

# Landscape Sensitivity Study Update for Telford and Wrekin

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**Final Report**  
to  
Telford and Wrekin Council

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# PART 1

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. White Consultants were appointed by Telford and Wrekin Council in December 2013 to undertake an update of the 2009 landscape sensitivity and capacity assessment<sup>1</sup> for defined areas around Telford and Newport.
- 1.2. The scope of the study is to update the assessment of the sites previously assessed that are brought forward in the 2012 Strategic housing land availability assessment (SHLAA) for the borough, and to also apply the assessment to additional sites in the SHLAA. The sites now considered are those that are adjacent to the urban edge of Telford or Newport or which are located adjacent to previously assessed sites/sites around these settlements.
- 1.3. The study is updated to take account of any changes on the ground and the revised constraints that now apply- for example noting the updated County Wildlife Sites. The Green Network designation in its current form has been removed to reflect emerging local green infrastructure policy. However, the landscape considerations associated with that designation have continued to be taken into account in the assessment. The method has also been refined to reflect current guidance, in particular, the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) Edition 3, April 2013. The main change to the study is that rather than assessing the intrinsic sensitivity of a given site and its capacity for housing, just the sensitivity to housing development is assessed.
- 1.4. The majority of the underlying data remains the same as the previous study. The county landscape character assessment and analysis of intrinsic sensitivity undertaken by Shropshire County Council and reviewed by the 2009 study remains the same. This project works within this assessment, and assesses the sensitivity of the landscape to housing development, identifying those landscapes that may be able to accommodate development with few problems, those where landscape and visual issues are a constraint and those that should be protected. The study is intended to form part of the evidence base which will inform the Local Development Framework.
- 1.5. The report is divided into two parts. In Part 1, we discuss the method [2.0] and briefly set out a summary of findings [3.0]. The sensitivity assessments for each identified site are set out in Part 2 in site alphabetical order.
- 1.6. The client side was led by Michael Vout and the consultants team included Simon White and Steven Warnock.

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<sup>1</sup> Telford and Wrekin Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study, White Consultants, May 2009

## 2. METHOD

2.1. This study is a technical exercise and the report uses a number of technical terms for precision and as a means for reaching conclusions on sensitivity. These terms are defined in the Glossary in **Appendix 1**. We have taken into consideration the GLVIA approach to sensitivity which appears to supercede previous dated guidance emanating from Natural England/Countryside Agency. Whilst the GLVIA is intended to be used for landscape and visual impact assessments of individual proposed developments, and is limited in this respect, some broad principles are drawn from it to ensure that this document is consistent with it and relevant and applicable to strategic site allocation, as well as to development management. **Sensitivity** is taken to mean the sensitivity of the landscape to a given type of change, namely housing. The judgement is arrived at by combining value with susceptibility to change. The criteria informing these are discussed in the following paragraphs.

2.2. Box 1 shows a summary of the process undertaken which is then further explained in the text.

### *Definition of intrinsic sensitivity at LDU level*

2.3. The Shropshire County Council landscape character assessment carried out before the 2009 study is at a broad scale identifying landscape description units [LDUs] and ascribing characteristics. For each of these units the team carried out an assessment of intrinsic sensitivity as part of the 2009 study. These are divided into ecological sensitivity (see **Figure A1**), cultural sensitivity [see **Figure A2**], visual sensitivity and tranquillity. The latter two aspects are not attached because a more detailed visibility and tranquillity assessments related to each specific area is presented in this study. The County landscape assessment provides the background to the detailed analysis of sensitivity and capacity that is the subject of this study. It should be noted that the LDUs cover countryside only and do not extend into the built-up parts of the borough such as Telford and Newport.

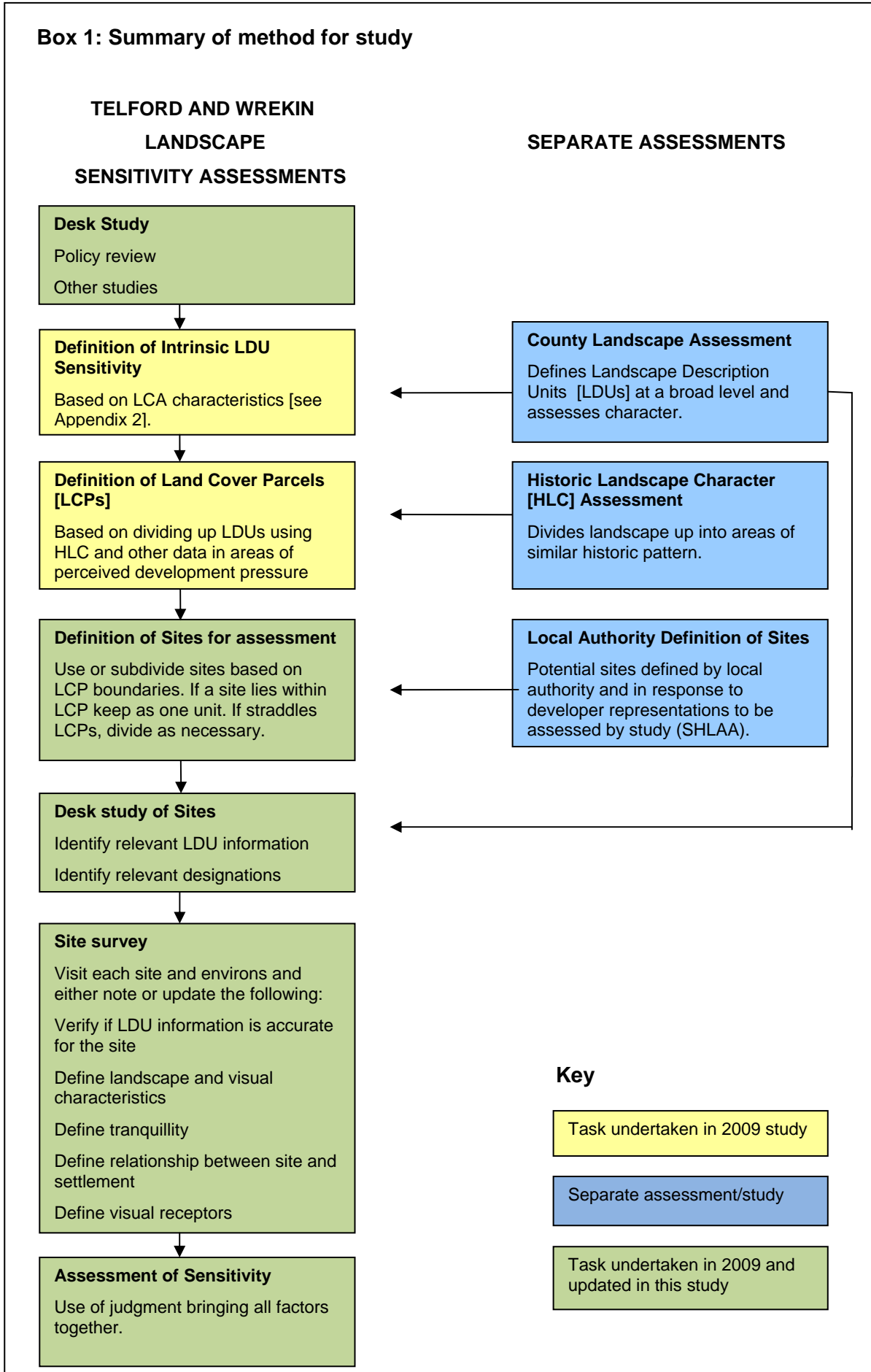
### *Defining Land Cover Parcels*

2.4. In areas around settlements where sites are put forward by the local authority for assessment Land Cover Parcels (LCPs) were derived in the 2009 study. These are still relevant and are discrete areas of land nested within a larger LDU reflecting variations in the physical character of the land. Bounded by roads, railways, watercourses and parish boundaries, these parcels define areas with similar patterns and land use, field pattern and tree cover. They provide the finer grain of resolution necessary for assessment. They are derived from Historic Landscape Character [HLC], previous studies, aerial photos and mapping.

### *Defining sites for assessment*

2.5. Sites are based on the SHLAA sites put forward by the local authority for assessment. If these lie within LCPs they are usually kept as one unit unless they are very large with differing characteristics or relationship with the settlement edge. However, where they cross LCP boundaries they are subdivided to reflect the different characteristics of each LCP. The numbering reflects this sub division with the first number indicating the identified site, and the second the relevant LCP in which it lies. The areas identified are set out in **Figure 1**.

**Box 1: Summary of method for study**



*Desk study of sites*

- 2.6. LDU sensitivity information is abstracted from the LDU assessment- cultural, ecological and visual sensitivity [see **Appendix 2**]. Up to date ecological and historic designations are identified which further refine each area's sensitivity. The functional relationship of the area with the adjoining settlement is assessed including its role as a green wedge or for recreation/access etc.

*Site Survey of sites*

- 2.7. The LDU sensitivities are verified for each site. 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 site is assessed to check whether its sensitivities do correspond to the broader level assessment. It is worth noting that at the county scale of the assessment some of the LDUs in Telford and Wrekin including both built form and adjacent green space were classified as urban and were not, therefore, attributed a sensitivity value.
- 2.8. Other relevant factors are then recorded including:
- Function of area
  - Presence of water
  - Visual characteristics
  - Tranquillity
  - Functional and visual relationship of the site with its surroundings and the built-up area.
  - Description of settlement edge- is it a positive or negative edge to the built-up area?
  - Definition of sensitive receptors within and outside the area.
  - Potential for improvement of the settlement edge and for overall mitigation.
- These are further explained in Part 2.
- 2.9. Bringing all the information together, the site is described in a summary description, and then an assessment is made of its overall sensitivity to housing development.
- 2.10. Housing development is taken to mean housing development upto two storeys high ie upto 8m to ridge, and at a scale suitable for site allocation in the LDP. It would be expected that the housing would be designed to a good standard in line with current design guidelines and would include planting of trees and shrubs to mitigate its effects, especially on the edges facing open countryside.
- 2.11. Sensitivity is derived from an appraisal of its value and susceptibility to housing.
- 2.12. The factors underpinning the landscape value of the site include:
- Designations in and around the site for landscape eg national or local, cultural heritage ie historic or archaeological, or for biodiversity.
  - Indications of local or community interest or use eg local green spaces, village greens, allotments, area used for recreation where the landscape is important.
  - Culture- art and literature, tourism or promotional literature including key views
  - Local conservation and/or landscape objectives
  - Assessment of integrity/condition, scenic quality, sense of place/ character, rarity, representativeness, perceptual qualities eg tranquillity.
- 2.13. Higher value sites may have national or local landscape or related designations, scenic value, rarity of character or features, strong sense of place, good condition, cultural importance, use for tourism or of community or recreation

- interest.
- 2.14. The factors underpinning the susceptibility of a site to housing include:
- Landscape Description Unit sensitivities
  - Land Cover Parcel data on landscape pattern, use and origin
  - Characteristics of the site
  - Function of the site
  - Water
  - Skyline
  - Key views
  - Intervisibility
  - Noise sources
  - Functional relationship of the area with surroundings
  - Visual relationship of area with surroundings
  - Reliance on adjacent areas based on function or visual characteristics
  - The nature of the settlement edge
  - Visual receptors- numbers and sensitivity
  - Consideration of the effect of housing at a scale suitable for a site allocation and with mitigation to a good standard.
- 2.15. The sets of factors are combined and judgements are made. These are not based on a mathematical adding up. Some factors will be more important than others in different sites. For instance, the function of an area in separating settlements may be considered very important and make it susceptible and therefore sensitive to development even if it is of limited inherent landscape value.
- 2.16. A justification is given as to why it is considered that an area has a particular sensitivity. A site may not have the same level of sensitivity throughout. The justification may identify that a site may have potential to accommodate housing development but that there are issues that could potentially limit the nature and extent of development. These are explained in the text and is reflected in the definition of site sensitivity calibrations in **Table 1**.
- 2.17. The calibration of the sensitivity is given on a five point scale in order to be consistent with the previous study and to reflect the range of situations (see **Table 1**). These are equated to the 'traffic light' system used by the Council in assessing the suitability of sites for allocation in the LDP.



**Table 1 Site Sensitivity Calibration**

<i>Level</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>LDP site suitability</i>
<b>Low</b>	Landscape and/or visual characteristics of the site/zone are robust or degraded and/or its values are low and the zone can accommodate the relevant type of development without significant character change. Thresholds for significant change are very high.	Green
<b>Medium/low</b>	Landscape and/or visual characteristics of the site/zone are resilient to change and/or its values are medium/low or low and the zone can accommodate the relevant type of development in many situations without significant character change. Thresholds for significant change are high.	Green
<b>Medium</b>	Landscape and/or visual characteristics of the site/zone are susceptible to change and/or its values are medium/low through to high/medium and/or the zone <i>may</i> have some potential to accommodate the relevant type of development in some defined situations without significant character change. Thresholds for significant change are intermediate.	Amber
<b>High/medium</b>	Landscape and/or visual characteristics of the site/zone are vulnerable to change and/or its values are medium through to high and the zone can accommodate the relevant type of development only in defined limited situations without significant character change. Thresholds for significant change are low.	Red
<b>High</b>	Landscape and/or visual characteristics of the site/zone are very vulnerable to change and/or its values are high or high/medium and the zone is unable to accommodate the relevant type of development without significant character change. Thresholds for significant change are very low.	Red

### 3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1. Overall, the study has found that there is potential for housing around Telford and Newport with 16% of sites being of low or medium/low sensitivity. Areas of higher sensitivity have tended to be those of intrinsically higher value, those in open countryside not closely associated with a settlement, acting as setting to conservation areas, historic parkland or listed buildings, in valley and/or view corridors, in floodplains, on steep or prominent slopes, of attractive character and pattern, those associated with nearby higher value landscapes or the wider landscape, those used by the local community and those forming gaps between settlements. Some sites assessed form an important visual setting to parts of a settlement and act as recreational and wildlife corridors and reservoirs.
- 3.2. Some settlement edges, usually consisting of housing estates, present an unsympathetic boundary with the countryside. In these cases, and combined with where the landscape itself has lower sensitivity, the opportunity is taken to indicate potential for development. This is with the proviso that the development itself will present a positive edge in order to integrate and enhance the landscape. This is best achieved by a design or development brief including landscape, nature conservation and urban design/settlement edge objectives in line with Council planning policy.
- 3.3. In summary, there is low sensitivity for housing in one site- in Arleston, low/medium sensitivity for housing in 16 sites- in Arleston [2], Newport [8], Wellington [2], and one each in Donnington, Hadley, Horsehay and Priorslee. There is medium capacity in a further 39 sites in Admaston, Bratton, Cluddley, Donnington, Hadley Park, Horsehay, Horton, Hadley Park, Jackfield, Lawley, Leegomery, Muxton, Newport, Redhill, The Nedge, Tibberton and Wheat Leasows. Some of these areas should only be considered for development in the longer term due to their current visual prominence and where advance planting is suggested if considered appropriate. Ten sites are considered high sensitivity, whilst 44 are considered high/medium sensitivity. The numbers and percentages are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2 Summary of site sensitivity**

Sensitivity	Number of sites	Percentage of sites (%)
Low	1	1
Medium/Low	16	15
Medium	39	35
High/medium	44	40
High	10	9

- 3.4. The landscape sensitivities of each site are summarised in Table 3 and are shown in Figures 1 and 2.
- 3.5. It is recommended that these findings are taken into consideration in the preparation of the Local Development Framework and the allocation of sites for housing development.

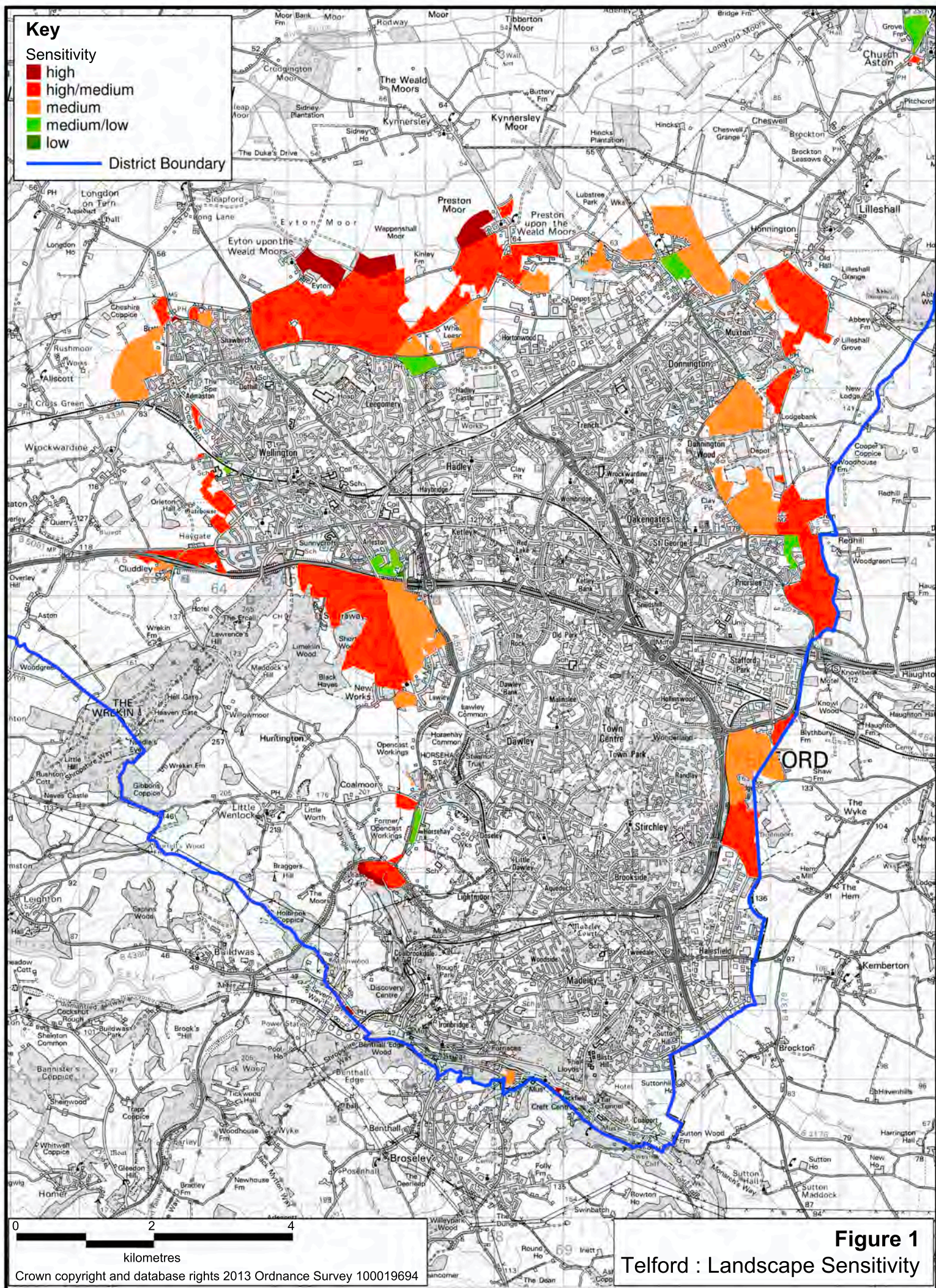
**Table 3 Telford and Wrekin sites landscape sensitivity**

Site Reference	Settlement	Sensitivity
TWAd1 - 55	Admaston	medium
TWAd2 - 53	Admaston	high/medium
TWAd4 - 55	Bratton	medium
TWAr1 - 35	Arleston	medium/low
TWAr1 - 38	Arleston	medium/low
TWAr2 - 38	Arleston	low
TWBr1 - 61	Bratton	medium
TWBr1 - 62	Bratton	high/medium
TWBr2 - 62	Bratton	medium
TWBr3 - 62	Bratton	high/medium
TWBr4 - 62	Bratton	high
TWbu1 - 4	Buildwas	high
TWCI1 - 36	Cluddley	high/medium
TWCI2 - 33	Cluddley	medium
TWCI3 - 34	Cluddley	high/medium
TWCI4 - 28	Cluddley	medium
TWCI5 - 26	Cluddley	medium
TWDo2 - 78	Donnington	medium
TWDo3 - 75	Donnington	medium/low
TWDo4 - 75	Donnington	medium
TWGr1 - 46	Redhill/Granville	high/medium
TWHa1 - 56	Hadley	medium/low
TWHa2 - 57	Hadley Park	medium
TWHh1 - 11	Horsehay	medium/low
TWHh2 - 13	Horsehay	medium
TWHh3 - 13	Horsehay	high/medium
TWHo1 - 69	Horton	medium
TWHo1 - 73	Horton	high/medium
TWHo2 - 69	Horton	medium
TWHo2 - 73	Horton	high/medium
TWHo3 - 73	Horton	high/medium
TWHP1 - 58	Hadley Park	medium
TWJf1 - 1	Jackfield	high
TWJf2 - 3	Jackfield	medium
TWLa1 - 20	Lawley	medium
TWLa1 - 22	Lawley	medium
TWLa1 - 25	Lawley	medium
TWLa2 - 19	Lawley	high/medium
TWLa2 - 22	Lawley	medium
TWLa2 - 24	Lawley	high/medium
TWLa2 - 27	Lawley	high/medium
TWLa2 - 31	Lawley	high/medium
TWLa3 - 19	Lawley	medium
TWLa4 - 19	Lawley	medium
TWLe1 - 59	Leegomery Roundabout	medium
TWLi1 - 5	Lightmoor	high
TWLi1 - 7	Lightmoor	high/medium
TWLi2 - 6	Lightmoor	high
TWLi2 - 8	Lightmoor	high
TWLi2 - 9	Lightmoor	high/medium
TWLi3 - 10	Lightmoor	high/medium
TWmu1 - 72	Muxton	medium
TWmu2 - 70	Muxton	medium

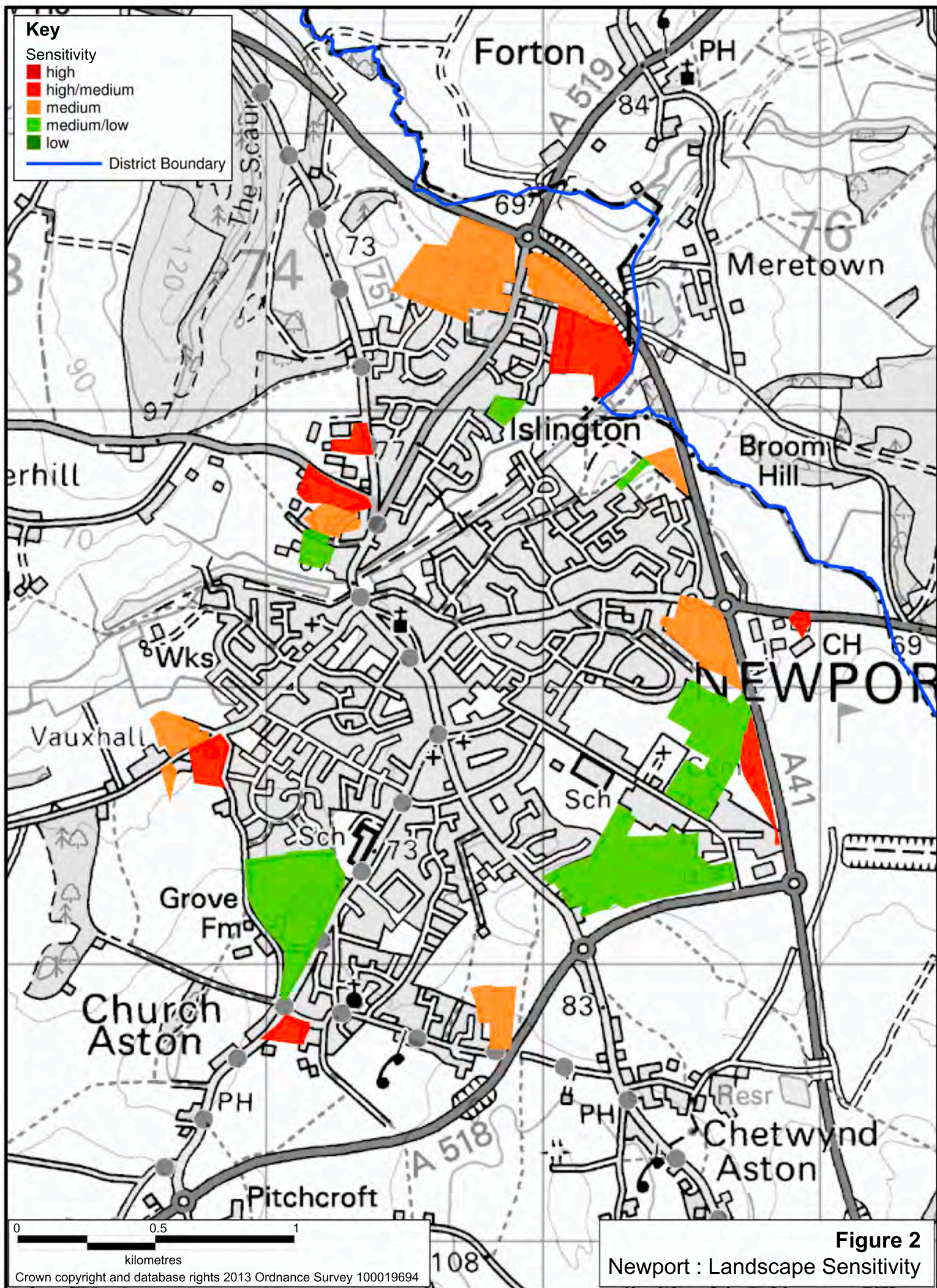
Site Reference	Settlement	Sensitivity
TWMu3 - 74	Muxton	high/medium
TWMu4 - 64	Muxton	medium
TWMu5 - 54	Muxton	high/medium
TWMu6 - 64	Muxton	high/medium
TWNe1 - 87	Newport	medium
TWNe10 - 129	Newport	medium
TWNe11 - 119	Newport	high/medium
TWNe12 - 114	Newport	high/medium
TWNe13 - 110	Newport	medium
TWNe14 - 106	Newport	medium/low
TWNe15 - 95	Newport	medium
TWNe16 - 93	Newport	high/medium
TWNe17 - 88	Newport	medium/low
TWNe18 - 86	Newport	high/medium
TWNe19 - 94	Newport	high/medium
TWNe2 - 89	Newport	medium/low
TWNe2 - 91	Newport	medium/low
TWNe20 - 93	Newport	medium
TWNe3 - 92	Newport	medium/low
TWNe3 - 94	Newport	high/medium
TWNe3 - 96	Newport	medium/low
TWNe4 - 100	Newport	medium
TWNe5 - 115	Newport	medium/low
TWNe5 - 117	Newport	medium
TWNe7 - 121	Newport	medium/low
TWNe8 - 126	Newport	high/medium
TWNe9 - 132	Newport	medium
TWNH1 - 15	Nedge Hill	high/medium
TWNH1 - 16	Nedge Hill	high/medium
TWPI1 - 32	Priorslee	high/medium
TWPI1 - 41	Priorslee	high/medium
TWPI2 - 41	Priorslee	medium/low
TWPW2 - 80	Preston upon the Weald Moors	high/medium
TWRh3 - 44	Redhill	high/medium
TWRh5 - 47	Redhill	medium
TWRh6 - 47	Redhill	medium
TWRh7 - 47	Redhill	medium
TWRh8 - 47	Redhill	medium
TWSb1 - 66	Shawbirch	high/medium
TWSN1 - 12	South Nedge	high/medium
TWTN1 - 14	The Nedge	medium
TWWe1 - 40	Wellington	high/medium
TWWe2 - 39	Wellington	high/medium
TWWe5 - 48	Wellington	medium/low
TWWe5 - 49	Wellington	high/medium
TWWe6 - 50	Wellington	medium/low
TWWe8 - 49	Wellington	high/medium
TWWL1 - 65	Wheat Leasows	medium
TWWL1 - 66	Wheat Leasows	high/medium
TWWL2 - 66	Wheat Leasows	high
TWWL3 - 66	Wheat Leasows	high
TWWs1 - 68	Wappenshall	high/medium
TWWs1 - 71	Wappenshall	high/medium
TWWs1 - 76	Wappenshall	high
TWWs2 - 71	Wappenshall	high

<b>Site Reference</b>	<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Sensitivity</b>
TWWs4 - 71	Wappenshall	high/medium

# FIGURES



**Figure 1**  
Telford : Landscape Sensitivity



**Figure 2**  
Newport : Landscape Sensitivity