

# **PART B**

## **LAND COVER PARCEL/ZONE SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENTS**

## 5. Explanation of sensitivity assessment forms

- 5.1. The sensitivity of each LCP/zone is set out on the following pages. This is structured into two summaries using full prose followed by supporting desk study and site assessment information which is in note form for directness and brevity. The purpose of each section is set out below. The definition of specific terms can be found in the Glossary in **Appendix 1**.

### Zone Sensitivity Summary

- 5.2. This section summarises the overall landscape sensitivity of the zone for housing or commercial development. The bulk of the text is repeated in each summary for avoidance of doubt as to what is relevant to each sensitivity assessment. In some cases, where development is considered potentially acceptable, the numbers of units is sometimes suggested. This is usually based on nearby settlement densities and is a possible indication that low densities are considered appropriate to minimise landscape and visual effects.

### Landscape character context

- 5.3. The LDU (land description unit) is the broad area of landscape with common characteristics in which the zone is located. This has been defined as part of the Warwickshire landscape assessment. The LDU is described in terms of landform and land cover amongst other factors and these are set out on the form. The inherent cultural, ecological and visual sensitivities are also defined. Because of the size of the LDUs there will often be variations in both characteristics and sensitivity within them. In terms of this more detailed study, each zone is assessed in terms of sensitivity to a particular form of development so there may be a difference between the judgements. The LDU information still acts as a relevant context to the zone.
- 5.4. The LCP information relates to desk study information collated as part of the definition of each LCP/zone. It includes its land use, field pattern [where relevant] and origin ie what is the historic origin that has defined its current pattern. This could be farmland developed in a planned way eg parliamentary enclosure or a piecemeal way eg clearance from ancient woodland etc. The presence underscoring is due to the direct sourcing of data from another database.

### Designations

- 5.5. If designations are present in, or potentially directly adjacent to, the LCP/zone, [technically where the two digitised areas overlap,] the relevant designation box is ticked. If there are no designations present, the relevant boxes remain unticked and may have a grey or white background. Text comments are made as to the specific features.
- 5.6. Designations can indicate that the area has value and this may contribute to sensitivity. They are divided into landscape/planning, biodiversity and historic/archaeology. It should be noted that Green Belt is a planning, not a landscape, designation and is not taken as a relating to value.

### Characteristics

- 5.7. The broad characteristics of the area are briefly described- landform, which describes the topography, and landcover, which describes the uses of the area. Simple land use can indicate strong consistency of character of either a positive or negative nature. Diversity can indicate a rich, varied landscape which might be affected adversely by large-scale development but in which sensitive small-scale development may be able to be accommodated.

- 5.8. The detailed patterns of the fields, trees, habitat patch survival, ecological corridors and intensity of use record observations in the field. They give an indication of the condition and function of elements of the landscape, contributing to intrinsic sensitivity.

#### **Pattern**

- 5.9. Settlement pattern defines an important element of landscape character within the area, unless otherwise specified as being adjacent. Other built features, such as wireless masts or pylons, also influence character.
- 5.10. The presence of water is noted and commented upon. Water bodies such as streams or ponds can be sensitive and valuable features.
- 5.11. The perceived scale, sense of enclosure and diversity of the landscape through desk study and site observation complete the picture of landscape pattern.

#### **Skyline**

- 5.12. The prominence and importance of any skyline in the zone is noted and its complexity described. Skylines are sensitive features as they are generally widely visible and any feature on them is brought out in relief against a light sky. Varied skylines can be more attractive and valued although they may be able to accommodate small-scale change. Simple skylines may be less attractive although may be more sensitive to any change as it may be more noticeable. As a general rule, all development should avoid breaking the skyline.

#### **Key views**

- 5.13. Key views are those views from publicly accessible places [which are used regularly or to enjoy scenic quality] towards features of interest. Generally, these are sensitive to change and development. Any landmarks in the zone or visible from the zone are noted. Any detractors, or unsightly features, are also noted.

#### **Intervisibility**

- 5.14. The degree to which the zone is visible to the surrounding area is noted through site observation i.e. a visit to the zone. Any views of key features visible or key places within the zone are also recorded. If the area has high intervisibility it is likely to be more sensitive to development than if it is hidden.

#### **Tranquillity**

- 5.15. Tranquillity is broken down into the noise sources within an area, the number of views of development and the presence of people. Views of development are defined by the amount that can be seen using, where appropriate the arc of view of development possible ie 180, 270 or 360 degrees. The more and louder the noise sources, the less the tranquillity. The more the views of development or the number of people, also the less the tranquillity. Tranquillity is a valuable commodity, particularly in areas accessible to larger settlements, and contributes to sensitivity.

#### **Functional relationship of area**

- 5.16. The relationship of the zone with the adjacent settlement, if relevant, with the wider landscape and with an adjacent assessed zone in terms of function is recorded. The function can range from land use such as agriculture through to the nature conservation function e.g. as a wildlife corridor. Some zones may be interdependent with others and change in one may affect all adversely.

### **Visual relationship of area**

- 5.17. The relationship of the zone with the adjacent settlement, if relevant, with the wider landscape and with an adjacent assessed zone in terms of visual connection is recorded. Some areas can be important to the settlement in terms of providing a setting. Other areas can provide a visual link out into the wider landscape. These links can be important and make an area more sensitive to change.

### **Are adjacent assessed areas mutually reliant?**

- 5.18. Some zones may be interdependent with others and change in one may affect all adversely.

### **Settlement edge**

- 5.19. The age of the settlement edge is defined as either being pre-20<sup>th</sup> century or more recent 20 to 21st century. Often, where the older core of a settlement meets an open area it is likely to be more sensitive than a later development. The nature of the edge is recorded i.e. whether it is positive or negative and its form noted i.e. whether it is smooth, linear or indented. The latter tends to be more attractive and is often symptomatic of an older edge. It can be more sensitive towards proposed development than a linear, bland edge or an edge with detractors.

### **Receptors and sensitivity**

- 5.20. Receptors are people in a variety of different situations who can experience views within an area and who may be affected by change or development. Receptors can include urban or rural residents, and users of public footpaths, roads, railways or cycleways. Those residents within a settlement [even a small village] are classified as 'urban', while those outside the settlement are classified as 'rural' for simplicity. Some receptors are more sensitive than others. The same person driving a delivery van for work may be less sensitive to a view than when he or she is looking out of their living-room window or taking a walk in the countryside. The more the number of sensitive receptors in an area, the more sensitive the area will be to change or development.

### **5.21. Potential for improvement of settlement edge and overall mitigation**

- 5.22. If an existing settlement edge has a number of detractors, or a poor relationship with the adjacent landscape, there may be opportunity for improvement. This improvement can either take the form of mitigation, such as woodland planting, or screening. It could also mean that further development may be desirable provided it was carried out in a sensitive manner and provided a positive edge itself. Where such opportunities exist a comment is made. If no such opportunity exists, this is stated as a dash.