

HINCKLEY/BARWELL/EARL SHILTON/BURBAGE **GREEN WEDGE REVIEW**

February 2026



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council



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Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge Review

Role of this Evidence Base study

This study has been produced to inform the preparation of the Local Plan. It should be read alongside other relevant studies.

Evidence Base Overview

Document title	Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge Review
Lead author	Planning Policy, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
Purpose of the study	The aim of the Green Wedge Review is to assist the Council in determining the boundary of the green wedge. A full review was last undertaken in 2020, so there is a need to update this to provide an up-to-date picture of the current state of the Green Wedge, and whether any modifications are needed.
Key outputs	The purpose of the Review is to assess the functionality of the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/ Burbage Green Wedge to identify whether revisions to the boundary are required.
Key recommendations	Action points to be investigated in the formulation of the Local Plan.
Relations to other studies	There is an interface with all other evidence base studies through their input into the draft Local Plan.
Next Steps	The document should be used to inform the preparation of the Local Plan and guide development form.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this Green Wedge Review is to provide an updated, robust and proportionate evidence base to inform the emerging Local Plan. A full review of the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge was last undertaken in 2020; since then, development pressures, new ecological evidence and updated national policy have created a need for reassessment. This Review evaluates the current extent, condition and performance of the Green Wedge and considers whether boundary refinement is required to ensure continued alignment with national planning policy and local strategic objectives.
- 1.2 This Review focuses on evaluating the functionality of the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge to determine whether revisions to its boundary are justified. The existing boundary is shown in Appendix A and depicted on the Local Plan Proposals Map. It was last formally adopted through the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) in 2016.
- 1.3 Green wedges primarily serve to shape the form of urban areas. They play a key role in preserving the identity of individual settlements and provide vital green infrastructure links between them.
- 1.4 This assessment provides a comprehensive review of the green wedge and will identify potential boundary amendments. It will inform the preparation of the emerging Local Plan (2024–2045), which will formally define green wedge boundaries. This document does not amend the boundary directly; any changes will be made through the Local Plan process and subject to public consultation. The current green wedge boundary, as shown on the Local Plan Proposals Map, will remain in place until the new Local Plan is adopted.

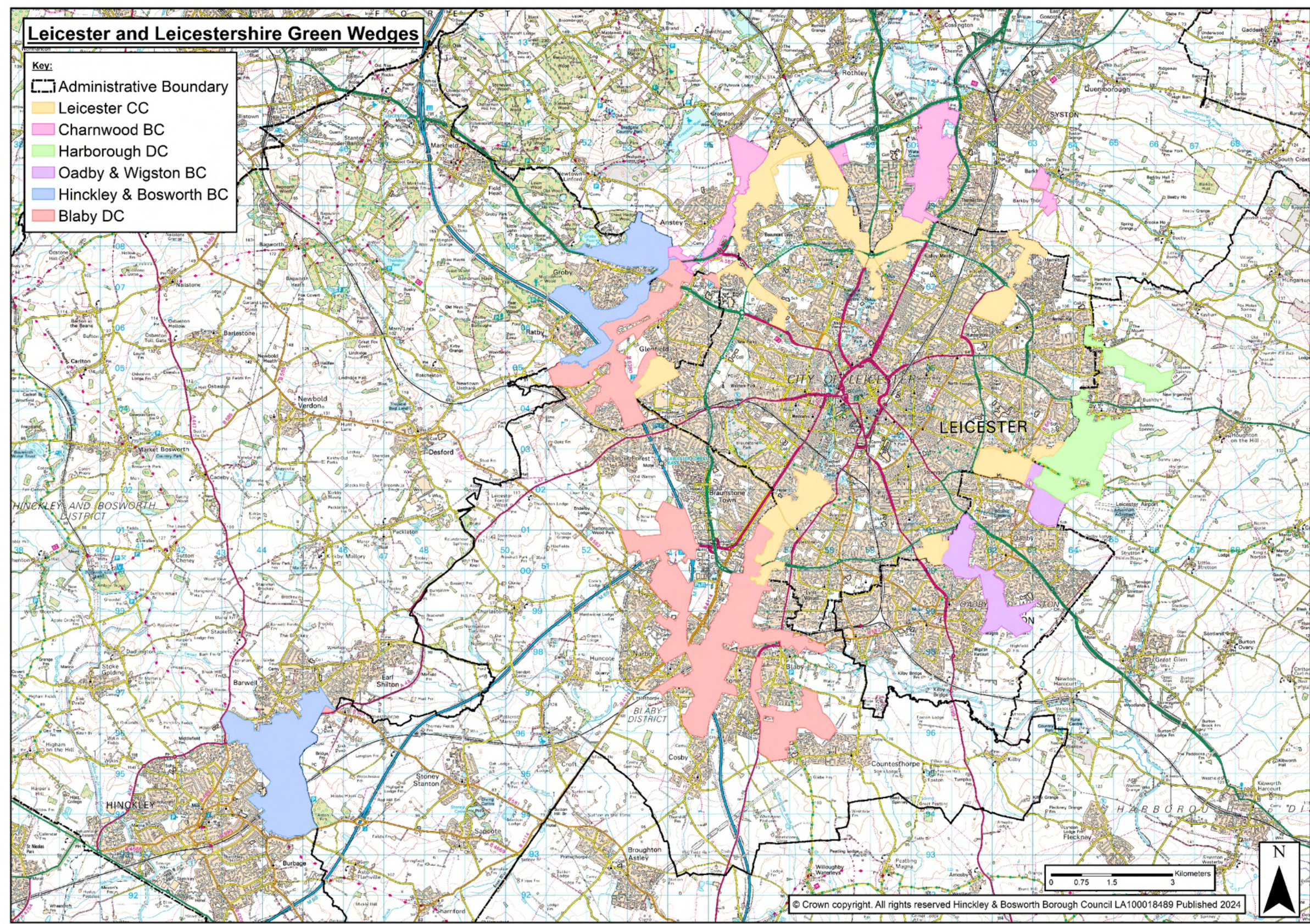
General Description of Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/ Burbage Green Wedge

- 1.5 The Green Wedge within Hinckley and Bosworth Borough covers approximately 444 hectares, with an additional 3 hectares located in Blaby District. It extends south from Barwell across to Earl Shilton, following the eastern boundary and the built edge of Hinckley to the west. Its southernmost boundary adjoins Burbage. Figure 1 illustrates the overall extent of the Green Wedge.
- 1.6 Compared to the Rothley Brook Green Wedge, which spans multiple administrative districts, this Green Wedge is relatively small. It contains two notably narrow sections:
 - The housing area accessed from Barwell Lane, Hinckley, and the southern tip of St Mary's Avenue, Barwell.

- The area between Elmesthorpe Lane, Earl Shilton, and properties off Shilton Road, Barwell.

1.7 The portion within Blaby District comprises a small triangular area north of the Earl Shilton Bypass, following the Borough boundary as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Map showing the extent of Green Wedges within Leicestershire¹



¹Please note the boundaries of the green wedges in other Leicestershire and Leicester Local Authorities are corrects as of

2. Policy background

- 2.1. Green Wedge policies were first introduced in the Leicestershire Structure Plan (1987) and were subsequently retained in later versions of the Structure Plan in 1994 and 2005. Although the East Midlands Regional Plan (2009) did not include a specific policy on green wedges, it did identify four key functions:
- Preventing the merging of settlements
 - Guiding the form of development
 - Providing a green lung into urban areas
 - Acting as a recreational resource
- 2.2. The Regional Plan emphasised that green wedges are a local planning designation, stating that any review of existing green wedges or the creation of new ones in association with development should be undertaken through the Local Development Framework (now Local Plan) process.
- 2.3. Following the repeal of regional planning policy, several Leicestershire authorities have continued to adopt local plans that include green wedge designations. These have consistently been accepted by Planning Inspectors as a legitimate and appropriate policy tool, without challenge.

Policy context

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)²

- 2.4. Although the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) does not specifically reference green wedges, it provides a clear basis for their continued use as a local planning tool. Paragraph 32 of the NPPF states that:
- ‘The preparation and review of all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence. This should be adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned, and take into account relevant market signals.’*
- 2.5. This supports the use of green wedges where robust evidence demonstrates their value in guiding development and protecting strategic open spaces. Green wedges are a well-

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

established planning mechanism in Leicestershire and are consistent with the NPPF's emphasis on evidence-led policy making.

2.6. Paragraph 15 of the NPPF states that:

'The planning system should be genuinely plan-led. Succinct and up-to-date plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for meeting housing needs and addressing other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings'.

2.7. Green wedges contribute to this vision by helping communities shape their environment and maintain the character of their settlements.

2.8. Paragraphs 187 and 188 of the NPPF are particularly relevant to green wedges. These paragraphs emphasise the importance of environmental protection and strategic planning across boundaries. Paragraph 188 states:

'Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries'.

2.9. Green wedges are locally designated areas that help guide development away from sensitive locations, support green infrastructure, and provide recreational and ecological benefits across administrative boundaries.

2.10. Paragraph 198 of the NPPF highlights the need for planning policies and decisions to consider the cumulative effects of development on health, living conditions, and the natural environment. It states:

'Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development'.

2.11. Green wedges function as green lungs for urban areas, contributing to air quality, biodiversity, flood mitigation, and overall environmental resilience.

Statement on the consistency of the Green Wedge designation in Leicester and Leicestershire with the National Planning Policy Framework (2023) May 2024³

- 2.12. This joint statement, prepared by the Leicester and Leicestershire local planning authorities, reaffirms the continued relevance and consistency of the Green Wedge designation with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023. Originating from the 1987 Leicestershire Structure Plan, Green Wedges serve key strategic functions: preventing the coalescence of settlements, guiding the form of development, providing green lungs into urban areas, and offering accessible recreational spaces.
- 2.13. The designation is embedded within adopted Local Plans across several authorities and is subject to ongoing review through a jointly agreed methodology. The Green Wedge approach aligns with multiple NPPF objectives, including promoting sustainable development, enhancing community health and wellbeing, supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation, protecting biodiversity, and ensuring effective land use planning.
- 2.14. The statement confirms that Green Wedges continue to represent a locally justified and nationally supported planning tool, contributing to the delivery of high-quality places and resilient communities across Leicester and Leicestershire.
- 2.15. Although the joint statement was prepared in reference to the NPPF 2023, the strategic functions and planning principles underpinning the Green Wedge designation remain fully consistent with the updated NPPF 2024. The 2024 Framework continues to emphasise the importance of evidence-led policy making, sustainable development, and the protection of locally designated green infrastructure. Green Wedges contribute directly to these objectives by maintaining settlement separation, guiding development form, enhancing biodiversity, and supporting climate resilience. Furthermore, the NPPF 2024 reinforces the role of strategic planning in shaping high-quality places and promoting community wellbeing, functions that are central to the Green Wedge approach. As such, the designation remains a locally justified and nationally supported planning tool, aligned with both current and emerging policy priorities.

Core Strategy (December 2009)⁴

- 2.16. The Core Strategy highlights that one of the key purposes of green wedge designations is to ensure accessible green spaces for residents of urban areas, contributing positively to their quality of life. Green wedges are intended to form a vital part of the green space infrastructure,

³ https://www.leicester.gov.uk/media/cd1fmppq/exam-13-statement-of-consistency-of-the-green-wedge-designation-with-the-nppf-2023_final.pdf

⁴ https://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/info/856/local_development_framework/400/core_strategy

as evidenced through studies such as the Landscape Character Assessment and the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

- 2.17. The Core Strategy includes two specific policies Policy 6 and Policy 9 which relate to the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge and the Rothley Brook Meadow Green Wedge, respectively. These policies outline the intended function of the green wedges and specify the types of land uses considered appropriate within them.

Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (2016)⁵

- 2.18. The Green Wedge Review (2011) provided a comprehensive assessment of both designated green wedges and recommended boundary changes. These recommendations directly informed the development of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD, where the revised boundaries were formally incorporated. Specific amendments to the green wedge are detailed within the Urban Areas sections of the document, and the updated boundaries are illustrated on the accompanying Policies Map.
- 2.19. In his examination report, the Inspector stated:

'I have considered all of the proposed Site Allocations, but have focused upon the housing and employment allocations, as these are, in my judgement, more critical elements of the Council's growth strategy. Nevertheless, I have also sought to ensure that other site allocations, including the various open space and green wedge designations, all conform with the spatial approach set out in the CS'.

- 2.20. This confirms that the green wedge designations were assessed in line with the overarching spatial strategy and were considered an integral part of the plan-making process.

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Local Nature Recovery Strategy (July 2025)⁶

- 2.21. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland identify Green Wedges in Hinckley and Bosworth as strategically significant areas for biodiversity enhancement and ecological connectivity. These wedges, originally designated to prevent settlement coalescence and guide urban form, are now recognised as multifunctional landscapes that contribute to nature recovery.

⁵ https://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/info/856/local_development_framework/426/site_allocations_and_generic_development_control_policies-development_plan_document

⁶ <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/local-nature-recovery-strategy/leicestershire-leicester-and-rutland-local-nature-recovery-strategy>

- 2.22. The strategy highlights their potential to support Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) through habitat creation, restoration, and connectivity, particularly in areas where on-site BNG delivery is constrained. Green Wedges are identified as priority areas for nature-based solutions, including floodplain restoration, woodland expansion, and grassland enhancement. Their proximity to urban populations also makes them valuable for public engagement, access to nature, and health and wellbeing benefits.
- 2.23. The LNRS reinforces the role of Green Wedges in delivering landscape-scale conservation, aligning with national policy objectives and supporting long-term ecological resilience across the Borough.

Landscape Character Assessment (September 2017)⁷

- 2.23. The Landscape Character Assessment identifies this area as 'Burbage Common Rolling Farmland', defined by the following key characteristics:
- Large-scale, gently rolling farmland comprising arable and pasture uses, with subtle variations in topography influenced by small streams.
 - Burbage Common and associated ancient woodland represent resources of both national and local importance, valued for their ecological significance and recreational opportunities.
 - Field pattern predominantly medium to large-scale and rectilinear, bounded by low hedgerows and post-and-wire fencing, with smaller pasture fields located closer to settlements. Field boundaries and hedgerows generally follow the natural contours of the land.
 - Urban fringe influences arising from exposed settlement edges of Hinckley and Earl Shilton on higher ground, alongside recreational activity around Burbage Common.
 - Sparse settlement pattern, limited to individual buildings and scattered farmsteads.
 - Major transport corridors dissect the landscape, introducing noise, movement, and visual intrusion.
 - Open landform and limited tree cover create expansive, long-distance views towards settlement edges, often on the skyline and punctuated by major infrastructure.

⁷ https://www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk/info/1004/planning_policy_and_the_local_plan/1470/evidence_base_and_supporting_studies

- Public rights of way, including the Leicestershire Round, are concentrated around Burbage Common and extend beyond the borough boundary into Blaby.

2.24. The Green Wedge plays a critical role in maintaining separation between Hinckley and Barwell, while providing green infrastructure that benefits the wider cluster of settlements: Burbage, Hinckley, Barwell, and Earl Shilton.

Green Infrastructure Strategy (August 2020)⁷

- 2.25. The Green Infrastructure Strategy recognises the Borough's two green wedges as valuable open spaces located directly on the doorstep of local communities. These areas offer accessible green environments that contribute to residents' wellbeing and quality of life.
- 2.26. Although green wedges are not formal landscape designations, the Strategy emphasises their role in safeguarding undeveloped landscapes in areas that may otherwise face significant development pressure. They serve as a vital landscape resource for those living in the most built-up parts of the Borough and continue to play an important role in maintaining separation between the Borough's most developed settlements.
- 2.27. The Strategy also identifies opportunities for green wedge land to support a broader range of functions, including recreational and community uses, as well as the enhancement of habitats and biodiversity, particularly in response to the pressures of future growth.
- 2.28. The Green Infrastructure Strategy provides a strategic framework to protect, strengthen, and expand the existing green infrastructure network. This is essential not only for managing the impacts of growth, but also for addressing challenges such as climate change and the need to create a healthy, attractive environment for residents and workers alike.

Open Space Assessment (2025)⁷

- 2.29. The Open Space and Recreation Assessment (2025) provides a comprehensive evaluation of open space provision across Hinckley and Bosworth Borough. It assesses the quality, quantity, and accessibility of open spaces, identifying areas of deficiency and opportunities for improvement. The study also includes site-specific audits and value assessments, which inform future planning and investment priorities.
- 2.30. Several open spaces within the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton Burbage Green Wedge are identified in the Study. These include:
- The Common Recreational Ground, Barwell
Classified as Amenity Green Space and Children's Play Space, this site provides a

valuable recreational resource for Barwell residents, offering informal play and leisure opportunities.

- **Dawson's Lane Allotment, Barwell**
Designated as Allotments, this site supports local food growing and community gardening, contributing to health and well-being and promoting sustainable lifestyles.
- **Hinckley Sports Ground, Leicester Road**
Identified as Outdoor Sports Facility, this ground accommodates formal sports activities, including football and cricket, and serves as a hub for local clubs and community sport.
- **Leicester Road Crematorium, Barwell**
Categorised as Cemeteries and Churchyards, this space provides a tranquil environment for remembrance and reflection, with landscaped areas contributing to biodiversity.
- **Burbage Common and Woods**
A significant Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace, this site is of ecological and recreational importance, offering extensive woodland walks, wildlife habitats, and informal leisure opportunities.
- **Hinckley Golf Club, Leicester Road**
Classified as Outdoor Sports Facility, the golf course provides specialist sporting provision while maintaining green infrastructure and landscape character.
- **John Cleveland College Playing Fields**
These Education and Outdoor Sports Facilities support school-based and community sports, offering pitches for football and rugby and contributing to youth engagement.
- **Swallows Green Recreation Ground**
Designated as Amenity Green Space and Children's Play Space, this site provides informal recreation opportunities and equipped play facilities for younger age groups, serving as a local green space for surrounding communities.
- **Harwood Drive**
Classified as Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace, this site offers a more informal, nature-based setting for residents, contributing to biodiversity and visual amenity.
- **Ashby Road Allotments**
Classified as Allotments, this site supports community gardening and food production, promoting sustainability and healthy lifestyles.

- 2.31. The Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge contains a diverse range of open spaces, including natural areas, sports facilities, allotments, and amenity spaces with play provision. Collectively, these sites provide essential recreational opportunities, support biodiversity, and maintain the strategic function of the Green Wedge in separating settlements. The varied provision ensures that residents have access to formal and informal recreation, nature-based experiences, and community growing spaces, strengthening the green infrastructure network and enhancing quality of life across the urban fringe.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 2.32. The introduction of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) under the Environment Act 2021 reinforces the strategic value of Green Wedges as multifunctional spaces capable of delivering measurable ecological enhancements. Their typical features, such as semi-natural habitats, watercourses, hedgerows, and woodland edges offer clear opportunities for biodiversity improvement, especially in urban fringe locations where access and education can be integrated.
- 2.33. Green Wedges can also serve as priority areas for off-site BNG delivery, particularly where on-site gains are limited. Subject to ecological assessment and alignment with Local Plan policies, they support habitat connectivity, species movement, and climate resilience.
- 2.34. In this context, Green Wedge designations provide a spatial framework for targeting, monitoring, and sustaining biodiversity improvements over the long term, complementing the implementation of BNG and wider environmental planning objectives.

3. Methodology

Background

- 3.1. This review has been undertaken using the Leicester and Leicestershire Green Wedge Review Joint Methodology (July 2011)⁸, which was developed and agreed by six local authorities within the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area:
- Charnwood Borough Council
 - Harborough District Council
 - Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
 - Leicester City Council
 - North West Leicestershire District Council
 - Oadby & Wigston Borough Council
- 3.2. The joint methodology was established to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach, particularly as many green wedges' cross administrative boundaries. For example:
- The Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge spans Hinckley & Bosworth and Blaby District.
 - The Rothley Brook Meadow Green Wedge extends across Hinckley & Bosworth, Blaby, Charnwood, and Leicester City.
- 3.3. Using this shared framework ensures that all authorities assess green wedges in a comparable and strategic manner.
- 3.4. The methodology allows for assessment at both a macro and micro scale:
- Macro scale: Evaluates the overall strategic function of the green wedge.
 - Micro scale: Focuses on specific areas within the green wedge to identify potential boundary amendments or development pressures.
- 3.5. This review applies both scales to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the green wedge's role and performance, with recommendations provided at the micro level.

⁸ <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/media/wh1fwkl0/green-wedge-review-joint-methodology-july-2011.pdf>

Assessment Criteria

3.6. The following criteria are used to evaluate the functionality of the green wedge:

Table 1: Green Wedge Assessment Criteria

Assessment Criteria	Description
Preventing the merging of settlements	Green wedges help maintain the distinct identity of communities, particularly in areas facing growth pressures. This includes both physical separation and the perceived distance between settlements.
Guiding Development Form	Green wedges influence the shape and direction of urban growth. They may be designated or amended to support the development of new communities, such as sustainable urban extensions.
Providing a Green Lung into Urban Areas	Green wedges offer vital green infrastructure and access to the countryside. They differ from other open spaces by forming continuous corridors that penetrate deep into urban areas. Their multifunctional roles include: • Public open space and recreation • Flood alleviation • Air quality improvement • Protection and enhancement of wildlife and habitat connectivity • Conservation of historic and cultural assets • Strategic and local green infrastructure links • Integration with transport corridors

Assessment Criteria	Description
Acting as a Recreational Resource	Green wedges provide both formal and informal recreational opportunities, with an emphasis on maximising public access.

Review process: Data collection and desk top survey.

- 3.7. To support this review, a comprehensive range of data has been gathered to assess the functionality and strategic value of the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge. The data collection process has included both desktop analysis and site-based observations, covering the following key themes:

Table 2: Green Wedge Assessment Themes

Theme	Description
Public access and connectivity	Assessment of public rights of way and permissive routes (including footpaths, bridleways, and cycleways), with a focus on the degree of access from surrounding urban areas and links to strategic access corridors.
Historic and archaeological context	Identification of historic landscapes and archaeological remains that contribute to the cultural significance of the area.
Minerals and Waste Planning	Review of relevant findings from the Minerals and Waste Local Plan, including any safeguarding or operational considerations affecting the Green Wedge.
Land use and open space provision	Analysis of existing land uses within the Green Wedge, including agricultural land, open space, sports and recreation facilities, and the location of designated ecological sites such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Local Wildlife Sites, and Nature Reserves.

Theme	Description
Ecological value and connectivity	Evaluation of the Green Wedge's role in supporting biodiversity and forming part of wider wildlife corridors.
Planning history and development control	Review of planning applications and appeal decisions within the Green Wedge since the adoption of the Local Plan, to understand development pressures and policy outcomes.
Air quality and environmental health	Consideration of nearby Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and the Green Wedge's function as a 'green lung' contributing to air quality and public health.
Water management and flood risk	Identification of areas within the Green Wedge subject to fluvial and surface water flood risk, informed by Strategic Flood Risk Assessment data.
Green infrastructure linkages	Analysis of the green wedge's connection to wider green infrastructure networks at both strategic and local levels.
Development pressures	Evidence of land promotion, speculative development, or other pressures that may influence the future integrity of the Green Wedge.
Transport infrastructure	Mapping of strategic transport routes and infrastructure that intersect or influence the Green Wedge, including roads, transmission lines, and access corridors.

Review Process: Onsite Surveys

- 3.8. A detailed visual appraisal of the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge has been undertaken to complement the desktop survey. This appraisal focused on the following key characteristics:

Characteristic	Description
Topography	Identification of landform variations, including slopes, elevated viewpoints, and low-lying areas that influence visibility and development sensitivity.
Physical features	Mapping of prominent landscape elements both within and adjacent to the Green Wedge, such as watercourses, woodland edges, and infrastructure.
Vegetation and habitat structure	Assessment of significant hedgerows, hedgerow trees, and woodland blocks that contribute to ecological value and landscape character.
Extent of built development	Evaluation of existing development within the Green Wedge and its impact on openness, connectivity, and visual separation.
Settlement separation and visibility	Analysis of intervisibility (seeing one settlement from another) and intravisibility (seeing multiple settlements from a single vantage point), to understand the perception of separation and potential coalescence.
Informal land uses	Observation of visible informal activities such as dog walking, cycling, or community gardening that contribute to the recreational function of the Green Wedge.
Potential for additional function	Consideration of whether the Green Wedge could support further roles not currently identified, such as climate resilience, education, or community engagement.

- 3.9. To ensure a robust and locally sensitive evaluation, the Green Wedge has been divided into distinct assessment areas, each reflecting different landscape characteristics, pressures, and functions. These areas are mapped in Appendix A and are used throughout the review to structure site-specific analysis and recommendations.

4. Desktop Survey

- 4.1. The desktop survey is undertaken at a Borough Wide level, although it may include some information which falls within neighbouring authority areas. Assessment areas have been identified and these are mapped in Appendix A; these areas are sometimes referenced to aid the evaluation in the latter part of the review.

Public access and connectivity

- 4.2. The Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton and Burbage Green Wedge serves as a vital multifunctional landscape that separates urban settlements while providing strong connectivity through a network of public rights of way, footpaths, and bridleways. These routes enable sustainable travel and recreation, linking communities and enhancing access to green infrastructure. The wedge functions as a strategic corridor and green lung, supporting biodiversity and community



wellbeing.

Figure 2: Active Travel Route between Barwell and Hinckley

- 4.3. Table 3 summarises key access routes between settlements such as Hinckley, Barwell, Earl Shilton, and Burbage, illustrating their contribution to landscape permeability and active travel.

Table 3: Footpaths within the Green Wedge

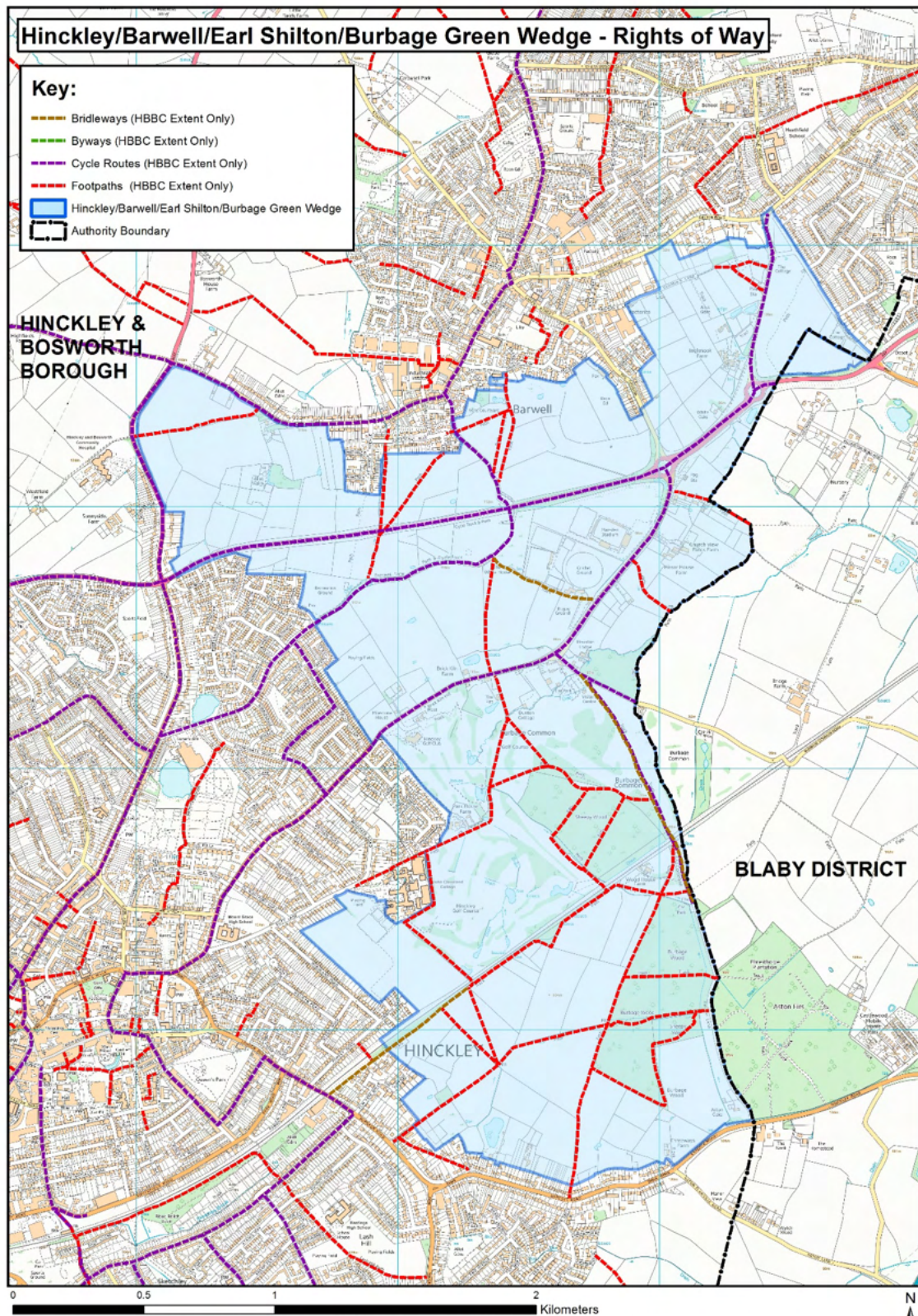
Route	Connection	Type	Key Features
Hinckley to Barwell	North of Hinckley	Public Right of Way	Connects residential areas to open countryside; links to Barwell via well-defined footpaths
Hinckley to Earl Shilton	Eastern edge of Hinckley	Footpath	Provides direct pedestrian access between Hinckley and Earl Shilton across the wedge.
Hinckley to Burbage	Southern Hinckley	Footpath and Bridleway	Links Hinckley and Burbage through open fields; suitable for walkers and horse riders
Barwell to Earl Shilton	Central wedge	Footpath	Crosses through agricultural land; connects two settlements.
Earl Shilton to Burbage	Eastern wedge	Footpath	Scenic route along woodland edge connecting Markfield Road, Ratby and through Martinshaw Woods (outside the green wedge) onto Woodbank Road, Groby.
Cycle Route	Hinckley to Barwell	Cycleway	Off-road section providing safe cycling route between settlements
Bridleway Network	Across wedge	Bridleway	Supports equestrian access and recreational use

- 4.3 The Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton and Burbage Green Wedge provides a well-connected network of public access routes that link urban and rural areas across the Borough. It offers strong connectivity between Hinckley, Barwell, Earl Shilton, and Burbage, while also extending

green infrastructure links toward Blaby District. These routes support active travel, recreation, and community access to nature, reinforcing the wedge's role in promoting sustainable movement and wellbeing.

- 4.4 A notable feature within the wedge is the cycleway connecting Hinckley and Barwell, which provides an off-road, safe, and accessible route for cyclists. This route complements the wider network of footpaths and bridleways, creating opportunities for circular walks and multi-modal travel. Together, these routes enhance ecological connectivity, encourage outdoor activity, and maintain the wedge's function as a strategic green corridor.

Figure 2: Map showing Public Rights of Way through the Green Wedge and surrounding area⁹



This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office© Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council LA100018489 Published 2018

⁹ Note: The Green Wedge boundary within Blaby District Council is based on their respective adopted Local Plan (Blaby 2006–2029) and may change through future Local Plan reviews.

Historic and archaeological context

- 4.5 The Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton and Burbage Green Wedge is a landscape of considerable historic depth, reflecting centuries of agricultural, woodland, and settlement evolution. Its character is shaped by patterns of enclosure, remnants of medieval farming systems, and areas of ancient woodland, all of which contribute to its cultural and ecological significance. This section summarises the key historic landscape features that define the area.
- 4.6 The Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) identifies the majority of fields within this Green Wedge as either 'planned enclosure' or 'piecemeal enclosure'.
- Piecemeal enclosure represents an earlier, informal process of dividing open land into fields, typically dating from the 16th–17th centuries.
 - Planned enclosure is a later, more formalised approach, generally associated with the 18th–19th centuries.
- 4.7 Other HLC types present in the area include golf course, other commons, and broadleaved ancient woodland.
- 4.8 Other Traces of the medieval open-field system remain visible through surviving ridge and furrow earthworks, particularly in fields adjacent to Barwell. These undulating patterns were created by medieval ploughing and provide an important link to the area's agricultural past.
- 4.9 The Green Wedge includes Burbage Wood and Sheepy Wood, both classified as broadleaved ancient woodland. According to Natural England, ancient semi-natural woodland sites have maintained continuous woodland cover since at least the early 17th century. These sites retain native tree and shrub species, although they may have been historically managed through coppicing or selective felling. Historical records suggest that both Burbage and Sheepy Woods were subject to common rights as early as the mid-13th century.
- 4.10 Between Burbage and Sheepy Woods lies a small triangular area identified as Small Assarts, characterised by irregular or rectilinear fields created through woodland clearance. This landscape type typically occurs adjacent to ancient woodland. In Leicestershire, woodland assartment likely began during the 12th–13th centuries, with some examples possibly dating to the 16th century.

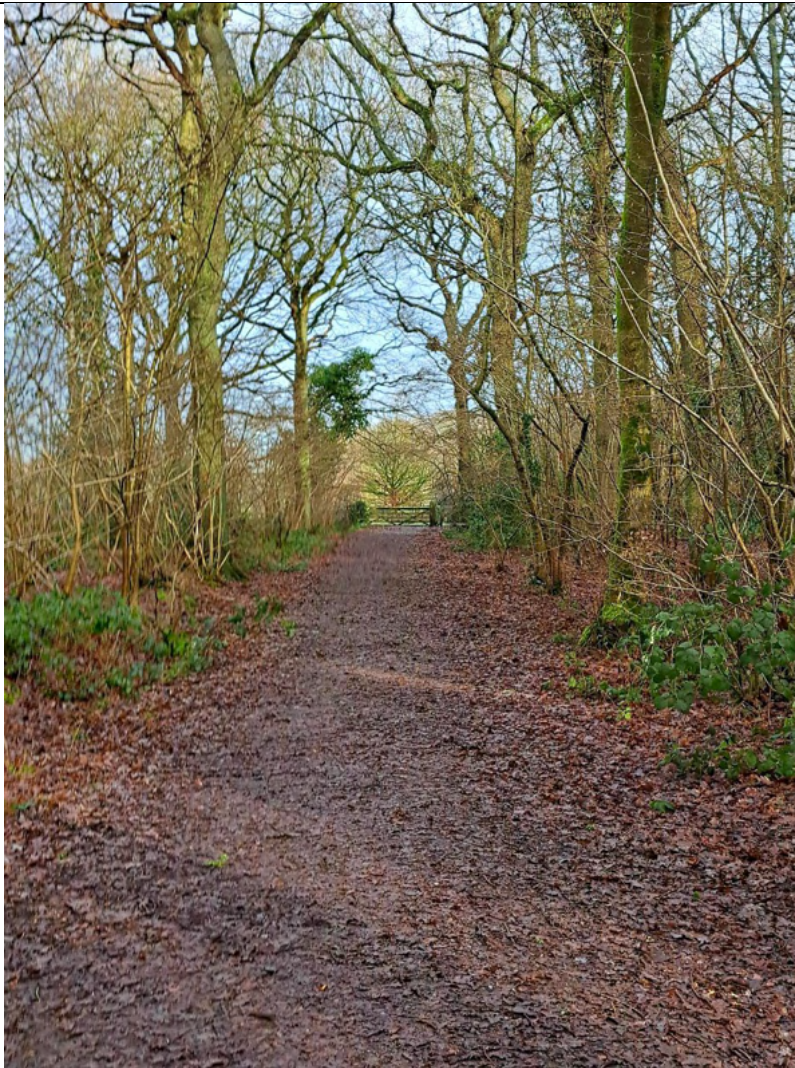


Figure 3: Sheepy Wood

- 4.11 Sheepy Wood is bounded on its north-eastern and north-western sides by Burbage Common, which is recorded in the Domesday Book as providing shared common grazing rights. Today, the common remains a valuable site for wildlife and biodiversity.
- 4.12 The area contains numerous archaeological sites of significance, including:
- A possible Roman villa site south of Park House, Hinckley, discovered during an informal watching brief in the 1980s.
 - A possible medieval moated site near Hall Close, Barwell, visible as ponds.
 - Post-medieval brickworks at Barwell Lane, Barwell, and Outwoods Brickyard on Brick Kiln Hill, Hinckley.

- 4.13 The historic landscape of the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton and Burbage Green Wedge is a rich tapestry of features spanning from the medieval period to the present day. Surviving ridge and furrow, ancient woodland, and remnants of common land provide tangible links to past land use and settlement patterns. Combined with archaeological sites and historic enclosure types, these elements contribute to the area's distinct character and underline its importance as a cultural and environmental asset within the Borough.

Minerals and Waste

- 4.14 The Adopted Leicestershire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2019–2031) outlines how mineral and waste developments should be considered within Green Wedges. It states that mineral development may be acceptable in Green Wedges if it does not compromise their strategic planning function. In contrast, waste development is generally less appropriate, although exceptions may apply where proximity to waste sources or specific locational needs make urban fringe sites the most sustainable option. In all cases, proposals must comply with relevant policies of the Plan.
- 4.15 The 2015 Minerals and Waste Safeguarding Document identifies a small site for waste operations on the Waste Safeguarding Map.
- 4.16 Together, the Minerals and Waste Local Plan and the Safeguarding Document highlight the importance of strategic planning in managing development within and around Green Wedges. While certain mineral and waste operations may be appropriate in specific circumstances, careful consideration must be given to their location, access, and potential impacts, particularly where cross-boundary issues arise. This ensures that development supports sustainable waste and mineral management without undermining the wider functions of Green Wedges.

Land use

- 4.17 The Hinckley/Earl Shilton/Barwell/Burbage Green Wedge comprises a diverse mix of land uses that contribute to its character and function. Within the Green Wedge, there are several recreational and sporting facilities, including a cricket ground, Hinckley Town Tennis Club, the Leicester Road Stadium, Hinckley Golf Course, and a rugby ground. These spaces provide opportunities for leisure and community activities.
- 4.18 In addition to formal sports facilities, the area contains significant natural and semi-natural features. Burbage Common and areas of woodland offer important habitats for wildlife and serve as valuable green spaces for informal recreation. Farmland within the wedge supports agricultural activity and helps maintain the rural setting between settlements.

- 4.19 Other land uses include allotments and rear gardens, which provide opportunities for local food production and private outdoor space. The Green Wedge also accommodates essential infrastructure such as roads, as well as recreation grounds that cater to a range of outdoor activities. Furthermore, a network of public rights of way and cycle tracks enhances connectivity and encourages sustainable travel across the area.



Figure 4: Dawsons Lane Allotments

Ecology

- 4.20 The Hinckley / Earl Shilton / Barwell / Burbage Green Wedge contains areas of ecological interest that contribute to its role as a multifunctional green space. The 2025 UK Habitat Classification Survey, commissioned by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, supersedes the 2020 Phase 1 Habitat Survey. It provides a comprehensive ecological baseline across the Green Wedge, identifying habitat types, condition assessments, and areas of strategic ecological importance. The survey highlights the presence of priority habitats, potential LWSs, and ecological networks that contribute to the wider landscape connectivity. Full site assessments are detailed in Appendix C of the document.

- 4.21 A key feature within the Green Wedge is Burbage Wood and Aston Firs SSSI, which represents one of the best examples of ash–oak–maple woodland on Glacial Boulder Clay in eastern England. This semi-natural woodland is of high conservation importance, supporting characteristic ground flora and contributing to regional biodiversity networks.



Figure 5: Burbage Wood

- 4.22 The 2025 UK Habitat Classification Survey identifies the National Habitat Network within the study area (see Figures 2b and 2c of the Habitat Survey). This mapping confirms that the Green Wedge includes significant areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland, which are critical for biodiversity and landscape character. These woodlands, alongside existing grassland and hedgerow networks, form the ecological backbone of the wedge.
- 4.23 The Green Wedge is highlighted as an area with strong potential to deliver habitat enhancement and connectivity benefits. Its position between settlements makes it an

important corridor for wildlife movement and a buffer against habitat fragmentation. The presence of Network Enhancement Zones indicates opportunities to strengthen ecological links between existing habitats, improve resilience, and support the objectives of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

- 4.24 Future management should focus on measures such as reinforcing hedgerow networks, restoring species-rich grassland, and buffering ancient woodland to create a more robust ecological corridor. These actions will not only conserve existing biodiversity but also enhance the wedge's role in climate adaptation, water management, and recreational value.
- 4.25 Together, these features underline the Green Wedge's strategic role in supporting biodiversity, maintaining habitat connectivity, and contributing to the objectives of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Future management should prioritise safeguarding irreplaceable habitats, enhance grassland condition, and implement measures that align with national habitat network principles.
- 4.26 The Green Wedge plays a key role in delivering Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), as required under the Environment Act 2021. The 2025 UKHab Survey provides baseline biodiversity unit (BU) calculations for habitats, hedgerows, and watercourses, enabling informed decisions on habitat retention, enhancement, and creation. Green Wedges offer opportunities for strategic habitat restoration, particularly where low-value habitats can be enhanced to meet BNG targets.
- 4.27 The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Leicestershire identifies Green Wedges as priority areas for habitat enhancement and connectivity. The Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge falls within the classification of Areas that Could Become of particular importance for biodiversity and wider environmental benefits (ACBs). These areas should be targeted for nature recovery actions, aligning with LNRS objectives and supporting the development of ecological networks across the borough.

Air Quality Management areas (AQMA's)

- 4.28 In terms of air quality, the Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth currently have no designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). Monitoring is carried out by the Environmental Health (Pollution) Team in line with the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) framework. Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), primarily from road traffic, is the principal pollutant of concern, but levels across the borough remain below national thresholds. This reinforces the role of Green Wedges in supporting clean air, biodiversity, and wider environmental resilience.

Water management

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 (2025)

- 4.29 Several watercourses flow through the Hinckley / Earl Shilton / Barwell / Burbage Green Wedge, including streams within Burbage Common and Woodland and across Hinckley Golf Course. These features provide important ecological corridors and contribute to the wedge's role in natural drainage and flood management. Of particular note is the watercourse running between Barwell and Hinckley, which forms part of the wider hydrological network.



Figure 6: Watercourse through Burbage Wood

- 4.30 The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment identifies areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3a within the wedge, with an Indicative Flood Zone 3b located to the east near Burbage Common and Leicester Road/Burbage Common Road. This functional floodplain underlines the need to maintain undeveloped land and implement riparian buffers, ensuring the wedge continues to deliver flood storage, water quality improvements, and biodiversity benefits.

- 4.31 The 2025 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) emphasises the role of green infrastructure in managing flood risk and supporting climate resilience. Within the Hinckley / Earl Shilton / Barwell / Burbage Green Wedge, this aligns with its multifunctional purpose: providing space for natural flood management, riparian buffers, and habitat connectivity. The SFRA recommends measures such as maintaining undeveloped floodplain areas, creating vegetated buffer strips along watercourses, and integrating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). These actions complement the wedge's ecological objectives by enhancing biodiversity, improving water quality, and reducing surface water runoff, reinforcing its strategic role in both flood mitigation and nature recovery.

Green Infrastructure

- 4.32 The Hinckley and Bosworth Green Infrastructure Strategy was published in 2020; it contains a number of recommendations and offers commentary on the role of the green wedge. The Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge (Southern Green Wedge) is identified as a critical component of the Borough's Green Infrastructure (GI) network. Its primary function is to maintain separation between settlements and provide a 'green lung' into the urban area, but the GI Strategy highlights opportunities for the wedge to deliver a broader range of benefits. These include biodiversity enhancement, improved recreational access, and climate resilience. The wedge sits within the Southern GI Zone, an area of high population density and future growth pressures, making its multifunctional role increasingly important.
- 4.33 The GI Strategy notes that the Southern Green Wedge is underperforming as a recreational asset and faces increasing pressure from population growth and development. Burbage Common and Woods, a key destination within the green wedge, is experiencing recreational pressure that threatens sensitive habitats. There is also a deficit in allotment provision and nature-based play opportunities in the surrounding urban areas. Enhancing the wedge to provide community gardens, allotments, and environmental education facilities could help meet these needs while supporting biodiversity and health objectives. Opportunities also exist to improve active travel routes through the wedge, creating green corridors that link settlements and encourage sustainable transport.



Figure 7: Example of environmental educational boards around Burbage Common

4.34 The GI Strategy identifies “Enhancing the Southern Green Wedge” as a priority opportunity. Recommended actions include:

- **Community-focused uses** such as allotments, orchards, and environmental education centres to promote health, wellbeing, and social cohesion.
- **Habitat improvements** to strengthen biodiversity networks, including hedgerow restoration and woodland expansion, guided by emerging ecological network mapping.
- **Active travel integration**, with greenways and wayfinding improvements to connect the wedge to Hinckley, Barwell, and Earl Shilton.
- **Climate resilience measures**, such as riparian buffers and tree planting, to support flood management and carbon sequestration.

4.35 These interventions would enable the wedge to function as a strategic GI asset, delivering multiple benefits for people and nature while safeguarding its openness and landscape character.

Planning applications and appeals

- 4.36 Appendix B lists planning applications which have been received within the Green Wedge between 8 December 2020 and 8 December 2025. Over the past five years, the Green Wedge has been subject to sustained development pressure, particularly for residential schemes.
- 4.37 A notable concentration of applications relates to Crabtree Farm (Hinckley Road, Barwell), which has been the focus of sustained development pressure over the past five years. Multiple proposals for housing, ranging from small clusters to schemes of up to 51 dwellings have been submitted, reflecting the site's strategic location on the edge of Barwell and the Council's historic housing land supply shortfall. Earlier schemes were allowed on appeal (e.g., 21/00031/NONDET, 21/00581/OUT, 21/00695/FUL, and 22/00024/NONDET), with Inspectors concluding that harm to the wedge's openness was limited and outweighed by housing need. In the case of 21/00695/FUL, the Inspector acknowledged that the development would erode openness and introduce built form into the Green Wedge but considered the harm to be moderate and localised, noting that the site sits on the wedge's edge and includes mitigation through landscaping and open space. The decision emphasised that while the Green Wedge policy seeks to maintain separation, it does not impose an absolute prohibition on development, and the housing benefits carried significant weight. These outcomes created a precedent, encouraging further applications and revised layouts. However, recent proposals (e.g., 23/01175/FUL, 23/01177/FUL, 23/01184/FUL, 23/01186/FUL) have been refused, with delegated reports citing significant cumulative harm to openness, landscape character, and the strategic function of the wedge, despite mitigation measures such as landscaping. The delegated report stress that incremental development risks undermining the wedge's role in maintaining settlement separation, providing a green lung, and supporting recreation.
- 4.38 Similarly, land east of The Common, Barwell has seen repeated attempts for large-scale housing (110 dwellings in 21/01470/OUT and 22/00018/NONDET), both dismissed at appeal. However, in 2023, an outline application for up to 95 dwellings (23/01229/OUT) was allowed on appeal. The recent appeal decision highlights the ongoing tension between housing delivery and the protection of the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge. The Inspector acknowledged that the proposal would introduce built development into the wedge, resulting in a loss of openness and some harm to its character and function. However, this harm was judged to be limited, as the site lies on the wedge's edge adjacent to existing development, and proposed landscaping would help retain elements of green infrastructure. Crucially, the Inspector concluded that the wedge's strategic role in maintaining separation

between Barwell and Hinckley would not be fundamentally compromised, and the benefits of housing delivery outweighed the identified harm.

- 4.39 Beyond residential proposals, the wedge has accommodated incremental changes to recreational and sporting facilities, particularly along Leicester Road. Hinckley Rugby Club and Leicester Road Football Club have secured permissions for clubhouse extensions, viewing shelters, a multi-use games area, and a replacement 3G pitch (24/00017/FUL), reinforcing the wedge's role as a hub for sport and leisure. Hinckley Golf Club also obtained consent for a new storage building (24/00984/FUL) and has a pending application for solar panels (25/01067/FUL), reflecting a shift toward sustainability.
- 4.40 Other trends include rural diversification and leisure proposals, such as dog day care facilities (22/00790/FUL, 23/00455/FUL, 24/00007/PP) and holiday accommodation at Inglenook Farm (23/00535/FUL, 24/00010/PP), though these have largely been dismissed at appeal, underlining the sensitivity of the wedge to non-agricultural uses.
- 4.41 Overall, the planning history demonstrates a pattern of persistent residential pressure, balanced by permissions for sport-related development and refusals for uses deemed incompatible with the wedge's strategic function.

Planning Policy

Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment

- 4.42 A number of sites within the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge have been put forward as expressions of interest and these have been assessed through the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). The SHELAA 2022 is the council's most recently published SHELAA review, the Borough Council have published on maps those sites which will be assessed in the SHELAA 2024 Review. The following sites are included in the 2024 Review:

Table 4: Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) Sites

SHELAA Ref	Assessment Area	Location
LPR21	I	Land East of Woodgate Road, Burbage
LPR135	I	The Coppice, Burbage
LPR160	I	Land off The Outwoods, Burbage
LPR141	I	The Outwoods, Burbage Road, Burbage
LPR234	I	Land north of Sapcote Road, Burbage
AS606	D	Land between Leicester Road & Elmsthorpe Lane (Carrs Hill), Barwell
LPR75	C	Land at the Common, Barwell
AS600	C	Land at Inglenook Farm, Leicester Road, Barwell
LPR76	A	Crabtree Farm, Barwell
AS302	A	Allotments at Normandy Way, Hinckley
LPR210	F	Land north of Newquay Close/South of the A47, Hinckley
LPR188	F	Paddock Land to the north of Leicester Road, Hinckley
AS602	H	Land to the south of Leicester Road, Hinckley
LPR191	G	Land at Hissar House Farm, Hinckley

SHELAA Ref	Assessment Area	Location
LPR187A	A	Land East of Ashby Road, Hinckley
LPR187B	A	Land East of Ashby Road, Hinckley

Strategic Transport Infrastructure and Connectivity

- 4.36 The Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge is intersected by a number of key transport routes that play an important role in local and strategic connectivity. The most significant of these is the A47, which runs through the Green Wedge and provides a vital east–west corridor linking Hinckley and its surrounding settlements to the A5 and onward to the City of Leicester. This route supports both local traffic movements and longer-distance journeys, contributing to the area’s accessibility and economic function.
- 4.37 In addition to the A47, the Green Wedge accommodates several secondary roads that facilitate movement between the settlements and provide access to residential and employment areas. These include:
- Leicester Road (Hinckley): a key approach route connecting Hinckley to Barwell and Earl Shilton.
 - Ashby Road (Hinckley): An important road which abuts the green wedge providing connectivity between Hinckley and Barwell as well as rural settlements beyond.
 - The Common (Barwell): an important link between Barwell and Earl Shilton, supporting local traffic flows.
 - Carrs Hill (Earl Shilton): providing connectivity between Earl Shilton and Hinckley, as well as access to the wider road network.
- 4.38 The Green Wedge area benefits from a network of bus services that provide sustainable travel options and link the settlements to each other and to larger urban centres. Regular services operate along the A47 corridor, offering connections between Hinckley, Barwell, Earl Shilton, and Leicester. These routes support commuting, shopping, and leisure trips, reducing reliance on private vehicles and helping to maintain accessibility for those without access to a car.



Figure 8: Photograph of Ashby Road on the border of the green wedge.

- 4.39 Local bus stops are located along key roads such as Leicester Road, The Common, and Carrs Hill, ensuring coverage across the settlements. Services typically include:
- Hinckley to Leicester via Barwell and Earl Shilton (frequent daytime services).
 - Hinckley to Nuneaton connections, providing access to employment and rail links.
 - Community transport and demand-responsive services for rural and less accessible areas.
- 4.40 The availability of public transport within and adjacent to the Green Wedge supports the strategic aim of promoting sustainable travel and reducing congestion on key routes.
- 4.41 The Green Wedge plays an important role in supporting active travel through its network of public rights of way, bridleways, and informal paths. These routes provide opportunities for walking and cycling between settlements and into the surrounding countryside, contributing to health, wellbeing, and sustainable transport objectives.
- 4.42 Key features include:

- Public Rights of Way linking Hinckley, Barwell, and Earl Shilton, offering off-road alternatives to busy roads.
- Green corridors and open spaces within the wedge that connect to local parks and recreational areas.
- Proximity to the National Cycle Network Route 52, which runs through Hinckley and provides longer-distance cycling opportunities.

4.43 Potential to enhance connectivity through improved surfacing, signage, and links to bus stops and local centres.



Figure 9: Public right of way signage south of Barwell.

Utilities Infrastructure

4.44 The Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge does not contain significant built development. However, essential utilities infrastructure crosses or borders the area to serve surrounding settlements. This includes:

- **Electricity and Gas Networks:** Overhead electricity lines and underground gas mains run adjacent to the main transport corridors, particularly along the A47 and connecting roads, ensuring supply to Hinckley, Barwell, Earl Shilton, and Burbage.
- **Water Supply and Drainage:** The area is served by Severn Trent Water, with water mains and foul drainage systems located primarily within the settlements. Surface water drainage within the Green Wedge is managed through natural watercourses and sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) associated with open spaces.
- **Telecommunications:** Broadband and mobile coverage is generally strong in the surrounding urban areas, with infrastructure extending into the Green Wedge along transport routes.
- **Strategic Infrastructure:** No major utility installations (such as substations or treatment works) are located within the Green Wedge, preserving its open character.



Figure 10: Train line running through Burbage Common and woodland.

5. Site Surveys

- 5.1 Site assessments were carried out on the green wedge in January 2026. The Green Wedge was split into 9 areas so that a more detailed analysis could be undertaken on site. A map of the areas is contained in Appendix A. The areas identified are listed as follows:

Table 5: Assessment Area locations

Assessment Area Title	Description
Area A	La South of Hinckley Road and north of Normandy Way and adjacent to A46 and A50
Area B	South of Hinckley Road and north of Normandy Way
Area C	East of The Common and south of Shilton Road
Area D	Land between Leicester Road (Carrs Hill) and Elmesthorpe Lane
Area E	Land off Leicester Road
Area F	Land between Normandy Way and Leicester Road
Area G	Land east of Leicester Road and North of Burbage Common Road
Area H	Land off Leicester Road including Burbage Common and Hinckley Golf Course
Area I	Land south of railway line and north-east of Burbage

- 5.2 This chapter sets out the main findings of the on-site surveys, the full site pro-formas are contained in Appendix C.

Area A: South of Hinckley Road and north of Normandy Way

Physical Characteristics

- 5.3 Area A comprises predominantly arable farmland, with cropped fields enclosed by medium-height hedgerows and occasional mature trees. The landscape includes grass verges along the roadside and overhead utility poles in the distance, contributing to a semi-rural character. Adjacent uses include agricultural land, residential development, and Hinckley and Bosworth Community Hospital, which overlooks the site. A bus stop is located along the A47 and Hinckley Road, providing public transport access.
- 5.4 The topography features a gentle incline rising toward Hinckley Road, Barwell, with occasional undulations across the site. Vegetation is mainly hedgerow boundaries and cropped fields, with isolated mature trees offering limited vertical structure. No significant water bodies were observed, although field drainage ditches are likely present.



Figure 11: View from Hinckley Road, Barwell towards Hinckley, properties on Ashby Road are visible in the distance.

Access and Connectivity

- 5.5 A public footpath runs between Ashby Road and Hinckley Road, forming a linear route across the northern section of the site. The access point from Hinckley Road is heavily vegetated, which may restrict ease of entry during summer months. While signage for this route is poor and partially obscured, the footpath from St Mary's Avenue to Normandy Way is well signposted and more accessible.



Figure 12: Entrance Gate and Signage from Water's End, Barwell into the Green Wedge

Visual Assessment

- 5.6 The site is generally open and visually exposed, with low vegetation allowing clear views from surrounding roads, footpaths, and adjacent properties. Boundary hedgerows and tree lines provide partial screening but do not fully enclose the area. Views out of the site extend across the wider countryside and into Barwell, framed by tree belts along the A47 and hedgerows that maintain a rural character. Built development on the urban edge of Barwell is visible but softened by intervening vegetation.
- 5.7 Area A contributes to key visual corridors within the Green Wedge and exhibits moderate to high landscape sensitivity due to its role in maintaining settlement separation and ecological connectivity. Development within this area would result in a significant visual impact, given its

openness and proximity to the narrowest section of the Green Wedge between Hinckley and Barwell.



Figure 13: Field accessed from Water's End, Barwell

Functional Assessment

- 5.8 The land holds high agricultural value, with evidence of active management and seasonal cropping contributing to local productivity. Ecological value is moderate, as hedgerows and mature trees provide habitat connectivity, although cropped fields limit biodiversity. Recreational value is also moderate, with the public footpath offering pedestrian access and allotments and horse paddocks providing informal recreational opportunities.
- 5.9 Critically, Area A plays a significant role in maintaining the physical and visual separation between Hinckley and Barwell, preventing coalescence and preserving the integrity of the Green Wedge.

Area B: South of Barwell and north of Normandy Way

Physical Characteristics

- 5.10 Area B comprises a mix of agricultural land, horse paddocks, and recreational space, including the Dovecote Way Open Space. The landscape is defined by hedgerows, scattered mature trees, grazing land, and ploughed fields. St Mary's Church, a Grade I Listed Building, occupies a prominent position on the edge of the Green Wedge, abutting properties along Church Lane and forming a key visual landmark.
- 5.11 The topography features a significant incline rising from the A47 toward Barwell, peaking near the settlement edge. This elevated landform creates a strong sense of openness and rural character. Field boundaries are delineated by hedgerows and tree lines, which also function as ecological corridors. No major water bodies were observed, although drainage ditches and field drains are likely present to manage runoff.



Figure 14: View from field accessed via Church Lane, Barwell towards Hinckley

Access and Connectivity

- 5.12 The area benefits from multiple access points via public rights of way, cycleways, and pedestrian routes. Barwell Lane provides a well-used off-road link between Barwell and Hinckley, supporting active travel and informal recreation. Footpaths are generally well signposted and visible from access points, with stiles and kissing gates facilitating movement across fields. Dovecote Park offers additional recreational opportunities, including a football pitch, pavilion, and equipped play area, all in good condition.



Figure 15: Images of the entrance to Barwell Lane from Waters End, Barwell and Dovecote Park Play Equipment

Visual Assessment

- 5.13 Visibility into the site from Barwell is limited due to adjoining built development, although glimpses are possible from the A47 and The Common through breaks in vegetation. Once inside the Green Wedge, particularly from elevated positions near St Mary's Church and Dovecote Park, the area provides expansive views across the countryside toward Hinckley and Earl Shilton. These vistas reinforce the sense of openness and rural character, with layered horizons of woodland and distant settlement edges contributing to a strong landscape setting.
- 5.14 The area exhibits moderate to high landscape sensitivity, offering several key visual corridors that maintain the perception of separation between settlements. Development here would be

highly prominent due to the upward-sloping landform and would significantly erode the rural setting of St Mary's Church, which is an important designated heritage asset.



Figure 16: View towards Barwell Church

Functional Assessment

- 5.15 Agricultural value is moderate to high, with evidence of historic and current land use. Ridge and furrow earthworks observed in parts of the site indicate a legacy of medieval open-field farming, adding cultural and historic significance. Fields appear to be under grassland or grazing management, with soil and drainage conditions suitable for continued agricultural activity.
- 5.16 Ecological value is moderate, supported by hedgerows and mature trees that provide habitat connectivity for birds, small mammals, and invertebrates. The presence of ridge and furrow suggests long-term stability of land use, which can support species-rich grassland communities where not intensively cultivated.

- 5.17 Recreational value is high, with well-maintained footpaths and Dovecote Park offering formal and informal opportunities for leisure. The park includes a football pitch, pavilion, and equipped play area, enhancing its role as a community asset.
- 5.18 Critically, Area B plays a significant role in maintaining settlement separation between Barwell and Hinckley, a green lung and recreational resource. Its elevated topography and open fields create a strong visual and physical barrier, preventing coalescence and preserving the integrity of the Green Wedge.



Figure 17: View from Barwell Lane into the green wedge.

Area C: East of The Common and south of Shilton Road

Physical Characteristics

- 5.19 Area C comprises a diverse mix of land uses, including allotments, agricultural fields, farm buildings, horse paddocks, and grazing land. The allotments appear well used and are accessed via Dawsons Lane. A track extends from Dawsons Lane, leading to a narrow, enclosed walkway that is well trodden but has a poor-quality surface. This track opens up toward Earl Shilton, where the public right of way is better maintained, featuring a grassed walkway.
- 5.20 The topography slopes gently downward toward the A47, creating elevated vantage points that offer views across the wider landscape, including Burbage, Elmesthorpe, and the church spire at Stoney Stanton. The area is characterised by mature trees and hedgerows interspersed with paddocks, contributing to a varied and multifunctional landscape.



Figure 18: View from inside the Green Wedge looking south-eastwards.

Access and Connectivity

- 5.21 Access is primarily via Dawsons Lane, which connects to a public footpath linking onto Leicester Road at two points. Public rights of way provide good connectivity through the area, although signage along the narrow track is limited, making navigation less intuitive. Improvements to this section would enhance connectivity between Earl Shilton and Barwell.



Figure 19: Public Right of Way signage into and within Area C

Visual Assessment

- 5.22 The sloping landform creates expansive views both into and out of the site. From Shilton Road, there are open vistas across the Green Wedge toward Burbage Common and beyond. Elevated positions within the site provide long-distance views toward Earl Shilton and into the neighbouring District of Blaby, reinforcing the sense of openness and rural character.
- 5.23 The landscape exhibits high sensitivity due to its openness and elevated position. Development here would significantly alter the rural setting, introduce visual intrusion, and compromise the integrity of the Green Wedge. Minor visual intrusion is currently limited to small-scale structures associated with allotments (such as sheds and greenhouses) and some buildings adjacent to Leicester Road, which is effectively screened by vegetation.

Functional Assessment

- 5.24 Agricultural value is moderate, with the eastern section comprising grasslands and paddocks, while the western side is more intensively farmed. A portion of the western area already benefits from planning permission for residential development, which may influence future land use patterns.
- 5.25 Ecological value is moderate, supported by hedgerow networks, mature trees, and allotments that provide structural diversity and microhabitats for wildlife. Allotments offer seasonal foraging opportunities for pollinators and invertebrates, while hedgerows act as wildlife corridors, enhancing connectivity to adjacent habitats. Opportunities exist for biodiversity enhancement through hedgerow restoration, wildflower margins, and wildlife-friendly practices within allotments.
- 5.26 Recreational value is notable, with allotments and horse paddocks contributing to informal leisure use. Public rights of way provide pedestrian access and connectivity, supporting active travel and informal recreation.
- 5.27 Critically, Area C plays an important role in maintaining the physical and visual separation between Barwell and Earl Shilton. Any significant built development, particularly near Carrs Hill, would erode this separation and impact the visual amenity of the wider Green Wedge.



Figure 20: Dawson's Lane Allotments

Area D: Land between Leicester Road (Carrs Hill) and Elmesthorpe Lane

Physical Characteristics

- 5.28 Area D is a contained section of the Green Wedge located between Carrs Hill and Elmesthorpe Lane. It comprises two distinct parcels: the northern triangular area, characterised by rough grassland, and the larger southern parcel, dominated by semi-natural scrub and unmanaged vegetation. The southern section includes horse paddocks and a secure dog exercise field, while the remainder of the land is largely unmanaged, featuring dense bramble, scrub, and early successional woodland.
- 5.29 Field boundaries are defined by mature hedgerows and intermittent tree belts, with clusters of young deciduous trees along roadside edges creating a naturalistic and transitional character. The landform slopes gently southwards toward the A47 and contributes to a more natural, wooded feel created by dense scrub and early successional tree growth along Leicester Road approaching Earl Shilton. A small section of this area falls within Blaby District.



Figure 21: Northern parcel of land north of Elmesthorpe Lane

Access and Connectivity

- 5.30 There is no formal public access into this part of the Green Wedge. Elvesthorpe Lane divides the two parcels and provides visual access across the site, while Leicester Road forms a strong western boundary. Neither route offers pedestrian entry, and no footpaths, bridleways, or permissive routes were observed within the area.



Figure 22: Images showing tree lined belt along Leicester Road edge and Elvesthorpe Lane which runs through Area D, dividing the larger and smaller portions of the area

Visual Assessment

- 5.31 Views into the area are generally restricted by dense vegetation and belts of early successional woodland along Leicester Road, which provide strong screening. Elvesthorpe Lane offers slightly more open views, particularly around the paddocks and the northern parcel, which is more exposed and visible from the roadside.
- 5.32 Outward views from within the site are similarly limited due to tall hedgerows, scrub, and woodland belts, creating a sense of enclosure across most of the area. However, the elevated position of the northern parcel contributes to a sense of arrival and place, with the Earl Shilton gateway sign reinforcing its role as a visual marker at the settlement edge.
- 5.33 The landscape exhibits high sensitivity due to its strategic position at one of the narrowest points of the Green Wedge. Any development here would significantly impact the visual

amenity of the wider area, eroding the perception of separation between Barwell and Earl Shilton.



Figure 23: Area of semi-natural scrubland south of Elmesthorpe Lane

Functional Assessment

- 5.34 Agricultural value is very limited, as there is no evidence of active cultivation or crop production. The land is predominantly unmanaged, comprising rough grassland, scrub, and early successional woodland. Small paddocks are present but used for equine and canine purposes rather than farming.
- 5.35 Ecological value is moderate, supported by structural diversity and habitat connectivity. Dense hedgerows, scrub, and woodland belts provide corridors for wildlife movement, while unmanaged grassland and bracken offer microhabitats for birds, small mammals, and invertebrates. Mature trees along boundaries provide potential roosting sites for bats, and the drainage ditch along Elmesthorpe Lane adds riparian habitat features.

- 5.36 Recreational value is negligible, as there is no public access or formal recreational provision within the site. Private uses include horse paddocks and a dog exercise field, which provide limited amenity for specific users.
- 5.37 Critically, Area D plays an essential role in maintaining the physical and visual separation between Barwell and Earl Shilton. Its position at the narrowest point of the Green Wedge makes it highly sensitive to change. Retaining this area within the Green Wedge is vital to safeguarding settlement separation and preserving the strategic integrity of the landscape.



Figure 24: Horse Paddock off Elmesthorpe Lane

Area E: Land off Leicester Road

Physical Characteristics

- 5.38 Area E comprises a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) set within a landscape of early to mid-successional woodland, rough grassland, and unmanaged scrub. The area has a strongly enclosed and naturalistic character, reflecting limited recent management and evidence of rewilding, including young tree planting protected by tree tubes. Vegetation is dense throughout much of the site, with bramble, thorn scrub, and developing woodland forming a continuous cover that restricts long-distance views.
- 5.39 The land is largely flat, with a gentle slope descending from east to west toward The Common roundabout. Mature hedgerows and intermittent tree belts define the boundaries, while patches of rough grassland and a discreet SuDS feature contribute to structural diversity. A small watercourse runs along the edge of the site, forming a narrow riparian corridor enclosed by scrub and young woodland. Adjacent uses include agricultural land and residential development, with major road infrastructure (the A47 and Leicester Road) forming strong edges that influence the overall character. The far boundary of the site abuts Blaby District and lies close to the village of Elmesthorpe.



Figure 25: Typical view into the site screened by vegetation.

Access and Connectivity

- 5.40 There is no public access within the site itself. The only direct access is private, via a gated entrance serving a Severn Trent Water facility located near the Leicester Road frontage. Public rights of way run along the eastern boundary, providing pedestrian access into the wider countryside but do not enter Area E. Additional surfaced pedestrian routes follow the A47 and Leicester Road along the northern and western edges, offering safe, well-defined connectivity around but not through the site.



Figure 26: Images showing public access around the edges of the area

Visual Assessment

- 5.41 Views into the area are generally restricted due to dense vegetation, including mature hedgerows, thick scrub, and early successional woodland. These features create a heavily enclosed character, with external views typically terminating on dense woody growth. Occasional filtered glimpses are possible where vegetation thins, but these are narrow and short-range.
- 5.42 Views out of the area are more open, particularly from the site's edges. From the A47 boundary, rising land toward Barwell enables outward visibility of the settlement edge. Along the public right of way to the east, wider vistas across the surrounding countryside are available, including filtered views towards Elmhurst. The enclosed nature of vegetation

means that some settlements, such as Hinckley and Burbage are not visible from within the site, reinforcing a sense of containment.

- 5.43 Overall, the landscape displays moderate to high sensitivity, with the enclosed, naturalistic character easily affected by change. Edge views are particularly sensitive to development that may intrude into existing rural sightlines.



Figure 27: Images showing water course running along the edge of the area with single storey building in the background and early to mid-successional woodland.

Functional Assessment

- 5.44 The site has very limited agricultural function, with no active cultivation or crop production evident. The land primarily comprises rough grassland, scrub, and young woodland.
- 5.45 Ecological value is moderate, supported by a structurally varied mosaic of habitats including scrub, early successional woodland, rough grassland, overgrown hedgerows, and the riparian corridor associated with the adjacent watercourse. The SuDS feature adds additional wetland interest and supports local water management. The combination of unmanaged vegetation and developing woodland provides foraging, shelter, and movement corridors for a range of wildlife, enhancing the site's role as part of a wider ecological network.

- 5.46 Public recreational use is minimal due to the absence of internal access. However, the perimeter footpaths enable the community to experience the landscape visually. In this way, the site functions as a remote-access green space, offering important outward views and contributing positively to local visual amenity.
- 5.47 Area E occupies a transitional position forming part of the valley floor between Barwell, Earl Shilton, and the wider Hinckley urban edge. Its location near key approach routes particularly around The Common roundabout means it forms part of an important visual and spatial gateway to the surrounding settlements.
- 5.48 Although views between settlements vary due to the dense vegetation structure, the site retains a critical role in maintaining perceptual and physical separation between Barwell, Earl Shilton, Elmesthorpe, and Hinckley. The enclosed, semi-natural character and absence of built form help preserve the rural setting and prevent coalescence.
- 5.49 Any development within Area E would significantly affect visual amenity on the approach to Burbage Common and Woods and would alter the rural character of the western fringes of Elmesthorpe, an area already sensitive to change following the construction of the bypass. The site continues to provide an essential green linkage between Area C and Area G, supporting wider ecological corridors extending toward Burbage Common.



Figure 28: Image from the edge of Area E, the urban edge of Barwell can be seen in the distance.

Area F: Land between Normandy Way and Leicester Road

Physical Characteristics

- 5.50 Area F presents a varied and multifunctional landscape comprising formal recreational facilities, open agricultural land, and a number of semi-natural vegetated corridors. The eastern portion is dominated by recreational uses, including football, rugby, cricket and tennis facilities, as well as Swallows Green Recreation Ground, which forms a key open space accessible to the surrounding residential community. Moving westwards, the character transitions to larger pastoral and arable fields defined by long-established hedgerow boundaries and more naturalistic grassland, giving the western extent a noticeably more rural and open feel. A small brook runs east to west through the area, providing an element of natural drainage and contributing modestly to the semi-natural qualities.



Figure 29: Field within Area F, accessed from Barwell Lane

- 5.51 Topographically, the land rises toward the eastern edge of the green wedge, where the recreational facilities are concentrated, before gradually falling away to the west. Small undulations are present throughout, reflecting historic field patterns. This variation in height influences visibility across the site, with the elevated eastern areas providing clearer views of

built features such as the sports ground floodlights, which are prominent even under winter lighting conditions.

- 5.52 Vegetation is diverse and structurally layered, with a mixture of short-mown sports grassland, semi-improved pasture, and taller, tussocky field edges. Mature hedgerows, many of which are dense and multi-layered, form strong linear boundaries. These include hawthorn, blackthorn and other deciduous species, supported by intermittent mature tree belts that frame open spaces and provide important ecological connectivity. Woodland corridors possess thicker understorey and create an enclosed, shaded character, contrasting with the openness of the recreational fields. This combination of open land and vegetated boundaries produces a landscape with both broad visibility and more intimate, enclosed spaces.
- 5.53 The area also contains several local landscape features, including public footpaths and shared-use routes, fencing, bollards, and various markers associated with the sports facilities. Collectively, these contribute to a legible landscape with well-defined movement routes and a mix of open and enclosed spatial experiences.

Access and Connectivity

- 5.54 Area F is well connected and benefits from a highly accessible path network. Public rights of way and shared-use tracks run through both the agricultural and recreational sections of the site, ensuring strong permeability. Path surfaces range from compacted earth to fully surfaced active-travel routes, with vegetation and fencing often providing a clear sense of direction and enclosure. Swallows Green Open Space acts as a key access point and local recreational hub, linking residential areas into the deeper parts of the green wedge and supporting informal recreational activities.
- 5.55 Formal facilities within the site, including sports clubs and the stadium complex, generate regular footfall and reinforce the accessibility of the landscape, although some of these spaces remain privately operated. Barwell Lane forms a significant movement corridor, providing an active-travel route that enhances connectivity to both Burbage Common and the wider countryside. The Green Wedge Review (2020) noted issues at the Leicester Road access point, where steep descent and overgrown vegetation limited ease of use. While conditions have improved in some locations, Leicester Road remains a perceptual barrier due to traffic volumes, making movement between the green wedge and Burbage Common still challenging for pedestrians.



Figure 30: Barwell Lane active travel route and the edge of Area F on Leicester Road

Visual Assessment

- 5.56 The visibility of the area is varied and closely tied to boundary vegetation, land use, and topography. Views into the site from Harwood Drive and nearby residential streets are open and expansive, with recreational fields, play equipment and associated infrastructure visible across broad swathes of short-mown grassland. In contrast, views from Leicester Road and the A47 are more heavily filtered by hedgerows and tree belts, offering only intermittent glimpses into the green wedge. Along Barwell Lane, views remain moderately open but are frequently framed by tree canopies, reinforcing the transition between managed recreational land and semi-natural field edges.
- 5.57 Views from within the site are generally wide and uninterrupted across the recreational core, particularly around the sports pitches and Swallows Green, where outward sightlines are dominated by open grassland and low fencing. More enclosed viewpoints are experienced within wooded routes and along hedgerow-bounded paths, where vegetation controls visibility and produces a more intimate landscape character.
- 5.58 Key vistas are defined by the long, open views across the playing fields and agricultural land, reinforcing the perception of a broad green gap. These views contribute strongly to landscape sensitivity, which is assessed as moderate to high across much of the area. Built development would be particularly intrusive within open vistas. Areas with stronger vegetation cover have

slightly lower sensitivity but still play an important role in maintaining the site's rural character and ecological continuity.

- 5.59 Visual intrusion is largely confined to the eastern sporting cluster, where the football stadium, stands, fencing, car parks and tall lighting columns introduce a noticeable urbanising influence. Lighting structures are particularly prominent from elevated positions due to their height and silhouette against the sky. Tennis court fencing and associated lighting similarly contribute to visual clutter. Beyond these zones, natural elements such as hedgerows and woodland quickly soften or eliminate views of built structures, restoring a predominantly rural appearance across the majority of the landscape.



Figure 31: Swallows Green Open Space

Functional Assessment

- 5.60 Area F retains a significant agricultural function, particularly in its western half where active arable fields dominate. These fields are well maintained and contribute substantially to the openness of the green wedge, reinforcing its working rural character. Hedgerows, tree lines and field boundaries support ecological movement and contribute to the overall coherence of the landscape.

- 5.61 Ecologically, the area has moderate value. While the intensively managed arable land provides limited biodiversity, the hedgerows, wooded edges, and grassland margins create valuable wildlife corridors and habitat variety. Public rights of way framed by thick vegetation enhance these connections by forming semi-natural movement routes for birds, bats and other species.
- 5.62 Recreational value is high, with formal sports facilities complemented by extensive open space suitable for informal use. Swallows Green Recreation Ground is well used and provides a valuable community asset. Although several facilities remain privately operated, public access across much of the site is strong, with a series of well-used rights of way enabling regular local use.
- 5.63 In terms of settlement separation, Area F plays a mixed but important role in preventing the coalescence of Hinckley and Barwell. Large open agricultural fields create a clear physical gap, particularly to the west where the wedge is at its narrowest and therefore most sensitive. Dense boundary vegetation reduces direct intervisibility in places, meaning the sense of separation is sometimes perceptual rather than visually explicit. Nonetheless, the area continues to function as a meaningful and strategically important open gap that reinforces the distinct identities of the two settlements.



Figure 32: Cricket Ground, Leicester Road

Area G: Land east of Leicester Road and North of Burbage Common Road

Physical Characteristics

- 5.64 Area G comprises a transitional landscape situated between the residential and agricultural edges of Hinckley and the larger expanse of Burbage Common. The area accommodates a diverse mix of uses, including residential properties, actively managed agricultural pasture, equestrian facilities with associated stables and paddocks, and established blocks of deciduous woodland that form part of the wider green infrastructure network. A small Gypsy and Traveller site is also located off Leicester Road, which is screened by mature hedgerows. The immediate surroundings include registered common land, sporting and recreational facilities, and agricultural holdings, with the area also forming part of the boundary interface with Blaby District.



Figure 33: View into Woodland from Burbage Common Road

- 5.65 Topographically, the land is generally flat with only a very gentle incline towards Elvesthorpe, creating a broad and level landscape that allows for long views in certain directions but remains relatively contained where woodland dominates. Vegetation structure across Area G is defined by a combination of mature deciduous woodland, managed grassland, and robust hedgerow boundaries. Woodland areas contain both mature and early-successional trees with

extensive leaf litter and intermittent bramble, creating a semi-natural woodland floor. The understorey is limited in places due to shading, resulting in a relatively open internal structure during winter months. Hedgerows and scrub form strong boundary features, contributing enclosure along road edges and marking field boundaries clearly.

- 5.66 Beyond the woodland, pastureland is regularly maintained and enclosed by timber post-and-rail fencing, offering contrast to the more enclosed wooded sections. Interpretation boards and wayfinding elements indicate managed public access points, though access remains localised. Together, these elements produce a landscape that blends enclosed woodland with more open agricultural settings, reinforcing a predominantly rural character while contributing to the wider green wedge network.



Figure 34: Access to woodland from Burbage Common Road

Access and Connectivity

- 5.67 Public access into Area G is primarily achieved from Burbage Common Lane, where a kissing gate provides controlled pedestrian entry to the woodland. This forms the principal connection into the site, restricting vehicular access while enabling walkers to navigate the informal woodland paths that run through the area. These internal routes provide permeability and

connect to the broader recreational network associated with Burbage Common and Woodland, strengthening east–west and north–south recreational movement across the wider green infrastructure corridor.

- 5.68 The area does not support extensive public access beyond these routes, although private access points exist to individual properties and equestrian facilities. While the previous study highlighted the role of the public right of way along the northern edge, the primary access point observed during the 2026 visit remains the pedestrian gateway from Burbage Common Lane. Overall, Area G functions as part of a wider system of walking routes that support informal recreation and provide access to natural environments for nearby communities.

Visual Assessment

- 5.69 Views into Area G vary according to the boundary treatment. Along Leicester Road, a mature and uninterrupted hedgerow forms a strong visual screen, significantly limiting visibility into the site for much of the year. Occasional gaps allow brief views but do not materially alter the sense of enclosure. In contrast, Burbage Common Road offers more open views into the area, particularly where woodland density reduces and internal tree cover becomes visible, creating a more permeable edge.
- 5.70 Views outwards from the site reflect similar variation. From Burbage Common Road, views extend across the open expanse of Burbage Common and Woodland, offering an immediate connection with the wider countryside and contributing strongly to the perceived separation between surrounding settlements. Views to the west, toward adjacent sports pitches, are partially filtered by mature hedgerows but remain legible within the broader landscape context.
- 5.71 Key vistas are associated with the open eastward views across Burbage Common, which emphasise the spatial openness and rural setting of this part of the green wedge. These long views contribute significantly to the perceptual separation of settlements and reinforce the area’s sensitivity to visual change. Within the woodland itself, sightlines are enclosed due to the density of trunks and understorey vegetation, creating a filtered environment with minimal long-distance visibility. Overall, landscape sensitivity is assessed as moderate to high, with open views particularly vulnerable to intrusion, and any development within or adjacent to these areas likely to undermine the rural character and visual continuity of the green wedge.



Figure 35: View into Area G from Leicester Road

- 5.72 Visual intrusion within Area G is limited. Some residential properties along Leicester Road are visible, but mature hedgerow screening effectively softens their presence. As a result, the wider landscape maintains a predominantly rural and wooded character with little urban influence perceptible from within the area.

Functional Assessment

- 5.73 The agricultural value of Area G is limited. While isolated pasture fields are maintained and support equestrian or low-intensity grazing activity, much of the site is dominated by woodland blocks and strong boundary vegetation that restrict the extent of productive agricultural activity. The landscape plays a more significant semi-natural and recreational role rather than contributing meaningfully to agricultural output.
- 5.74 Ecologically, the area holds moderate value. The established woodland provides a structurally diverse habitat, with mature and early-successional trees, leaf litter, fallen branches and patches of bramble supporting a range of woodland species. Although the understorey is sparse in places, the habitat still supports birds, small mammals and invertebrates. Hedgerows act as important ecological corridors, linking the woodland to adjacent habitats and

contributing to wider ecological networks that include Burbage Common. Managed grassland and pasture further supplement habitat diversity, offering additional foraging opportunities and supporting pollinator activity. The varied mosaic of woodland, hedgerows and open pasture therefore contributes positively to biodiversity and ecological connectivity within this part of the green wedge.

- 5.75 In recreational terms, Area G primarily supports informal walking through its woodland paths and connections to the adjoining common land. The presence of interpretive signage enhances the educational and amenity value of the site, while the quiet, naturalistic woodland offers an accessible informal recreational experience. Although access is limited to pedestrian routes, the area integrates effectively with the broader recreational landscape that surrounds Burbage Common and contributes to local wellbeing and outdoor activity.
- 5.76 The area plays a significant role in maintaining settlement separation, particularly between Barwell, Earl Shilton, Hinckley and the open landscape of Burbage Common. Its strong vegetative structure, mature hedgerows, woodland blocks and open pasture collectively form a clearly defined green buffer that prevents encroachment from surrounding urban areas. Long views across Burbage Common to the east reinforce a strong sense of openness, while the continuity of green infrastructure supports both visual and perceptual separation. This function will remain particularly important in forming the setting for nearby development, ensuring that the rural character and spatial separation of settlements is preserved.

Area H: Land off Leicester Road including Burbage Common and Hinckley Golf Course

Physical Characteristics

- 5.77 Area H forms one of the most extensive and diverse landscapes within the Green Wedge, encompassing Burbage Common, the associated Visitor Centre and managed recreational spaces, the adjoining Hinckley Golf Course, areas of broadleaved woodland and scrub, pockets of managed grassland, and a small scrap yard located toward the site entrance. The combination of semi-natural habitats, formal recreational areas and ancillary employment uses creates a multifunctional setting that connects urban edges with the wider countryside.
- 5.78 The landscape is bordered by residential areas, school buildings, the adjoining railway corridor, and broader tracts of woodland and agricultural land. These neighbouring land uses reinforce the transitional character of Area H, where built form gradually gives way to semi-natural and rural environmental features. The topography is generally flat, with only a subtle incline rising toward Elmesthorpe, contributing to long open views across the central meadows.



Figure 36: Burbage Common

- 5.79 Vegetation within the area is notably varied, reflecting the transition from managed amenity spaces to semi-natural woodland. Large areas of closely mown or semi-improved grassland dominate the main open spaces, interspersed with scattered deciduous trees that are currently without leaf cover. Surrounding these open meadows, extensive belts of mature broadleaved woodland form strong landscape edges. The woodland floor is characterised by deep leaf litter, fallen branches, and moss-covered timber, with patches of bramble and scrub providing additional understorey structure. Edge habitats exhibit a denser scrub component, acting as a transitional zone between grassland and woodland compartments.
- 5.80 In the more naturalistic woodland areas, small seasonal ponds, wet depressions and waterlogged ground contribute to habitat diversity, supporting features characteristic of Burbage Common's wider ecology. In contrast, the more formal areas around the Visitor Centre, café and children's play area contain mown amenity grassland, trimmed hedgerows and ornamental planting typical of managed recreational settings.
- 5.81 Across the wider site, hedgerow-bounded fields and pastoral margins contribute to a coherent rural identity, resulting in a landscape that combines structured amenity spaces with more naturalistic woodland and meadow habitats.
- 5.82 Water features across Area H are varied and reflect both natural and managed hydrology. Within the grassland areas, a shallow linear drainage channel transports surface water following periods of rainfall, functioning as part of the site's surface water management. Within the woodland, several seasonal ponds and wet depressions support small wetland habitats, containing standing water, fallen timber and saturated leaf litter.
- 5.83 Along the site edge adjacent to the railway, a brook forms the principal watercourse, contributing both drainage capacity and riparian ecological value. Together, these features enhance habitat diversity and contribute positively to the area's semi-natural character.

Access and Connectivity

- 5.84 Area H benefits from a comprehensive and well-established network of formal and informal routes that provide strong connectivity throughout the common, woodland and recreational spaces. A series of footpaths – including clear Public Rights of Way – traverse the grassland, woodland and golf course. These routes are well signposted in most locations, with additional paths linking key attractions such as the Visitor Centre, café, car park and equipped children's play area.
- 5.85 The surfaces of these paths vary from compacted earth to grassed tracks and stone-surfaced walkways, reflecting differing levels of maintenance and usage. Numerous off-shoot paths

offer opportunities to explore woodland edges, meadows and more secluded natural habitats. The common forms a key hub within the wider recreational network, connecting to routes extending toward Hinckley, Burbage, Elmesthorpe and Earl Shilton.

- 5.86 The area is clearly well used, with high levels of footfall observed even during winter conditions. The previous study noted that the car park is often busy, and this remains evident, reflecting the important draw of Burbage Common as a local and sub-regional recreational resource.



Figure 37: Signage around Burbage Common which promotes way finding

Visual Assessment

- 5.87 Views into Area H vary considerably depending on location and boundary treatments. From Area I to the south, views inward is largely restricted by the raised railway line, although some glimpses of school playing fields are possible. In contrast, open views into the golf course are available from the nearby modern residential streets (Antwerp Close, Helsinki Drive, Paris Close), where the settlement edge directly adjoins managed grassland and scattered tree cover, creating a clear visual transition between the built environment and the recreational landscape.
- 5.88 Along Leicester Road, views into the site are much more limited. Mature hedgerows, woodland edges and scrub create a heavily filtered and often impenetrable visual barrier. From Burbage

Common Road, however, views are expansive, offering broad sightlines across the common's characteristic mosaic of open grassland, scrub and woodland.



Figure 38: Hinckley Golf Course

- 5.89 Outward views from Area H are similarly variable. Along the southern boundary, the railway line and dense woodland substantially restrict visibility, creating a highly enclosed character. To the north-east, outward views extend into adjoining woodland within Area G, with occasional gaps offering long-distance countryside views towards the M69. Along Leicester Road, outward views remain mostly enclosed by strong vegetative screening.
- 5.90 Where the landscape opens out toward the common and meadows, outward visibility is broad and uninterrupted, reinforcing the perception of openness and the strategic role of this land in maintaining rural character.
- 5.91 The most significant vistas are across the large open meadows of Burbage Common, which provide long, uninterrupted views framed by woodland edges. These vistas define the area's sense of openness and contribute strongly to the experience of the Green Wedge. Toward the north-east, key vistas link Area H to Area G and the wider countryside beyond.

- 5.92 Areas of enclosure occur at the Leicester Road boundary and the southern railway corridor, where vegetation significantly contains views. Overall, Area H exhibits moderate to high landscape sensitivity, with its open meadow views particularly vulnerable to change. Protecting these open sightlines is critical to maintaining settlement separation and conserving the established rural character.
- 5.93 Visual intrusion within the majority of Area H is low, with vegetation screening ensuring that built form remains limited in its effect. However, localised intrusion is present at the scrap yard, where industrial structures, fencing, skips and vehicles form a stark contrast with the otherwise rural and natural landscape. This intrusion is concentrated along the road frontage and does not extend deeply into the site, but it detracts from the setting of Burbage Common and is visually prominent. The golf course clubhouse and car park introduce additional elements of built form but are less visually dominant due to their positioning and surrounding vegetation.

Functional Assessment

- 5.94 Agricultural value across Area H is limited. Only small peripheral areas display characteristics of managed pasture or grazing. The majority of the site comprises recreational, semi-natural or woodland habitats, reducing the potential for agricultural productivity. Existing grazing is low-intensity and secondary to the area's broader recreational and ecological functions.
- 5.95 The ecological value of the site is moderate to high, reflecting the diverse mosaic of broadleaved woodland, scrub, seasonal wetland features, hedgerows, riparian corridors and semi-improved grassland. Woodland areas support mature tree cover, deadwood and varied understorey vegetation, providing habitat for woodland species. The open grassland meadows add further habitat variety, supporting foraging species and pollinators. Connectivity between these habitats and the wider Burbage Common area strengthens the ecological function of the Green Wedge.
- 5.96 Recreational value is exceptionally high. Burbage Common is a major public open space with a wide catchment, offering extensive walking routes, informal recreation opportunities and formal facilities including the visitor centre, café and children's play area. The golf course adds a significant private recreational function. The well-connected path network ensures strong pedestrian access across and beyond the site. High visitor numbers, even during winter, underscore the importance of this area to local residents and visitors from a broader area.
- 5.97 Area H plays a crucial role in maintaining settlement separation. The extensive open grassland, woodland and common land create a significant and perceptible buffer between surrounding residential areas. Woodland belts and the raised railway line reinforce physical

and visual separation, preventing coalescence. Long-range views toward the M69 emphasise the area's rural hinterland and its function in maintaining distinct settlement identities.



Figure 39: Play equipment at Burbage Common

Area I: Land south of railway line and north-east of Burbage

Physical Characteristics

- 5.98 Area, I comprises a diverse mix of semi-natural woodland, agricultural fields, recreational grassland, grazing paddocks, school playing fields, and ancillary uses such as tea rooms, all framed by the raised railway corridor that forms a defining physical boundary through the landscape. This mosaic of land uses creates a semi-rural character typical of the wider Green Wedge, with a strong interplay between open countryside, woodland habitat and settlement edge influences.
- 5.99 The area is surrounded by a mixture of complementary land uses, including Hinckley Golf Course, Burbage Common, woodland blocks, residential properties along the settlement edge, and wider agricultural countryside extending into Blaby District. These adjoining uses reinforce the transitional nature of Area I, which functions as a key interface between built development and open green space. The topography is largely flat, although the railway embankment introduces a pronounced change in level that creates a strong visual and physical barrier, influencing movement and visibility across the site.



Figure 40: Agricultural Field within Area I

- 5.100 Vegetation across the area varies between broadleaved woodland, open grassland, arable fields and dense hedgerow networks. Within the woodland, mature deciduous trees form a relatively open winter canopy, with leaf litter, scattered low vegetation and typical winter ground conditions. This woodland contrasts with adjacent open agricultural land, where extensive hedgerows, scrub and bramble contribute a contained and structurally varied edge. Tall scrub and woody species such as hawthorn and blackthorn create strong boundary definition along field margins, while enclosed belts of vegetation support a semi-natural character at the interface between woodland and farmland.
- 5.101 The landscape includes distinctive features such as large, uninterrupted agricultural fields offering long views to wooded horizons, strong hedgerow and scrub boundaries forming linear visual corridors, and a more intimate woodland environment with amenity grassland and picnic benches indicating informal recreational use. Together, these elements create a transition between open countryside and enclosed woodland paths, reinforcing the area's role within the Green Wedge.

Access and Connectivity

- 5.102 Area I contains a varied and well-used access network comprising informal field-edge routes, worn desire lines across grassland, and more formal woodland paths. The presence of muddied and worn paths indicates frequent pedestrian movement, particularly along the margins of open farmland. Within the woodland, a clearly defined path runs through the trees, with seasonal muddy conditions and leaf-covered surfaces typical of winter months.
- 5.103 Infrastructure such as a small boardwalk or footbridge and formal wayfinding signage including the "Welcome to Burbage Common & Woods" marker demonstrates managed access and supports navigation through the site. Public Rights of Way from Sapcote Road and Woodgate Road, referenced within previous studies, provide wider connectivity into Burbage Wood and beyond, contributing to the area's robust recreational network. This permeability ensures strong links between the settlement edge, the common, and the wider countryside.
- 5.104 The proximity of parking at Smithy Lane, as noted in previous assessments, further enhances accessibility and indicates that the area attracts visitors from a wider catchment.

- 5.105 Area I contains several small watercourses flowing through the landscape. These channels are typically narrow with visible flowing water, lined with riparian vegetation such as sedges, grasses and overhanging scrub. Although modest in scale, these watercourses form locally important ecological corridors and contribute to the drainage characteristics and naturalistic setting of the Green Wedge. Their integration with woodland and field margins supports amphibian and invertebrate habitat and increases ecological diversity within the site. **Visual**



Figure 41: Images showing access points into Burbage Woodland and signage

Assessment

- 5.106 Views into Area I differ markedly based on approach. From Burbage Common, the raised railway embankment forms a dominant visual and physical barrier, severely limiting intervisibility at ground level. Views from the train itself, however, would provide expansive panoramic views across the wider Green Wedge. Approaching from Blaby District, the woodland edge forms a strong vegetated boundary that restricts visibility into the interior of the site.
- 5.107 From the edge of Burbage settlement, visibility varies depending on property orientation. Where residential gardens back directly onto the Green Wedge, views are more immediate and open. For road users travelling out of Burbage towards the M69, views become broader

and more rural as the landscape opens near Smithy Lane, revealing fields and woodland edges.

- 5.108 Outward views illustrate the transitional quality of the landscape. Eastward views from woodland edges extend across open agricultural countryside within Blaby District, reinforcing the site's rural character and spatial openness. Southward views look directly onto the rear boundaries of residential gardens in Burbage, highlighting the importance of this area in maintaining a separation between settlement and open land. Westward, outward views reveal school playing fields and intermittent glimpses toward the golf course, where rising topography increases partial intervisibility.
- 5.109 Key vistas occur across the broad open fields, where long, uninterrupted sightlines create expansive rural panoramas framed by woodland edges. These areas possess high landscape sensitivity, as even minimal built form would fracture the open visual character. Hedgerow and scrub boundaries forming transitions between settlement and countryside also exhibit high sensitivity due to their role in maintaining separation and defining the wedge's structure.



Figure 42: Broad open agricultural field within Area I

- 5.110 Within the woodland, enclosed views and short sightlines create an intimate, contained character with moderate sensitivity; while visual change would be partly screened, alterations could still affect sense of place. Areas of open amenity grassland also hold moderate to high sensitivity, particularly where skyline elements or woodland backdrops are visually important.
- 5.111 Overall, the highest sensitivity is associated with open fields forming the settlement gap and long-range views toward woodland horizons.
- 5.112 Visual intrusion across most of the area is low, with limited built form visible and a strong semi-natural character. Infrastructure such as fencing, signage and small bridges is generally sympathetic and unobtrusive. The raised railway corridor is the most notable engineered feature, but its visual impact is contained and softened by vegetation. It does not materially diminish the openness or rural character of the wider landscape.

Functional Assessment

- 5.113 Area I retains an active agricultural function across much of its open land. Large field compartments exhibit signs of cultivation, improved grassland and early crop establishment. Visible tyre impressions and worn ground near field edges suggest regular vehicle or machinery access. While parts of the site transition into scrub or woodland edges, the agricultural fields remain a substantial component of the working landscape and contribute meaningfully to the openness and rural character of the Green Wedge.
- 5.114 Ecological value is moderate to high due to the presence of mature woodland, hedgerow networks, scrub belts, rough grassland and riparian corridors. Woodland areas with leaf litter floor and varied understorey offer habitat for birds, small mammals and invertebrates. Hedgerows and scrub support nesting and foraging species, while riparian features offer important linear habitats. The interplay between open fields, boundary vegetation and woodland edges creates strong ecological connectivity with Burbage Common and the wider landscape.
- 5.115 Recreational use is clearly established. Informal field-edge routes, more formal woodland paths, picnic benches and visitor-oriented facilities such as the tea rooms at Woodhouse Farm all indicate regular public use. Public Rights of Way provide strong links between Burbage, Burbage Wood and Burbage Common, while clearly signed access points and path infrastructure support legibility and ease of movement. High visitor activity noted in previous studies remains consistent, reflecting the area's ongoing role as an important recreational resource.

5.116 Area I plays a fundamental role in maintaining separation between Burbage and adjacent areas, including parts of Blaby District. The combination of open fields, woodland belts and scrub boundaries creates a substantial and perceptible green buffer. Views southwards illustrate the clear divide between the settlement edge and countryside, highlighting the importance of this open landscape in preventing coalescence. The area's mixed naturalistic and agricultural character continues to reinforce settlement identity and safeguard the integrity of the Green Wedge.



Figure 43: One of the bridges across the watercourse connecting a grassland area into the woodland.

6. Evaluation

- 6.1. The evaluation criteria set out in the Leicester and Leicestershire Joint Green Wedge Methodology Paper will be used to assess the green wedge. This evaluation will consider each of the criteria in turn and are set out below.

Preventing the merging of settlements

- 6.2 The Green Wedge continues to play a central role in maintaining separation between several of the Borough's most closely linked settlements. The evidence shows that across its length; the wedge retains both physical openness and a strong sense of visual containment two factors that operate together to prevent coalescence. The northern part of the wedge, particularly Areas A and B, contains some of the most visually exposed and topographically elevated land between Hinckley and Barwell. These areas form a conspicuous and defensible open gap where long-distance views underscore the distinction between the two urban areas. The rising landform around St Mary's Church in Barwell reinforces this divide, and despite recent development pressures at Crabtree Farm, the open agricultural fields and pasture continue to create a meaningful buffer.
- 6.3 Between Barwell and Earl Shilton, the evidence demonstrates that Areas C and D are especially sensitive. Area D represents the narrowest remaining segment of the entire wedge, where unmanaged scrub, early successional woodland and strong hedgerow boundaries offer critical visual filtering. This prevents either settlement from being perceived as encroaching upon the other, even where the urban edges lie in close proximity. The importance of this area was a recurring theme in the site survey work, which highlighted how even limited development in this location would rapidly erode the perception of openness.
- 6.4 To the south and east, the more expansive landscapes of Areas G, H and I make a substantial contribution to keeping the edges of Hinckley and Burbage visually and physically distinct while also maintaining separation from Elmesthorpe. Mature woodland blocks, extensive pastoral farmland and the significant open character of Burbage Common all combine to create an unbroken green buffer. The site surveys highlighted the clarity with which these areas preserve not only the physical distance between settlements but also their individual identity and rural setting.
- 6.5 Across the wedge, intervisibility patterns observed during the site surveys confirm that long-range views, woodland containment, and the absence of built form maintain strong perceptual separation. Areas E and D, though visually enclosed, still function critically by *preventing built encroachment* into the narrowest parts of the gap.

- 6.6 Overall, the evidence confirms that the Green Wedge is performing strongly and consistently in preventing the merging of settlements. Its removal or reduction would significantly increase coalescence risk, particularly around Areas A, B, C and D.



Figure 44: Example of a long-range view from Area B

Guiding Development Form

- 6.7 The Green Wedge continues to act as an important tool in managing the spatial distribution of growth, reinforcing compact settlement patterns and providing clear limits to outward expansion. Evidence from the Desktop Survey and planning history demonstrates this.
- 6.8 Across the wedge, clear landscape features, including hedgerow boundaries, woodland blocks, areas of pronounced topography and watercourses, create well-defined settlement edges. These features reinforce the development form of Hinckley, Barwell, Earl Shilton and Burbage by establishing defensible limits to growth. In the northern areas, the strong openness of the land around Hinckley Road and Barwell Lane ensures that new development remains proportionate and avoids visually intrusive expansion into rural land.
- 6.9 The planning history also demonstrates the role of the wedge in guiding development decisions. While a number of appeal decisions have granted housing on the extreme edge of

the designation, inspectors consistently recognise the continuing strategic purpose of the wedge. These outcomes show that while planning need may sometimes outweigh localised harm, the wedge remains a key policy tool, and its overarching function in structuring development form continues to be upheld.

- 6.10 In the southern parts of the wedge, the extensive woodland and common land around Burbage Common (Areas H and I) help define the outer limit of Hinckley and Burbage, preventing dispersed or outward-facing development in a highly sensitive landscape. Here, the Green Wedge provides a strong and logical settlement edge, guiding development inward and contributing to the spatial coherence of the settlement structure.
- 6.11 In summary, the Green Wedge is continuing to guide development form effectively by reinforcing defined settlement boundaries, focusing growth within appropriate areas and preventing incremental rural encroachment.



Figure 45: Field view looking towards Burbage Woodland in Area I

Providing a green lung into urban areas

- 6.12 The desktop and field-based evidence repeatedly emphasises the role of the Green Wedge as a vital green lung for the four surrounding settlements. The green wedge forms a continuous environmental corridor that penetrates the urban area and provides immediate access to

nature for thousands of residents. This is particularly evident in the strong ecological and green infrastructure network that characterises Areas G, H and I, where mature woodland, semi-natural habitats and open meadows create significant landscape permeability for both people and wildlife.

- 6.13 The green wedge provides multiple environmental functions that directly benefit the adjacent urban areas. Its woodland blocks, hedgerows and semi-natural habitats contribute to air-quality regulation, heat moderation and carbon sequestration. While the Borough currently lacks designated Air Quality Management Areas, the wedge nonetheless supports the prevention of pollution build-up through its extensive vegetative cover. Water management is another key aspect of this function. The presence of watercourses, riparian corridors and naturally functioning floodplain, particularly within Areas E, F, H and I and demonstrates the role the wedge plays in attenuating runoff, improving water quality and offering space for natural flood processes.



Figure 46: Example of one of the watercourses which runs through the green wedge.

- 6.14 Ecologically, the Green Wedge forms one of the most significant habitat networks in the Borough, linking Burbage Common and Aston Firs SSSI with surrounding agricultural land, woodland fragments and hedgerow corridors. This connectivity provides an essential route for species movement and supports the objectives of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The 2025 UKHab Survey confirms that much of the wedge falls within priority areas for habitat enhancement, particularly in locations where unmanaged scrub and early successional woodland are emerging. These findings demonstrate both current value and future potential for biodiversity enhancement.
- 6.15 The wedge also provides a direct and highly valued contact with nature for surrounding communities. Whether through the extensive access networks around Burbage Common, the

footpaths linking Hinckley to Barwell, or the woodland edges accessible from Burbage, the wedge facilitates health, wellbeing and everyday engagement with green space.

- 6.16 Overall, the wedge performs strongly as a green lung, providing multifunctional environmental, ecological and health benefits that extend deeply into the surrounding urban fabric.

A recreational resource

- 6.17 Recreation is one of the Green Wedge's most visible and well-used functions. The combination of formal sports facilities, informal open spaces and a well-connected network of footpaths and bridleways gives it substantial recreational value for multiple communities. Areas F and H in particular contain a significant concentration of sports and leisure assets, including football, cricket, tennis and rugby facilities, as well as large expanses of mown and semi-improved grassland that support informal recreation.
- 6.18 Burbage Common, located within Area H, remains one of the Borough's most popular public open spaces and attracts visitors from a wide geographic area. The visitor centre, café, play area and woodland trails provide a diverse recreational offer that is used year-round. The site survey confirmed that footfall remains high even during the winter months, indicating the long-term importance of the site as a recreational anchor for the whole green wedge.
- 6.19 Elsewhere, footpaths such as those along Barwell Lane, Dawsons Lane and through the woodland edges of Areas G and I support walking, dog exercising, cycling and active travel between settlements. These routes create an interlinked network that not only encourages recreational use but also enhances sustainable movement corridors across the Borough. The cycleway linking Hinckley and Barwell is a particular example of how the green wedge supports active, non-car-based travel.
- 6.20 Although some parts of the wedge, such as Areas D and E, currently lack direct public access and therefore provide limited recreational value, they still contribute to the wider recreational experience by offering visual openness and tranquillity to those travelling through or alongside them. The Green Wedge Strategy identifies opportunities to enhance recreational provision in these underused areas, although this must be balanced carefully with ecological and landscape considerations.
- 6.21 In its entirety, the wedge remains a significant recreational asset, offering both formal and informal opportunities that support public wellbeing and enrich the landscape character of the Borough.



Figure 47: Example of signage welcoming visitors to Burbage Common and Woods

Concluding thoughts

- 6.22 The combined findings of the desktop and site survey work confirm that the Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge continues to perform strongly across all four of its strategic functions. It remains essential in preventing coalescence between several settlements, and its role in guiding development form is both effective and enduring. The wedge functions as a vital green lung, offering environmental, ecological and health benefits that extend deep into the urban area, while also providing an extensive and much-valued recreational resource for residents and visitors.

- 6.23 Although some variations in performance are evident at a local level, particularly where access or agricultural value is limited, the overall strategic functionality of the Green Wedge remains intact and robust. The landscape, ecological and recreational value of the wedge continues to justify its designation, and its protection will remain central to the delivery of sustainable development and high-quality placemaking within the emerging Local Plan.



Figure 48: Agricultural field with the urban edge of Hinckley in the background.

7. Recommendations and Conclusion

- 7.1 Strategically at the wider area level the green wedge fulfils the objectives set out in the Leicester and Leicestershire Green Wedge Methodology Paper. This section explores whether there are any areas which do not perform the role of the green wedge.
- 7.2 Any potential release of Green Wedge land must be guided by robust evidence and aligned with the principles of sustainable development. Key considerations include:
- Landscape sensitivity and visibility
 - Ecological value and habitat connectivity
 - Recreational access and community benefit
 - Flood risk and water management
 - Settlement identity and coalescence risk

Area A: South of Hinckley Road and north of Normandy Way

- 7.3 Area A continues to perform a critical role within the Green Wedge by maintaining a clear and visually open gap between the urban edges of Hinckley and Barwell. The desktop and on-site survey work demonstrate that this landscape is highly sensitive to change due to its open agricultural fields, elevated topography, and far-reaching visibility in multiple directions. The area forms part of one of the narrowest points of the Green Wedge, where the retention of open land is essential to preserving both the physical and perceptual separation of the two settlements. Hedgerow networks, mature boundary trees and the well-used public footpath reinforce the rural character of the landscape, supporting ecological connectivity and modest recreational use.
- 7.4 However, it is acknowledged that repeated planning permissions and appeal decisions at Crabtree Farm have now established a committed development footprint on the western edge of the assessment area. These approvals have resulted in a situation where the currently mapped Green Wedge boundary no longer aligns with the permitted extent of development. In light of this, a minor boundary amendment will be required to remove the land subject to approved residential schemes at Crabtree Farm from the Green Wedge. This amendment would reflect the implemented or implementable planning permissions, ensure internal consistency within the designation, and maintain policy clarity in the emerging Local Plan. The modification should be tightly drawn around the approved developable area only, in order to

avoid any unnecessary erosion of the remaining open land that continues to fulfil Green Wedge functions.

- 7.5 Beyond this localised adjustment, the wider extent of Area A should remain fully designated as Green Wedge. The open and visually exposed nature of the land means that any additional development would risk substantial harm to the separation between Hinckley and Barwell, weaken strategic views across the landscape, and undermine the rural setting of both settlements. Retaining the majority of Area A within the Green Wedge is therefore essential to safeguarding the long-term integrity, openness and ecological function of this part of the corridor.



Figure 49: Field within Area A

Area B: South of Barwell and north of Normandy Way

- 7.6 Area B forms one of the most visually prominent and topographically sensitive sections of the Green Wedge. The rising landform from the A47 towards Barwell, combined with open views across the countryside, reinforces the separation between Barwell and Hinckley. This area also accommodates valuable community assets, such as Dovecote Park, which enhance local

recreational provision. The presence of medieval ridge and furrow further strengthens the cultural and historic significance of the landscape, supporting its ongoing protection.

- 7.7 The evidence confirms that Area B performs strongly against all four Green Wedge functions and retains a clear strategic purpose. The landscape characteristics, combined with its recreational and heritage value, justify its continued inclusion within the designation. No boundary amendments are recommended, and protection of this area should be sustained to prevent visually prominent development that would undermine the rural setting and separation between settlements.



Figure 50: Dovecote Way Recreation Ground within Area B

Area C: East of The Common and south of Shilton Road

- 7.8 Assessment Area C continues to function as a critical part of the Green Wedge between Barwell and Earl Shilton, with a varied mosaic of allotments, paddocks and actively farmed land knitted together by strong hedgerow and tree lines. The gently sloping landform affords long views toward Burbage Common and across to Elmesthorpe and Stoney Stanton, reinforcing the perception of an open rural gap. Public rights of way from Dawsons Lane into Leicester Road support everyday access and informal recreation, while the allotments add

community value and seasonal biodiversity interest. These characteristics collectively sustain the area's role in preventing coalescence, guiding the settlement edge, and contributing to the wider green infrastructure network identified in the desktop and site surveys.

- 7.9 However, the planning history now establishes a committed residential scheme east of The Common, where an outline application for up to 95 dwellings was allowed on appeal in 2023. This creates a situation where the currently mapped Green Wedge boundary no longer aligns with implemented or implementable permissions at the edge of Area C. To maintain policy clarity and internal consistency, a focused boundary revision is required to remove from the Green Wedge only the land within the approved developable envelope associated with the "Land East of The Common, Barwell" permission, while retaining all structural green infrastructure, riparian margins, PROW corridors and strategic landscape buffers outside that envelope. This tight redrawing will reflect the appeal outcome without sanctioning wider erosion of the open gap that remains necessary to preserve separation between Barwell and Earl Shilton.
- 7.10 A further potential boundary amendment within Area C relates to the current planning application at Highcliffe, 158 Shilton Road, Barwell (25/00485/OUT), which seeks outline permission for up to 28 dwellings and is presently awaiting decision. Although earlier appeal decisions within the wider area have shown that some limited development may be accommodated at the periphery of Area C without wholly undermining the Green Wedge designation, the findings of this Review emphasise that the remaining open land continues to play a vital role in maintaining separation between Barwell and Earl Shilton. The sloping landform, open vistas, and strong hedgerow and field-pattern structure provide a clear and meaningful landscape buffer that continues to perform all four Green Wedge functions. Until the outcome of the application is known, this land should remain within the Green Wedge. Should permission be granted, the Green Wedge boundary may require refinement to reflect the approved developable footprint; however, any amendment should be tightly drawn and considered through the Local Plan Review to ensure it does not compromise the strategic separation function, landscape character or ecological value demonstrated in this assessment.
- 7.11 Beyond the above two paragraphs, the remainder of Area C should remain designated as Green Wedge. The site surveys emphasise that the sloping, visually prominent pasture and arable land continues to deliver the core functions of the designation and is highly sensitive to further built intrusion. Any additional release beyond the approved developable area would materially diminish the sense of openness, interrupt key vistas across the wedge and weaken the landscape-led edge that currently guides the form of development in this location. Where the approved scheme necessitates green infrastructure, it should be secured to reinforce

wedge functions including hedgerow restoration, new woodland edge planting, habitat links back toward Burbage Common, and high-quality treatment of the public right of way so that recreational connectivity is preserved and enhanced.



Figure 51: Public Right of Way through Area C

Area D: Land between Leicester Road (Carrs Hill) and Elmesthorpe Lane

- 7.12 Assessment Area D represents the narrowest part of the Green Wedge between Barwell and Earl Shilton and is therefore of strategic importance. The enclosed nature of the landscape, shaped by unmanaged scrub, hedgerows and emerging woodland, creates a strong sense of separation despite the proximity of settlement edges. The area has limited agricultural and recreational value, but its ecological contribution through diverse scrub and habitat corridors is notable. More importantly, its position at the most vulnerable pinch-point of the Green Wedge means the area plays a vital role in preventing settlement coalescence.
- 7.13 Due to its strategic significance for maintaining settlement separation and its sensitive landscape character, Area D should remain within the Green Wedge. No releases or boundary modifications are recommended. Future management could focus on habitat enhancement

and informal access opportunities, but only where these would not diminish the perceptual separation provided by the area's dense vegetation.



Figure 52: Horse Paddock within Area D

Area E: Land off Leicester Road

- 7.14 Assessment Area E is characterised by dense scrub, young woodland, a SuDS feature and visually contained spaces that contrast sharply with the more open landscapes elsewhere in the Green Wedge. While its enclosed nature means that long-distance views are limited, the area nonetheless plays an important perceptual role by maintaining a vegetated and undeveloped gap at a key gateway location between Barwell, Elvesthorpe and Hinckley. Its ecological value is notable, with the emerging woodland providing meaningful habitat connectivity and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement.
- 7.15 Although historically discussed as a potential location for minor boundary refinement, the site surveys confirm that removing Area E from the Green Wedge would weaken the visual and environmental separation between multiple settlement edges. Its transitional character and green gateway role justify its continued designation. The area should remain within the Green

Wedge, with potential future enhancements focusing on habitat management rather than recreation.



Figure 53: Horse Paddocks adjoining Area E beyond the green wedge within Blaby District

Area F: Land between Normandy Way and Leicester Road

- 7.16 Assessment Area F represents one of the most multifunctional landscapes within the Green Wedge, accommodating an extensive mix of agricultural fields, formal sports provision, woodland belts, and active travel routes. The site surveys indicate that the area continues to provide a perceptible physical gap between Hinckley and Barwell, particularly across the more open western land where long views reinforce a clear sense of separation. Public access is strong, with well-used rights of way and a concentration of sporting facilities that contribute significantly to community recreation and movement. Despite the presence of urban-fringe infrastructure, such as the stadium complex, tennis courts, floodlighting and associated paraphernalia the wider area retains a predominantly open and rural character that continues to fulfil the Green Wedge's core functions.

- 7.17 The Green Wedge Review (2020) identified a boundary amendment to implemented and this is to be carried forward within this Review to reflect the planning permission and now completed relocation of Dorothy Goodman Upper School onto land off Barwell Lane.
- 7.18 In light of the implemented permission, and consistent with the position established by the 2020 Green Wedge Review, it is recommended that the Green Wedge boundary is amended to exclude the Dorothy Goodman Upper School site. This amendment reflects both the planning approval and the long-term community function now attributed to the land, and it ensures that the Green Wedge boundary remains robust, coherent and aligned with physical reality on the ground. Importantly, this revision should be tightly drawn to encompass only the committed school development and associated playing fields, ensuring no further encroachment into the remaining open land that continues to perform a strong settlement-separation role.
- 7.19 Outside of this specific modification, the remainder of Area F should continue to be protected as Green Wedge. The landscape retains a high degree of openness and makes a material contribution to preventing the coalescence of Hinckley and Barwell. It also accommodates some of the most frequently used recreational assets in the Borough and provides a well-connected network of routes that deliver everyday access to nature and activity. Continued management of hedgerows, woodland edges and informal recreational corridors will strengthen the ecological and visual functions of the area, ensuring that its role within the Green Wedge remains firmly established.



Figure 54: Rugby Fields within Area F

Area G: Land east of Leicester Road and North of Burbage Common Road

- 7.20 Assessment Area G comprises mature woodland, grassland, equestrian uses and areas of open pasture that provide a seamless transition into Burbage Common. The area plays a clear role in preventing the outward spread of development from Hinckley and Burbage and contributes significantly to the ecological connectivity of the wider green infrastructure network. The open views from Burbage Common Road and the structurally rich woodland habitats demonstrate the area's environmental importance and landscape sensitivity.



Figure 55: Edge of Area G along Burbage Common Lane

- 7.21 A small Gypsy and Traveller site is located along the Leicester Road frontage. This development is tightly contained and is enclosed by mature vegetation, which substantially limits wider visibility and prevents any material encroachment into the core open land of the Green Wedge. Owing to its limited scale, roadside position, and strong containment by existing hedgerows and boundary features, the site does not prejudice the four identified functions of the Green Wedge: it does not affect settlement separation, does not influence the form or outward spread of development, does not diminish access to recreational resources, and does not compromise the area's role as a green lung. Importantly, its presence does not alter the overall rural and wooded character of Area G and does not indicate capacity for further built development within the Green Wedge.
- 7.22 Given its strong contribution to settlement separation, ecological networks and informal recreation, Area G should remain wholly within the Green Wedge. No boundary changes are recommended. The area presents opportunities for further habitat enhancement and woodland management that would strengthen its green infrastructure function.

Area H: Land off Leicester Road including Burbage Common and Hinckley Golf Course

- 7.23 Assessment Area H is the largest and most diverse landscape within the Green Wedge and represents one of the Borough's most significant recreational and ecological assets. Burbage Common and Woods, in particular, attracts substantial visitor numbers and provides a rich natural environment of woodland, meadows, wetland features and extensive path networks. The adjoining golf course and woodland belts maintain a broad and uninterrupted tract of open land that separates Hinckley, Burbage and Elmeſthorpe.



Figure 56: View towards Burbage Common and the cafe.

- 7.24 The evidence strongly supports the retention of Area H within the Green Wedge without modification. Protecting this area is essential to maintaining its recreational, ecological and landscape value, as well as safeguarding the rural setting of nearby settlements. Continued investment in visitor facilities, path management and habitat conservation would enhance the long-term resilience and accessibility of the area.

Area I: Land south of railway line and north-east of Burbage

- 7.25 Area I forms an extensive and multifunctional part of the Green Wedge, comprising a mosaic of mature woodland, agricultural land, recreational grassland, paddocks, and riparian features that collectively support a semi-rural landscape. This area provides a clear physical and perceptual separation between Burbage and the wider countryside, while also forming the southern gateway into the wider Burbage Common and woodland complex. The raised railway embankment creates a strong structural edge, limiting intervisibility to the north while allowing broad open views eastwards into Blaby District. The site surveys confirm that Area I supports strong ecological connectivity via woodland belts, hedgerows, scrub boundaries and stream corridors, and that it plays an important role in sustaining informal recreation through well-used woodland paths, desire lines, bridges and waymarked entrances.
- 7.26 Since the previous Green Wedge Review, planning permissions have altered the extent of committed development along the Burbage settlement edge. An appeal was allowed for the erection of eight dwellings on land to the rear of 5–15 The Coppice (21/00556/FUL and 24/00818/CONDIT), and this development is currently being implemented. As the permitted scheme lies within the existing Green Wedge boundary, this part of the designation is no longer reflective of on-the-ground circumstances and should therefore be amended to exclude the land associated with the approved development. Planning permission was also granted for six dwellings at 73 Sapcote Road (21/00654/FUL), which formed an allocation within the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD. However, this site is not actively being built out, and clarification is required as to whether the planning permission remains extant. If the permission has expired, the justification for amending the Green Wedge boundary at this location is reduced, and the designation should be retained until such time as the Local Plan Review determines whether a boundary change is appropriate.
- 7.27 In light of these permissions, it is recommended that the Green Wedge boundary in Area I be amended to remove only the land encompassed within the approved developable area associated with the appeal-allowed scheme at The Coppice (22/00014/PP). For the land at 73 Sapcote Road (21/00654/FUL), the status of the permission should first be confirmed. If the consent has expired, then the Green Wedge boundary in this location should be maintained and reconsidered as part of the Local Plan Review rather than amended at this stage. Where boundary changes are justified, any revision should be tightly drawn around the curtilages and access arrangements of the permitted development, ensuring no surplus land beyond the approved footprints is released. This approach reflects established planning decisions, responds accurately to the updated settlement edge, and preserves the strategic integrity of the Green Wedge. Importantly, the removal of these limited parcels does not compromise the primary separation function of Area I, as both sites lie

immediately adjacent to the existing built-up area of Burbage and do not encroach into the open core of the wedge.

- 7.28 Beyond these two discrete parcels, the remainder of Area I continues to perform all four Green Wedge functions strongly. The open agricultural fields to the east, the woodland corridor linking to Burbage Common, and the extensive internal path networks together preserve a substantial and meaningful rural buffer. The area remains highly sensitive to development, with long open vistas and strong ecological relationships that would be vulnerable to any further built encroachment. Therefore, no further boundary alterations are recommended, and the protection of the wider landscape should be maintained in full.
- 7.29 Enhancements to woodland path surfacing, signage and ecological connectivity may be explored as long as such interventions conserve the naturalistic character of the area. Retention of Area I (excluding the two consented sites) within the Green Wedge is essential for maintaining settlement separation, recreational access, ecological integrity and the rural setting of Burbage.



Figure 57: Field within Area I

Extensions to the green wedge

- 7.30 Depending on the scale and location of future development proposals to the north of Hinckley and west of Ashby Road, it may become necessary to explore an extension to the Green Wedge in this area. The evidence in this Review demonstrates that the existing wedge performs an essential role in maintaining separation between Barwell and Hinckley, particularly where the open gap narrows south of Barwell Lane and around the Ashby Road corridor. With the Barwell SUE expanding towards Ashby Road, any additional development coming forward on the Hinckley side of this corridor would significantly increase the risk of coalescence between the two settlements and could weaken the distinct identity of each. In such circumstances, an extension to the Green Wedge, potentially in the form of a green corridor or strategic landscape buffer could provide a reinforced separation function while also delivering wider benefits as a green lung, habitat link and recreational resource. This would help to guide development form, structure future growth and maintain openness along this sensitive urban fringe. The potential for such an extension should therefore be examined through the Local Plan Review should development be proposed in this part of Hinckley, ensuring that settlement separation, green infrastructure value and long-term landscape character are appropriately safeguarded.

7. Conclusion

7.1. The Hinckley/Barwell/Earl Shilton/Burbage Green Wedge Review 2025 has provided a comprehensive and evidence-led assessment of the green wedge's strategic role, landscape character, ecological value, and community function. The review confirms that the green wedge continues to perform strongly against the four core criteria established in the Leicester and Leicestershire Green Wedge Methodology:

- Preventing the merging of settlements
- Guiding development form
- Providing a green lung into urban areas
- Acting as a recreational resource

8.2 Across all nine assessment areas, the green wedge demonstrates a multifunctional landscape that supports spatial planning objectives, biodiversity enhancement, climate resilience, and public wellbeing. It remains a vital tool in shaping the form of development, maintaining settlement identity, and delivering accessible green infrastructure.

8.3 The review highlights the following key conclusions:

Settlement Separation

8.4 The Green Wedge continues to play a critical and irreplaceable role in maintaining clear and perceptible separation between Hinckley, Barwell, Earl Shilton and Burbage. Site survey work shows that the open agricultural landscapes of Areas A, B and F remain particularly important in retaining the physical and visual gap between Hinckley and Barwell, while Areas C and D form the narrowest but most strategically sensitive break between Barwell and Earl Shilton. To the south and east, the extensive woodland and open habitats of Areas G, H and I safeguard the rural edge of Burbage and prevent encroachment toward Elmesthorpe. Across all areas, the Review confirms that the Green Wedge continues to prevent both the physical and perceived merging of settlements and remains necessary to preserve the Borough's settlement hierarchy and distinct urban identities.

Development Form

8.5 The Green Wedge successfully shapes the pattern and direction of growth, reinforcing compact and logical settlement boundaries. Landscape structure, topography, woodland belts, watercourses and field patterns collectively provide strong physical limits to outward

expansion. The Review demonstrates that the designation continues to guide development away from visually sensitive landscapes and toward more appropriate locations within existing settlement envelopes. Although some developments have been permitted on the edge of the wedge through appeal decisions or site-specific considerations, the designation remains broadly effective in preventing unplanned expansion into open countryside. The Review concludes that maintaining the overall extent of the Green Wedge is necessary to uphold strategic spatial planning objectives and to ensure that development form remains visually coherent and landscape-led.



Figure 58: View towards Barwell Church from Area A

Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

- 8.6 The Green Wedge forms a vital part of the Borough's green infrastructure network. It contains significant areas of woodland, grassland, hedgerows, wetland features and riparian corridors, including Burbage Common, Burbage Wood and Aston Firs SSSI, one of the most ecologically important habitats in eastern England. The Green Wedge Review identifies that the green

wedge supports extensive habitat connectivity and forms a key environmental corridor linking designated and semi-natural habitats across the Borough. The area contributes significantly to the aims of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and provides clear opportunities for Biodiversity Net Gain delivery through restoration of hedgerow networks, enhancement of species-rich grassland and strengthening of woodland edges. The wedge also contributes to climate resilience through its role in water management, flood alleviation, air-quality regulation and microclimate cooling.

Recreation and Community Use

- 8.7 The Green Wedge continues to be one of the Borough's most valued recreational and community resources. Burbage Common and Woods attracts significant visitor numbers year-round and provides a large, accessible natural greenspace for walking, informal play, nature exploration and education. In Area F, formal sports facilities including football, rugby, cricket and tennis infrastructure, support active community use. Allotments within Areas C and A provide opportunities for food growing and community engagement, while public rights of way throughout the wedge facilitate active travel between settlements. Together, these assets create a diverse recreational landscape that contributes substantially to community wellbeing, health, education and social cohesion. The Review highlights that enhancements to wayfinding, footpath quality and habitat interpretation could further strengthen recreational value in future years.



Figure 59: Access point within Burbage Common and Woods

Landscape Sensitivity and Visual Character

- 8.8 Across all assessment areas, the Green Wedge is characterised by a high degree of landscape sensitivity. Open fields, ridge-and-furrow features, mature woodland blocks, strong hedgerow patterns and visually exposed slopes combine to create a distinctive and often highly visible rural landscape context. Key views across Areas A, B and F reinforce settlement separation, while the woodland edges of Areas G, H and I contain and frame longer vistas. Areas where vegetation enclosure is strong such as Areas D and E, still contribute perceptually to the wedge's openness and rural character. The Review concludes that many parts of the Green Wedge would be highly vulnerable to built development, and their loss would significantly alter both the experience and character of the landscape. Maintaining landscape continuity and openness is therefore essential to safeguarding the environmental quality and visual identity of this part of the Borough.

Boundary amendments

- 8.9 The Review has identified several locations where boundary refinement is required to reflect implemented planning permissions, correct inconsistencies or respond to site-specific evidence while preserving the wider Green Wedge function. These amendments are limited,

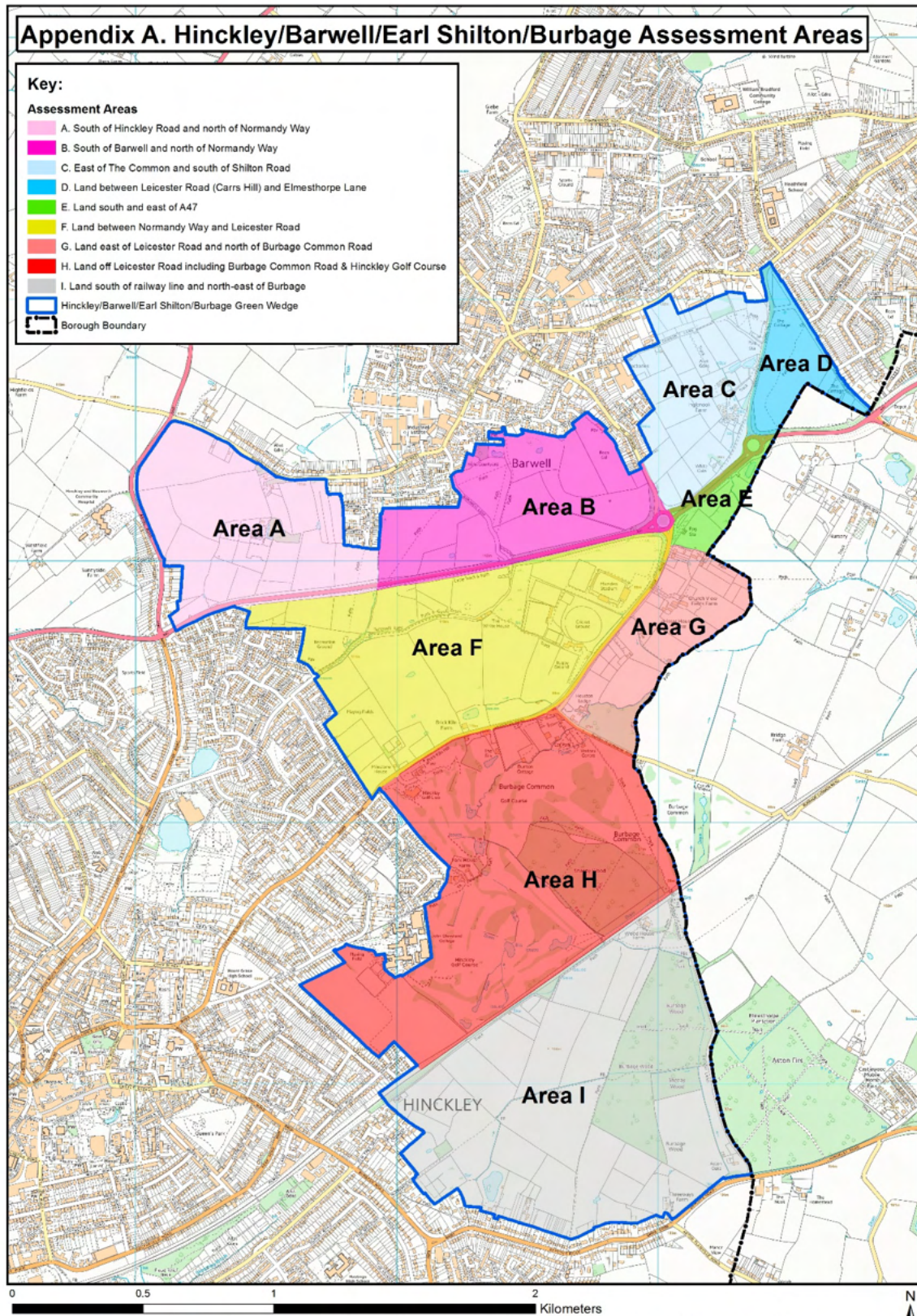
tightly drawn and do not undermine the overall integrity or strategic purpose of the designation. In addition, one area is identified for potential future extension subject to outcomes of the Local Plan Review.

Table 6: Proposed Boundary amendments

Assessment Area	Location / Planning Reference	Nature of Amendment	Reason for Amendment
Area A	Land at Crabtree Farm (multiple planning applications /appeals)	Remove approved developable footprint from Green Wedge	Planning permissions implemented/committed; ensure consistency with settlement edge and policy clarity.
Area C	Land East of The Common, Barwell (23/01229/OUT – Appeal Allowed)	Remove only the approved developable area	Reflect appeal decision while retaining strategic open land; preserve separation between Barwell and Earl Shilton.
Area C (Potential Amendment)	Highcliffe, 158 Shilton Road, Barwell (25/00485/OUT – Awaiting decision)	<i>Potential future amendment pending outcome of the current planning application</i>	Land continues to perform all four Green Wedge functions; boundary change only appropriate if permission is granted. Any revision should be tightly defined and considered through the Local Plan Review to maintain settlement separation and landscape integrity.
Area F	Dorothy Goodman Upper	Remove school site from Green Wedge	Consistent with 2020 Review; planning permission implemented;

Assessment Area	Location / Planning Reference	Nature of Amendment	Reason for Amendment
	School (Barwell Lane)		community use outweighs Green Wedge harm.
Area I (1)	Land Rear of 5–15 The Coppice (22/00014/PP – Appeal Allowed)	Remove approved developable area	Development being implemented; boundary must reflect updated built form.
Area I (2)	73 Sapcote Road (21/00654/FUL)	Boundary revision conditional pending confirmation of whether permission has expired	If permission extant, remove developable area; if expired, retain Green Wedge designation and reassess via Local Plan Review.
Potential Extension Area	Land north of Hinckley / west of Ashby Road	<i>Potential extension to be explored through the Local Plan Review</i>	To maintain separation between Barwell SUE and Hinckley; provide green buffer/green corridor and prevent coalescence.

Appendix A: Assessment Areas



Appendix B: Planning Applications 8 December 2020 to 8 December 2025

Application number	Location	Proposal	Decision
21/00031/NON DET	Land At Crabtree Farm Hinckley Road Barwell Leicestershire	Residential development of up to 25 dwellings with associated public open space and infrastructure (outline - access to be considered)	Appeal Allowed
21/00053/FUL	Paddock South Of Hinckley Road Barwell Leicester Leicestershire LE9 8DP	Manege	Permitted
21/00169/CON DIT	Land East of Leicester Road Barwell Hinckley Leicestershire LE10 3PR	Variation of conditions 2 (plans) of planning permissions 18/00751/DEEM to amend internal road layout, attenuation pond design, increased service yard and plant room, increased administration building and elevation changes to the ceremonial hall	Permitted
21/00257/HOU	Fairways Cottage Leicester Road Hinckley Leicestershire LE10 3DR	Two storey rear extension	Refused

Application number	Location	Proposal	Decision
21/00264/FUL	Hinckley Rugby Club Leicester Road Hinckley Leicestershire LE10 3DR	Extension to existing club house to include additional changing facilities, a rehabilitation room and additional kitchen space	Permitted
21/00347/CLE	Church View Fields Farm Leicester Road Barwell Leicester Leicestershire LE9 8BB	Storage comprising 3 units in the former agricultural building, 9 shipping containers used for storage, storage within the yard area to the south-east of the building and caravan/motorhome storage in other yard area	Permitted
21/00365/FUL	Land At Rear of Penbryn 156 Shilton Road Barwell Leicester Leicestershire LE9 8BN	Proposed stable block	Permitted
21/00435/FUL	Acorn Coffee Shop Visitors Centre Burbage Common Road Hinckley Leicestershire LE10 3DD	Canopies to front and rear of visitor centre	Permitted
21/00556/FUL	Land Rear Of 5 - 15 The Coppice Burbage Leicestershire	Erection of No. 8 dwellings with associated access and landscaping	Appeal Allowed
21/00581/OUT	Land At Crabtree Farm Hinckley Road Barwell Leicestershire	Residential development of up to 25 dwellings with associated public open space and infrastructure (outline - access to be considered)	Appeal Allowed

Application number	Location	Proposal	Decision
21/00654/FUL	73 Sapcote Road Burbage Hinckley Leicestershire LE10 2AS	6 new dwelling houses with associated access and ancillary spaces.	Permitted
21/00695/FUL	Land At Crabtree Farm Hinckley Road Barwell Leicestershire	Residential development of 51 dwellings with associated access and parking	Appeal Allowed
21/00813/CLP	Fairways Cottage Leicester Road Hinckley Leicestershire LE10 3DR	Certificate of Lawful Proposed Development for detached outbuilding	Appeal dismissed
21/01343/FUL	Hinckley Rugby Club Leicester Road Hinckley Leicestershire LE10 3DR	Shelter with raised viewing area and press box	Permitted
21/01470/OUT	Land East of The Common Barwell Leicestershire	Residential development of 110 dwellings with associated access, open space and landscaping (outline - access only)	Appeal Dismissed
22/00014/PP	Land Rear Of 5 - 15 The Coppice Burbage Leicestershire	Erection of No. 8 dwellings with associated access and landscaping	Appeal Allowed
22/00018/NON DET	Land East of The Common Barwell Leicestershire	Residential development of 110 dwellings with associated access, open space and landscaping (outline - access only)	Appeal Dismissed

Application number	Location	Proposal	Decision
22/00024/NON DET	Land At Crabtree Farm Hinckley Road Barwell Leicestershire	Residential development of 51 dwellings with associated access and parking	Appeal Allowed
22/00224/FUL	Leicester Road Football Club Leicester Road Football Ground Leicester Road Hinckley Leicestershire LE10 3DR	Proposed development of a multi-use games area pitch with associated floodlighting and fencing	Permitted
22/00594/FUL	White House Cottage Barwell Lane Hinckley Leicester Leicestershire LE9 8DA	Change of use of existing outbuilding to a single residential unit	Refused
22/00626/CLP	The Oaks Sapcote Road Burbage Hinckley Leicestershire LE10 2AT	Proposed single storey pool building	Permitted
22/00790/FUL	Land South East Of Dawsons Lane Barwell Leicestershire	Change of use of land to provide a dog day care facility and associated secure dog walking facility	Refused
22/01053/FUL	Land At Crabtree Farm Hinckley Road Barwell Leicestershire	Proposed construction of 45 dwellinghouses with garage and associated driveway, open space, landscaping, drainage and LEAP	Permitted
22/01018/FUL	The Cottage Elmesthorpe Lane Earl Shilton Leicestershire LE9 7PU	Proposed three bedroom replacement dwelling following demolition of the existing three bedroomed detached house and garage.	Permitted

Application number	Location	Proposal	Decision
23/00131/FUL	Inglenook Farm Leicester Road Barwell Leicester Leicestershire LE9 8BD	Proposed replacement and extension of existing barns and erection of new detached barn	Permitted
23/00146/FUL	Inglenook Farm Leicester Road Barwell Leicester Leicestershire LE9 8BD	Proposed two storey detached house and garage (following demolition of existing dwelling and semi-temporary accommodation)	Permitted
23/00268/FUL	Leicester Road Football Club Leicester Road Football Ground Leicester Road Hinckley Leicestershire LE10 3DR	Proposed new food retail unit and extension to existing club shop	Permitted
23/00366/FUL	Inglenook Farm Leicester Road Barwell Leicester Leicestershire LE9 8BD	Proposed replacement of existing barns	Withdrawn
23/00455/FUL	Land South East Of Dawsons Lane Barwell Leicestershire	Change of use of land to provide a dog day care facility and associated fence	Appeal Dismissed
23/00535/FUL	Inglenook Farm Leicester Road Barwell Leicester Leicestershire LE9 8BD	Erection of 9 accommodation pods, 4 holiday lodges, management building with associated internal access roads, parking, landscaping and surface water balancing	Appeal Dismissed
23/00790/FUL	The Cottage Elmesthorpe Lane Earl	Change of Use of paddock (Sui generis	Permitted

Application number	Location	Proposal	Decision
	Shilton Leicester Leicestershire LE9 7PU	agriculture) to dog exercising area (Class E) with associated fencing and parking	
23/00922/FUL	Hinckley Town Cricket Club Leicester Road Hinckley Leicestershire LE10 3DR	Two storey rear extension and stairs to clubhouse/pavilion	Permitted
23/01135/FUL	Land Adjacent to Hinckley Rugby Club Leicester Road Hinckley Leicestershire LE10 3DR	Construction of two storey boxing gym with associated parking, outdoor activity areas and landscaping	Permitted
23/01175/FUL	Land At Crabtree Farm Hinckley Road Barwell Leicestershire	Residential development of 51 dwellings with associated access and parking (revised scheme of 21/00695/FUL)	Refused
23/01177/FUL	Land At Crabtree Farm Hinckley Road Barwell Leicestershire	Residential development of 44 dwellinghouses with garage and associated driveway, open space, landscaping, drainage and LEAP (Revised scheme 22/01053/FUL)	Refused
23/01184/FUL	Land At Crabtree Farm Hinckley Road Barwell Leicestershire	Residential development of 16 dwellinghouses with associated garages, driveway, open space, landscaping, drainage and LEAP	Refused
23/01186/FUL	Land At Crabtree Farm Hinckley Road Barwell Leicestershire	Residential development of 14 dwellinghouses with associated garages, driveway, open space, landscaping, drainage and LEAP	Refused

Application number	Location	Proposal	Decision
23/01229/OUT	Land East of The Common Barwell Leicestershire	Outline Planning application for up to 95 dwellings with associated access, open space and landscaping following demolition of all buildings on site	Appeal Allowed
24/00007/PP	Land South East Of Dawsons Lane Barwell Leicestershire	Change of use of land to provide a dog day care facility and associated fence	Appeal Dismissed
24/00010/PP	Inglenook Farm Leicester Road Barwell Leicester Leicestershire LE9 8BD	Erection of 9 accommodation pods, 4 holiday lodges, management building with associated internal access roads, parking, landscaping and surface water balancing	Appeal Dismissed
24/00017/FUL	Hinckley Rugby Club Leicester Road Hinckley Leicestershire LE10 3DR	Replacement of 3G Artificial Turf Pitch (3G ATP) and associated fence, gate, storage container, lighting, hard-standing areas, vehicular access and other works	Permitted
24/00984/FUL	Hinckley Golf Club Leicester Road	Remove and replace damaged timber sheds with a steel portal frame	Permitted

Application number	Location	Proposal	Decision
	Hinckley Leicestershire LE10 3DR	building to store golf caddies.	
24/01123/DISC ON	Hinckley Rugby Club Leicester Road Hinckley Leicestershire LE10 3DR	Application to discharge condition 3 (Community Use Agreement) attached to planning permission 24/00017/FUL	Discharged
25/00485/OUT	Highcliffe 158 Shilton Road Barwell Leicester Leicestershire LE9 8BN	Outline planning permission for residential development of up to 28 dwellings with associated infrastructure (All matters reserved except for access and layout)	Awaiting decision
25/01101/FUL	Land Rear Of 5 - 15 The Coppice Burbage Leicestershire	Erection of a custom build bungalow and detached garage	Awaiting decision
25/01067/FUL	Hinckley Golf Course Leicester Road Hinckley Leicestershire LE10 3DR	The installation of 132 solar panels on the south facing face of the existing roof to provide renewable energy to the premises	Awaiting decision

Appendix C: Assessment Area Pro-formas

Location: Area A – South of Hinckley Road and north of Normandy Way

Site Identification	Description
Reference	Area A
Date of Visit	14/01/2026
Weather Conditions	Frosty clear morning

Physical Characteristics	Description
Land use description	Predominantly arable farmland with cropped fields; hedgerow boundaries; adjacent to A47 roadside infrastructure (bus stop visible), horse paddocks.
Adjacent uses	Agricultural, Residential, Hospital
Topography	Gentle incline rising toward Hinckley Road, Barwell, with occasional undulations across the landscape.
Vegetation cover	Hedgerows along field boundaries, occasional mature trees, cropped fields with green vegetation.
Landscape features	Medium-height hedgerows, isolated mature trees, grass verges along roadside, overhead utility poles in distance.

Physical Characteristics	Description
Access/paths	There is a public footpath which runs from Ashby Road to Hinckley Road, the access point from Hinckley Road is heavily vegetated which may make it tricky to access in the summer months.
Water features	No visible water bodies; likely field drainage ditches present.

Visual Assessment	Description
Views into area	The site is generally open with low vegetation, fields remain visually exposed allowing clear views from surrounding roads, footpaths, and adjacent properties. Boundary hedgerows and tree lines provide partial screening but do not fully enclose the site.
Views out of area	Offers expansive views across adjacent countryside into Barwell and wider green wedge area. Tree belts along the A47 and hedgerows frame the landscape, maintaining a rural character. Some built development (Barwell) is visible but softened by vegetation.
Key vista/landscape sensitivity	Contributes to key visual corridors within the Green Wedge. Moderate to high sensitivity due to its role in settlement separation and ecological connectivity.
Visual intrusion	Urban edge features and nearby buildings introduce minor visual intrusion.

Visual Assessment	Description
	Minimal built development within this assessment area.

Functional Assessment	Description
Agricultural Value	High, likely used for seasonal cropping, contributing to local agricultural productivity. Evidence suggests the land is actively managed.
Ecological Value	Moderate, hedgerows and mature trees provide habitat connectivity; cropped fields may limit biodiversity but still provide habitat and food sources.
Recreation/Public Access	Moderate, public footpath across northern section of this area. Allotments and horse paddocks also provide a recreational resource for users of these spaces
Contribution to settlement separation	Significant, maintains open green wedge between Barwell and Hinckley, preventing coalescence.

Location: Area B – South of Barwell, North of Normandy Way

Site Identification	Description
Reference	Area B
Date of Visit	14/01/2026
Weather Conditions	Frosty Clear Sunny Morning

Physical Characteristics	Description
Land use description	Agriculture, paddocks Recreation ground and A47
Adjacent uses	Residential, place of worship, Football Stadium, and Agriculture.
Topography	A fairly significant incline towards Barwell, peaking at the edge of the green wedge abutting the properties on Church Lane.
Vegetation cover	Hedgerows, trees, grazing land and ploughed fields. Church has a prominent position on the edge of the green wedge
Landscape features	The area rises upwards from the A47 and is arable in nature. Field boundaries are defined by hedgerows, or tree lines, which may serve as ecological corridors.
Access/paths	Cycleway, pedestrianised Barwell Lane and rights of way across fields. The green wedge can be accessed at numerous points due to the number of public rights of ways that cut through this area. Tarmac footpath linking Hinckley and Barwell.
Water features	No prominent water features present. There are drainage ditches or field drains present to manage water runoff.

Visual Assessment	Description
Views into area	Visibility into the site is generally limited from the Barwell side due to adjoining built development. Glimpses are possible from the A47 and The Common through breaks in vegetation. However, once inside the green wedge, particularly when accessed via public rights of way or from Dovecote Park the elevated position provides expansive views across the landscape from Barwell, offering a strong sense of openness and rural character.
Views out of area	The outward views vary depending on location within the site. From the elevated position near Barwell Church, there are long-distance views across the countryside toward Hinckley, extending for miles. From Barwell Lane, views toward Barwell and Earl Shilton are also evident, while Dovecote Park offers expansive vistas across the landscape toward Hinckley, reinforcing the sense of openness and rural character.
Key vista/landscape sensitivity	The area offers several notable vistas that contribute to its landscape character and sense of openness. From elevated positions within the green wedge, particularly near Barwell Church and along public rights of way, there are long-distance views across the countryside toward Hinckley, extending for miles. These views encompass a gently undulating rural landscape punctuated by hedgerows and tree belts, reinforcing the perception of separation between settlements. Expansive panoramas are also visible from Dovecote Park, where the elevated vantage point provides sweeping views toward Hinckley and the wider green wedge. The Open fields often had

Visual Assessment	Description
	the backdrop of layered horizons of woodland and distant settlement edges creating a strong rural character.
Visual intrusion	Currently, low visual intrusion due to the naturalistic and agricultural land use. Minimal built development within this assessment area.

Functional Assessment	Description
Agricultural Value	The site appears to retain moderate to high agricultural value, with evidence of historic and current land use. The visible ridge and furrow earthworks in parts of the area indicate a legacy of medieval open-field farming, which adds historic significance to the landscape. These undulating patterns suggest that the land has been cultivated for centuries, reinforcing its cultural and agricultural heritage. Currently, the fields appear to be under grassland management or grazing, with some areas showing signs of seasonal use. Soil structure and drainage seem suitable for continued agricultural activity, and the field layout supports mechanised farming where required. The combination of active agricultural use and historic features enhances the site's multifunctional value, contributing to both food production and heritage conservation. Soil quality and drainage seem suitable for cropping, and the field layout supports mechanised farming.
Ecological Value	The site demonstrates moderate ecological value, primarily through its structural features and connectivity. Hedgerows and

Functional Assessment	Description
	mature trees along field boundaries provide important habitat corridors for birds, small mammals, and invertebrates. The presence of ridge and furrow indicates long-term stability of land use, which often supports species-rich grassland communities where not intensively cultivated. Although many fields appear to be under grassland or grazing management, these areas can still offer foraging opportunities for farmland birds and pollinators. The proximity to other green infrastructure elements such as wooded areas and hedgerow networks, enhances ecological connectivity across the landscape. Drainage ditches or field drains, while not prominent in the images, likely contribute to riparian habitats supporting amphibians and aquatic invertebrates.
Recreation/Public Access	The site provides good public access, with well-signposted footpath routes that are easy to navigate. Access across fields is facilitated by stiles and a kissing gate, ensuring connectivity for walkers. The Barwell Lane footpath appeared to be well used during the site visit, indicating its popularity for informal recreation and active travel. These routes contribute to the area's amenity value and reinforce its role as a multifunctional green space. Dovecote Park was in good condition and clearly marked out for grassroots football. The pavilion on site supports the parks use for football. There was also an area of equipped play which was of good quality.
Contribution to settlement separation	The upward-sloping landform from the A47 creates a strong sense of openness and visual separation between Barwell and Hinckley. This elevated topography means that any built

Functional Assessment	Description
	development would be highly prominent, significantly altering the rural character and eroding the perception of separation between settlements. The area's open fields and uninterrupted views reinforce its strategic role in preventing coalescence, making it highly sensitive to change.

Location: Area C – East of the Common and South of Shilton Road

Site Identification	Description
Reference	Area C
Date of Visit	14/01/2026
Weather Conditions	Bright frosty morning

Physical Characteristics	Description
Land use description	The site comprises allotments, agricultural land, farm buildings, paddocks, dog day care centre and areas of grazing.
Adjacent uses	Surrounding land uses include agriculture, residential development, and employment sites.
Topography	The land gently slopes downward toward the A47, offering views of Burbage, Earl Shilton, Elmesthorpe, and the church spire in Stoney Stanton.
Vegetation cover	The area features paddocks interspersed with mature trees and shrubs.
Landscape features	The landform rises noticeably from the A47, creating an elevated position that reinforces the sense of openness across the area. The landscape comprises a mix of uses, including equine paddocks, allotments, and agricultural fields under cultivation. Field boundaries are clearly defined by mature hedgerows and

Physical Characteristics	Description
	intermittent tree lines, which not only structure the setting but also function as important ecological corridors, supporting habitat connectivity and biodiversity.
Access/paths	Access is provided via Dawsons Lane, which connects to a public footpath which connects onto Leicester Road in two locations.
Water features	Although there are no significant water bodies within the site, ponds, drainage ditches, and field drains are present, supporting surface water management.

Visual Assessment	Description
Views into area	Expansive, open views are available from Shilton Road, looking across the green wedge towards Burbage Common and beyond.
Views out of area	The sloping topography provides open outward views from Shilton Road towards Burbage Common.
Key vista/landscape sensitivity	The green wedge's sloping landform creates a highly sensitive visual environment. Development here would significantly alter the landscape character, introduce substantial visual intrusion, and bring built form closer to the A47, thereby compromising the integrity and openness of the wedge.
Visual intrusion	There is minor visual intrusion from limited built development along Leicester Road, comprising residential properties and small independent commercial units. The Doggy Day Care

Visual Assessment	Description
	Centre is also present but is effectively screened, reducing its visual impact. Built structures associated with the allotments are confined to small-scale features such as sheds, greenhouses, and propagation tunnels.

Functional Assessment	Description
Agricultural Value	The eastern part of the site comprises grasslands and paddocks, while the western side is more intensively agricultural in character. It should be noted that a section of the western area already benefits from planning permission for residential development.
Ecological Value	The area exhibits moderate ecological value, characterised by a mix of allotments, grazing pasture, and hedgerow networks that provide structural diversity and habitat connectivity. Allotments offer microhabitats through unmanaged plots, compost heaps, and varied vegetation, supporting invertebrates and pollinators during the growing season. Grazing fields, while limiting species-rich grassland, retain mature trees that provide potential roosting sites for bats and nesting opportunities for birds. Hedgerows and scrub along field boundaries act as wildlife corridors, enhancing connectivity to adjacent woodland. Overall, the area supports a range of species and offers opportunities for biodiversity enhancement through hedgerow restoration, wildflower margins, and wildlife-friendly practices within allotments.

Functional Assessment	Description
Recreation/Public Access	The site accommodates allotments and horse paddocks. Public rights of way provide good connectivity and access through the area, supporting informal recreation.
Contribution to settlement separation	The site plays a critical role in maintaining the physical and visual separation between Barwell and Earl Shilton. This separation helps preserve the distinct identity of each settlement and prevents urban coalescence.

Location: Area D – Land between Leicester Road (Carrs Hill) and Elvesthorpe Lane

Site Identification		Description
Reference	Area D	
Date of Visit	14/01/2026	
Weather Conditions	Bright Cold Morning	

Physical Characteristics	
Land use description	Towards the south of Area D, the land is being used as horse paddocks and there is also a paddock for canine use offering a secure dog field. The remainder of the large parcel of land is semi-natural vegetation and scrubland. The area is dominated by unmanaged scrub and bramble growth. There are also a number of deciduous trees along the Leicester Road edge suggesting successional woodland. The northern smaller parcel is characterised as rough grassland.
Adjacent uses	Residential and agriculture
Topography	The landform gently slopes downward toward the A47.
Vegetation cover	The area comprises a mix of unmanaged habitats. Large sections are dominated by rough grassland, with tall, tussocky grasses and patches of green ground vegetation. Dense bracken is present in several areas, particularly toward the central and southern sections, forming thick, brown fronds

Physical Characteristics	
	typical of winter dieback. Scrub vegetation, including bramble and hawthorn, is widespread along field edges and within the site, creating dense thickets in places. There is a clear presence of early successional woodland, primarily young deciduous species such as birch, forming belts and clusters along boundaries. Hedgerows and scattered mature trees provide structural diversity, particularly along roadside edges and field margins.
Landscape features	The site is characterised by a gently sloping landform that falls toward the A47, creating a subtle gradient across the area. The landscape has a naturalistic and transitional character, with open areas of rough grassland interspersed with dense patches of bracken and scrub. Field boundaries are defined by mature hedgerows and intermittent tree belts, while clusters of young deciduous trees form early successional woodland along the edges and roadside. These features create a mix of open and semi-enclosed spaces, with strong boundary vegetation providing visual containment and reinforcing separation from adjacent roads and settlements.
Access/paths	There is no physical public access into this part of the Green Wedge. The only route through the area is Elvesthorpe Lane, which divides the two parcels and then continues along the eastern boundary. While this lane does not provide pedestrian access into the area, it offers clear visual access across the landscape from the roadside. Leicester Road runs along the western boundary, forming a strong edge to the area and similarly providing visual connectivity rather than direct public

Physical Characteristics	
	entry. No formal footpaths, bridleways, or permissive routes were observed within the area.
Water features	A ditch runs parallel to Elmesthorpe Lane and appears to function as a drainage feature. It is narrow and shallow, with steep sides, and contains dense vegetation. The base and sides are covered with dead bracken, leaf litter, and unmanaged scrub, while overhanging branches from adjacent hawthorn partially obscure the ditch. The ditch itself is naturalistic and unmanaged, contributing to surface water management along the road edge.

Visual Assessment	
Views into area	Views into the site were generally limited from Leicester Road due to the presence of high vegetation and belts of early successional woodland along the boundary, which provide strong visual screening. From Elmesthorpe Lane, the site appeared more open in parts, but visibility was still restricted by dense scrub and tree cover. Around the paddocks, views were clearer, offering better visual access across the landscape. The northern small parcel was noticeably more open, with less boundary vegetation and reduced screening, allowing wider views into this section of the site.

Visual Assessment	
Views out of area	Views out of the area were generally limited due to the dense vegetation growth and belts of early successional woodland providing strong screening. The combination of tall hedgerows, scrub, and young trees along the boundaries significantly restricted outward visibility, creating a sense of enclosure across most of the site.
Key vista/landscape sensitivity	Views into the area are largely restricted by dense vegetation and early successional woodland, particularly along Leicester Road. Elmesthorpe Lane offers slightly more open views, though screening remains strong, with clearer visibility around paddocks and the northern parcel being more open. Outward views are similarly limited due to tall hedgerows and woodland belts, creating an enclosed character. The landscape features a gentle slope toward the A47. Open rough grassland contrasts with dense bracken and scrub, forming a patchwork of open and semi-enclosed spaces, while a roadside drainage ditch adds to the naturalistic character.
Visual intrusion	Limited built development within this area, there is a small cluster of built development to the south close to the A47.

Functional Assessment	
Agricultural Value	The site has very limited agricultural function. There is no evidence of active cultivation or crop production, and the land is predominantly unmanaged, comprising rough grassland, scrub, and early successional woodland. While small paddocks are present, these appear to be used for equine purposes rather

Functional Assessment	
	than farming, indicating that the area does not currently contribute to agricultural productivity.
Ecological Value	The site demonstrates moderate ecological value, primarily due to its structural diversity and habitat connectivity. Dense hedgerows, scrub, and early successional woodland provide important corridors for wildlife movement, supporting species such as birds, small mammals, and invertebrates. The unmanaged nature of the area, with rough grassland, bracken, and scrub, offers microhabitats and foraging opportunities, while mature trees along boundaries provide potential roosting sites for bats. The drainage ditch adds riparian habitat features, contributing to biodiversity and surface water management. Overall, the site functions as part of a wider ecological network, linking adjacent green spaces and reinforcing habitat connectivity across the landscape.
Recreation/Public Access	There is no formal public access into this part of the Green Wedge, as no footpaths, bridleways, or permissive routes were observed. Elmesthorpe Lane runs through the two parcels and along the eastern boundary, providing visual access but not pedestrian entry. Leicester Road forms the western boundary and similarly offers visual connectivity rather than direct access. While the site lacks public recreational facilities, it does accommodate some private recreational uses, including horse paddocks and a dog paddock, which provide equestrian and canine exercise opportunities.
Contribution to settlement separation	The site plays an important role in maintaining the physical and visual separation between Barwell and Earl Shilton. Its open character and strong boundary vegetation help prevent

Functional Assessment

coalescence and preserve the distinct identity of each settlement. This function is particularly critical around the northern parcel, where the Green Wedge narrows significantly, making the gap between the two settlements more vulnerable to erosion. Retaining this area within the Green Wedge is essential to safeguarding settlement separation and the strategic integrity of the landscape.

Location: Area E – Land off Leicester Road

Site Identification	
Reference	Area E
Date of Visit	14/01/2026
Weather Conditions	Some clouds, sky brightening

Physical Characteristics	
Land use description	Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDs), woodland and grassland
Adjacent uses	The site is bordered by agricultural land and residential development. Major infrastructure features include the A47, which define the area's edges and influence its character.
Topography	The land is largely flat with a gradual slope from the east to west, descending towards The Common roundabout.
Vegetation cover	The area appears to have early to mid-successional woodland development. High structural diversity, with trees, scrub, and rough ground flora. Signs of rewilding or ecological enhancement, particularly in areas with tree tubes. Dense scrub and bramble, suggesting limited recent management.
Landscape features	The landscape is characterised by a mix of early-successional woodland, dense scrub, and overgrown hedgerow boundaries that create a strongly enclosed and naturalistic setting. Young tree planting, areas of rough grassland, and patches of bramble

Physical Characteristics	
	and thorn scrub contribute to a varied structure and a semi-wild appearance. Subtle variations in ground levels, alongside the presence of a small watercourse and a discreet SuDS feature, introduce additional texture and ecological interest but remain visually integrated within the wider mosaic of woodland, scrub, and unmanaged vegetation.
Access/paths	Access to the site is limited, with a private vehicular entrance that is secured by a gate and not available for public use. A public right of way runs along the eastern edge of Area E, providing pedestrian access into the countryside beyond the Green Wedge. Additional pedestrian connectivity is available via footpaths along the northern and western boundaries, following the A47 and Leicester Road, which offer safe, surfaced routes adjacent to the area.
Water features	A Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) feature is present within the area, forming part of the local water management infrastructure. A small watercourse runs adjacent to the area, creating a linear riparian corridor. Its banks are typically enclosed by scrub, bramble, and young woodland, providing a semi-shaded environment.

Visual Assessment	
Views into area	Views into the area are generally restricted due to the dense vegetation structure, with mature deciduous trees, thick scrub, and overgrown hedgerows creating a strongly

Visual Assessment	
	enclosed character. In several places, bramble, thorn scrub, and young woodland planting form a continuous vegetative screen that limits long-distance visibility and reduces openness. Glimpsed views are possible through gaps in the trees particularly where vegetation thins out along boundaries but these are narrow and filtered. The result is a landscape that feels visually contained, with most external views terminating on dense woody growth rather than extending across open ground.
Views out of area	Views out of the area are more open than the views in, particularly from the edges of the site. From the northern boundary along the A47, the rising landform towards Barwell allows clear outward views of the settlement edge, with built development visible above the intervening vegetation. Along the public right of way on the eastern side of Area E, there are expansive outward views across the surrounding countryside, creating a strong sense of openness compared with the enclosed character deeper within the site. From this vantage point, elements of Elmesthorpe are also visible, reinforcing the site's visual connection to the wider rural landscape beyond the Green Wedge.
Key vista/landscape sensitivity	Key vistas are limited due to dense woodland and scrub, which create an enclosed character across most of the area. More open views occur only at the edges, particularly along the A47 and the public right of way, where outward views towards Barwell, Elmesthorpe, and the surrounding countryside become visible.

Visual Assessment	
	The landscape shows moderate to high sensitivity, with dense vegetation, young woodland, and naturalistic scrub making the area susceptible to visual change. The enclosed character and ecological value mean that even small alterations could affect its appearance, while open edge views are sensitive to development that may intrude into rural sightlines.
Visual intrusion	A small amount of built development is present in association with the SuDS feature, including a single-storey building located near the Leicester Road access point. This structure is heavily screened by surrounding vegetation and is only partially visible through occasional gaps in the planting.

Functional Assessment	
Agricultural Value	The site has very limited agricultural function. There is no evidence of active cultivation or crop production, and the land is predominantly unmanaged, comprising rough grassland, scrub, and early successional woodland
Ecological Value	The site supports a varied and structurally rich mosaic of habitats, dominated by early- to mid-successional woodland, dense scrub, overgrown hedgerows and rough grassland. This combination creates a strongly enclosed, semi-wild, and naturalistic character, with high structural diversity arising from young tree planting, bramble and thorn scrub, and unmanaged ground flora. Evidence of rewilding and recent ecological enhancement, such as tree tubes, indicates that the area is developing increased ecological complexity. Limited recent

Functional Assessment	
	management has allowed scrub and bramble to expand, reinforcing habitat variety and providing cover and foraging opportunities for a broad range of wildlife. The presence of a small watercourse running along the site's edge introduces a valuable linear riparian corridor, with its shaded, scrub-lined banks enhancing habitat connectivity. Alongside this, a discreet SuDS feature provides additional wetland interest and contributes to local water management. Together, these elements create a coherent ecological network that supports movement, shelter, and feeding for species typical of woodland-scrub mosaics, while offering clear opportunities for future biodiversity enhancements as part of wider green infrastructure.
Recreation/Public Access	Access to the site is highly limited, with no public entry available through the private vehicular access, which is secured by a locked gate and restricted to authorised use only. As a result, opportunities for on-site recreation are very low, and the area does not currently function as a public recreational resource. Public access is instead provided around the perimeter of Area E. A public right of way runs along the eastern edge of the site, offering a pedestrian route that connects into the wider countryside and supports informal recreation such as walking. In addition to this, further pedestrian connectivity exists via footpaths along the northern and western boundaries, following the A47 and Leicester Road. These outward-facing footpaths are surfaced, safe, and well-defined, providing accessible walking routes adjacent to the site but not into it. Overall, recreational use is peripheral rather than internal, with the public able to experience the landscape only from its edges.

Functional Assessment	
	While the site contributes to the wider Green Wedge's sense of openness and provides visual amenity, its role in active recreation is limited to the rights of way that run alongside it rather than any internal access or facilities.
Contribution to settlement separation	This area occupies what functions as a valley floor between Barwell and Earl Shilton and the wider Hinckley urban edge, forming part of the transitional landscape between these settlements. Its position at the crossroads of several key approach routes, including a prominent roundabout, means it sits within an important visual and spatial gateway. From the edge of the area, it is possible to obtain clear views toward Barwell and more limited views toward Earl Shilton, demonstrating a degree of intervisibility between these settlements. Standing at the public right of way along the eastern edge, it is also possible to view Elmhurst within Blaby District, reflecting the site's location at a point where several settlement edges can be perceived. However, due to the site's rewilded character, dense scrub, and early-successional woodland, outward visibility is heavily constrained, and Hinckley and Burbage cannot be viewed from this location. This vegetation structure reinforces a sense of containment and helps maintain perceptual separation between surrounding settlements. Although the site does not enable extensive long-distance views, its enclosed, semi-natural character and absence of built form ensure that it continues to play an important role in preventing coalescence and preserving the distinct identities of Barwell, Earl Shilton, Elmhurst and Hinckley.

Location: Area F – Land between Normandy Way and Leicester Road

Site Identification	
Reference	Area F
Date of Visit	14/01/2026
Weather Conditions	Some clouds, sky brightening

Physical Characteristics	
Land use description	Recreation ground, Football, Rugby, Cricket and Tennis facilities. Farmland, small brook running east to west. Barwell Lane Active Travel route
Adjacent uses	Agriculture, A47, Burbage Common and Woodland, Dorothy Goodman School, Residential
Topography	Topography rises to a high point on the eastern side before gradually falling away toward the west, displaying minor undulations throughout.
Vegetation cover	The vegetation cover across the site comprises a mix of semi-improved grassland, mature hedgerows, and established woodland belts. Large areas of short-mown grassland are present where the land is in recreational use, transitioning into taller, more tussocky grass in less-managed pasture areas. Hedgerows, some dense and multi-layered form strong linear boundaries, incorporating hawthorn, blackthorn, and occasional

Physical Characteristics	
	early-leaving shrubs. These are supplemented by mature deciduous trees, many currently without full leaf cover, creating a clear structural canopy edge around fields. Within wooded corridors, vegetation is notably thicker, with ground flora and low-level understorey providing a more enclosed, shaded character. Overall, the vegetation demonstrates good structural diversity, supporting habitat connectivity between open fields, hedgerows, and woodland edges.
Landscape features	The landscape is characterised by a combination of open pastoral fields, recreational grassed areas, and enclosed wooded corridors, creating a varied and visually layered environment. Key features include a network of well-defined footpaths, both surfaced and earth-worn providing clear movement routes through the site, often framed by hedgerows or woodland on either side. Mature tree belts form strong visual boundaries, creating a transition between open land and more enclosed vegetated areas. Occasional infrastructure elements such as fencing, bollards, and signage mark access points, while distant tree lines and hedgerow patterns help define field geometry and reinforce the rural character. The overall landscape displays a mix of open views across grassland and more intimate, enclosed paths, contributing to a sense of permeability and varied spatial experience.
Access/paths	The site is highly accessible, benefiting from a well-connected network of public footpaths that run through both the agricultural fields and the more enclosed wooded corridors. Several routes are clearly defined, ranging from compacted earth paths to surfaced shared-use tracks.

Physical Characteristics	
	wallows Green Open Space provides an additional point of access and acts as a local recreational hub, linking into the wider path network and offering open grassed areas for informal use. Accessibility is further enhanced by the presence of organised recreational facilities, including the tennis club, rugby club, cricket ground, and football stadium complex, which draw regular footfall and support multiple entry points into the landscape. Wayfinding is straightforward, with routes framed by hedgerows, tree belts, and fencing, and the paths provide good permeability throughout the area for walkers, cyclists, and those accessing the sports facilities.
Water features	The site contains a series of small-scale water features typical of an agricultural and semi-natural landscape, including localised watercourses, shallow brooks, and field drainage ditches.

Visual Assessment	
Views into area	Views into the area vary depending on your location. From Harwood Drive views are generally open and expansive, with visibility varying depending on the level of boundary vegetation and the presence of recreational infrastructure. At the formal play area and adjacent sports fields, inward views are largely unobstructed due to the low boundary fencing and the open grassland that dominates the foreground. These views allow clear sightlines across the play equipment, sports pitches, and surrounding green space, reinforcing the perception of an accessible and publicly used landscape.

Visual Assessment	
	Where the green wedge is bordered by hedgerows and tree belts (Leicester Road/A47), views into the area become more filtered. In several locations, mature and early-successional vegetation partially screens the interior, creating glimpsed views through branches or gaps in the hedgerow. This contributes to a more enclosed, transitional character at the edges, particularly toward the agricultural fields where vegetation forms a stronger visual barrier. Along Barwell Lane, views into the green wedge remain moderately open, with the route providing framed vistas between tree canopies. These views highlight the contrast between the more manicured recreational spaces and the surrounding semi-natural landscape.
Views out of area	Views out of the area vary according to location but are generally open and expansive, reflecting the predominately recreational and semi-natural character of the landscape. From within the formal play area and adjacent sports fields, outward views extend across large areas of short-mown grassland framed by low fencing and intermittent tree cover. These open sightlines emphasise the breadth of the green wedge and provide a clear visual connection to surrounding fields and hedgerow boundaries. Outward visibility is often influenced by the surrounding vegetation structure. Mature hedgerows, scrub, and tree belts define many of the outward views, creating a mixture of filtered and partially screened vistas.
Key vista/landscape sensitivity	Key vistas across the area are defined by wide, open views over grassland, particularly from the play area and sports pitches,

Visual Assessment	
	where outward sightlines are largely uninterrupted. These long vistas reinforce the sense of openness that characterises this part of the green wedge. In contrast, paths framed by hedgerows and maturing scrub offer more enclosed, intimate views, with occasional glimpses into adjoining farmland through gaps in vegetation. This variety in visual experience strengthens the transition between recreational land and the wider countryside. The landscape displays moderate to high sensitivity, largely due to the strong reliance on open, expansive views that form an important part of its rural character. Any built intrusion would noticeably erode this openness. Areas with denser vegetation have marginally lower sensitivity but remain important for maintaining visual continuity, ecological function, and landscape structure. Overall, the combination of broad vistas and framed, vegetated edges contributes to a visually coherent and sensitive landscape.
Visual intrusion	Visual intrusion within the area varies depending on proximity to built structures and formal recreational facilities. Around the sports complex and associated parking areas, visual intrusion is more noticeable due to the presence of hard-surfaced car parks, lighting columns, fencing, and the large sports buildings. These features introduce a more urbanised character at the edge of the green wedge and contrast with the otherwise open and rural landscape. The tennis courts and surrounding high chain-link fencing similarly introduce a strong engineered element, supported by lighting columns that increase the vertical presence of built form in views across the site. The stadium complex, including stands, perimeter fencing, and signage, forms another distinct visual feature. While

Visual Assessment	
	concentrated in one area, these structures introduce bulk and height that are clearly visible from nearby vantage points. The lighting columns associated with the stadium and sports pitches have a significant vertical profile and remain visually prominent even when viewed against the sky, increasing the perceived level of urbanising influence. Further into the green wedge, visual intrusion reduces substantially. Once beyond the cluster of sports facilities, outward views are dominated by open grassland, hedgerows, and mature tree belts. These natural elements help screen surrounding development and soften the transition between recreational land and the wider countryside. Filtered views framed by vegetation restrict visibility of nearby infrastructure, maintaining a sense of rural character away from built edges. Along the path networks, where tree cover creates enclosure, views are largely free from intrusive structures, enhancing the perception of separation from the adjacent developed areas. Overall, visual intrusion is localised to the areas immediately surrounding the sports facilities, lighting, and car parking infrastructure. Beyond these points, the landscape quickly reverts to a predominantly open, rural character with limited built form visible, preserving the wider green wedge function and landscape quality.

Functional Assessment	
Agricultural Value	The majority of the area is in active agricultural use, characterised by extensive open fields managed predominantly

Functional Assessment	
	as arable land. Large sections of the landscape comprise well-maintained, regularly cultivated fields with visible crop growth, consistent with typical agricultural management practices. The scale and openness of these fields contribute significantly to the rural character of the green wedge and underpin its productive agricultural function. Boundary hedgerows and occasional tree lines define field parcels and support farm operations while also providing ecological corridors. The agricultural land appears to be in good condition, with no evidence of dereliction or abandonment, indicating continued and ongoing farming activity. Overall, the area retains high agricultural value, serving as an important and productive part of the working countryside. This agricultural function contributes both to the openness of the landscape and to the green wedge's wider role in preventing settlement coalescence and maintaining rural character.
Ecological Value	The area displays moderate ecological value, with its strongest contributions arising from boundary features rather than the arable fields themselves. Mature hedgerows, scrub, and scattered trees form important linear wildlife corridors that support movement of birds, bats, and small mammals across the landscape. Semi-improved grassland margins and unmanaged edges provide foraging habitat for invertebrates and pollinators, adding structural diversity to the site. Public rights of way bordered by dense vegetation create more naturalistic corridors that enhance habitat connectivity between agricultural land, woodland blocks, and wider green infrastructure. While the intensively farmed fields offer limited ecological value in isolation, the combination of hedgerows,

Functional Assessment	
	tree belts, scrub, and green corridors ensures the area plays a key role in maintaining biodiversity linkages and supporting ecological networks within the green wedge.
Recreation/Public Access	The area holds high recreational value, offering a mix of formal and informal opportunities that are well-used by the surrounding communities. Formal facilities, including sports pitches, play areas, tennis courts, and associated infrastructure provide structured spaces for organised sport and physical activity. These are complemented by extensive open grassland suitable for informal recreation such as walking, casual play, and dog-walking. A network of public rights of way and shared-use paths enhances accessibility across the site, creating strong links between recreational spaces and the wider green wedge. These routes also allow users to experience a variety of landscape settings, from open playing fields to more enclosed, wooded corridors. The combination of managed sports facilities, accessible pathways, and broad open space reinforces the area's role as a multifunctional recreational asset that supports health, wellbeing, and community use.
Contribution to settlement separation	The area makes a mixed contribution to the separation between Hinckley and Barwell. Large sections of open agricultural land provide a clear and tangible physical gap between the two settlements, reinforcing their distinct identities and preventing coalescence. However, the contribution is partially reduced in areas where dense boundary vegetation, hedgerows and tree belts filter or obscure views between the settlement edges. In these locations,

Functional Assessment

the sense of separation becomes more perceptual than visual, with intervisibility between Hinckley and Barwell being limited or entirely screened. While this vegetation strengthens landscape structure and ecological connectivity, it also reduces the ability to appreciate the full extent of the gap across the whole area.

Location: Area G – Land east of Leicester Road and North of Burbage Common Road

Site Identification	
Reference	Area G
Date of Visit	14/01/2026
Weather Conditions	Some clouds, sky brightening

Physical Characteristics	
Land use description	The area comprises a mix of residential properties, actively managed agricultural land, equestrian uses including stables and associated paddocks, and established woodland forming part of the wider green infrastructure network.
Adjacent uses	Adjacent uses include areas of registered common land, formal and informal recreational grounds, agriculture, sports grounds and land that directly adjoins the administrative boundary with Blaby District Council.
Topography	The land is predominantly flat, with a gentle incline rising toward Elmesthorpe.
Vegetation cover	The area comprises a mix of established woodland and managed grassland. The woodland sections are characterised by deciduous tree cover, including mature specimens with an extensive leaf litter floor, dense bramble patches, and occasional areas of early successional growth. Understorey vegetation is limited in places due to shading, resulting in an open woodland structure with visible trunks and sparse ground flora during

Physical Characteristics	
	winter months. Boundary vegetation consists of well-established hedgerows and scrub, providing strong enclosure along road edges and field boundaries. Grassland areas appear regularly managed, with short, improved pasture enclosed by timber fencing and flanked by hedgerows and intermittent mature trees. Together, these elements create a varied vegetative structure, transitioning from enclosed woodland to more open agricultural pasture.
Landscape features	The landscape comprises a transition from enclosed deciduous woodland to more open pastoral fields. The woodland areas contain mature and early successional trees with a dense layer of leaf litter, fallen branches, and intermittent scrub, creating a naturalistic and semi managed character. Internal views are filtered by the close spacing of tree trunks, resulting in a visually contained environment. Field boundaries are defined by a combination of timber post and rail fencing, established hedgerows, and scattered mature trees, providing clear demarcation between agricultural land and adjacent woodland. The presence of interpretation boards, access structures, and wayfinding features indicates managed public access at certain points, contributing to the recreational function of the landscape. Open pastureland beyond the woodland provides contrast, with large, uninterrupted grassed areas framed by hedgerows and field margins. Taken together, these elements form a diverse and structurally varied landscape that blends enclosed woodland character with open agricultural settings, reinforcing the area's rural identity and its role within the wider green infrastructure network.

Physical Characteristics	
Access/paths	Access to the area is gained via Burbage Common Lane, which provides the principal point of entry into the site. A kissing gate marks the entrance to the woodland, enabling pedestrian access while restricting vehicular movement. Internal paths consist of informal woodland routes, offering permeability through the tree cover and linking to the wider network of recreational paths across Burbage Common.
Water features	No formal water features were observed within the area. However, the landscape may contain field drainage ditches typical of agricultural and woodland edge environments, providing minor localised water management functions.

Visual Assessment	
Views into area	Views into the area are largely screened from Leicester Road due to a mature, well-established hedgerow boundary that forms a strong visual barrier along this edge. In contrast, more open views are available from Burbage Common Road, where the woodland is less densely enclosed and internal tree cover is more visible. These contrasting viewpoints create a varied visual experience, ranging from enclosed roadside edges to more permeable sightlines into the woodland interior.
Views out of area	Views from Burbage Common Road are generally open, extending across Burbage Common and Woodland Open Space and providing wider countryside views beyond Area G to the east. To the west, outward views are directed across the

Visual Assessment	
	adjoining sports pitches, though these are partially filtered by mature hedgerows that form a strong vegetated boundary.
Key vista/landscape sensitivity	Key vistas within the area are primarily experienced from Burbage Common Road, where open views extend across Burbage Common and Woodland Open Space, providing a strong visual connection with the wider countryside and reinforcing the sense of spaciousness characteristic of this part of the green wedge. These long-range vistas contribute significantly to the area's rural setting and perceptual separation between surrounding settlements. Within the woodland, internal views are more enclosed due to the density of deciduous tree cover, creating a filtered visual environment with limited long-distance sightlines. In contrast, views to the west open out across adjacent sports pitches, framed by mature hedgerows that provide partial screening while maintaining a sense of continuity with the wider landscape. Overall, the landscape exhibits moderate to high sensitivity, with open views to the east particularly vulnerable to visual intrusion. The combination of open pasture, established woodland, and strong hedgerow boundaries contributes to a varied and distinctive landscape character that could be adversely affected by inappropriate development or encroachment. The area plays an important role in maintaining visual openness and settlement separation, resulting in a heightened sensitivity to change.
Visual intrusion	Visual intrusion within the area is minimal. Some residential properties along Leicester Road are visible but are largely softened by mature hedgerow boundaries and intervening

Visual Assessment	
	vegetation, resulting in limited impact on the overall rural and wooded character of the landscape.

Functional Assessment	
Agricultural Value	The area has limited agricultural function. While some adjacent land is managed as pasture, the woodland blocks and associated hedgerow boundaries dominate the landscape and restrict the extent of productive agricultural activity. Grassland areas appear maintained but are not indicative of active arable cultivation, and much of the site fulfils a semi-natural or recreational role rather than contributing to agricultural output. As such, the agricultural value of the area is considered low.
Ecological Value	The area supports a moderate level of ecological value derived from its mix of established deciduous woodland, hedgerow boundaries, scrub, and managed grassland. The woodland exhibits a structurally diverse environment, with mature and early-successional trees, leaf-litter floors, and patches of bramble and scrub providing habitat for a range of woodland species. The limited understorey, typical of shaded woodland, still offers foraging and shelter opportunities for birds, small mammals, and invertebrates. Boundary hedgerows form important ecological corridors, supporting species movement and enhancing connectivity with adjacent habitats, including Burbage Common and wider green infrastructure networks. Grassland areas, though managed, contribute additional habitat variety and potential for pollinators and ground-foraging species. Collectively, the mosaic of

Functional Assessment	
	woodland, hedgerows, scrub, and open pasture provides coherent ecological connectivity and contributes positively to local biodiversity.
Recreation/Public Access	The area provides opportunities for informal recreation primarily through pedestrian access into the woodland via a kissing gate on Burbage Common Lane. Informal paths within the woodland allow for recreational walking and provide permeability through to the wider network of routes across Burbage Common and the adjoining open space. The woodland setting offers a quiet, natural environment for informal recreation, with interpretative signage present at key access points, contributing to the site's educational and amenity value. While public access is focused on pedestrian use, the wider area functions as part of a broader recreational landscape that supports walking, nature appreciation, and connections to neighbouring green infrastructure.
Contribution to settlement separation	The area plays a significant role in maintaining perceptual and physical separation between surrounding settlements. Its combination of established woodland, mature hedgerows, and open pasture contributes to a clearly defined green buffer that prevents encroachment from neighbouring built-up areas. The strong vegetative structure reinforces a sense of visual distinction between settlement edges, particularly where views extend across Burbage Common and the wider countryside to the east. This open character, alongside the continuity of green infrastructure linking to adjoining common land, is integral to preserving settlement identity and avoiding coalescence within this part of the green wedge.

Location: Area H – Land off Leicester Road including Burbage Common and Hinckley Golf Course

Site Identification	
Reference	Area H
Date of Visit	14/01/2026
Weather Conditions	Some clouds, sky brightening

Physical Characteristics	
Land use description	The area comprises a varied mix of land uses, including Burbage Common and its associated Visitor Centre, areas of established woodland and scrub, school playing fields, a golf course, and a small scrap yard. The landscape presents a transition between formal recreational uses, semi-natural habitats, and pockets of ancillary employment activity, contributing to a diverse and multifunctional setting within the Green Wedge.
Adjacent uses	The area is bordered by residential development, school buildings, and the adjoining railway line, with Burbage Common Woodland and agricultural land forming the remaining edges. These neighbouring uses create a transition from built-up settlement to semi-natural and rural environments, reinforcing the multifunctional character of the wider Green Wedge.
Topography	The land is predominantly flat, with a gentle incline rising gradually toward Elvesthorpe.

Physical Characteristics	
Vegetation cover	The vegetation cover across the area is varied and reflects the transition between semi-natural woodland, managed grassland, scrub, and more formal recreational landscapes. Large expanses of closely mown or semi-improved grassland dominate the central open areas, with patches of wetter, more tussocky grass evident in places. These open areas are interspersed with scattered young and mature deciduous trees, many of which are currently without leaf cover, typical winter conditions. Surrounding the open meadows, the landscape is enclosed by extensive broadleaved woodland, comprising mature stands of deciduous species with a dense leaf-littered woodland floor. Understorey vegetation is present in places, including bramble, scrub, and early successional growth, particularly along woodland edges. Several areas show dense boundary scrub, forming thick visual buffers and contributing to habitat structure. Within the woodland, occasional small wetland or pond features are present, surrounded by fallen timber and moss-covered branches, adding to habitat diversity and contributing to a more naturalistic character. In the more managed parts of the site, such as the play area and around the visitor centre, vegetation includes mown amenity grassland, isolated trees, and trimmed hedgerows. Adjacent fields beyond the scrub and woodland edges appear to support pasture-type grassland, with boundary hedgerows and intermittent scrub patches shaping field margins. Overall, vegetation ranges from structured, managed green space to dense, semi-natural woodland and scrub, contributing

Physical Characteristics	
	to a diverse and multifunctional landscape supporting both ecological value and recreational use.
Landscape features	The landscape comprises a varied mix of open grassland, established woodland, and areas of scrub that together form a multifunctional and visually diverse environment. Large, gently undulating meadows provide broad open spaces, framed by dense belts of broadleaved woodland at the edge of the site. The woodland contains mature deciduous trees with a well-developed leaf-litter floor, as well as areas of understorey scrub and early successional growth, contributing to a naturalistic and enclosed character. Scattered individual trees and small tree groups are present across the grassland, creating intermittent visual punctuation within otherwise open vistas. Some areas contain more managed grassland typical of recreation or amenity use, while others show signs of rougher, less intensive management. Occasional scrub patches and bramble thickets form transitional zones between open grassland and woodland edges. Within the woodland, small wetland features and seasonal pools add to ecological variety and introduce subtle changes in landform and surface texture. Fallen branches, moss-covered trunks, and natural woodland debris contribute to a semi-natural appearance and enhance habitat structure. Formal features, such as fencing, play equipment, benches, and visitor-centre structures, are localised and generally contained within managed areas of the site. Beyond these locations, the wider landscape retains a distinctly rural character, with

Physical Characteristics	
	surrounding agricultural fields enclosed by hedgerows and low boundary vegetation. Overall, the area exhibits a coherent blend of semi-natural and managed landscape elements, with strong structural definition provided by woodland edges, open meadows, and hedgerow-lined field boundaries. This creates a landscape that is both visually varied and consistent with the wider character of Burbage Common and its adjoining open countryside.
Access/paths	The area is served by a well-established network of formal and informal paths that provide strong permeability across the parkland, woodland, and associated recreational spaces. Path surfaces are mixed, comprising compacted dirt routes, grassed tracks, and sections of stone-surfaced walkways, reflecting varying levels of maintenance and usage. These paths form a series of interconnected walkways with numerous off-shoot routes leading into woodland edges, open meadows, and adjoining recreational areas. Public Rights of Way are clearly demarcated through on-site signage, including routes that cross the golf course, ensuring legibility of formal access points and wayfinding across the wider landscape. Within the central parkland, additional paths connect key facilities, including the children's equipped play area, the visitor centre, and the café. These destinations are easily accessible from the surrounding footpath network and contribute to the area's strong recreational function. Overall, the access network offers a high degree of connectivity and supports a range of informal and formal recreational

Physical Characteristics	
	activities, enhancing the usability and accessibility of the Green Wedge.
Water features	Water features within the area comprise a mix of natural and small-scale man-made drainage elements. A shallow linear drainage channel is present within the grassed areas, carrying surface water following periods of rainfall. This feature appears to function as part of the local surface water management system, directing runoff away from key circulation spaces and paths. Within the woodland, several seasonal ponds and wet depressions were observed. These contain standing water, fallen branches, and leaf litter, creating small wetland habitats characteristic of Burbage Common's naturalistic woodland ecology. The presence of moss-covered fallen trees and saturated ground conditions indicates areas of prolonged winter wetness. A brook runs along the edge of the site adjacent to the railway line, forming a more substantial linear water feature that contributes to local drainage and provides riparian habitat. This brook represents the primary hydrological feature along the site boundary and forms part of the wider ecological network. Overall, water features in the area support ecological diversity, provide visual interest within the woodland, and contribute to the site's natural drainage characteristics.

Visual Assessment	
Views into area	Views into the area vary depending on the surrounding context and boundary treatments. From Area I, inward visibility is notably restricted due to the raised railway line, which forms a strong physical and visual barrier; however, glimpses of the school playing fields are possible from certain vantage points within Area I. In contrast, there are open views into the golf course from the modern residential streets of Antwerp Close, Helsinki Drive, and Paris Close, where the settlement edge directly adjoins the managed grassland and scattered tree cover of the course. These open aspects provide a clear visual transition between the built form and the recreational landscape. Views from Leicester Road are more limited, with vegetation screening, including hedgerows and woodland edges filtering or blocking sightlines into the site for much of the year. This creates a more enclosed and visually contained edge along this corridor. From Burbage Common Road, views are far more open, offering broad visibility across the common land and its associated grassland, scrub, and woodland blocks. These vantage points provide a strong sense of landscape openness and contribute to the perception of a continuous green corridor within the wider Green Wedge.
Views out of area	Views out of the area are variable and influenced strongly by boundary vegetation, topography, and the presence of major infrastructure. Along the southern boundary, views into Area I are largely restricted due to the raised railway line and the dense, wooded character of Burbage Common in this section of the Green Wedge. This combination of elevation and vegetation

Visual Assessment	
	creates a visually enclosed edge with only limited outward visibility. To the north-eastern edge, outward views extend into the adjoining woodland within Area G, providing a sense of continuity between wooded compartments of the wider landscape. Beyond this, where gaps in the tree cover occur, there are open countryside views stretching towards the M69, reinforcing the perception of a broad, rural hinterland beyond the immediate common land. Along Leicester Road, outward views are more limited. Mature hedgerows, scrub, and woodland edges form a strong vegetative screen for much of the year, significantly filtering sightlines and creating a more enclosed and contained visual experience from this corridor. Overall, outward visibility ranges from highly contained in areas influenced by infrastructure and dense woodland, to more expansive toward the north-eastern edge where the landscape opens out toward adjacent countryside.
Key vista/landscape sensitivity	Key vistas across the area reflect its varied landscape structure, transitioning between open grassland, woodland, and recreational spaces. The broad meadows at Burbage Common provide long, uninterrupted views across open grassland, framed by tree belts and woodland edges. These views contribute strongly to the perception of openness that characterises this part of the Green Wedge. Towards the north-eastern edge, key vistas extend across adjoining woodland within Area G, with occasional gaps allowing long-distance views towards the wider countryside and the M69.

Visual Assessment	
	These outward views reinforce the strategic role of the Green Wedge in maintaining a sense of separation between settlement edges and the rural hinterland. In contrast, areas adjacent to Leicester Road display a more enclosed visual character. Mature hedgerows, scrub, and woodland edges form strong visual barriers, limiting key vistas and increasing landscape containment. Along the southern boundary, the raised railway line and dense woodland significantly reduce opportunities for long-range views, further emphasising the enclosed nature of this edge. Overall, the landscape demonstrates moderate to high sensitivity, with open vistas across Burbage Common being particularly vulnerable to change. These views form a defining characteristic of the Green Wedge and play an important role in reinforcing openness, settlement separation, and the rural setting of the area. Any alteration to these open sightlines, especially within the central meadow areas would have a pronounced effect on landscape character and the perceived continuity of the Green Wedge.
Visual intrusion	Visual intrusion within the area is generally low across the parkland, woodland, and open meadow sections, where built form is minimal and largely screened by vegetation. However, localised visual intrusion occurs at the boundary where the scrap yard and associated commercial units are present. This frontage includes industrial structures, security fencing, skips, heavy vehicles, and hardstanding, which introduce a distinctly urban and utilitarian character that contrasts sharply with the predominantly rural and natural landscape of the Green Wedge.

Visual Assessment	
	The golf course also introduces moderate visual intrusion in association with the club house and associated parking. These features are visually prominent from the adjacent road and form a noticeable interruption to the otherwise open and green setting. While this intrusion is contained to the immediate road frontage and does not extend into the wider parkland, it nonetheless represents a hard edge to the Green Wedge and reduces landscape quality in this specific location. Elsewhere, built development is largely softened by mature vegetation, and views across the common and woodland areas remain predominantly rural and undeveloped in character.

Functional Assessment	
Agricultural Value	The site has limited agricultural value, with only small pockets of land on the periphery displaying characteristics of managed pasture or grazing. Much of the area comprises amenity grassland, semi-natural open space, and recreational land, rather than actively farmed fields. Areas of scrub and woodland edge further reduce the potential for productive agricultural use. Where grazing land is present, it appears low-intensity and forms part of a broader multifunctional landscape rather than a primary agricultural unit.
Ecological Value	The ecological value of the area is moderate to high, reflecting the mosaic of habitat types present. The site includes broadleaved woodland, scrub, seasonal ponds, semi-improved grassland, and riparian habitat associated with the brook

Functional Assessment	
	running adjacent to the railway line. Woodland areas provide mature tree cover, leaf-litter floors, deadwood, and understorey vegetation that support a range of woodland species. The open grassland meadows offer foraging habitat, while the ponded areas within the woodland and the linear drainage features in the grassland provide additional ecological niches. Hedgerows and scrub belts contribute to habitat connectivity, linking Burbage Common to surrounding green infrastructure networks.
Recreation/Public Access	The area has high recreational value, forming one of the borough's key publicly accessible green spaces. There is an extensive network of formal and informal footpaths, including Public Rights of Way, some of which traverse the golf course. Path surfaces vary from compacted dirt to stone, and numerous off-shoot paths enhance permeability across parkland and woodland. Key recreational assets include the visitor centre and café, children's equipped play area, and large areas of open grassland suitable for walking, informal play, and nature appreciation. The woodland also supports informal recreation, offering sheltered routes and access to natural habitats. The area is well-used by local residents and visitors for leisure, active travel, and connection with the wider Burbage Common landscape.
Contribution to settlement separation	The site plays an important role in maintaining settlement separation within this part of the Green Wedge. The extensive areas of common land, woodland, and open grassland maintain a clear and perceptible buffer between surrounding built-up areas. Although some modern residential development adjoins the golf course, the openness of the landscape and the continuity

Functional Assessment

of woodland prevent visual coalescence. The raised railway line and woodland belts further reinforce physical and visual separation between settlement edges. Long-distance views toward the M69 from the north-eastern edge strengthen the sense of open countryside and maintain the rural setting of adjoining communities. Overall, the area contributes significantly to preventing encroachment and retaining the distinct identity of nearby settlements.

Location: Area I – Land south of railway line and north-east of Burbage

Site Identification	
Reference	Area I
Date of Visit	14/01/2026
Weather Conditions	Some clouds, sky brightening

Physical Characteristics	
Land use description	The area comprises woodland, recreational space, railway corridor, agricultural land, grazing paddocks, tea rooms, and school playing fields. These uses create a mixed semi-rural landscape typical of the wider Green Wedge.
Adjacent uses	Adjacent land uses include the golf course, woodland blocks, Burbage Common, nearby residential properties, and the surrounding countryside/agricultural land, all contributing to a varied and transitional edge between settlement and open space.
Topography	The land is relatively flat throughout, with limited variation in level. The railway corridor sits on a raised embankment, forming a clear elevated feature that creates enclosure and a strong physical boundary within the landscape.
Vegetation cover	The area is mixed in terms of vegetation cover. In the Burbage woodland section there is a strong contrast between open

Physical Characteristics	
	grassland and the woodland itself. The woodland areas are predominantly broadleaved with mature trees and a relatively open winter canopy at the time of the visit; ground cover is seasonally sparse, with leaf litter and patches of low vegetation typical of winter conditions. The other section of the area is characterised by open grassland/arable fields with enclosed vegetation belts, with extensive hedgerows, scrub and bramble along field margins creating a largely contained edge in places. There are also examples of tall scrub and bramble thickets in the foreground and along boundaries, with hawthorn/blackthorn-type woody scrub and climbing vegetation visible within hedgerow structure.
Landscape features	The landscape is characterised by large, open fields with long, uninterrupted views towards a wooded horizon, suggesting a broad agricultural setting with limited internal subdivision. Hedgerows and scrub belts form strong linear features, creating a clear boundary between open fields and woodland and contributing to the perceived separation and “green corridor” feel. In the woodland, amenity/recreation elements are evident, including a mown/open grass area and picnic benches, indicating informal recreation use and a managed open space component within the wider semi-natural setting. Woodland paths and edge habitats create a more enclosed, ‘woodland walk’ character in contrast to the adjacent open fields.
Access/paths	There are informal/unsurfaced field-edge routes with signs of regular use (muddy/worn desire lines), indicating pedestrian circulation through open farmland and along margins. A more

Physical Characteristics	
	defined woodland path is evident within the wooded area, with a clear walked line through trees and seasonal surface conditions (mud/leaf litter). Access infrastructure includes a signed entry point (“Welcome to Burbage Common & Woods”) and a small bridge/boardwalk feature, indicating a managed access node and formalised crossing also supporting wayfinding.
Water features	There are a number of watercourses running through this area with visible flowing water. The channels are often narrow and contained, with bank-side vegetation (grasses/sedges) and overhanging scrub/trees, suggesting a locally important riparian feature and habitat corridor within the site.

Visual Assessment	
Views into area	Views into the area vary depending on approach point. From Burbage Common, views into the site are heavily restricted due to the raised embankment of the railway, which forms a strong physical and visual barrier. Intervisibility is therefore limited at ground level; however, views from the train would provide strong panoramic views across the Green Wedge, given the elevated position. From the north-eastern edge (countryside within Blaby District), the woodland forms a strong landscape feature, creating a clear vegetated boundary and reducing permeability of views into the interior of the wedge. From Burbage settlement, views into the area vary: For residents whose rear gardens back onto the Green Wedge, views are more prominent and more closely experienced. For drivers travelling out of Burbage towards the M69, views into

Visual Assessment	
	the wedge become increasingly open and expansive as the road approaches Smithy Lane, where visibility across fields and woodland edges improves.
Views out of area	Views out of the area display a strong directional contrast: Looking eastwards (into Blaby District) from the edge of the woodland, there are wide open views across agricultural countryside, reinforcing the site's rural setting. Views to the south look directly onto the rear gardens of Burbage residential properties, creating a clear interface between settlement edge and open land. Views to the west reveal school playing fields and filtered glimpses of the golf course, where the topography rises, allowing partial intervisibility with adjacent Green Wedge land. The outward views emphasise the area's transitional nature where woodland, settlement, and agricultural landscapes meet.
Key vista/landscape sensitivity	There are broad, open grassland vistas framed by continuous woodland edges, contributing to an expansive rural panorama. These open fields have high landscape sensitivity, as even limited built form would disrupt long uninterrupted sightlines. Areas of semi-natural scrub and hedgerow belts create strongly defined boundaries, resulting in a high sensitivity to visual change, particularly where the scrub edge forms the primary separation between settlement and open countryside. Woodland footpaths demonstrate an enclosed, intimate visual character, where views are short-range and strongly contained. These areas have moderate sensitivity, as visual change would be screened but could still influence sense of place.

Visual Assessment	
	Open amenity grassland with picnic benches creates a more managed landscape setting, but with long views to woodland backdrops. The open nature here also increases sensitivity where skyline or backdrop changes may be visible. The greatest landscape sensitivity occurs in areas with wide, open views across grassland towards woodland, and in locations forming part of settlement separation. Enclosed woodland areas have slightly lower sensitivity but remain sensitive to character change.
Visual intrusion	The majority of the area is visually uncluttered, with minimal built form. The rural and semi-natural character is consistently strong. Instances of infrastructure such as fencing, small bridges, and signage (e.g., the Burbage Common & Woods entrance) are low-impact features and blend appropriately with the landscape. The railway embankment, while not visually dominant in long views, forms a noticeable engineered feature where visible, and its associated infrastructure such as small bridges and rail-side fencing introduces a modest level of visual intrusion. However, this is localised, partly screened by vegetation, and does not significantly detract from the wider open landscape or the perceived openness of the Green Wedge.

Functional Assessment	
Agricultural Value	The area retains partly active agricultural function, demonstrated by large, open fields under grassland or early crop growth. There appears to be improved grassland and arable parcels, with a

Functional Assessment	
	coherent field structure consistent with agricultural management. Ground conditions in some locations indicate regular vehicle or machinery access, with visible tyre impressions and worn ground along field edges. These features suggest continued or periodic cultivation and pasture use. Although parts of the landscape transition into scrub and woodland edges, the open field compartments remain a meaningful component of the working agricultural landscape, contributing to the area's openness and rural character.
Ecological Value	Ecological value within the site is moderate to high, supported by a mosaic of habitats. This includes mature woodland, structural scrub belts, hedgerows, riparian vegetation, rough grassland, and more intensively managed grassland. The presence of broadleaved woodland with leaf-litter groundcover provides valuable habitat for woodland species, while scrub and hedgerow networks support nesting birds, small mammals, and invertebrates. The watercourse corridor, with overhanging vegetation and sedges, offers a linear ecological feature supporting amphibians, invertebrates, and foraging wildlife. The transition between woodland, open field, and scrub creates strong ecological connectivity, forming part of the wider Green Wedge ecological network.
Recreation/Public Access	The site contains a well-used and varied access network, demonstrated by informal field-edge paths, worn desire lines, and more formal woodland paths. These routes enable

Functional Assessment	
	pedestrian circulation through both open grassland and enclosed woodland. Infrastructure such as footbridges, wayfinding signage (e.g., “Welcome to Burbage Common & Woods”), and boardwalk-type crossing points indicates managed public access and a landscape actively used for recreation. Open grassland areas with picnic benches illustrate informal amenity use and reinforce the site’s recreational role within the wider Burbage Common setting. Overall, public access is strong, with good permeability and a mixture of naturalistic and more formal recreational environments.
Contribution to settlement separation	The site plays an important role in maintaining separation between Burbage and adjoining areas, including parts of Blaby District. The expansive open fields and woodland belts create a clearly defined green buffer, preventing visual coalescence and protecting the rural setting of the settlement edge. Views southwards reveal the rear gardens of Burbage properties, demonstrating the importance of this open landscape in maintaining a transition between settlement and countryside. The mix of open land, woodland cover, and low-rise recreational features ensures that the site continues to function as a distinctive and perceptible gap, reinforcing settlement identity and safeguarding the integrity of the Green Wedge.

Appendix D: Glossary

Amenity Value: The contribution of a landscape or open space to the quality of life of residents, including visual appeal, recreational use, and opportunities for relaxation and enjoyment.

Ancient Woodland / PAWS (Planted Ancient Woodland Site): Woodland that has existed continuously since at least 1600 AD. PAWS are ancient woodland sites that have been replanted with non-native species but retain ecological and historical significance.

Archaeological Sites: Archaeological remains are important resources often containing valuable information about the past. They are part of the areas heritage and are of great historic value.

Areas that Could Become of particular importance for biodiversity: Designated zones identified in the Leicestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) where habitat enhancement and creation should be prioritised to support biodiversity and ecological networks.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG): A planning approach that ensures development leaves biodiversity in a better state than before. It requires measurable improvements to habitats and ecological value.

Coalescence: The merging or coming together of separate towns or villages to form a single entity.

Development Plan Document: Spatial planning documents that are subject to independent examination and form the Development Plan for a local authority area. They can include a Core Strategy, Site Specific Allocations of land, and other Development Plan Documents, such as generic development control policies. They will all be shown geographically on an adopted Proposals Map. Individual Development Plan Documents or parts of a document can be reviewed independently from other Development Plan Documents.

Green Infrastructure (GI): A network of natural and semi-natural spaces that provide environmental, social, and economic benefits. This includes parks, woodlands, rivers, hedgerows, and footpaths.

Green Lung: An area of open space or vegetation that contributes to air quality, climate regulation, and public health by providing breathing space within or near urban areas.

Habitat Distinctiveness: A measure of the ecological value of a habitat based on its rarity, species richness, and ability to support biodiversity.

Historic Landscape Characterisation: Framework to aid our understanding of the landscape as a whole and provide us with an important tool that will contribute to the decision-making process especially where issues affecting the landscape, both rural and urban are to be considered. Produced by Leicestershire County Council.

Intervisibility: It is possible to see one settlement from the edge of the other.

Intravisibility: It is possible to see more than one settlement from anyone point in the green wedge.

Landscape Sensitivity: The degree to which a landscape can accommodate change without significant adverse effects on its character, visual quality, or ecological function.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS): A county-level strategy that identifies priorities for nature recovery, habitat creation, and ecological connectivity across Leicestershire.

Local Plan: The Local Plan is the key document which helps develop the borough of Hinckley & Bosworth, over a 20 year period. It sets out the vision and framework to achieve development, addressing the needs and opportunities of the area. It also guides decisions on planning applications.

Local Wildlife Site (LWS): Non-statutory sites designated for their local ecological importance. These sites support priority habitats and species and contribute to biodiversity conservation.

National Forest: A major environmental initiative covering parts of Leicestershire, Derbyshire, and Staffordshire, aimed at creating a new forested landscape through tree planting, habitat creation, and community engagement.

Priority Habitat: Habitats identified as being of principal importance for biodiversity conservation under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

Riparian Zone: The interface between land and a river or stream, often supporting unique vegetation and playing a key role in water management and biodiversity.

Settlement Separation: The maintenance of distinct boundaries between neighbouring towns or villages to preserve their individual identities and prevent urban sprawl.

Sites and Monument Record (SMR): Detailed records of the known archaeological investigations (sites or events), remains (monuments), find spots, buried deposits, and areas of archaeological potential of various kinds.

Remote Access: The site provides a valuable, visual green space resource to the community along a number of distinct sightlines and at a distance.

Settlement Boundary: Marks the extent of the built-up area and the countryside beyond. They are used to prevent the unregulated encroachment of development into the countryside. A settlement boundary is sometimes also known as a village envelope.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are protected by the Statute under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and usually managed by Natural England. Their designation provides protection to features of regional/national biodiversity. There are seven Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the Borough

Site Specific Allocations: Allocations of areas of land for specific purposes (e.g. housing, green wedge or employment land) or for mixed uses or development to be contained in the Local Plan.

Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDs): Sustainable Urban Drainage System is a sequence of management practices and control structures designed to drain surface water in a more sustainable fashion than some conventional techniques.

Tree Preservation Order (TPO): A legal protection placed on trees or woodlands to prevent unauthorised felling, lopping, or damage due to their landscape, ecological, or historical value.