

APPENDIX A

Published Landscape Character Area Extracts

Summary

The Melbourne Parklands NCA is located between the ancient forests of Needwood and Charnwood. The Trent Valley forms its northern and western boundary, in a wide arc sweeping round from its confluence with the River Soar in the north-east, to Burton-upon-Trent in the south-west.

It is a landscape of rolling farmland, ancient and plantation woodland and, as the name suggests, a cluster of landscaped parklands with grand country houses, one of which, Calke Abbey, boasts a Grade II* listed historic park and garden. The park has also been designated a National Nature Reserve (NNR), and contains many notable ancient and veteran trees. One-quarter of the NCA is within The National Forest and 10 per cent is woodland.

The NCA is predominantly rural, although there are strong and often abrupt contrasts with the urban areas on its peripheries. The M1 and A42 cross the NCA and East Midlands Airport is sited on the central plateau in an otherwise undulating area.

It is an important area for water supply. Two valleys have been dammed to create large reservoirs. Both Foremark and Staunton Harold Reservoirs are supplied from the River Dove in the adjacent NCA. Outcrops of the Sherwood Sandstone Group form recharge areas to the Sherwood aquifer.

Most of the area is in agricultural use, with extensive areas under arable production, and mixed arable and pasture on the steeper ground. Siltstones and mudstones of the Mercia Mudstone Group in the east of the NCA produce a gently rolling lowland plateau of productive, reddish clay soils suitable for agriculture.

Commuter development pressures are likely to continue around the villages and small settlements of Castle Donington, Repton and Melbourne, at the edge of the area.

Click map to enlarge; click again to reduce.

Summary

The Trent Valley Washlands National Character Area (NCA) comprises the river flood plain corridors of the middle reaches of the River Trent's catchment in the heart of England. It is a distinctly narrow, linear and low-lying landscape, often clearly delineated at its edges by higher ground, and it is largely comprised of the flat flood plains and gravel terraces of the rivers.

A washland is described as an area of flood plain that is allowed to flood or is deliberately flooded for flood management purposes.⁴ Thus the Trent Valley Washlands are strongly defined by the riverine environment and periodic inundation. The key ecosystem services provided are related to water, its availability and regulation of flow. Thick superficial deposits of alluvium and river terrace gravels dominate the Washlands' geology. Variations in these, the resultant soils and the differences in elevation above and below flood levels have determined both settlement pattern and agricultural land use. Arable crops are by and large located on the freely draining soils of the river terraces and on the higher ground where fields are big and hedgerows are small with few trees. Pastoral farming generally takes place on the river flood plains, where soils are subject to frequent flooding or are naturally wet. Here fields are usually smaller and the hedgerows fuller with more tree cover. Overall woodland cover in the Washlands is very limited, although riparian trees, especially willows, provide an important component of the landscape.

The broad rivers, their riparian vegetation and the semi-natural parts of the flood plain form the main habitats of the Washlands, with flooded former gravel extraction

sites introducing new wetland habitat into the area. Characteristic species are those associated with these wetlands such as grey heron, lapwing and kingfisher.

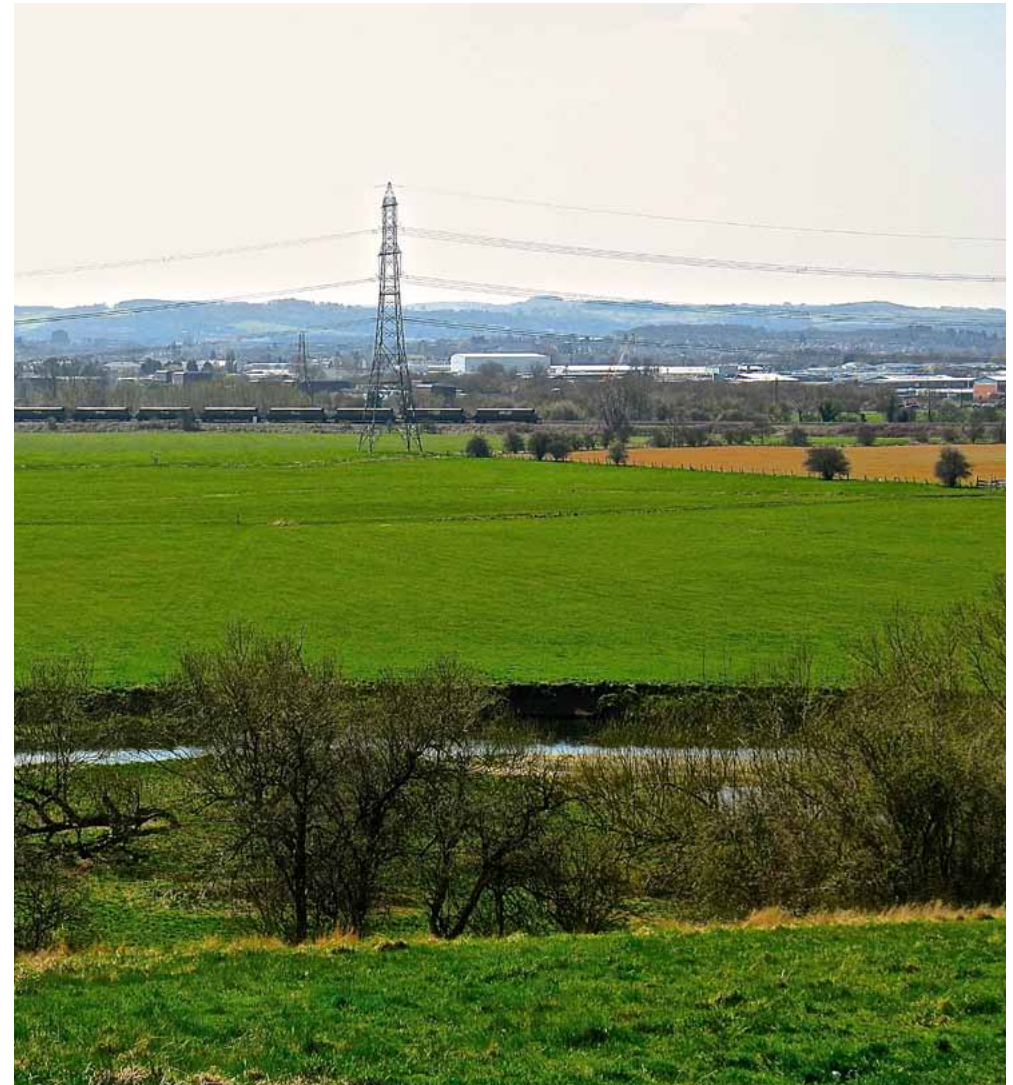
The rivers have attracted humans from the earliest times, especially the gravel terraces and crossing points. Traditional buildings are typically made of red brick with clay plain tile roofs with the occasional survival of some earlier timber-framed structures, while grander dwellings and churches are often built from sandstone.

⁴ *Working with Natural Processes to Manage Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk*, Environment Agency (2010)

[Click map to enlarge](#); [click again to reduce](#).

A unifying thread throughout the Washlands is provided by the rivers, their flood plain tracts of pasture and the bordering higher ground; however, it is also a landscape that is heavily fragmented and intruded upon by modern built development, communication and transport infrastructure. It is greatly influenced by past and present industry, from energy generation to aggregate extraction. The landscape is experiencing significant forces for change over short timescales from housing, infrastructure, the sand and gravel industry, agriculture and commercial 'big shed' development which detracts from the established character.

Despite these intrusions, in places, particularly beside the rivers, the Washlands provide a picturesque pastoral landscape with a beguiling, timeless quality. In addition, the potentially abundant opportunities for recreation offered by the many water resources are particularly important owing to their accessibility to the many people living within and near the area.

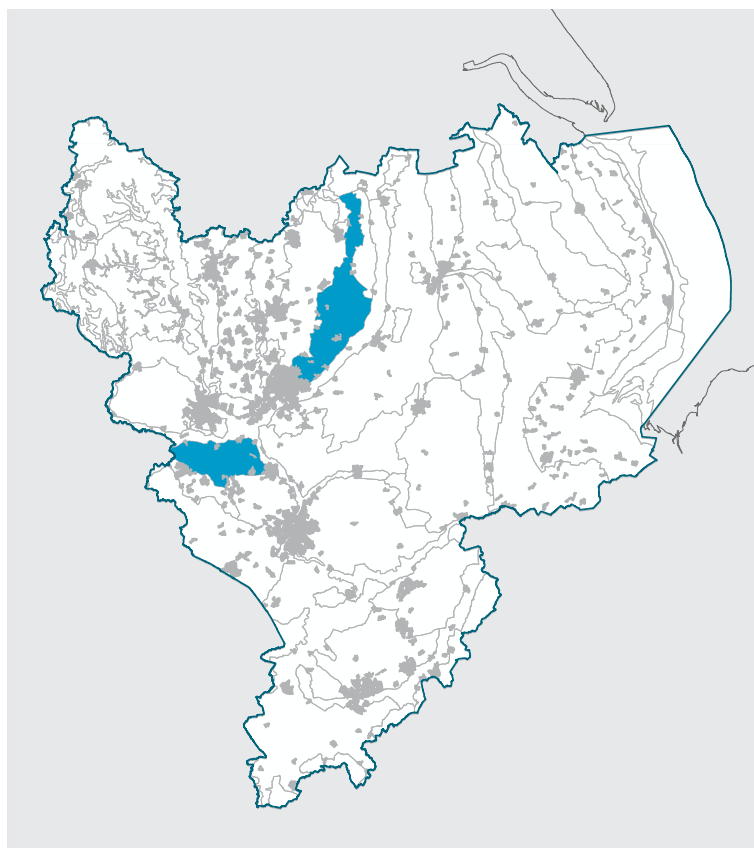


View over the Soar Valley towards Loughborough and the hills of Charnwood.

5B:

WOODED VILLAGE
FARMLANDS

*Prominent woodland on hills and valley sides
(© Derbyshire County Council)*



KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Varied topography, ranging from gently undulating farmlands to rolling hills, becks and steep sided valleys, locally known as 'Dumbles';
- Scattered farm woodlands, ancient woodlands on prominent hills and tree lined valleys contribute to a well wooded character;
- Well maintained pattern of hedged fields enclosing pasture and arable fields, with evidence of decline close to urban areas;
- Sparsely settled, with traditional pattern of farms and small rural villages linked by quiet country lanes; and
- Strong sense of landscape history.