

FPCR
On behalf of
Gladman Developments Ltd

Matter 6 Hearing Statement
Telford and Wrekin (2011 – 2031)

Environment



Telford & Wrekin Local Plan

LANDSCAPE TEXT

27th October 2016

1.0 MATTER 6.1

1.1 ***Is the highest level of protection for AONBs adequately reflected in the local plan and does NE7 make a sufficient distinction between the AONB and Strategic Landscapes?***

- The NPPF affords the highest status of protection to AONBs in relation to conservation of their landscape and scenic beauty at Paragraph 115.
- Paragraph 113 also requires local authorities to use a hierarchical approach to landscape areas.

1.2 Policy NE7 provides protection to the AONB within Telford and Wrekin. This protection is however provided under the designation of three Strategic Landscapes (SLs), only one of which includes AONB.

1.3 The proposed SLs are the Wrekin Forest, Weald Moors, and Lilleshall Village. The Wrekin Forest SL includes all of the AONB within Telford and Wrekin. The Weald Moors were formerly part of a further lower tier of landscape designation (Area of Special Landscape Character – OL2), whilst the Lilleshall Village has never been designated for any landscape character reason. The landscape review of the LVSL (Appendix 1) provides figures showing these existing national and former local designations.

1.4 The AONB is therefore grouped together with two further local landscapes that are of a lower landscape value and this does not therefore follow the hierarchical approach set out within the NPPF.

1.5 The policy states within the explanatory text at para 6.5.4 that the Wrekin Forest Strategic Landscape includes part of the Shropshire Hills AONB and that any proposals affecting the AONB will be required to be consistent with the AONB Management Plan. This is the only area within the policy that makes any distinction between the AONB and the SLs.

1.6 Overall the policy makes no clear hierarchical distinction between the Wrekin Forest and the two other Strategic Landscapes and it is therefore not clear that the AONB is afforded the highest level of protection.

2.0 MATTER 6.2

2.1 **Are the Local Plans Strategic Landscapes sufficiently justified and consistent with national policy in the framework?**

2.2 The NPPF provides protection to the “top tier” of landscape designations which includes Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, at paragraph 115. Whilst one of the Strategic Landscape (SLs) includes part of the Shropshire Hills AONB, the majority of the landscape within the three SLs is not designated at a national level. The proposed SLs are local landscape designations and the use of local designations such as this, have been largely superseded by the use of landscape character assessments and suitable criteria based policies. As such the Strategic Landscapes are not consistent with paragraph 113 of the NPPF.

- 2.3 There are three Strategic Landscapes proposed. The evidence base for policy NE7 is provided within the “Strategic Landscape Study” (Fiona Fyfe Associates December 2015).
- 2.4 The three Strategic Landscapes (SLs) have all been essentially designated for their “*intrinsic landscape quality*”. The Wrekin Forest SL includes the Wrekin itself, but also the land which surrounds it and forms its setting. It is of high scenic quality, partly designated at a national level for its natural beauty and has a high level of recreational use. The Weald Moors SL has a low-lying topography, wooded skylines, a network of tree-lined streams and ditches, quiet rural lanes and a lack of settlement. It is a distinctive and tranquil landscape, with long views available across the Moors.
- 2.5 The Lilleshall Village SL is the third Strategic Landscape. The SL lies between Telford and Newport and forms the setting to the Lilleshall Monument which sits on the distinctive outcrop of Lilleshall Hill. However, there appears to be some disparity between the intrinsic character designation of the other two SL’s, and the function that the Lilleshall Village SL has as a Strategic Gap between Telford and Newport. The Strategic Landscape Study (2015) states that “*Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape forms an important **strategic gap** between the settlements of Telford and Newport, preventing the coalescence of these settlements with the village of Lilleshall. It also contributes to the **approach** to Telford from the north-east along the A518, and the **landscape setting** of the villages of Lilleshall and Muxton, the Scheduled Monument of Lilleshall Abbey, and the popular viewpoint of Lilleshall Monument. The network of footpaths within the area is popular for **recreation**, particularly the paths and common land on Lilleshall Hill, around the Monument. Lilleshall Abbey (managed by English Heritage) has free public access, as does the Local Wildlife Site at Barrack Lane Quarry*”.
- 2.6 All of these functions are generally more consistent with settlement gap policies rather than landscape quality policies.
- 2.7 Both the Weald Moors, and Wrekin Forest Strategic Landscapes lie predominantly within separately defined small character areas at a local level within the Shropshire Landscape Typology, which provides the regional landscape character assessment for Telford and Wrekin. Lilleshall Village SL however falls predominantly within the Estate Farmlands Character Area which is one of the largest character areas in the County. This would suggest that at a county level it was not deemed that the area was sufficiently different to this wider landscape to warrant a separate landscape character area, in contrast to the other two proposed Strategic Landscapes.
- 2.8 Whilst there are elements within the Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape which would contribute to a locally higher value landscape than the wider character area within which it sits (Estate Farmlands), there are also clearly elements that detract from the landscape. A review of the character of the LVSL is provided at Appendix 1. The following key points are outlined within this review:
- The LVSL is considered to be less or equally tranquil than the majority of the wider Estate Farmlands character area due to its location and the adjacent road network.
 - The landscape within the SL is represented by an agricultural landscape on the fringes of the urban area of Telford (Muxton) and Newport to the north. The landscape character is therefore inevitably influenced to a varying degree by its relationship with the urban edge. Various urbanising influences are present including the very busy A518, and housing on the edge of Muxton and within Lilleshall including new housing on the eastern edge of Lilleshall
 - Two large farms are located on the northern and southern boundaries of the LVSL at Little Hales Manor Farm, and Abbey Farm. These large scale buildings detract from the overall scenic quality of

the area.

- The Lilleshall Monument forms an attractive focal point from a number of viewpoints and is visible as a backdrop within the majority of the SL. The monument is therefore a key orientational landmark within the local landscape. Aside from this however, the landscape is predominantly typified by large to medium scale arable land affected by the adjacent settlement edges, roads and large scale agricultural buildings and is generally not of any remarkable scenic quality.
- Overall the LVSL is considered to be generally of a similar scenic quality to the wider character areas, although varying across the Strategic Landscape with some locally of higher scenic quality and some of lower, due to the SLs location adjacent to the urban edge.

2.9 It is considered that overall the landscape of Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape is consistent with the wider landscape character areas within which it sits, and its proposed designation as a strategic landscape is unjustified and therefore unsound. The Council may seek to argue that this area functions as a gap between Telford/Lilleshall and Newport and that this is something worthy of protection, but this is not the approach set out in the submitted plan and is a separate matter to whether the landscape of the proposed designated area is of sufficient quality and value.

Appendix 1

Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape Landscape Review FPCR (October 2016)



Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape (LVSL)

LANDSCAPE REVIEW

25th October 2016

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1.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 This document provides a review of the Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape (LVSL). This emerging designation is set out in Policy NE7 Strategic Landscape of the Telford and Wrekin Local Plan June 2016, with supporting evidence provided in the “Strategic Landscape Study” (Fiona Fyfe Associates December 2015).
- 1.2 The review has been prepared by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd. on behalf of Gladman Developments Ltd and has been undertaken by Chartered Members of the Landscape Institute.
- 1.3 The LVSL is one of three proposed strategic landscapes within Telford and Wrekin, the others being the Weald Moors and Wrekin Forest. The two other Strategic Landscapes have a history of landscape designations. The Weald Moors were formerly designated as an Area of Special Landscape Character (Figure 07) and a large portion of the Wrekin Forest Strategic Landscape lies within the Shropshire Hills AONB. Lilleshall Village has however never been designated for any landscape value or quality reason.
- 1.4 The three Strategic Landscapes (SLs) have all been essentially designated for their “*intrinsic landscape quality*”. However, there appears to be some disparity between the intrinsic character designation of the Lilleshall Village SL, and the function that this landscape has as a Strategic Gap between Telford and Newport.
- 1.5 *The Strategic Landscape Study states regarding its function that:*
*“Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape forms an important **strategic gap** between the settlements of Telford and Newport, preventing the coalescence of these settlements with the village of Lilleshall. It also contributes to the **approach** to Telford from the north-east along the A518, and the **landscape setting** of the villages of Lilleshall and Muxton, the Scheduled Monument of Lilleshall Abbey, and the popular viewpoint of Lilleshall Monument. The network of footpaths within the area is popular for **recreation**, particularly the paths and common land on Lilleshall Hill, around the Monument. Lilleshall Abbey (managed by English Heritage) has free public access, as does the Local Wildlife Site at Barrack Lane Quarry.*
- 1.6 All of these functions are generally more consistent with settlement gap policies rather than landscape policies, and therefore some further analysis of the character of the SL has been undertaken to compare the Strategic Landscape with the wider character area within which it sits and to determine whether this has been correctly designated for its landscape quality rather than its function as a gap between Telford and Newport.

2.0 LOCAL PLAN POLICY

2.1 Policy NE7 Strategic Landscapes

“The Borough's Strategic Landscapes will be protected from inappropriate development. Development which would cause detrimental change to the quality of landscape in the areas will not be supported.”

2.2 *The NPPF places great weight on the importance of landscape protection both at a national and local level. It requires councils to protect and enhance valued landscapes. Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) are to be given the highest level of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.*

2.3 *The Local Plan has identified three areas as Strategic Landscapes. These are:*

- *Wrekin Forest;*
- *Weald Moors; and*
- *Lilleshall Village.*

2.4 *Policy NE7 recognises the protection of these three distinctive Strategic Landscapes which contribute to the overall quality of the borough.*

2.5 *The Council will protect the borough's Strategic Landscapes from development which would cause detrimental change to the quality of the landscape.*

2.6 *This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 22, 25, 27, 31 and 33.*

2.7 *The purpose of this policy is to protect the appearance and intrinsic landscape quality of these areas and to prevent development which would be inconsistent with, and detrimental to, their visual and landscape quality. All proposals for development within, or likely to effect, a Strategic Landscape should have regard to Telford & Wrekin Strategic Landscapes Study (December 2015). The Wrekin Forest Strategic Landscape includes part of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) a small part of which falls within the borough. Any proposals affecting the Shropshire Hills AONB will also be required to be consistent with the current AONB Management Plan and any subsequent update.*

3.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

National Context

3.1 The majority of the proposed Lilleshall Strategic Landscape lies within the 'Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau' National Character Area 66. (refer to Figure 01). The key characteristics of this Character Area are described as:

- *Extensive sandstone plateau in the core and east of the NCA underpins an undulating landscape with tree-lined ridges; this contrasts with the irregular topography and steep, wooded gorges of the Severn Valley in the west.*
- *Plateau underlain by Permian and Triassic sandstones and conglomerate from the Sherwood Sandstone Group forming an important aquifer. Silurian limestones and Carboniferous Coal Measures of the Coalbrookdale and Wyre Forest coalfields in the west provide the source of mineral wealth which fuelled the Industrial Revolution.*
- *Permian and Triassic sandstones erode to free-draining, slightly acid mineral soils which historically supported extensive heathland and grassland. In contrast, marls and sandstones associated with Coal Measures erode to clayey (argillic) brown earth soils.*
- *The plateau is drained by the rivers Worfe and Stour and fast-flowing streams in small wooded, steep-sided streamside dells, locally known as dingles.*
- *The main river is the fast-flowing Severn, flowing north to south in the west of the NCA, often through steep, wooded gorges, the largest being the Ironbridge Gorge.*
- *Interlocking blocks of mixed woodland and old orchards provide a well-wooded landscape and conifer plantations combine with parklands to give an estate character. Wyre Forest is part of one of the largest ancient lowland oak woods in England.*
- *Large, open arable fields with a weak hedgerow pattern on the plateau contrast with mixed arable and pasture land with smaller, irregular- shaped fields bounded by hedgerows with hedgerow oaks in the west.*
- *Characteristic lowland heathland associated with acid grassland and woodland supports nationally important populations of flora and fauna, notably butterflies including the pearl-bordered fritillary.*
- *Post-industrial sites, disused coal mines and mineral quarries are important habitats around Telford and urban areas in the Black Country and are becoming increasingly important because of their dwindling number.*
- *Rich and important heritage assets have led to World Heritage status for Coalbrookdale and Ironbridge, the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution.*
- *Traditional buildings constructed of brick vary in colour. The local Kidderminster and Bromsgrove Sandstone features extensively. Its characteristic red colouration provides local distinctiveness to many towns and villages and estate boundary walls.*
- *The Stour and Severn valleys contain frequent villages and there are a number of attractive historic towns, for example Bridgnorth and Bewdley with cores of Georgian and earlier buildings; there are fine individual examples of timber-framed buildings in Kinver, Bewdley and Bridgnorth.*

- *There is a coalfield remnant landscape along the Severn Valley.*
 - *Important manmade features include the Roman road Watling Street, the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, the M54 and the railway line that links the urban areas of Birmingham and the Black Country in the east with Shrewsbury in the neighbouring NCA in the west.*
- 3.2 *Additional Opportunities: Promote sustainable agricultural practices to maintain the food productivity of the plateau, while incorporating semi-natural habitats into arable fields and valley pastures, to protect the quality of the soil and prevent erosion, thus also increasing the contribution to biodiversity, landscape character and climate regulation.*
- 3.3 A small section of the western section of the LVSL falls within the Shropshire, Staffordshire and Cheshire Plain' National Character Area 61. This covers a very broad geographic area, which extends from the broad Mersey Valley in the north, with its urban and industrial development, to the Shropshire Hills in the south. The key characteristics of the area are as follows:
- *Extensive, gently undulating plain, dominated by thick glacial till from the late Pleistocene Period, producing productive, clay soils and exemplifying characteristic glacial landforms including eskers, glacial fans, kettle holes, moraines and a landscape of meres and mosses.*
 - *Prominent discontinuous sandstone ridges of Triassic age, characterised by steep sides and freely draining, generally infertile soil that supports broadleaved and mixed woodland.*
 - *Few woodlands, confined to the area around Northwich and to estates, cloughs and deciduous and mixed woods on the steeper slopes of the wind-swept sandstone ridges. Locally extensive tracts of coniferous woodland and locally distinctive orchards scattered throughout.*
 - *Strong field patterns with generally well-maintained boundaries, predominantly hedgerows, with dense, mature hedgerow trees. Sandstone walls occur on the ridges and estate walls and Cheshire-style (curved topped) metal railing fences occur locally on estates in Cheshire.*
 - *Dairy farming dominates on the plain, with patches of mixed farming and arable in the north and large areas in the south-east.*
 - *Diversity of wetland habitats includes internationally important meres and mosses comprising lowland raised bog, fen, wet woodland, reedbed and standing water, supporting populations of a host of rare wildlife, including some species of national and international importance.*
 - *Extensive peat flood plains where flood plain grazing marsh habitats support regionally important populations of breeding waders in areas such as Baggy Moor, Weald Moor and Doxey Marshes.*
 - *Many main rivers and their flood plains lie in this area, including the Dee, Dane, Severn, Penk and Sow. Significant areas of grazing marsh, alluvial flood meadows and hay meadows associated with the rivers Dee, Sow, Gowy and Severn. The area has the highest density of field ponds in western Europe.*
 - *Rich archaeological evidence of iron-age hill forts concentrated on the sandstone ridges and the Weald Moors. Remnant ridge and furrow and moated houses are features of the plain. The Roman road, Watling Street, crosses the plain linking London to Wales via Wroxeter. Chester was an important Roman settlement.*

- *Regularly spaced, large farmsteads, dispersed hamlets, market towns and many other settlements including Macclesfield and Telford. Timber-frame buildings are a distinctive feature of the plain, often highly decorated in Cheshire, for example, the moated Little Moreton Hall. The historic towns including Stafford, Shrewsbury and the city of Chester have a wealth of 17th- and 18th-century half-timber, brick and red sandstone buildings.*
- *Parklands and gardens associated with estates such as Chillington, Trentham, Tatton and Attingham; country houses such as Gawsworth Hall, Arley Hall and Adlington Hall; and fortified manor houses and castles such as at Shrewsbury, Stafford, Beeston, Acton Burnell and Cholmondeley.*
- *Nationally important reserves of silica sand and salt. Active extraction of salt has developed a locally distinctive landscape of subsidence flashes, particularly around the area of Sandbach. Adjacent to these saline flashes are areas of salt marsh rarely found at inland sites.*
- *The numerous canals are important for recreation as well as habitat. Several National Cycle Routes and nearly 5,000 km of public rights of way cross the plain. Six National Nature Reserves (NNRs) are scattered throughout, close to large population centres and well used for recreation.*

3.4 **SEO 2:** *Protect the landscape of the plain, recognising its importance to food production and incorporating well-maintained hedgerows, ponds and lowland grassland margins within agricultural systems, to secure resource protection and maintain productivity, while reducing fragmentation of semi-natural habitats to benefit a wide range of services, such as landscape character, sense of place, water quality and biodiversity.*

- *Ensuring that new development is informed by and sympathetic to landscape character and quality and contributes, as appropriate, to the conservation of the landscape, having regard to visual impact and local vernacular.*

4.0 REGIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Shropshire Landscape Typology (2006)

- 4.1 The Shropshire Landscape Typology identifies 27 different Landscape Types within the County. The study describes each of these Landscape Types and sets out their key characteristics.
- 4.2 Both the Wealds Moor, and Wrekin Forest Strategic Landscapes lie predominantly within separately defined small character areas at a local level within the Shropshire Landscape Typology. (Figure 06) The Weald Moor SL lies predominantly within the “Lowland Moors” Character Area, and the Wrekin Forest SL includes centrally all of the High Volcanic Hills & Slopes, and Wooded Hills and Farmlands with Wooded Estate lands to the east. (Figure 06)
- 4.3 Lilleshall Village however falls predominantly within the Estate Farmlands Character Area. (Extracts at Appendix 1). When looking at the overall County Typology Map (Figure 06), it can be seen that this is one of the largest character areas in the County and as stated in the report, Estate Farmlands “*occur across large areas of Shropshire*”. The SL also includes part of the “Coalfields character area” which covers a small section of the SL, but the SL boundary does not reflect this character areas boundary. This would suggest that at a county level it was not deemed that the area was sufficiently different to the wider landscape to warrant a separate landscape character area, in contrast to the other 2 strategic landscapes.
- 4.4 The following chapter therefore firstly considers the two landscape character areas that the LVSL falls within, and their general characteristics. Secondly the report considers whether the character within the Strategic Landscape differs to any extent from the wider character area that it forms part of.

The Shropshire Landscape Typology

- 4.5 The majority of the Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape lies within the Landscape Type ‘Estate Farmlands’, the key characteristics of which are as follows:
- *Mixed farming land use;*
 - *Clustered settlement pattern;*
 - *Large country houses with associated parklands;*
 - *Planned woodland character; and*
 - *Medium to large scale landscapes with framed views.*
- 4.6 A finger of landscape within the south east of the Strategic Landscape falls within the Coalfields Landscape Type, the key characteristics of which are described as:
- *Upstanding rolling plateau*
 - *Dispersed pattern of small farms and wayside cottages*
 - *Coal mining remains*
- 4.7 *Coalfield landscapes are found in two locations around the fringes of Telford, in eastern Shropshire. They occur on an upstanding, gently rolling plateau formed of Carboniferous Coal Measures, which is overlain by heavy, poorly drained soils that once supported extensive areas of woodland and rough pasture.*

- 4.8 *Following a long period of industrial decline between the late 19th and mid-20th century, these landscapes have been transformed through the establishment of Telford new town. The extensive reclamation of derelict industrial land, which occurred alongside the development of the new town, has resulted in widespread amenity planting on the site of former spoil tips, significantly increasing the amount of tree cover. The historic settlement pattern has also been modified by housing developments and the construction of an urban road network.*

5.0 LOCAL LANDSCAPE – ANALYSIS & COMPARISON TO THE SHROPSHIRE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER STUDY

Topography (Figure 02)

- 5.1 The majority of the SL lies within very gently rolling land between 70m AOD in the west, rising to 125m at Abbey Wood on the eastern boundary. Lilleshall Hill forms a distinctive Limestone outcrop towards the centre of the SL, rising to 132m AOD. This creates a minor valley within the eastern portion of the SL. The Lilleshall Monument sits on the top of the central outcrop. To the west of the study area, the land remains relatively flat and open, descending towards the low point of the Weald Moors. To the east, the contours rise past Lilleshall National Sports Centre and Golf Club. To the north east, the contours rise towards Pitchcroft Lane.
- 5.2 This rolling topography is therefore generally typical of the Estate Farmland character area. The central outcrop is locally distinctive, but predominantly only in conjunction with the Monument on its top. The contours are not sufficiently dramatic for this to have its own character area, as do the distinctive hills within the 'High Volcanic Hills' character area that includes The Wrekin and the larger scale landscape to the south west of Telford.

Landscape Designations:

- 5.3 The SL is not subject to any national, local or any other landscape value designations. Several areas within the wider Estate Farmlands character area do fall within the boundaries of the Shropshire Hills AONB, but the majority of this large character area does not.

Landscape Quality (Condition):

- 5.4 The SL is predominantly characterised by medium scale arable fields typical of the Estate Farmlands character area. In places and in particular to the north and west it exhibits a rather degraded character and structure, through intensive agricultural use. This is clearest in the northern section of the SL towards Pitchcroft Lane where the scale of the fields is larger with little tree cover.
- 5.5 The majority of land is made up of intensive arable farmland. Hedgerows generally form the boundaries to the fields within the SL and the majority of the treecover is confined to these field boundaries. Three small blocks of woodland plantations are present at Sulphur Piece Plantation, Grange Plantation and Incline Plantation. A further larger area of woodland is present at Abbey Wood on the south eastern boundary. Treecover is therefore typical of the local landscape character area 'Estate Farmlands'.
- 5.6 There are a number of small streams and ditches which run through the SL. A number of ponds are also associated with the Abbey within the south eastern corner of the SL. One of these forms part of a seating area. Generally however these ponds and ditches are screened by adjacent vegetation.
- 5.7 Overall the landscape of the SL is judged to be of moderate condition which is consistent with the wider character area.

Scenic Quality:

- 5.8 The landscape within the SL is represented by an agricultural landscape on the fringes of the urban area of Telford (Muxton) and Newport to the north. The landscape character is therefore inevitably influenced to a varying degree by its relationship with the urban edge. Various urbanising influences are present including the very busy A518, and housing on the edge of Muxton and within Lilleshall including new housing on the eastern edge of Lilleshall. Figure 03 provides an overview of the vehicular routes, which shows the density of roads within the western portion of the LVSL.
- 5.9 Two large farms are located on the northern and southern boundaries of the LVSL at Little Hales Manor Farm, and Abbey Farm. These large scale buildings detract from the overall scenic quality of the area. Lilleshall Grange and associated buildings also detract from the scenic quality of the area in the southern part of the SL.
- 5.10 The Lilleshall Monument forms an attractive focal point from a number of viewpoints and is visible as a backdrop within the majority of the SL. The Monument also provides a popular panoramic viewpoint, which provides views across the character area. These views from the monument are longest to the south and west due to contours, which enclose the landscape to the east. Views include the urban edge of Telford, with the Wrekin visible beyond.
- 5.11 The monument is therefore a key orientational landmark within the local landscape. Aside from this however, the landscape is predominantly typified by large to medium scale arable land affected by the adjacent settlement edges, roads and large scale agricultural buildings and is generally not of any remarkable scenic quality.
- 5.12 Overall the LVSL is considered to be generally of a similar scenic quality to the wider character areas, although varying across the Strategic Landscape with some locally of higher scenic quality and some of lower, due to the SLs location adjacent to the urban edge.

Rarity and Representativeness:

- 5.13 The Lilleshall outcrop is a locally distinctive landscape feature, however the majority of the SL is considered to be farmland typical of the Estate Farmlands landscape character that it lies predominantly within. There are no particular rare features within the countryside, neither is the outcrop a rare feature and the SL does not include any particular characteristics or features that are important or rare examples. It is generally considered to be arable farmland with plantations, waterbodies and overall scale typical of the wider landscape character area.
- 5.14 The overall LVSL is not considered to be special, rare or unusual in terms of its landscape character. The hedgerows, field patterns and trees are characteristic of the Estate Farmlands Landscape Type. This landscape type (within which the SL is predominantly located) covers a very broad area.
- 5.15 The Valley within the south east of the SL forms part of the Coalfields character area which extends to the south west. This change is not marked on the ground although the valley is more enclosed than the wider landscape to the north and west.

Conservation Interest:

- 5.16 Lilleshall Abbey is a scheduled monument and located within the south eastern boundary of the SL. The Abbey sits at the base of the eastern ridge of hills and is relatively enclosed in character. It has a minimal relationship with the majority of the SL, although there are views north west from the Abbey towards Lilleshall Hill.
- 5.17 Lilleshall Hall Registered Park and Garden is situated adjacent to the eastern edge of Lilleshall Abbey and the Strategic Landscape includes part of this area. The remainder of the registered Park does not lie within Telford and Wrekin Local Authority, and now forms part of the Lilleshall National Sports Centre. The trees associated with the entrance drive to Lilleshall Sports Centre form a strong backdrop beyond the eastern edge of the SL. The Estate Farmlands, as reflected by the name, have a large number of country houses along with associated Parklands and this parkland landscape is typical of the Estate Farmlands character area.
- 5.18 There are a number of further listed buildings and structures recorded within the SL. The majority of these are located within the village centre of Lilleshall and these include the Sutherland Monument, which occupies an elevated position on top of Lilleshall Hill. There are no Conservation Areas within the SL. Lilleshall Village is linear in form and is visible on the eastern side of Lilleshall Hill from much of the SL, set below the Monument. Much of the existing visible development is however from the 20th Century.
- 5.19 There are remnants of the areas industrial past in the disused canal that leads south from Lilleshall and the former Quarries. However, these remnants are no greater than within other areas of the former industrial Coalfields character area, which continues to the south of the SL on the eastern edge of Muxton. This area includes a Scheduled Monument to the south west of the SL within Granville Country Park.
- 5.20 Overall it is considered that the LVSL has a slightly higher concentration of conservation interest than the overall Estates Farmland Character Area.

Recreational Value:

- 5.21 A number of footpaths cross the LVSL although these do not form part of any long distance recreation routes (figure 4). Lilleshall Hill has public access and a well-used footpath leads to the monument and viewing points. Barracks Lane Quarry similarly has public access, as does Lilleshall Abbey. However, there is minimal footpath access to the Abbey. Visitors are generally required to drive and the footpath that provides a potential link past Lilleshall Grange is infrequently used. Generally, the southern area of the SL has a lack of footpaths, with only a single footpath providing a link through to Muxton.
- 5.22 Overall whilst there is a cluster of footpaths around Lilleshall this is similar to the concentration of footpaths around the southern edge of Newport and the north western edge of Muxton. It is consistent with the wider character area where it adjoins settlement edges.

Perceptual Aspects and Associations:

- 5.23 The Lilleshall Monument was erected by tenants of the village in memory of their landlord George Leveson Gower, First Duke of Sutherland in 1833 and therefore has a relationship with the

former tenanted land which surrounds the monument. Lilleshall Abbey built in 1148 also has an association with the immediate landscape, although generally it is enclosed by vegetation.

- 5.24 The SL as a whole is not a particularly tranquil or wild landscape. To the west of Lilleshall, the landscape is dominated by the A518, to the south it is affected by large scale agriculture and Telford edge, and to the north by further large scale agriculture associated with Little Hales Manor Farm. The eastern side of the SL is more tranquil, having less vehicular access. It is not a particularly tranquil landscape however in comparison to the Weald Moors and Wrekin Forest Strategic Landscapes.
- 5.25 Overall therefore the SL is considered to be less or equally tranquil than the majority of the wider Estate Farmlands character area due to its location and the adjacent road network.

Boundaries:

- 5.26 The boundary to the Weald Moors SL is relatively clearly defined in landscape character terms whereas the boundaries of Lilleshall Village and Wrekin Forest are less well defined by landscape character. The Wrekin is instead defined by the setting to the elevated areas of the Wrekin and the Lilleshall Village SL by the visual setting to Lilleshall Monument.
- 5.27 The Northern boundary of the LVSL follows Pitchcroft Lane and the track to Little Hales Manor Farm. The eastern boundary is then defined by the edge of the local authority rather than any clearly defined landscape feature. This is in contrast to the strong visual boundary provided to the east along the line of the Lilleshall Sports Centre entrance track towards the top of the ridge.
- 5.28 The southern boundary of the SL extends fairly closely to the boundary of Telford, north east of Muxton. From many of these small scale fields to the south of Sulphur Piece Plantation, views of the Lilleshall Monument are filtered by existing mature trees, vegetation and contours. These relatively distant glimpsed views from approximately 2km are much less obvious than views from outside of the Strategic Landscape, to the immediate west of the A518. The methodology for the boundary suggests that *"It is the area in which an observer feels to be within the Lilleshall Village Landscape rather than looking at it from a distance"*. However it could be suggested that this extension of the Strategic Landscape to the south east is for the function of retaining a gap and preventing expansion of Muxton, rather than this area being clearly *'within the Lilleshall Landscape'*. A more logical boundary would be the brook that runs to the south of Sulphur Piece Plantation, above which the more open fields provide clear views back towards Lilleshall.
- 5.29 The western boundary of the SL is defined by a former railway line which is not apparent on the ground as shown within the viewpoint at Figure 8. The A518 provides a clear dividing line between the landscape around Lilleshall and the landscape to the west which would form a more logical boundary.
- 5.30 Overall in some areas the SL boundaries are inconsistent with a quality landscape based approach, and instead appear to therefore follow both a 'Gap' based approach and a Local Authority boundary rather than logical natural boundaries.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 In summary;

6.2 A broad character comparison has been made between the LVSL and two other Strategic Landscapes within the Local Plan. Both the Wealds Moor, and Wrekin Forest Strategic Landscapes lie predominantly within separately defined small character areas at a local level within the Shropshire Landscape Typology. Lilleshall Village however falls predominantly within the Estate Farmlands Character Area which is one of the largest character areas in the County. This would suggest that at a county level it was not deemed that the area was sufficiently different to this wider landscape to warrant a separate landscape character area, in contrast to the other 2 strategic landscapes.

6.3 A review of the features that contribute towards landscape value, has been carried out for the Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape in comparison with the overall wider County character area with the following conclusions:


- The rolling topography within the LVSL is generally typical of the Estate Farmland character area. The central outcrop is locally distinctive, but predominantly only in conjunction with the Monument on its top.
- The LVSL is predominantly characterised by medium scale arable fields typical of the Estate Farmlands character area. In places and in particular to the north and west it exhibits a rather degraded character and structure, through intensive agricultural use. Overall the landscape of the SL is judged to be of moderate condition which is consistent with the wider character area.
- The Lilleshall Monument forms an attractive focal point from a number of viewpoints and is visible as a backdrop within the majority of the SL. The Monument also provides a popular panoramic viewpoint, which provides views across the character area. These views from the monument are longest to the south and west due to contours, which enclose the landscape to the east, and include the urban edge of Telford, with The Wrekin visible beyond. The monument is therefore a key orientational landmark within the local landscape. Aside from this however, the landscape is predominantly typified by large to medium scale arable land affected by the adjacent settlement edges, roads and large scale agricultural buildings and is generally not of any remarkable scenic quality.
- It is considered that the LVSL has a slightly higher concentration of conservation interest than the overall Estate Farmlands Character Area.
- The LVSL is considered to be less or equally tranquil than the majority of the wider Estate Farmlands character area due to its location and the adjacent road network.
- Overall the LVSL is considered to be generally of a similar scenic quality to the wider character areas, although varying across the Strategic Landscape with some locally of higher scenic quality and some of lower, due to the SLs location adjacent to the urban edge.
- The overall LVSL is not considered to be special, rare or unusual in terms of its landscape character. The hedgerows, field patterns and trees are characteristic of the Estate Farmlands Landscape Type. This landscape type (within which the SL is predominantly located) covers a very broad area.


- Whilst there is a cluster of footpaths around Lilleshall this is similar to the concentration of footpaths around the southern edge of Newport and the north western edge of Muxton. The LVSL is consistent with the wider character area where it adjoins settlement edges.
- In some areas the SL boundaries are inconsistent with a quality landscape based approach, and instead appear to therefore follow both a 'Gap' based approach and a Local Authority boundary rather than logical natural boundaries.

6.4 Whilst there are elements within the Strategic Landscape which would contribute to a locally higher value landscape than the wider character area within which it sits, there are also clearly elements that detract from the landscape. It is considered that overall the landscape is consistent with the wider landscape character areas within which it sits, and its proposed designation as a strategic landscape is unjustified and therefore unsound. The Council may seek to argue that this area functions as a gap between Telford/Lilleshall and Newport and that this is something worthy of protection, but this is not the approach set out in the submitted plan and is a separate matter to whether the landscape of the proposed designated area is of sufficient quality and value. The degree to which this land functions as a gap worthy of protection has not been considered within this report.


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 Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape Boundary

 Weald Moors Strategic Landscape Boundary

Natural England National Character Areas


 National Character Area Boundary

NCA61: Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain


NCA 66: Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau

The Shropshire Landscape Typology, Shropshire County Council 2006

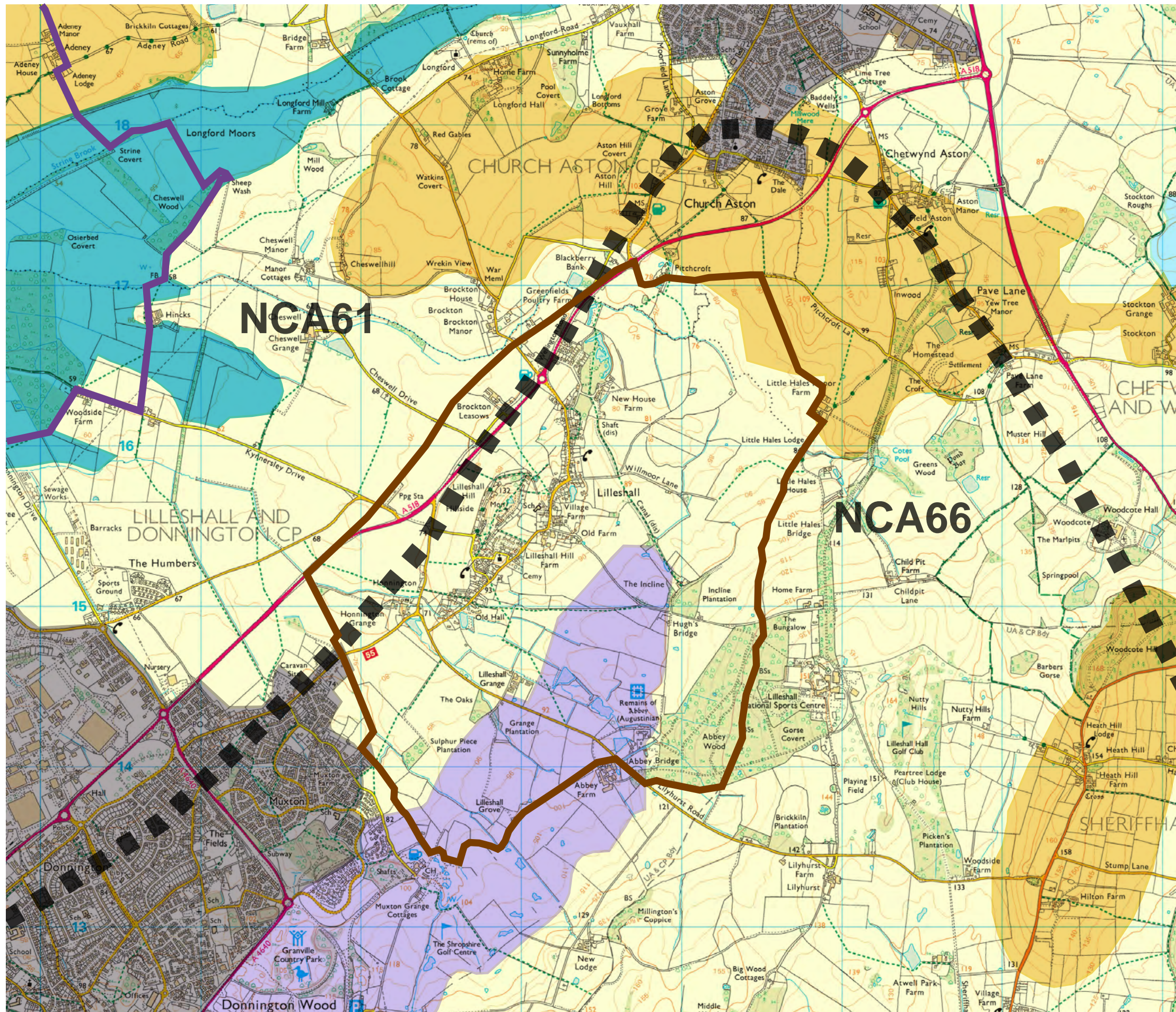
 Urban

 Estate Farmlands

 Sandstone Estatelands

 Lowland Moors

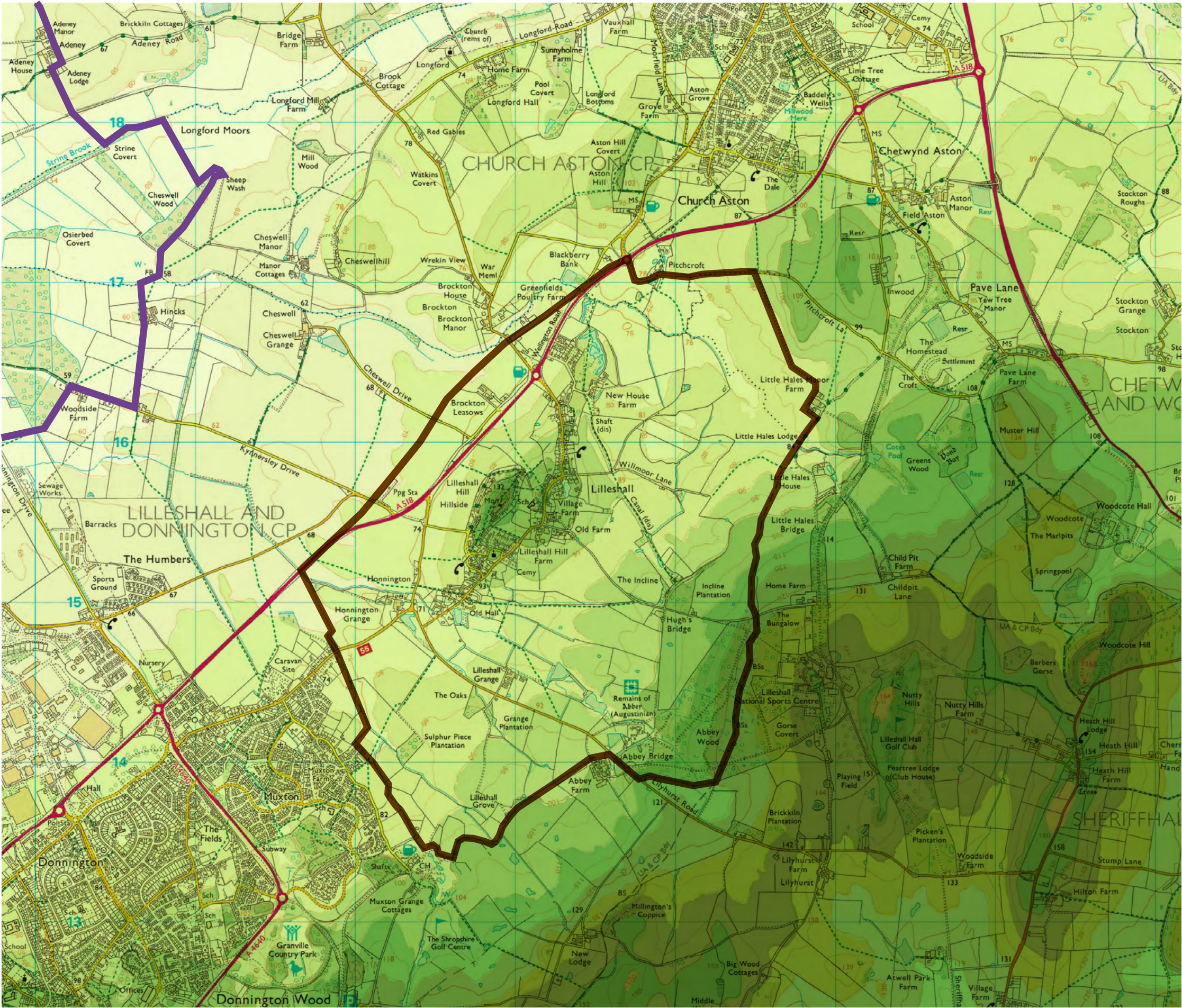
 Riverside Meadows



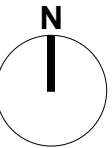
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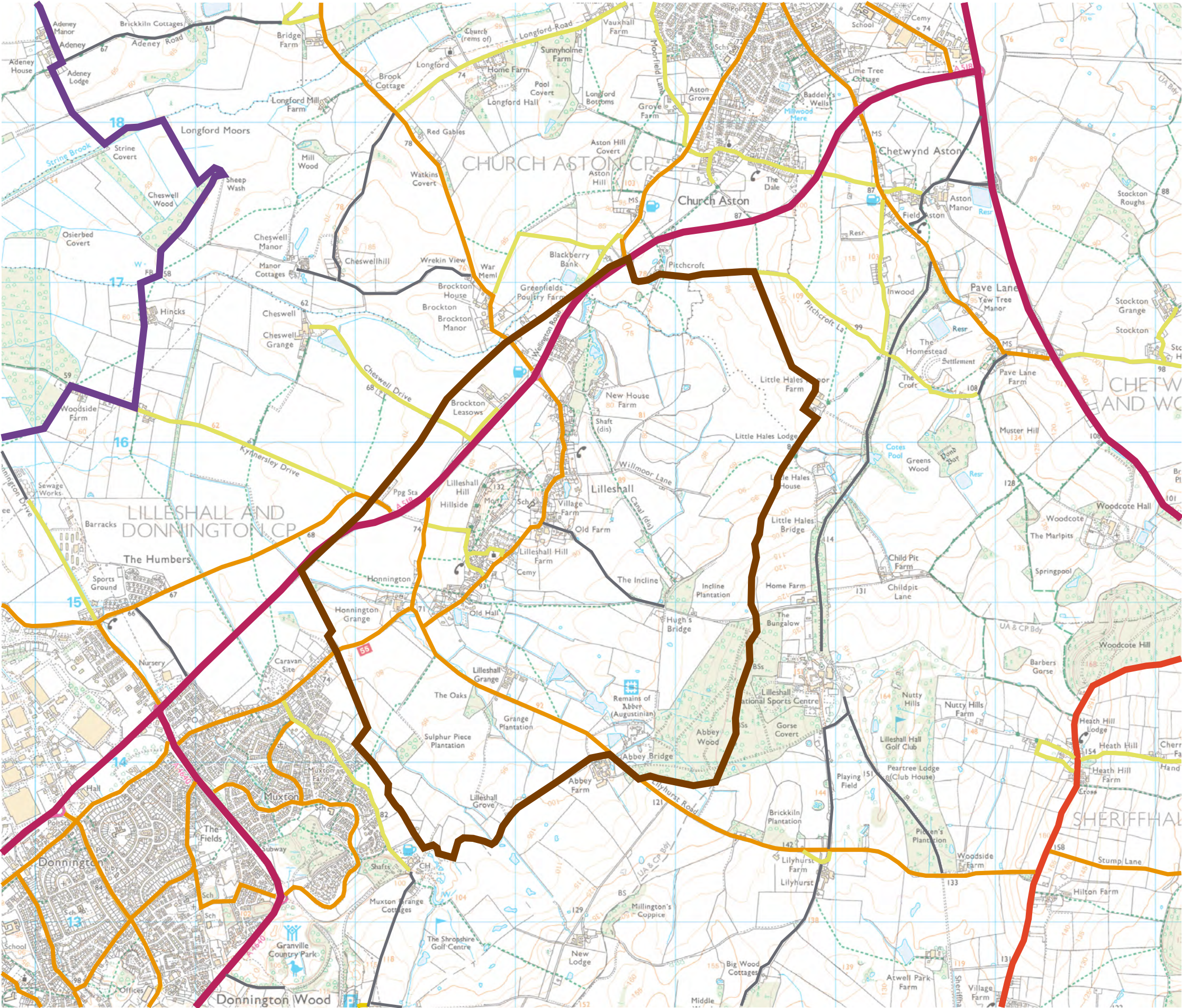
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



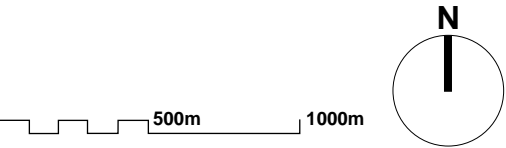
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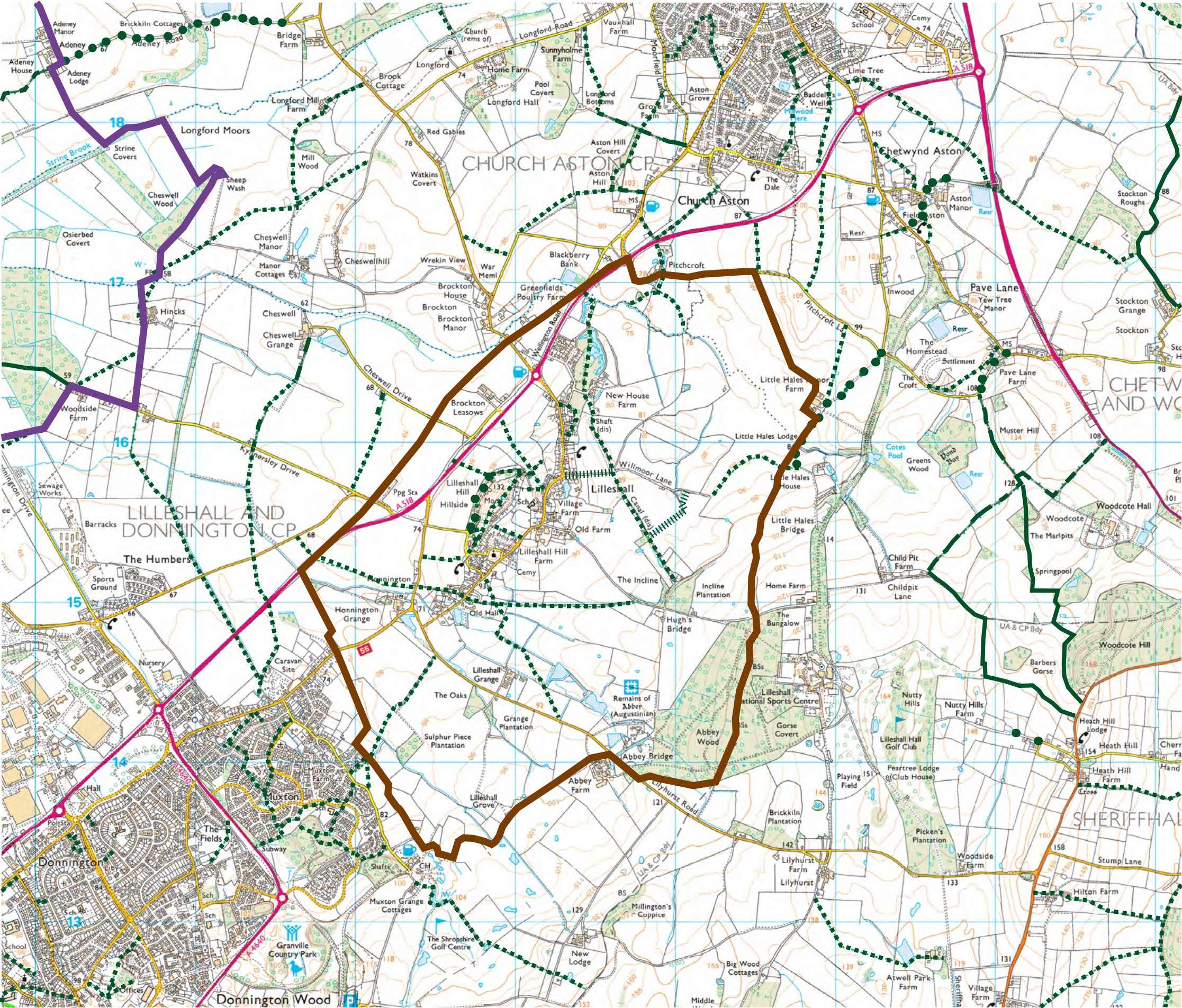
-  Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape Boundary
-  Weald Moors Strategic Landscape Boundary
-  Main Roads
-  Secondary Roads
-  Roads Generally more than 4m wide
-  Roads Generally less than 4m wide
-  Other Routes










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-  Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape Boundary
-  Weald Moors Strategic Landscape Boundary
-  Public Footpath
-  Road Used as Public Footpath
-  Bridleway
-  Other Routes with Public Access
-  Permissive Footpath

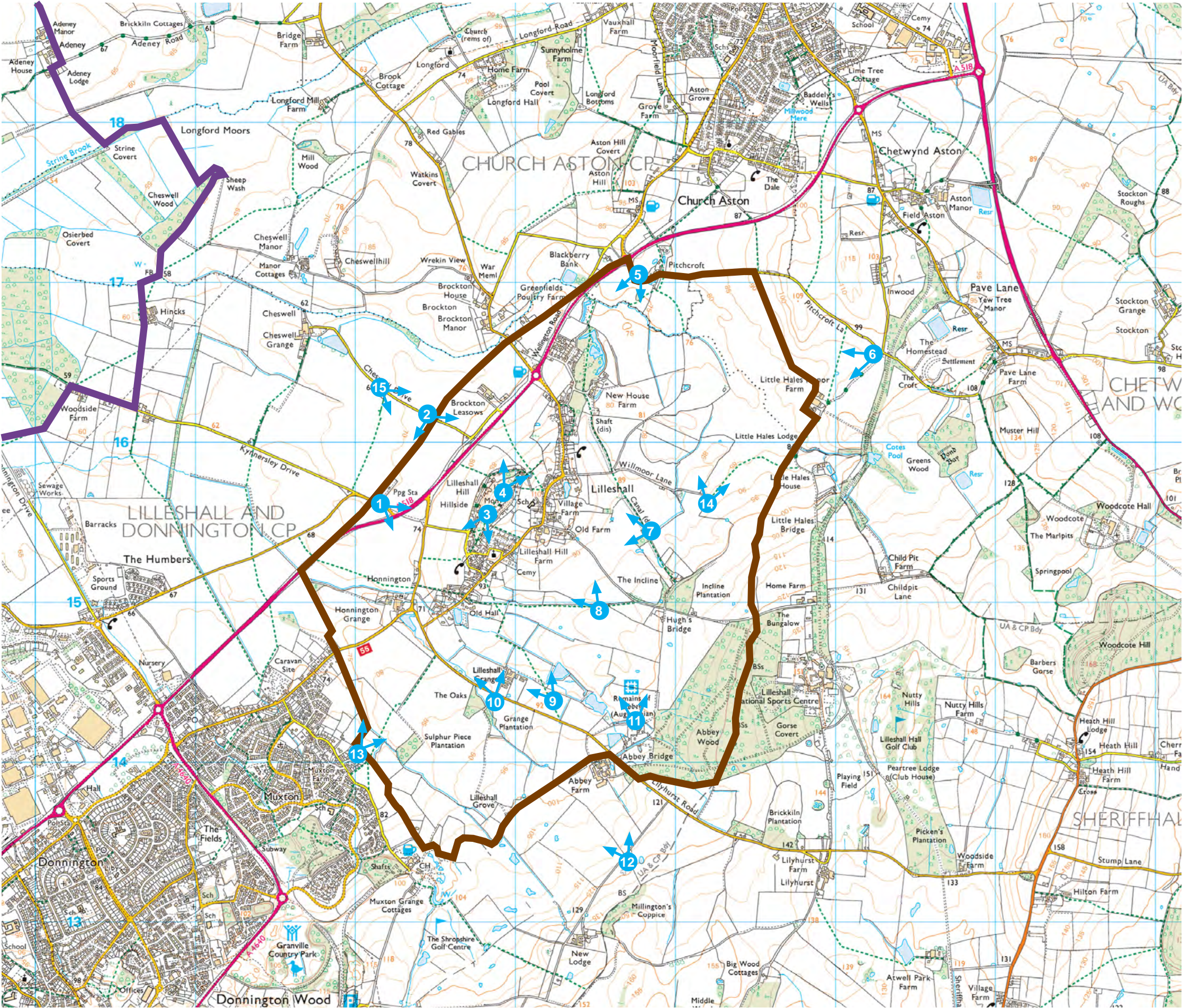
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- Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape Boundary
- Weald Moors Strategic Landscape Boundary
- 11

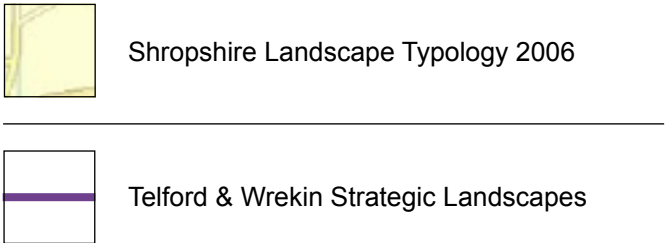
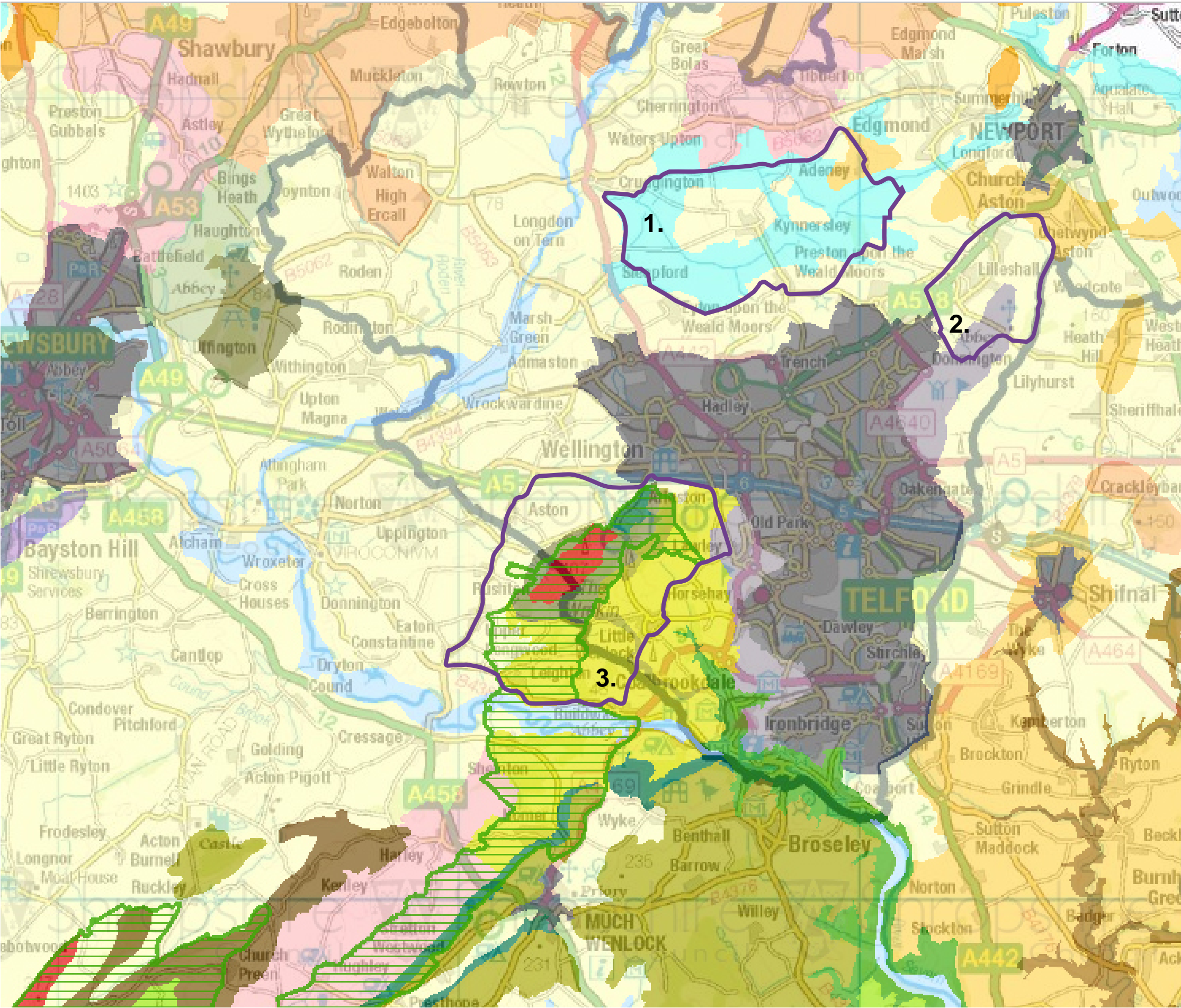
Viewpoint Location



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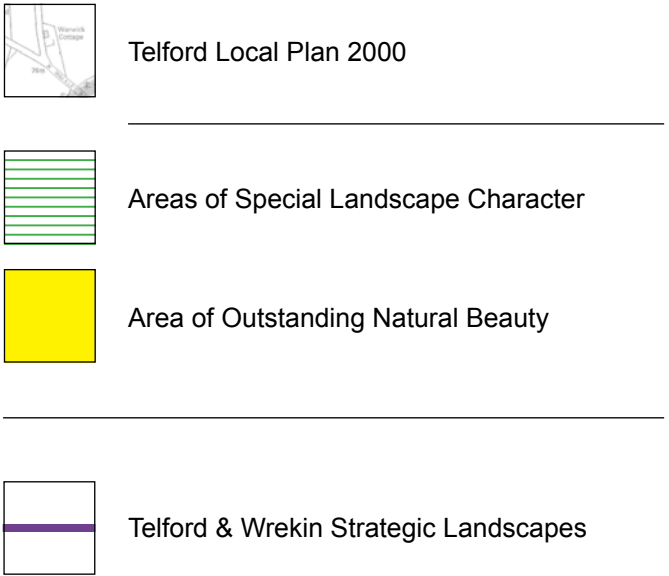
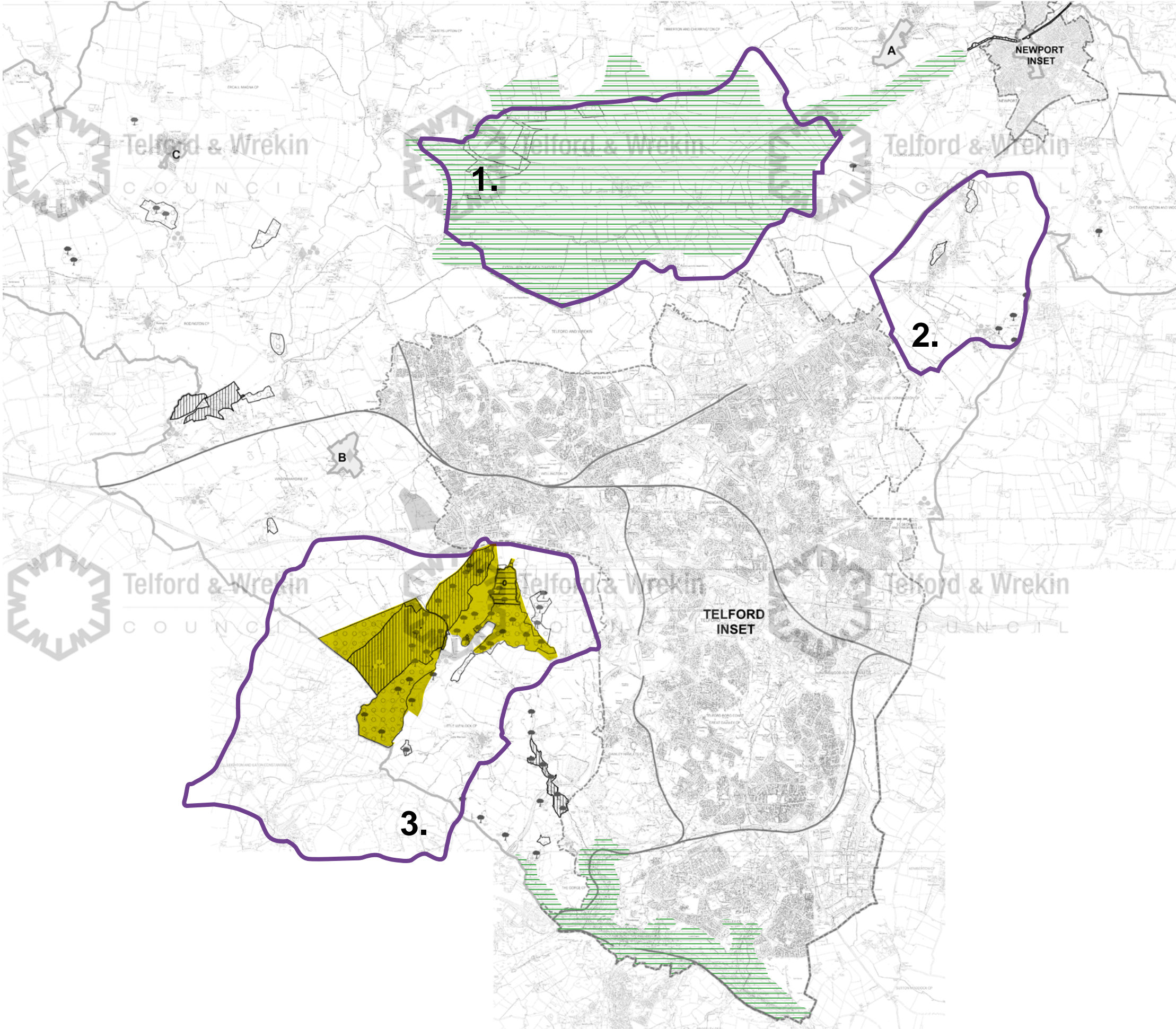
Strategic Landscapes

- 1. Weald Moors
- 2. Lilleshall Village
- 3. Wrekin Forest

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Strategic Landscapes

- 1. Weald Moors
- 2. Lilleshall Village
- 3. Wrekin Forest



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 1: View north east from junction of A518 and Kynnersley Drive



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 2: View south east from Cheswell Drive

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client
Gladman Developments Ltd
project
Strategic Landscape Review
drawing title
PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 1 & 2
scale
NTS @ A3
drawn
MPS / KMN
issue date
25 October 2016
rev

Figure 8

A

A518

Proposed Strategic Landscape Boundary




PHOTO VIEWPOINT 3: View south from Lilleshall Monument

Properties located off Limekiln Lane

Lilleshall



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 4: View north from Lilleshall Monument



client
Gladman Developments Ltd

project
Strategic Landscape Review

drawing title
PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 3 & 4

scale
NTS @ A3

drawn
MPS / KMN

issue date
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Lilleshall Monument
Lilleshall



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 5: View south from Pitchcroft Lane

Little Hales Manor Farm
Lilleshall Monument
Lilleshall



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 6: View south west from route with Public Access

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Lilleshall

Lilleshall Monument



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 7: View south west from Public Right of Way

Lilleshall Monument

Lilleshall



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 8: View west from Public Right of Way

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scale
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rev

Figure 11

A



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 9: View north west from Public Right of Way

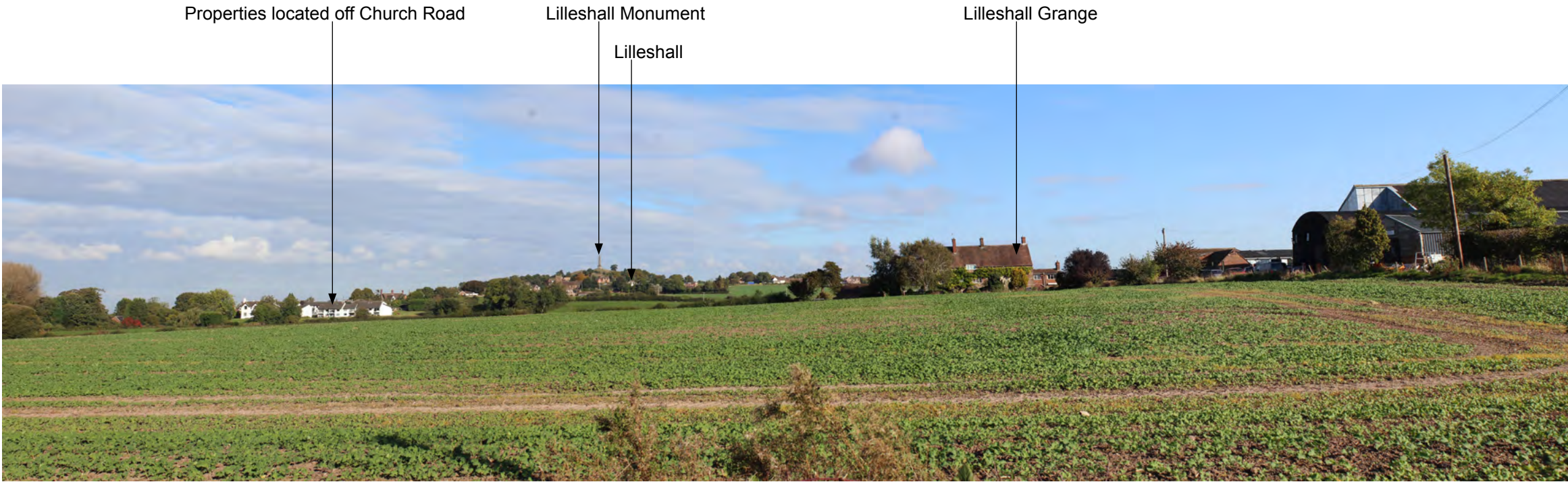


PHOTO VIEWPOINT 10: View north from Lilyhurst Road adjacent Lilleshall Grange

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project
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PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 9 & 10
scale
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Figure 12

A

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Lilleshall Monument
Lilleshall



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 11: View north west towards Lilleshall from Lilleshall Abbey

Abbey Farm
Lilleshall Monument
Lilleshall
Lilyhurst Road



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 12: View north west towards Lilleshall from Lodge Road



client
Gladman Developments Ltd

project
Strategic Landscape Review

drawing title
PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 11 & 12

scale
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Lilleshall Monument
Lilleshall
Public Right of Way
Sulphur Piece Plantation



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 13: View north towards Lilleshall from Granville Drive adjacent north eastern extent of Muxton

Little Hales Manor Farm



PHOTO VIEWPOINT 14: View north from Public Right of Way at the eastern extent of Willmoor Lane



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Gladman Developments Ltd

project
Strategic Landscape Review

drawing title
PHOTO VIEWPOINTS 13 & 14

scale
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PHOTO VIEWPOINT 15: View east from junction of Public Right of Way and Cheswell Drive

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project
Strategic Landscape Review
drawing title
PHOTO VIEWPOINT 15
scale
NTS @ A3
drawn
MPS / KMN
issue date
25 October 2016
rev
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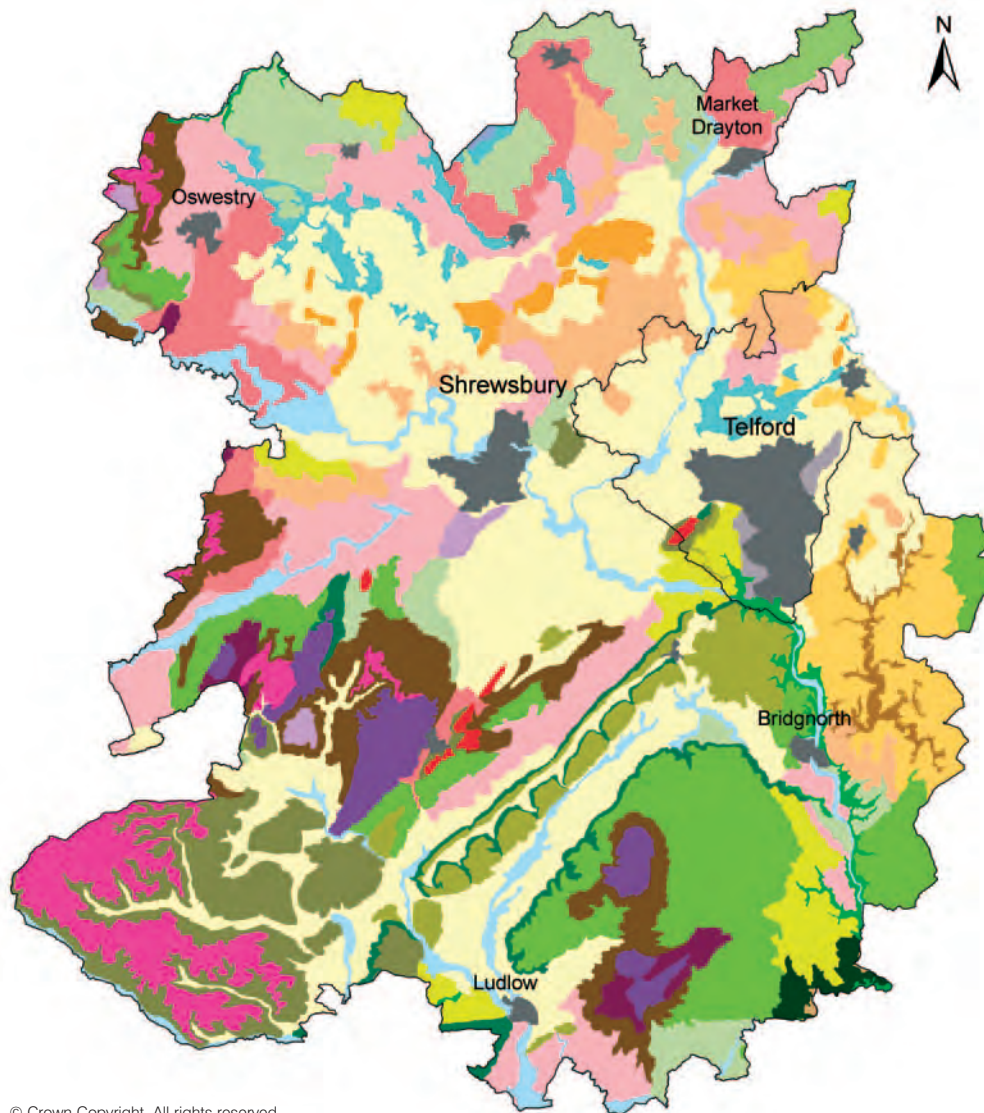
Figure 15

Appendix 1

The Shropshire Landscape Typology



September 2006



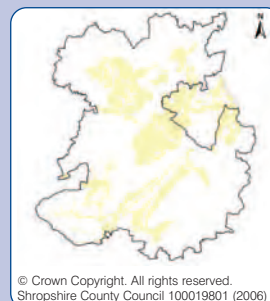
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Shropshire County Council 100019801
(2006)

Landscape Types			
High open moorland	Wooded river gorge	Timbered plateau farmlands	Lowland moors
High enclosed plateau	Wooded hills & farmlands	Principal timbered farmlands	Riverside meadows
High volcanic hills & slopes	Wooded hills & estatelands	Timbered pastures	Lowland moss
Upland smallholdings	Sandstone hills	Wooded estatelands	Coalfields
Upstanding enclosed commons	Sandstone estatelands	Estate farmlands	Urban
Pasture Hills	Incised sandstone valleys	Settled pastoral farmlands	
Principal Wooded Hills	Wooded forest	Principal settled farmlands	
	Forest smallholdings	Enclosed lowland heaths	

Estate Farmlands

Key Characteristics

- Mixed farming landuse
- Clustered settlement pattern
- Large country houses with associated parklands
- Planned woodland character
- Medium to large scale landscapes with framed views

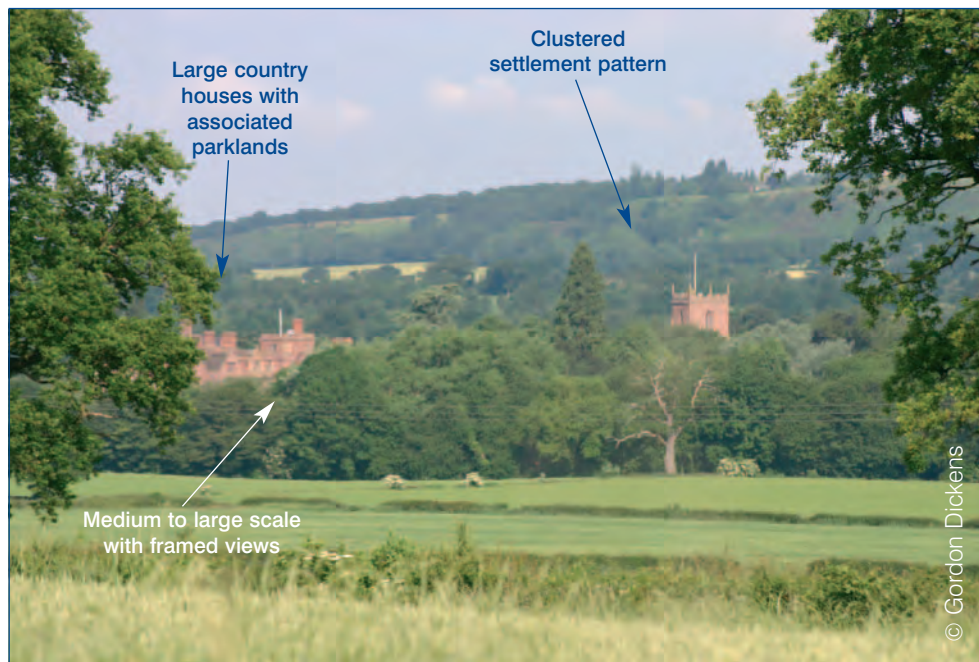


Description

Estate farmlands are gently rolling lowland and valley floor landscapes that occur across large areas of Shropshire. The lower ground is usually underlain by softer, more easily eroded rocks such as shales, sometimes in sharp contrast to nearby ridges of harder rocks. Glacial drift deposits form the basis of most soils and these landscapes include some the best agricultural land in the county, which have traditionally been associated with mixed farming. As with the Sandstone Estatelands, landscape character is largely determined by an ordered pattern of fields and woods, although the prevailing pattern of medium to large sub-regular fields means that they lack their strong, planned aspect. The majority of the woodlands have a

planned appearance, although some plantations occupy the sites of older woods and small stands of ancient woodland occur in some places. They tend to create framed views within medium to large scale landscapes. Parklands, with their veteran and specimen trees, are a particular feature of the type. The settlement pattern is predominantly one of villages and hamlets and large estate farmsteads.

The Estate Farmlands have varied histories of development. To the south-east and east of Shrewsbury, along the Tern valley, and within Ape Dale and Corve Dale, the density of Iron Age archaeological sites suggests that a carefully managed agricultural landscape had existed for some considerable time prior to the Roman Conquest. By the later medieval period arable open fields



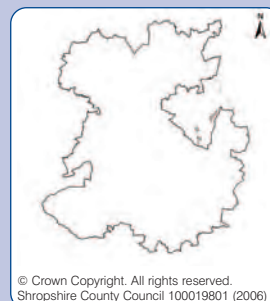
extended across a considerable proportion of most parishes in these areas, and they exhibit some of the strongest settlement nucleation within the county. Beyond them, arable land was less extensive and the intervening areas of woodland, rough grazing land, meadows and pastures are correspondingly larger. The gradual informal enclosure of the open fields was under way by the late medieval period and largely completed by the 17th century. Although some deer parks were created in the medieval period, the 18th and 19th century saw the establishment of many new parks. Within Attingham Park, for example, evidence of an earlier agricultural landscape, in the form of ridge and furrow, exists in some parts of the 18th century parkland. Many of their owners also spent considerable

sums on the agricultural improvement of their wider estates. As a result, the 18th and 19th century saw significant rationalisation of pre-existing field patterns and the formal enclosure of the remaining areas of unenclosed rough grazing lands. This period also saw the construction of new estate farmsteads in the open countryside, as well as labourers cottages and schools within some of the villages. As a result of the growing interest in fox hunting during the 19th century, many of the larger land owners planted game coverts on their estates to provide cover for their quarry. Since World War II agricultural intensification has introduced considerable change, and field enlargements in particular have created a larger scale and more open views.

Coalfields

Key Characteristics

- Upstanding rolling plateau
- Dispersed pattern of small farms and wayside cottages
- Coal mining remains



Description

Coalfield landscapes are found in two locations around the fringes of Telford, in eastern Shropshire.

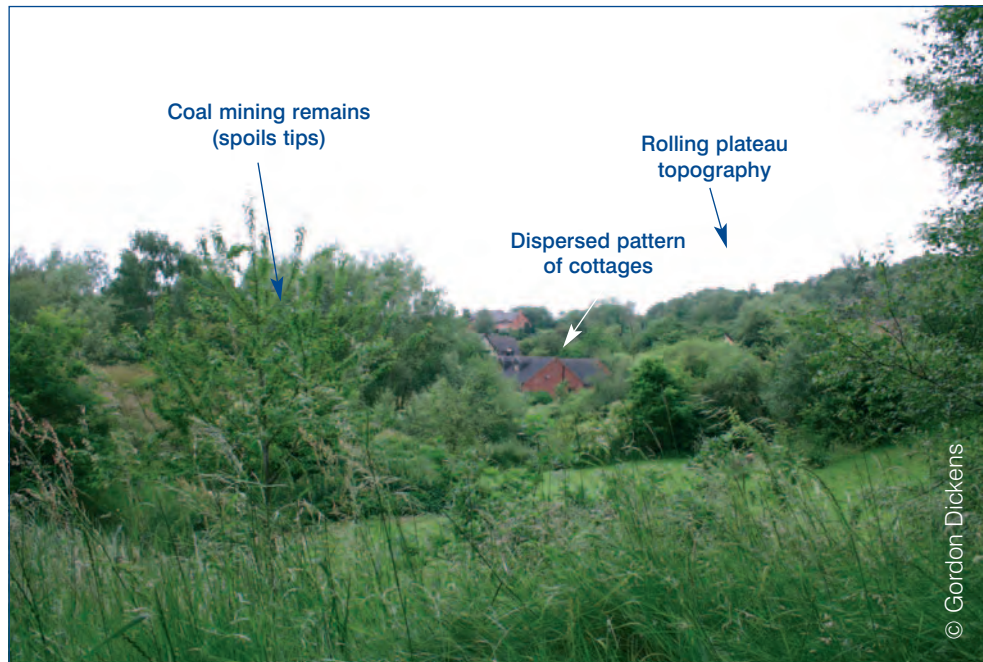
They occur on an upstanding, gently rolling plateau formed of Carboniferous Coal Measures, which is overlain by heavy, poorly drained soils that once supported extensive areas of woodland and rough pasture. The field systems within this landscape type were created through the progressive clearance and enclosure of these woodlands, and small holders encroachments on areas of former 'waste' (common rough pasture).

Apart from the numerous recent amenity plantations, tree cover is largely restricted to hedgerow trees, with oak as the dominant species.

Coal mining occurred throughout the type, creating large spoil tips, some of which now support heathland habitats.

These factors produced an historic settlement pattern of small dispersed farms and wayside cottages.

The extensive tracts of woodland and waste of the earlier Middle Ages were gradually reduced by later medieval clearances: a process that was encouraged by the six monastic houses that existed in the wider area. However, large areas of wood pasture and open rough grazing land remained, and some of that to the north-east of present day Telford was incorporated into Lilleshall Park.



Coal mining activity was initially stimulated by the monastic foundations but intensified during the mid-17th century, reaching a peak in the 18th and early 19th centuries. The local iron industry also grew rapidly during this period, and workers cottages and associated smallholdings were established on much of the remaining open common land.

Following a long period of industrial decline between the late 19th and mid-20th century, these landscapes have been transformed through the establishment of Telford new town. The extensive reclamation of derelict industrial land, which occurred alongside the development of the new town, has resulted in widespread amenity

planting on the site of former spoil tips, significantly increasing the amount of tree cover. The historic settlement pattern has also been modified by housing developments and the construction of an urban road network.