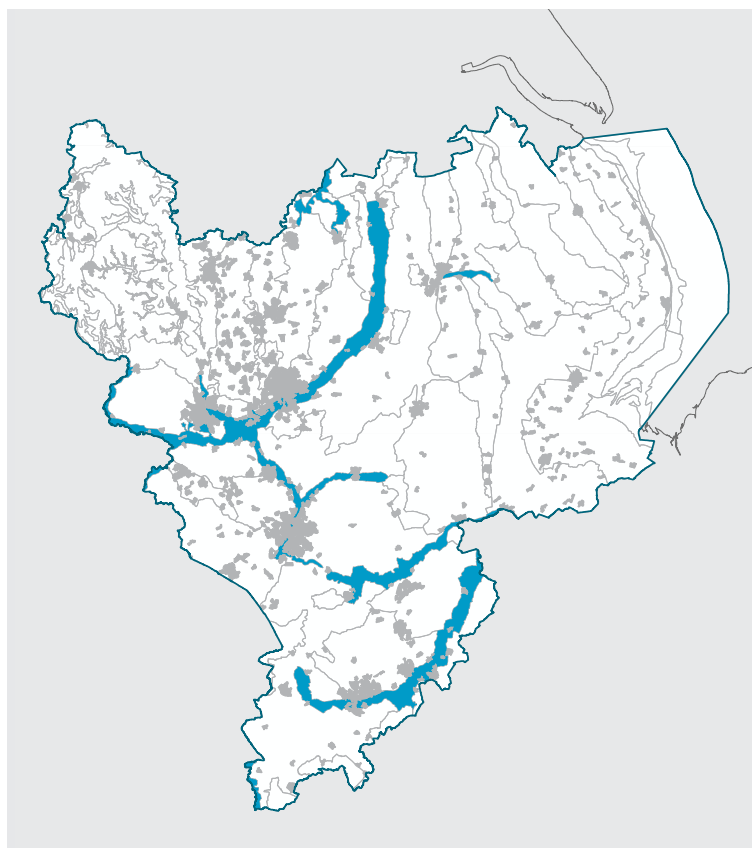


## 3A: FLOODPLAIN VALLEYS



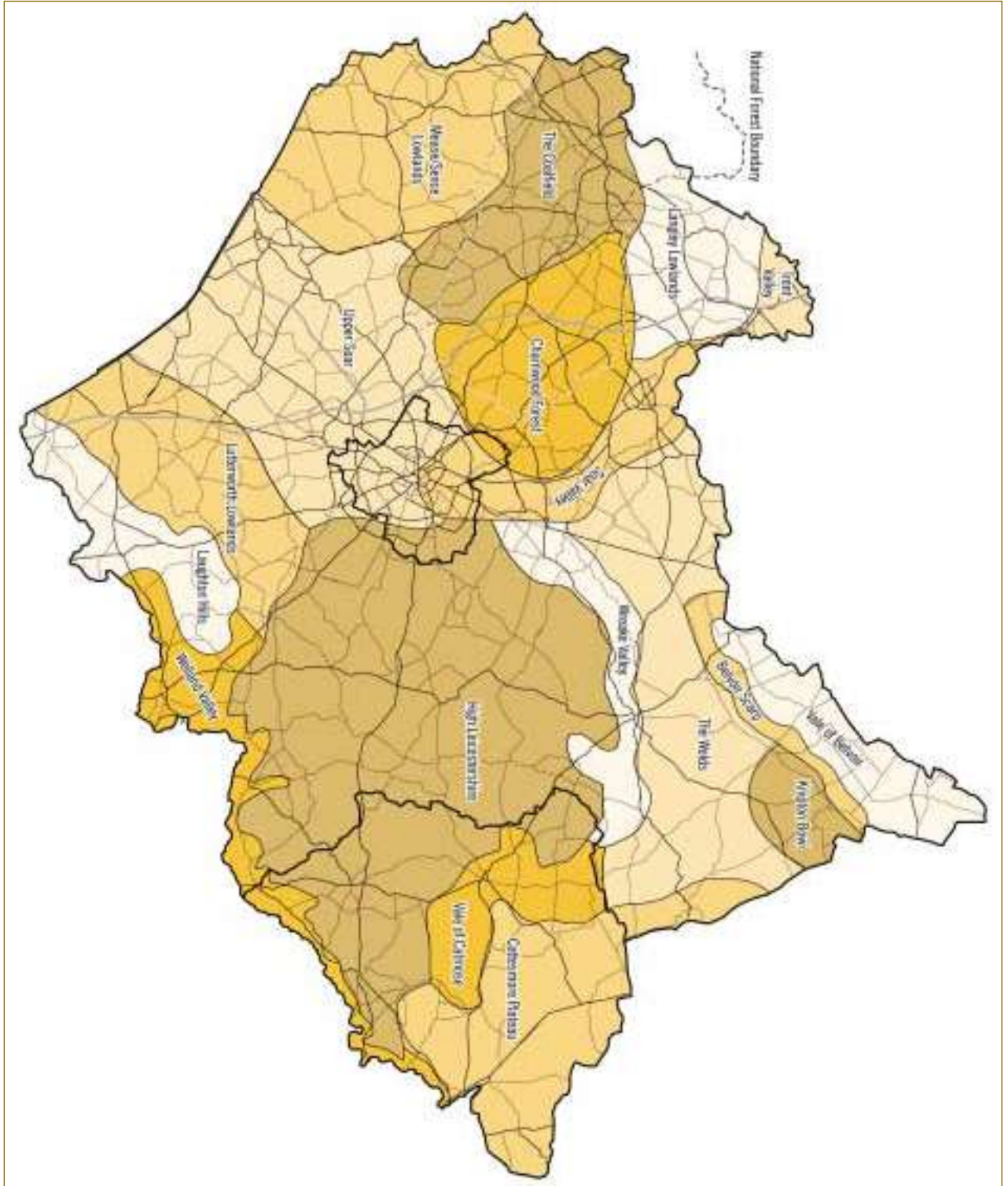
*Pastoral farming along river channels*  
(© Nottinghamshire County Council)



### KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Deep alluvium and gravel deposits mask underlying bedrock geology to create wide, flat alluvial floodplains surrounded by rising landform of adjacent Landscape Character Types;
- River channels, often along managed courses, bordered by riparian habitat;
- Predominance of pastoral land use, with cereal growing increasing in some areas. 'Warping' areas subject to more intensive cereal growing;
- Limited woodland cover; however, steep riverside bluffs and areas close to settlement or on former gravel extraction sites notable for a higher level of woodland cover;
- Regular pattern of medium to large fields defined by hedgerows or post and wire fencing, breaking down and becoming open in some areas;
- Hedgerow and riverside trees important component of landscape. Alder, Willow and Poplar are typical riverside trees;
- Limited settlement and development in rural areas;
- Sewage Treatment Works and power stations common close to larger settlements that fringe the floodplains;
- Roads and communication routes often define the outer edges of the floodplain; and
- Restoration of sand and gravel extraction sites to open water creates new character across many areas.

Fig. 7  
**Landscape Character Areas**  
Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland



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Published 2001

## 5.02 Trent Valley

This character area is a mainly flat open floodplain, bounded by the River Trent to the north and west, by the River Soar to the east, and by the lower slopes of the Castle Donington escarpment to the south. The Trent forms the county boundary with Derbyshire and the Soar that with Nottinghamshire, and the Leicestershire character area's boundaries are thus generally administrative rather than physical, although it is in fact part of a broader character area.

Although the land use is predominantly agricultural, including both arable and pasture, the character of the area is heavily influenced by the power generating industry, sand and gravel extraction and roads. Only small parts of the area - such as the parklands around Lockington and Hemington - avoid such intrusions.

Fields are generally enclosed by mainly hawthorn hedgerows. The management of these is not consistent - in some places they are closely trimmed, whilst in others there is evidence of degradation, disappearance or replacement with post and wire fencing. Woodland is virtually absent from the area. Its limited tree cover is provided by hedgerow trees, willows along streams and ditches, localised parkland trees, and a few small copses.

Ratcliffe on Soar power station is situated outside, but immediately adjacent to, the eastern boundary of the character area and is imposingly present in many views. The area is heavily criss-crossed by high voltage power lines and few open views are unaffected. The area is also strongly influenced by former and current extractive activities. Some former sand and gravel workings have been restored to agricultural use; others have been retained as open water for recreational purposes including marina development.

These man-made lakes and pools provide wildlife habitats, particularly for birds. The Trent itself, and the valley's network of open drainage ditches and small streams, also provide a concentration of sites of ecological value. Lockington Marshes is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The area includes several small villages, connected by minor roads, with the two larger settlements of Kegworth and Castle Donington on its southern boundary where the ground rises to the adjoining Langley Lowlands character area.

Roads, including the A6 trunk road and M1 motorway, and to a lesser extent other A-roads, dissect the area and their impact in terms of noise and visual intrusion is often felt. The new Derby Southern Bypass (A50) runs through the area and a new junction of this road with the M1 has recently been completed. The proximity of East Midlands Airport, situated to the south of the area on an elevated plateau is not unduly visually intrusive, though it results in frequent aircraft noise.

### 5.03 Langley Lowlands

This character area is one of rolling landform dissected by minor watercourses draining northwards towards the Trent or eastwards to the Soar. It borders the two valley character areas of the Trent and the Soar to the north and west and has boundaries with the Coalfield and Charnwood Forest character areas to the south-west and south-east respectively. The extreme western part of the character area, around Staunton Harold, lies within the boundary of the National Forest.

Agriculture is a mixture of pasture and arable. Fields are medium to large and enclosed by well-kept mixed hedgerows. Many hedgerow trees are present, mainly oak and ash, and these add to the wooded character of the area.

Woodland is mostly deciduous and occurs in the form of small game coverts, with larger blocks of ancient woodland sites at Cloud Wood, Pasture Wood, Piper Wood and Spring Wood. Other large blocks of woodland lie beyond the area's boundaries, for example at Calke and Melbourne and in Charnwood Forest, and their influence on the character of the Langley Lowlands is significant, providing tree-clothed backdrops and wooded horizons to most views.

Parkland trees are also present around Langley Priory and Garendon Park. Donington Park includes the surviving remnants of a medieval deer park, with a fine population of ancient oak trees, which are of ecological as well as landscape value and which have resulted in the Park being declared a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) on account of the invertebrate fauna associated with the trees. The parklands around Staunton Harold have a significant impact on the local landscape in the western part of the area. Staunton Harold park has a cluster of visitor attractions and is one of Leicestershire's most visited tourist sites.

Industrial and commercial activity is generally limited and small scale, the most visually and audibly intrusive, as well as the greatest traffic generators, being East Midlands Airport, Breedon Hill and Cloud Wood quarries, and the Donington Park motor racing circuit. The visual impact of East Midlands Airport is localised, but there are frequent audible reminders of its presence in air traffic movements and expansion of the airport and associated development is currently underway (November 1999). Away from the immediate environs of Donington Park the motor racing circuit is well screened by the local landform, as well as recently introduced earthmounds and tree planting. Breedon Cloud workings present an intrusive scar which the surrounding woodland fails to mitigate. Breedon Hill, by contrast, is more awesome than detracting. The outcrop of Carboniferous Limestone rising steeply out of the surrounding landscape provides a prominent local landmark which is visible as far away as Derby. The site is also of interest for a range of ecological and archaeological features.

A number of small villages are spread throughout the area, connected by quiet, narrow, winding lanes. A pattern of smaller fields surrounds some of the villages. Towards the west of the area, around Staunton Harold, the settlement pattern tends to be of scattered farms and hamlets. The small towns of Castle Donington to the north and Shepshed to the south lie on the boundaries of the character area.

Several A-roads run through the area, generally following higher ground, and connecting with larger settlements in Leicestershire and beyond. The area is bisected by the A42/M42, running roughly south-west/north-east, which in places, and particularly at its junction with the M1 just outside the boundary of the character area to the north-east, is visually and audibly intrusive.

## 6.02 Trent Valley

### OBJECTIVE

- To restore and enhance the river floodplain character of the valley landscape

### GUIDELINES

- Increase tree cover through planting and management of small woodlands and wet woodland including streamside willows
- Conserve and restore the hedgerow network through improved hedgerow management and new hedgerow planting including hedgerow trees
- Protect the parklands, woodlands and tree groups which contribute strongly to the unspoilt character of the areas around Lockington and Hemington
- Encourage the retention of open drainage ditches, small streams and other wetland habitats
- Obtain high quality restoration schemes for mineral workings with a high proportion of land returned to permanent grassland wherever feasible
- Promote the creation of reedbeds and other floodplain wetland habitats as afteruses for mineral extraction sites
- Enhance the appearance of the local landscape through well designed and adequately mitigated schemes wherever further infrastructure or extractive development is necessary
- Seek to establish, in partnership with others, an agreed plan for a broad range of environmental improvements to the Trent and Soar Valleys

## 6.03 Langley Lowlands

### OBJECTIVE

- To conserve and enhance the area's rural character and well wooded appearance.

### GUIDELINES

- Conserve the existing woodland resource through improved management
- Increase woodland cover through new planting in medium sized blocks
- Conserve and enhance the hedgerow network through the retention and proper management of hedgerows and hedgerow trees
- Minimise the impact of future quarry extensions through sensitive design and mitigation measures
- Protect and restore the historic parkland around Staunton Harold through improved visitor management and landscape restoration measures

**Key:**

-  North West Leicestershire boundary
-  Countryside Priority Areas
-  Areas of Particularly Attractive Countryside
-  Green Wedges
-  Areas of Separation
-  Sensitive Areas

**Note:**  
Map only shows sensitive area relevant to the six settlement study areas.

Data Source:  
Indicative boundaries digitised from local plan

TEP ref: G2233.021



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Project:  
**North West Leicestershire  
Landscape Character Assessment**

Figure No: **002**

Drawing  
Title: **Landscape Designations**

Scale:  Kilometres  
0 1.25 2.5 5

