



THE
ENVIRONMENT
PARTNERSHIP



LANDSCAPE POLICY FORMULATION DAVENTRY DISTRICT CT5 PLANNING POLICY FORMULATION

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1.0 Landscape

- 1.1 Daventry District is predominantly rural, it contains one main urban settlement and a large number of dispersed villages and hamlets, each of which has its own distinctive character. The landscape of the District is diverse and is characterised by gently rounded hills and valleys with many long low ridgelines and a great variety of landform. The landscape changes within the District with the north characterised by prominent scarp slopes forming a backdrop to lowland vales, the central area contains undulating hills and valleys and the southern area is defined by individual hills and knolls rising above lower ground. The landscape at the District's eastern fringe is more open and gently undulating. The Nene and Welland River valleys are distinctive features with flat floodplains and prominent historic houses and parklands on the outer fringes. The extreme western fringe around Barby and the M45 is a quiet rural landscape with low hills, heathland plateau and clay vales containing river valleys and canals.
- 1.2 Watercourses flow from the upland areas and there are frequent reservoirs, which, together with the Oxford and Grand Union Canals form important landscape features and recreational and biodiversity resources. The villages are often on high ground or at valley heads and are characterised by vernacular buildings in local Northamptonshire ironstone. Historic sites, houses, parks and gardens are also characteristic of this landscape.
- 1.3 The Daventry District Landscape Study 2017 has reviewed and updated the existing landscape evidence base. Part of this, the Daventry District Landscape Character Assessment reviewed the Northamptonshire Current Landscape Character Assessment (2005) and provided more District specific detail of the 11 landscape character types and 21 character areas present in the District. Landscape character types are generic in nature in that they may occur in different parts of the District or county and are typified by common geology, landform, drainage patterns, vegetation and historical land use and settlement pattern. They are subdivided into landscape character areas which are unique and geographically discrete areas of landscape that share characteristics.
- 1.4 The Landscape Study reviewed the key characteristics of the landscape character areas, including landscape condition and provided a landscape strategy to protect and enhance key features. It provided guidance on the landscape's potential to accommodate change and the scale and type of development that can be accommodated in each character area. The Landscape Study also involved a review and assessment of the Special Landscape Areas, Daventry and Northampton fringes and production of a landscape assessment toolkit for use by developers and officers to assist in assessing landscape impacts of planning applications.

- 1.5 Policy ENV1 (on page 4) aims to ensure that development has regard to landscape character and quality, using the evidence provided by the 2017 Daventry District Landscape Character Assessment. This evidence should be referred to for information about the characteristics and features of each character area and landscape elements that would benefit from enhancement. Mitigation measures could include woodland and tree planting consistent with landscape character to screen or background development, or enhancement of open space and existing hedgerow boundaries.
- 1.6 Consideration of the need to avoid both physical and visual coalescence between settlements is also important, to ensure that settlements maintain their individuality and setting. The policy also requires the consideration of cumulative impacts of development, which includes existing development, allocations, permissions and other extant applications, including those in adjacent authorities. Where a proposal would result in landscape harm, the general principle is that it should be refused, unless there would be an over-riding public benefit of the development, for instance, to meet a critical local housing need. In such cases, an effective landscape scheme would be crucial to mitigate any harm.

Policy ENV1 - Landscape

<p>The policy aims to address objectives 12, 13 and 14</p>
<p>The policy helps to deliver policies BN1, BN2, BN3, BN5 and R1 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy</p>
<p>ENV1 - Landscape</p>
<p>A. The Council will support proposals that maintain the distinctive character and quality of the District’s landscapes, as defined in the Daventry District Landscape Character Assessment 2017. In particular, development will be expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Respect the local distinctiveness and historic character of the particular landscape character area in which it is located; and ii) Respect existing patterns of development and distinctive features that make a positive contribution to the character, history or setting of a settlement or area such as key buildings, village skylines and ridgelines; and iii) Avoid creating hard developed edges to the open countryside; and iv) Avoid physical and visual coalescence between settlements; and v) Enhance and restore landscape features where the opportunity arises; and vi) Incorporate mitigation measures to integrate development into its surroundings and enhance or restore the local landscape. <p>B. The Council will take into account the cumulative impact of development proposals on the quality of the landscape.</p> <p>C. Development proposals should include, appropriate to their scale, use and location, an assessment of the likely visual impacts on the local landscape and the site’s immediate and wider setting. This will include the landscape capacity of the site’s immediate and wider setting to accommodate the development in accordance with the Daventry District Landscape Character Assessment and the Council’s Landscape Assessment Toolkit. Applications for major developments and where the Council identifies that a proposal would have an adverse impact on the landscape, may require a full landscape and visual impact assessment, which should be submitted as part of the planning application.</p> <p>D. Proposals that would cause landscape harm will be refused unless the applicant can demonstrate that the proposal would result in an over-riding public benefit and the impact of the harm can be successfully mitigated through an appropriate landscape treatment in keeping with character.</p> <p>E. Provision should be made for the long term management and maintenance (minimum of 5 years) of new landscape proposals to ensure their establishment.</p>

2.0 Special Landscape Areas

- 2.1 The NPPF makes it clear that the planning system should take local character into account, however, this should not be a reason to exclude sustainable development. When looking to conserve and enhance the natural environment, it states that planning should concentrate on ‘valued’ landscapes although it does not explicitly suggest that local landscape designations are appropriate. The local landscape designation of Special Landscape Area (SLA) pre-dates the NPPF and has been defined in Daventry District since the first Northamptonshire County Structure Plan in 1980. The designation recognised that although there are no national landscape designations in Northamptonshire but the county contains some distinctive landscapes that are of particular local importance.
- 2.2 In order to justify the retention of the SLA in the Part 2 Local Plan, the Daventry District Landscape Study 2017 included a Special Landscape Area Study. This examined whether the SLA areas are sufficiently distinctive and have clearly apparent special qualities that set them apart from other landscapes in the District that would warrant a specific designation. The Study reviewed the boundaries of the historic SLAs to confirm that they are evidence based, identifiable and robust. The Study also considered SLA designations in adjoining districts, namely the adopted Stratford-on-Avon District Core Strategy and the review being undertaken in South Northamptonshire, where areas of SLA are contiguous with those in Daventry District.
- 2.3 The SLA Study focussed on identifying ‘valued’ landscapes, taking the existing designations as a starting point. The approach to identifying ‘valued’ landscape followed guidance from a number of recognised sources¹. The guidance was used to identify what is special and distinctive about each SLA area, which included the following criteria:
- Landscape condition;
 - Scenic quality;
 - Rarity;
 - Representativeness;
 - Conservation interests;
 - Recreation value;
 - Perceptual aspects; and
 - Associations (cultural).
- 2.4 The Study concluded that there is justification for retaining the four SLAs, however, some amendments to the boundaries have been made to ensure that they are cohesive and representative of the distinctive characteristics of the relevant SLA and meet the criteria listed above.
- 2.5 There are four SLAs, which cover approximately 105 square miles/272 square km or 41% of the District:

¹ Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2005. *Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity*. London: Countryside Agency;
Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013. *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, 3rd Edition. London and New York: Routledge.

- 2.6 Welland Valley;
- 2.7 Hemplow Hills, Cottesbrooke and Brington;
- 2.8 Catesby and Fawsley; and
- 2.9 Eydon and Culworth
- 2.10 When defining boundaries of the SLA around individual settlements, settlements classed as an 'other' village or 'small settlement/hamlet' are washed over by the SLA, other than those where confines have already been defined through a 'made' neighbourhood plan. Primary and Secondary Service Villages have defined confines and the area within the confines will be excluded from SLA.
- 2.11 Policy ENV2 (on page 8) aims to ensure that the protection of the special qualities of the SLAs is given priority when considering proposals which fall within them. As with ENV1, the policy requires the consideration of cumulative impacts of development, which includes existing development, allocations, permissions and other extant applications, including those in adjacent authorities.

Policy ENV2 - Special Landscape Areas

The policy aims to address objectives 12, 13 and 14
The policy helps to deliver policies BN1, BN2, BN3, BN5 and R1 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy
ENV2 - Special Landscape Areas
<p>A. The Council gives priority to protecting the special qualities of the District's areas of high quality landscape which are designated as Special Landscape Areas, including their landscape and heritage features and cultural associations. The Council will support proposals that make a positive contribution to their special qualities and will resist proposals that would have a harmful effect on their special qualities.</p> <p>B. The Council will take into account the cumulative impact of development proposals on the special qualities of the Special Landscape Areas.</p> <p>C. Where the Council identifies that a proposal would have an adverse impact on a Special Landscape Area, applicants will be required to assess the likely impacts of the development on its special qualities. This will include reference to the Special Landscape Areas Study and an assessment of the landscape capacity of the site's immediate and wider setting to accommodate the development, in accordance with the Daventry District Landscape Character Assessment and the Council's Landscape Assessment Toolkit. The level of detail of the assessment will be proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposal. Applications for major developments and where the Council identifies that a proposal would have an adverse impact on the landscape, may require a full landscape and visual impact assessment, which should be submitted as part of the planning application.</p> <p>The following Special Landscape Areas are identified and their extent is shown on the Policies Map:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welland Valley;• Hemplow Hills, Cottesbrooke and Brington;• Catesby and Fawsley; and• Eydon and Culworth

3.0 Green Wedge

- 3.1 The focus of growth on the urban areas of Daventry and Northampton towns has led to pressure on their fringes, which are predominantly agricultural areas and host to a number of settlements. The settlements on the Daventry fringes comprise Welton, Norton, Newnham, Staverton and Braunston; and in the case of Northampton, Lower Harlestone, Upper Harlestone, Church Brampton, Chapel Brampton, , Boughton, Moulton, and Overstone. Each settlement has a distinctive character and it is important that this character is not harmed by urban expansion or coalescence. The fringe areas therefore have the function of protecting the identity and setting of villages and preventing the coalescence of settlements, which can be achieved by keeping the areas between settlements predominantly open and green.
- 3.2 The proximity of the fringe areas to the urban areas means that they are also used for informal recreation and as part of the wider green infrastructure network, they also fulfil a biodiversity function.
- 3.3 The emphasis for Policy EN3 (on page 10) is therefore not necessarily about the type of development, it is more to ensure that the areas are kept predominantly open and green and to prevent coalescence.

Policy ENV3 - Green Wedge

The policy aims to address objectives 12, 13 and 14
The policy helps to deliver policies BN1, BN2, BN3, BN5 and R1 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy
ENV3 - Green Wedge
<p>A. The Council will protect the designated areas of Green Wedge in order to protect the identity, character and setting of settlements within the fringe areas of Daventry and Northampton. Proposals within the Green Wedges will be required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Maintain the physical and visual separation between settlements; <p>and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">ii. Maintain the predominantly open and green character of the Green Wedges; andiii. Preserve or enhance the character, visual amenity, biodiversity value and agricultural activities of the Green Wedges; andiv. Maintain the space around settlements. <p>B. The Council will support proposals that contribute towards increased public access to and enjoyment of the Green Wedges, particularly from the SUEs in the Northampton Related Development Area, providing they are compatible with i) to iii) above.</p> <p>The designated areas of Green Wedge are shown on the Policies Map.</p>



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