 mostly C20 field enlargement.</li> <li>Some remnants of medieval ASNW, and medieval / post-medieval clustered settlements around Frankley Green</li> </ul>	

<p><u>Biodiversity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PHI, especially to the north</li> <li>• Some ASNW</li> <li>• NFI sites</li> <li>• SWSs</li> <li>• Waterbodies</li> <li>• GI links to the north with Woodgate Valley Country Park</li> </ul>	<p><u>Recreation &amp; Access</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Trust Always Open land (Frankley Beeches)</li> <li>• Part of Woodgate Valley Country Park</li> <li>• Public footpaths, although limited</li> <li>• Popular viewpoints – Frankley Beeches, across Bartley Reservoir</li> <li>• Health and wellbeing opportunities</li> </ul>
<p><u>Landscape functions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Green gap</li> <li>• Buffer and transition zone</li> <li>• Recreational access</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Visual Value</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderate value</li> <li>• Views from within, or towards, undesignated landscapes and / or features of local importance</li> <li>• View is of moderate scenic beauty and moderate quality</li> <li>• View makes a moderate contribution to understanding of landscape function / contribution</li> <li>• Views from locally-popular recreation areas / green open spaces / public rights of way, but not used by many visitors</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Results and recommendations</b></p>	
<p>Overall landscape value for zone: <b>Low to Medium</b></p> <p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>Section of Woodgate Park in the north east, and land west of M5 are <b>Buffer Zone VLA candidates</b>.</p> <p>Majority of zone has a low density of key features and designations. However, more localised and granular studies such as through NDPs would help identify neighbourhood levels of value, and establish associations / relationships / interinfluence with the surrounding conurbation, especially in terms of landscape functions and recreational benefits (including health and wellbeing).</p> <p>NB Part of zone lies outside BD.</p>	

14. BELL HEATH		Landscape Character
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCA: Some representation, particularly geodiversity</li> <li>• LCT: Some representation</li> <li>• WCC LDU condition (2007): Enclosed Commons – Moderate; Principal Settled Farmlands - Good</li> <li>• WCC LDU sensitivity (2007): Medium</li> </ul>	
Landscape Quality		
<p><b>Low to Moderate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas of some value for their landscapes, components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition but showing signs of erosion and loss, in good to fair condition</li> <li>• Good to fair representation of the landscape area / type</li> <li>• Several atypical or incongruous features or detractors</li> <li>• Little sense of place</li> </ul>		
Landscape Value		
<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of nationally-designated areas / features of landscape, nature conservation, archaeological, historic, geological and / or other importance e.g. SSSIs, Local Geodiversity Sites (Very High value)</li> <li>• Landscapes between 'Everyday' and 'Degraded'</li> <li>• Several detractors present</li> <li>• The quality / qualities of, and / or features in, the landscape are unlikely to be a reason for visiting</li> </ul>		
<p><u>Heritage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nine listed buildings / structures including Grade II* Chadwich Manor</li> <li>• Unregistered historic park and garden at Castle Bourne</li> </ul>		<p><u>HLC</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mostly 20<sup>th</sup> century field amalgamation / reorganisation, and some parliamentary enclosure</li> <li>• Post-medieval piecemeal enclosure near Chadwich Manor</li> </ul>
<p><u>Biodiversity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Geological Site and geological SSSI (Madeley Heath)</li> <li>• NFI</li> <li>• Watercourses</li> <li>• Small area of SWS within zone near Chadwich Manor</li> <li>• PHI sites</li> </ul>		<p><u>Recreation &amp; Access</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public footpaths</li> <li>• Monarch's Way long-distance trail</li> </ul>
<p><u>Landscape functions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscape has some role in setting of designated features</li> </ul>		
<p><u>Visual Value</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderate value</li> <li>• View is of moderate scenic beauty and moderate quality</li> <li>• Views from locally-popular recreation areas / green open spaces / public rights of way, but appear not to be used by many visitors</li> </ul>		
Results and recommendations		

Overall landscape value for zone: **Low to Medium**

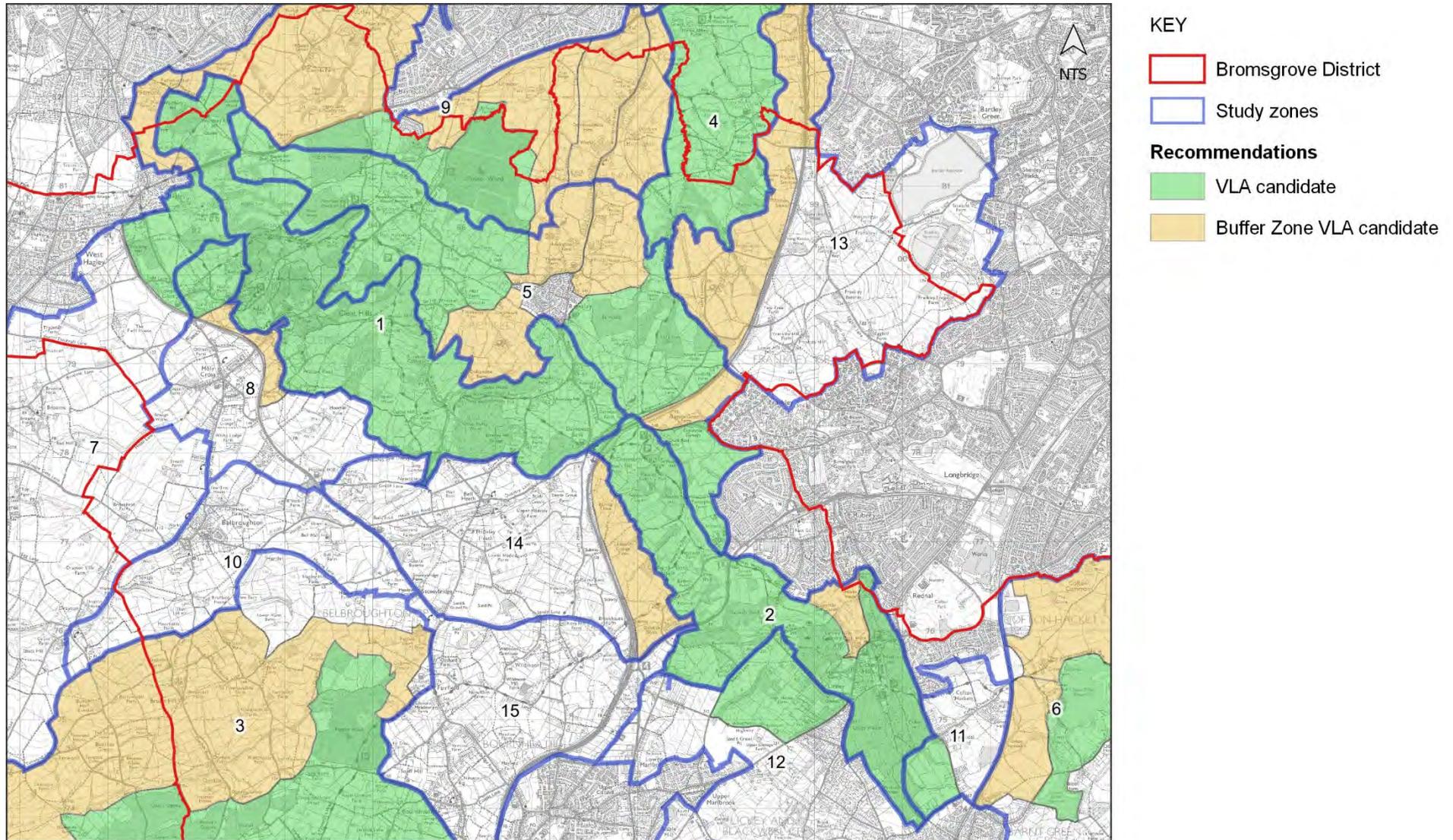
Recommendations

The area east of M5 is a **Buffer Zone VLA candidate** mainly due to landscape function in setting of Country Park.

The zone does contain highly valuable feature, but to a lesser extent than elsewhere in the study area. There are opportunities through local initiatives / NDPs to protect and enhance the geological SSSI at Madeley Heath, and to restore / improve several of the Enclosed Commons LCT's lost / eroded elements and features.

15. BOURNEHEATH		Landscape Character
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCA: Representative – contains several elements</li> <li>• LCT: Some representation, although degraded in areas</li> <li>• WCC LDU condition (2007): variable, from Moderate to Good</li> <li>• WCC LDU sensitivity (2007): mostly Medium; Area east of Wood Lane - High</li> </ul>	
Landscape Quality		
<p><b>Low</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signs of urbanisation and / or erosion, characteristic landscape elements and features degraded and / or lost</li> <li>• Limited representation of the landscape area / type</li> <li>• Several atypical or incongruous features or detractors</li> </ul>		
Landscape Value		
<p><b>Low</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Few if any areas / features of landscape, nature conservation, archaeological, historic, geological and / or other interest</li> <li>• Few if any cultural associations</li> <li>• The quality / qualities of, and / or features in, the landscape are unlikely to be a reason for visiting</li> <li>• Few GI assets</li> </ul>		
<p><u>Heritage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two Grade II Listed buildings / structures</li> <li>• Area of former common land</li> <li>• Historic turnpike</li> </ul>		<p><u>HLC</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matrix of field enclosure, mostly from former common land, ranging from post-medieval to modern</li> </ul>
<p><u>Biodiversity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small areas of PHI, including Traditional Orchard</li> </ul>		<p><u>Recreation &amp; Access</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large number of public footpaths</li> <li>• Monarch's Way long-distance trail</li> </ul>
<p><u>Landscape functions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition area between Catshill, M5 and surrounding landscape</li> </ul>		
<p><u>Visual Value</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderate value</li> <li>• Views from locally-popular recreation areas / public rights of way, but not used by many visitors</li> <li>• View is of moderate scenic beauty and moderate quality</li> <li>• View makes a moderate contribution to understanding of landscape function / contribution</li> </ul>		
Results and recommendations		
<p>Overall landscape value for zone: <b>Low to Medium</b></p>		
<p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>Limited designations and key features in zone. More localised and granular studies such as through NDPs would help identify neighbourhood levels of value and features important to the community.</p> <p>Enclosed Commons LCT relatively rare in Worcestershire although degraded in parts of zone (e.g. incongruous buildings and horsiculture).</p>		

VLA recommendations



## 6 Conclusions and Recommendations

### 6.1 Conclusions

- 6.1.1 The LVS concluded that within parts of the study area, levels of landscape value are high enough to merit protection (and, where appropriate, enhancement) at a local (district-wide) level.
- 6.1.2 These VLA candidates are largely within BDC's former LPAA, although the study has also considered areas outside BDC's boundary where the landscapes are closely-associated or contiguous.
- 6.1.3 The study found that there is a high concentration of designations and key features of significance within the Bromsgrove district, for example several ASNWs and areas of Open Access Land; it also concluded that their proximity to the urban areas of Birmingham and the Black Country makes these areas / features / assets even more valuable for a number of reasons.
- 6.1.4 Many of the areas / features are intrinsically valuable as a result of their various designations. However, the close associations and relationships between the rural landscapes and urban environments increases the value of certain areas / features due to the various landscape functions they perform, for example acting as green gaps, transition zones, ecological habitats and recreational resources.
- 6.1.5 It is important to note that the identification of 'high value' / 'valued landscape' areas does not denote that other areas are devoid of value, or are not potentially also 'valued landscapes'. As explained in Section 2, landscapes may be valued for a whole variety of reasons by different stakeholders; often, neighbourhood / community value is overlooked in studies as it usually requires more detailed analysis (see Recommendations below).
- 6.1.6 The LVS found that the Clent - Lickey hill range has high levels of landscape value, particularly in and around the Clent, Lickey and Waseley Country Parks. Other parts of the study area were also assessed as being of high value, especially areas rich in biodiversity and heritage features, and / or offering significant recreational opportunities with associated health and wellbeing benefits.
- 6.1.7 In recent years, the region has seen enormous landscape change, and good quality rural landscapes are particularly under pressure to absorb new development whether or not they have the 'capacity' to do so, especially from a landscape / environmental perspective.
- 6.1.8 The 2004 Bromsgrove District Local Plan described the uplands of Clent, Waseley, Beacon, Lickey and Weatheroak Hills as '*of regional landscape importance*', with the ridgeline and much of the surrounding landscapes being designated as a LPAA. Today, while certain features have some protection through designations such as CAs and RHPGs, the wider landscape and its functions and value are currently not explicitly protected through policy.
- 6.1.9 The LPA may or may not decide to use planning policy as a way of protecting its most valuable landscapes from the unacceptable effects of change, and ensure their enhancement. However, the identification of what constitutes the study area's landscapes' local distinctiveness and sense of place should go some way in helping to conserve (and ideally, restore) the positive aspects of the area's character whilst accepting a degree of appropriate evolution and change.

### 6.2 Recommendations

- 6.2.1 During the LVS, several issues were identified which have formed the basis of specific recommendations, the purpose of which is to help protect and enhance landscape character and visual amenity as important elements in a landscape's value.

#### **Neighbourhood Planning**

- 6.2.2 Introduced in the Localism Act 2011, neighbourhood planning gives communities statutory powers to shape how their communities develop.
- 6.2.3 A number of parishes within the study area have begun the NDP process. Lickey and Blackwell Parish with Cofton Hackett have produced a joint NDP which has passed Regulation 16 and

therefore the NDP has been 'made'. The policies within the plan can shape where development will go and what it will look like.

- 6.2.4 While the LVS has identified broad zones of high-value landscapes, NDPs enable a more granular, neighbourhood-scale of analysis that can identify locally-important areas / features of landscape value that cannot be established at the scale of this study. However, the information and baseline data contained in this LVS can provide a foundation for emerging NDPs and their policies.
- 6.2.5 An interesting recent example of an NDP successfully incorporating 'valued landscape' protection into its policies is Aymestrey in Herefordshire - the NDP was 'made' in May 2019. The examiner accepted the evidence-based conclusion that '*The landscape of Aymestrey Parish is undoubtedly a valued landscape within the meaning of paragraph 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018*'.<sup>61</sup>
- 6.2.6 The recommendations below could also form the basis of future NDP policies; for example where key views are identified, a policy with the objective of their protection / enhancement would have to be considered in any future development proposals.

### **Working with other LPAs**

- 6.2.7 Although this study is mainly concerned with the area covered by BDC, since landscapes are not constrained by administrative boundaries, the LVS also considered areas outside of BDC.
- 6.2.8 The study identified certain areas of landscape value outside of BDC that are contiguous or have a strong interinfluence with areas within BDC. If the value and functions of all the landscapes identified in the study are to be protected / enhanced, neighbouring LPAs will need to be consulted, as well as any other key stakeholders.

### **Landscape Character**

- 6.2.9 The landscapes of the study area perform many essential natural, cultural and visual functions, and are a highly valuable resource for the local community. Once character is understood, it is easier to establish exactly what is required to ensure that future changes are successfully integrated without detriment to the baseline situation - and enhance it where appropriate.
- 6.2.10 In some parts of the study area there is an erosion of landscape character, particularly where there is a tension between urban and rural elements and land uses / activities, for example industrial-scale intensive agricultural units, and sprawling new housing developments.
- 6.2.11 Strong, defensible boundaries should be created where future development sites abut open countryside. These boundaries would define not only the long-term physical edge of settlements, but also their character, context, setting, distinctiveness and sense of place, and so should reflect local and historic landscape patterns and characteristics (using locally-occurring native species / materials and traditional forms of management, for example). They will, ideally, also act as visual screens where key views may be adversely affected.
- 6.2.12 New developments should enhance and deliver benefits wherever possible; however, it must also be borne in mind that improving quality and condition should be an aspiration of land management practice regardless of whether an area is developed or not.
- 6.2.13 To this end, it may be helpful for parish councils to publicise sources of information and advice about managing areas of high landscape value. In conjunction with landowners, proposals could be developed for various environmental enhancement and management schemes.

### **Horses in the Landscape**

- 6.2.14 Large areas of land within the study area are used for keeping horses, particularly areas on the edges of settlements. If land used for 'horsiculture' is not properly managed, especially if overstocked, the grassland may never properly recover. This, and the related clutter / paraphernalia such as incongruous white-tape fencing and brightly-coloured jumps / buckets, has resulted in an erosion of landscape character and quality in several places, and introduces a suburban look and feel to rural areas.

---

<sup>61</sup> [https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/17722/neighbourhood\\_development\\_plan\\_march\\_2019.pdf](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/17722/neighbourhood_development_plan_march_2019.pdf) (para. 2.3)

- 6.2.15 Some local authorities have produced guidance to try and ensure that the effects of keeping horses are positive. For example, the Malvern Hills AONB Partnership has produced *Guidance on Keeping Horses in the Landscape*<sup>62</sup>. The introduction explains the necessity to produce such guidance:

*'Horses can have an extremely positive impact on the landscape and play an increasingly important role in grazing areas where other livestock numbers are dwindling. However, as a result of increasing numbers of horses and changes to agricultural practices, they are often kept more intensively now than in the past. Without due care this can affect the quality and character of the landscape and can impact on wildlife and the environment.'*

- 6.2.16 In order to limit the erosion of landscape quality, similar guidance could be produced for the Clent and Lickey Hills area.

### **History and Heritage**

- 6.2.17 It is often the case that historic landscape character is not a subject covered in studies accompanying planning applications. This is usually because it is not part of the 'scope' of the project, falling outside the remit of the archaeologist, the conservation expert and the landscape architect.
- 6.2.18 Planning officers can ask for an historic landscape character assessment to be included in an application if it is considered relevant, and should ask for it to be carried out in accordance with guidance such as that published by HE and others.
- 6.2.19 Such assessments help to identify specific features of historic value not necessarily included in HLC projects.

### **Biodiversity**

- 6.2.20 There is a diverse range of ecological habitats within the study area. Most are highly vulnerable to the effects of new development and changes in land use. Their protection and appropriate management are essential. Initiatives to encourage opportunities for wildlife and good management practices could be developed by the local community and through any policies produced through NDPs.
- 6.2.21 There is also evidence of erosion and loss of habitats which has resulted in connectivity being broken in places. The habitats are often highly valuable elements and features in the landscape, and so their erosion and loss can lead to adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity. Active management of all these habitats is critical to their long term survival.

### **Local Green Spaces**

- 6.2.22 The study area contains important and extensive areas of green spaces, such as the Country Parks, woodland and Hagley Park, and their value is often recognised through national and / or local designations.
- 6.2.23 Through NDPs, communities can designate areas which they consider valuable and worthy of protection as 'Local Green Spaces' (LGSs)<sup>63</sup>.

### **Future Planning and Design Guidance**

- 6.2.24 In future, further detailed landscape and visual assessments of the study area may be required in the light of material changes in the wider landscape (for example changes to the agricultural economy resulting in either more or less intensive farming methods; climate change effects; and pests / diseases which may result in loss of trees). The report, schedules and figures would need to be updated accordingly.
- 6.2.25 An assessment of the cumulative effects of the development of several sites could also be part of future studies, or accompanying planning applications if relevant, although it is the LPA's responsibility to ensure this is carried out. Many parts of the study area are highly vulnerable to change, and additional development of certain types is likely to exacerbate the current situation, increasing the rate at which erosion and loss occur. However, it is also possible for this to act

---

<sup>62</sup> [http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/HORSEpolicydocLOW\\_000.pdf](http://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/HORSEpolicydocLOW_000.pdf)

<sup>63</sup> <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/making-local-green-space-designations-neighbourhood-plan/>

as a catalyst for environmental enhancement and the introduction of better management practices, especially if made a prerequisite of new schemes.

- 6.2.26 A worthwhile initiative which could be conducted by LPAs, or at a smaller-scale as part of the NDP process, is the production of design codes for built form and landscaping in certain areas which developers would be expected to take into account.<sup>64</sup>
- 6.2.27 A Government website<sup>65</sup> explains how ‘good design’ can be achieved in planning with the use of these ‘tools’. In terms of ‘parameters’, it advises ‘... *considering the most important parameters for an area such as the mix of uses, requirement for open space or transport infrastructure, the amount and scale of buildings, and the quality of buildings*’.
- 6.2.28 It goes on to say that “*Design codes seek to capture the specific requirements of a place and encourage interested parties to think together about each development in its entirety as a unique place*’.
- 6.2.29 It also explains that ‘*A Local or Neighbourhood plan is essential to achieving high quality places. A key part of any plan is understanding and appreciating the context of an area, so that proposals can then be developed to respect it. Good design interprets and builds on historic character, natural resources and the aspirations of local communities.*’

#### Clent Hills Country Park



---

<sup>64</sup> For design code examples see [www.wealden.gov.uk/Wealden/Residents/Planning\\_and\\_Building\\_Control/Planning\\_Policy/Planning\\_Policy\\_Documents/Wealden\\_Design\\_Guide.aspx](http://www.wealden.gov.uk/Wealden/Residents/Planning_and_Building_Control/Planning_Policy/Planning_Policy_Documents/Wealden_Design_Guide.aspx) and <https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/media/1621472/appendix-d-cotswold-design-code.pdf>

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/design#which-planning-processes-and-tools-can-we-use-to-help-achieve-good-design>

# APPENDIX A

## Figures

(not bound in report - see separate document)

**Figure 1:** Study Area

**Figure 2:** Landscape Value Study Zones

**Figure 3:** Former Landscape Protection Areas

**Figure 4:** Landscape Baseline - NCAs and LCTs

**Figure 5:** Landscape Baseline - Physical Environment

**Figure 6:** Landscape Baseline - Heritage

**Figure 7:** Landscape Baseline - Historic Landscape Character

**Figure 8:** Landscape Baseline - Biodiversity

**Figure 9:** Landscape Baseline - Recreation and Access

**Figure 10:** Key Features - Hotspots

**Figure 11:** Valued Landscape Areas

# APPENDIX B

## Landscape Value Study Criteria

**Table 1:** Criteria for Judging Levels of Landscape Quality

**Table 2:** Criteria for Judging Levels of Landscape Value

**Table 3:** Criteria for Judging Levels of Visual Value

**Table 1: Criteria for Judging Levels of Landscape Quality**

Level of Quality	Definition
<b>Very High</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscapes of an ‘awe-inspiring’ or ‘sublime’ nature and which are important and valued on an international and national level (DMRB)</li> <li>• Unspoilt areas comprising a strong, clear and highly aesthetically-pleasing composition of highly characteristic landscape elements and features in excellent condition and health, intact and distinctive</li> <li>• Excellent representation of the landscape area / type</li> <li>• Very high level of management, or care, or pristine natural / semi-natural environment</li> <li>• Exceptional scenic integrity</li> <li>• Very strong sense of place</li> <li>• Negligible or no atypical or incongruous features or detractors</li> </ul>
<b>High</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very attractive landscapes which are of high value nationally and can be defined as highly scenic (DMRB)</li> <li>• Areas with components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition, in very good condition and health</li> <li>• Very good representation of the landscape area / type</li> <li>• High level of management, or care, or natural / semi-natural environment in very good form and health</li> <li>• Very good scenic integrity</li> <li>• Strong sense of place</li> <li>• Few atypical or incongruous features or detractors</li> </ul>
<b>Moderate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good landscape containing areas that, although still attractive, have less significant and more common landscape features (DMRB)</li> <li>• Areas of some value for their landscapes, components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition but showing signs of erosion and loss, in good to fair condition and health</li> <li>• Good to fair representation of the landscape area / type</li> <li>• Good to fair level of management, environment in good to fair form and health</li> <li>• Good to fair scenic integrity</li> <li>• Some loss of, or change to, intrinsic sense of place</li> <li>• Some atypical or incongruous features or detractors</li> </ul>
<b>Low</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ordinary landscape containing areas that have only common landscape features and some intrusive elements such as conspicuous infrastructure with scope for improvement in management (DMRB)</li> <li>• Areas of limited landscape value, disturbed and lacking coherence and structure. Limited aesthetically-pleasing composition. Signs of urbanisation and / or erosion, characteristic landscape elements and features degraded and / or lost. Poor condition / health</li> <li>• Limited representation of the landscape area / type</li> <li>• Limited management, or care, environment in fair to poor form and health</li> <li>• Poor scenic integrity</li> <li>• Little if any sense of place</li> <li>• Several atypical or incongruous features or detractors</li> </ul>

Level of Quality	Definition
<b>Very Low</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor landscape with areas that contain frequent detracting aspects and/or lack of management which results in a degraded landscape with very few valued features (DMRB)</li> <li>• Areas with few or no valued landscape components or comprising degraded and / or lost characteristic elements and features, making negative contribution to aesthetic composition</li> <li>• Poor or no representation of the landscape area / type</li> <li>• Little or no management, or care, environment in very poor form and health</li> <li>• Little or no scenic integrity</li> <li>• Negative sense of place</li> <li>• Widespread atypical or incongruous features or detractors</li> </ul>

**Table 2: Criteria for Judging Levels of Landscape Value**

Level of Value	Definition
<b>Very High</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Outstanding’ landscapes (ELC)</li> <li>• Internationally and / or nationally-designated landscapes e.g. World Heritage Sites, National Parks, AONBs</li> <li>• Presence of internationally and / or nationally-designated areas / features of landscape, nature conservation, archaeological, historic, geological and / or other importance e.g. SACs, SSSIs, Scheduled Monuments, Grade I and / or II* listed buildings, Registered Historic Parks and Gardens, Local Geodiversity Sites</li> <li>• Significant wider landscape / visual function e.g. Green Belt, context / setting of heritage asset, contribution to character of settlement of international or national importance</li> <li>• Landscapes in excellent condition and / or of very high quality as defined by appropriate criteria</li> <li>• Significant cultural associations</li> <li>• Exceptional representation of landscape area / type / characteristics and / or rare</li> <li>• Exceptional aesthetic and perceptual attributes and qualities e.g. significant scenic beauty, iconic views, very distinctive sense of place, very high degree of wildness / remoteness, tranquillity</li> <li>• No detractors present</li> <li>• The quality / qualities of, and / or features in, the landscape are likely to be the primary purpose of the visit</li> <li>• Significant contribution to wider public amenity, access and recreation e.g. national trails, Open Access Land</li> <li>• Significant Green Infrastructure assets</li> </ul>
<b>High</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscapes between ‘Outstanding’ and ‘Everyday’ (ELC)</li> <li>• Regionally / locally-designated landscapes e.g. Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) which may be subject of strategy and / or guidance</li> <li>• Presence of regionally / countywide-level designated areas / features of landscape, nature conservation, archaeological, historic, geological and / or other importance e.g. Country Parks, TPOs, National Forest Inventory, Priority Habitat Inventory sites, Local Wildlife Sites / Local Nature Reserves, Grade II Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Unregistered Historic Parks and Gardens, SMR / HER. Also National Trust land</li> <li>• Important wider, or significant local, landscape / visual function e.g. context / setting of heritage asset, contribution to character of settlement of regional importance, green gap, buffer zone etc.</li> <li>• Landscapes in very good condition and / or of high quality as defined by appropriate criteria</li> <li>• Important cultural associations</li> <li>• Very good representation of landscape area / type / characteristics and / or uncommon</li> <li>• Very good aesthetic and perceptual attributes and qualities e.g. high degree of scenic beauty, fine / key views, distinctive sense of place, high degree of wildness / remoteness, tranquillity</li> <li>• Negligible / few detractors present</li> <li>• The quality / qualities of, and / or features in, the landscape are likely to be one of the main reasons for the visit</li> <li>• Important contribution to wider public amenity, access and recreation e.g. long-distance / themed trails, well-used public rights of way, Heritage Coast, Public Open Space / Local Green Space. May be protected by / subject of planning policy</li> <li>• Important wider, or significant local Green Infrastructure assets</li> </ul>

Level of Value	Definition
<b>Moderate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Everyday’ landscapes (ELC)</li> <li>• Undesignated landscapes although may be subject of strategy and / or guidance</li> <li>• Presence of undesignated, ‘informally’ designated and / or locally-important areas / features of landscape, nature conservation, archaeological, historic, geological and / or other interest</li> <li>• Important local landscape / visual function e.g. context / setting of heritage asset, contribution to character of settlement, green gap, buffer zone etc.</li> <li>• Landscapes in good to fair condition and / or of moderate quality as defined by appropriate criteria but good potential for improvement</li> <li>• Important local cultural associations</li> <li>• Good to fair representation of landscape area / type / characteristics but common</li> <li>• Good to fair aesthetic and perceptual attributes and qualities e.g. moderate degree of scenic beauty, local key views, moderate sense of place, moderate degree of wildness / remoteness, tranquillity</li> <li>• Some detractors present</li> <li>• The quality / qualities of, and / or features in, the landscape are unlikely to be one of the main reasons for the visit, but make a positive contribution to the experience</li> <li>• Important contribution to local public amenity, access and recreation e.g. well-used public rights of way, green open spaces, common land</li> <li>• Good local Green Infrastructure assets</li> </ul>
<b>Low</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscapes between ‘Everyday’ and ‘Degraded’ (ELC)</li> <li>• Undesignated landscapes unlikely to be subject of strategy and / or guidance (unless for restoration)</li> <li>• Few if any areas / features of landscape, nature conservation, archaeological, historic, geological and / or other interest</li> <li>• Little or no local landscape / visual function</li> <li>• Landscapes in fair to poor condition and / or of low quality as defined by appropriate criteria but some potential for improvement</li> <li>• Few if any cultural associations</li> <li>• Fair to poor representation of landscape area / type / characteristics and common</li> <li>• Few if any aesthetic and perceptual attributes and qualities: little sense of place, little or no sense of wildness / remoteness, tranquillity</li> <li>• Several detractors present</li> <li>• The quality / qualities of, and / or features in, the landscape are unlikely to be a reason for visiting</li> <li>• Little or no contribution to public amenity, access and recreation</li> <li>• Few Green Infrastructure assets</li> </ul>

Level of Value	Definition
Very Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Degraded’ landscapes (ELC)</li> <li>• Undesignated landscapes, and not subject of strategy and / or guidance (unless for restoration)</li> <li>• No areas / features of landscape, nature conservation, archaeological, historic, geological and / or other interest</li> <li>• Negligible or no landscape / visual function</li> <li>• Landscapes in very poor condition and / or of very low quality as defined by appropriate criteria – may be contaminated land. Situation likely to be permanent, and very little if any potential for improvement</li> <li>• No cultural associations</li> <li>• Poor representation of landscape area / type / characteristics</li> <li>• Negative aesthetic and perceptual attributes and qualities: no sense of place, high levels of landscape and visual disturbance</li> <li>• Widespread detractors present / dominant</li> <li>• The quality / qualities of, and / or features in, the landscape may discourage people from visiting</li> <li>• No contribution to public amenity, access and recreation</li> <li>• Very few or no Green Infrastructure assets</li> </ul>

**Table 3: Criteria for Judging Levels of Visual Value**

Level of Visual Value	Criteria
<b>Very High</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Views from, or towards, designated landscapes and / or features of international and national importance (e.g. World Heritage Sites, National Parks, AONBs, Registered Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monuments, Grade I or II* Listed Buildings etc.) especially where contributing to the significance of an asset / feature</li> <li>• View is of outstanding scenic beauty and very high quality</li> <li>• View makes a highly important contribution to understanding of landscape function / contribution</li> <li>• Likely to be the subject of planning policy and / or guidance / protected views</li> <li>• Views from landscapes / viewpoints within highly popular visitor attractions / tourist destinations, and / or from national trails, used by very large numbers of people</li> <li>• Views with social / cultural / historic associations (e.g. in art and literature, or an historically-important vista over a battlefield) of international / national importance</li> </ul>
<b>High</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Views from within, or towards, designated landscapes and / or features of regional or countywide importance (e.g. Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV), Country Parks, Conservation Areas, Grade II listed buildings, National Trust land etc.), especially where contributing to the significance of an asset / feature</li> <li>• View is of high scenic beauty and high quality</li> <li>• View makes an important contribution to understanding of landscape function / contribution</li> <li>• Views from well-used and popular visitor attractions / tourist destinations, including long-distance / themed trails, Heritage Coasts, Public Open Spaces / Local Green Spaces, used by relatively large numbers of people</li> <li>• Views with social / cultural / historic associations of countywide importance</li> <li>• Views in which receptors have a proprietary interest, including people living in residential properties</li> </ul>
<b>Moderate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Views from within, or towards, undesignated landscapes and / or features of local importance</li> <li>• View is of moderate scenic beauty and moderate quality</li> <li>• View makes a moderate contribution to understanding of landscape function / contribution</li> <li>• Views from locally-popular recreation areas / green open spaces / public rights of way, but not used by many visitors</li> <li>• Views with social / cultural / historic associations of local importance</li> </ul>
<b>Low</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Views from within, or towards, undesignated landscapes and / or features of site-wide importance</li> <li>• View is of low scenic beauty and low quality</li> <li>• View makes a very limited contribution to understanding of landscape function / contribution</li> <li>• Views from landscapes / viewpoints which are not particularly popular or recognised as being destinations in their own right, including infrequently used rights of way</li> <li>• Views with no social / cultural / historic associations</li> </ul>
<b>Very Low</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Views from, or towards, undesignated landscapes and / or features of no importance</li> <li>• View is of poor scenic beauty / quality - landscape may be permanently degraded</li> </ul>

This page intentionally left blank