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Meeting	LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE
Time/Day/Date	6.30 pm on Wednesday, 2 October 2019
Location	Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville
Officer to contact	Democratic Services 01530 454512

AGENDA

Item		Pages
1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
2	DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	
	Under the Code of Conduct members are reminded that in declaring disclosable interests you should made clear the nature of that interest and whether it is pecuniary or non-pecuniary.	
3	MINUTES	
	To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2019.	3 - 6
4	LOCAL PLAN PARTIAL REVIEW	
	Report of the Interim Head of Planning and Infrastructure	7 - 26
5	LOCAL PLAN REVIEW - AREA OF SEPARATION STUDY	
	Report of the Interim Head of Planning and Infrastructure	27 - 126

Circulation:

Councillor J Bridges (Chairman)
Councillor D Harrison (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor D Bigby
Councillor R Boam
Councillor J Houlton
Councillor R Johnson
Councillor J Legrys
Councillor V Richichi
Councillor A C Saffell
Councillor N Smith
Councillor M B Wyatt

MINUTES of a meeting of the LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on WEDNESDAY, 26 JUNE 2019

Present: Councillor J Bridges (Chairman)

Councillors D Harrison, J Hoult, R Johnson, J Legrys, V Richichi, A C Saffell, N Smith and D Everitt (Substitute for Councillor D Bigby)

In Attendance: Councillors

Officers: Mr L Sebastian, Mrs M Meredith, Mr I Nelson, I Jordan and Mr C Elston

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D Bigby.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, Members declared the following interests:

Councillor J Hoult declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 6 – Blackfordby Neighbourhood Plan – Proposed Response to Pre-Submission Draft, as a member of the neighbourhood plan steering committee.

3 MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2019.

It was moved by Councillor J Legrys, seconded by Councillor A C Saffell and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2019 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4 ADMISSION OF ADDITIONAL ITEM

RESOLVED THAT:

By reason of special circumstance in that an additional item of business needs to be considered before the next meeting of the Local Plan Committee, the item entitled "Shop Fronts and Advertisements SPD: Adoption" be considered at this meeting as a matter of urgency in accordance with Section 100B(4)(B) of the Local Government Act 1972.

5 LOCAL PLAN REVIEW - RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION UPDATE

The Planning Policy Team Manager presented the report to members, highlighting the 62 consultee responses which had been received and the summary as set out in the report. He drew members' attention to the update to the National Planning Policy Framework set out at section 2 of the report and outlined the changes of relevance to the Local Plan review, and in particular, the change to the definition of local housing need and confirmation that the 2014 household projections should be used to inform the calculation of local housing need. He also highlighted the requirement for strategic policies to have a life of a least 15 years from the date of adoption. This could have implications for the end date of the local plan review.

The Planning Policy Team Manager made reference to the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth plan which had been approved by the Council in December 2018, outlining the elements of direct relevance to the Local Plan review. He advised that there was no definitive boundary for the Leicestershire International Gateway, however it included areas of both North West Leicestershire and Charnwood. The Strategic Growth Plan stated that the area should accommodate around 11,000 new dwellings up to 2050, but offered no guidance on how this figure was to be split between the two areas. The figure would need to be agreed through the duty to co-operate.

The Planning Policy Team Manager highlighted the issues relating to employment land and the concerns of officers regarding some aspects of the HEDNA, particularly the high level of office development that was said to be required. Officers felt it would be prudent to reconsider this issue and had commissioned the advice of consultants.

Councillor A C Saffell highlighted the mismatch between employment and housing provision in Castle Donington in particular and the impact this had on the road network. He commented that Junction 24 was currently the busiest in the country and the island was frequently gridlocked. He added that the users at the gateway did not want to utilise rail for their freight so this was bringing additional lorries onto the road network. He stated that the transport modelling had been undertaken on the original plan where all users of the gateway would be utilising the railway line and the fact that none of the users were doing so had significantly changed the way traffic would operate in that area.

The Planning Policy Team Manager acknowledged that there would be a significant impact on infrastructure with a development of this scale and he advised that detailed traffic modelling would be undertaken with the County Council. He added that if the model had been based on false assumptions, this would need to be addressed.

In response to questions from Councillor V Richichi, the Planning Policy Team Manager advised that the Council had sufficient land supply globally up to 2031 to meet the requirements in the adopted local plan. He explained that our housing need figure would have no impact on Leicester City's unmet housing supply. In respect of affordable housing expectations, these were set by the Council as the local planning authority through the Local Plan Review process.

Councillor J Legrys thanked officers for the comprehensive report. He disagreed that Whitwick should not be considered as part of the Coalville urban area. He requested to be kept informed of changes regarding the Leicestershire International Gateway. He felt that the Gateway was not being properly planned and expressed concern that the project affected communities on the other side of the River Trent which seemed to be ignored. He felt it was important to ensure that the individuals who had responded during the public consultation each received a response and an explanation if their comment had not been accepted.

In response to a comment made by Councillor N Smith, the Planning Policy Team Manager stated that a building a new settlement was a possible way forward and referred members to the next item on the agenda.

It was moved by Councillor J Legrys, seconded by Councillor R Johnson and

RESOLVED THAT:

The Local Plan Committee:

- (i) Notes the level of responses to the recent consultation on the local plan review;
- (ii) Notes the commissioning of additional evidence regarding employment land including a Leicester and Leicestershire wide strategic distribution study (paragraphs 2.21 and 2.22 of report);

- (iii) Agrees in principle to including a flexibility allowance when planning for housing provision (to be referred to as a contingency allowance) and this be set at 15% of the overall housing requirement (paragraphs 1.4 , 2.11 and 3.8 of Appendix A);
- (iv) Note that the review will be likely to have to allow for some development going beyond the end of the plan period (paragraph 5.5 of Appendix A);
- (v) Agrees in principle, subject to the outcome of the sustainability appraisal, to allow for some limited development in small villages where the proposed development meets the needs of somebody with a demonstrable local connection (paragraphs 13.5 and 14.8 of Appendix A);
- (vi) Agrees to not require the provision of self and custom build plots as part of general market developments (paragraph 20.4 of appendix A) and that further consideration be given to the most appropriate form of any policy in respect of self and custom build (paragraph 23.3 of Appendix A);
- (vii) Notes the intention to continue to explore the potential use of health impact assessments (paragraph 27.3 of Appendix A); and

Notes the proposal to establish an internal officer group to look at the issue of fast food/takeaways (paragraph 29.6 of Appendix A)

6 STRATEGIC HOUSING AND ECONOMIC LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (SHELAA) - NEW SITES

The Planning Policy Team Leader presented the report to members, highlighting the purpose of the SHELAA and the process for identifying and including sites in the document. He explained that the SHELAA was not a policy document and was essentially a long list of potential sites that could be considered for development, if and when they were required. He added that inclusion of a site in the SHELAA did not give any indication of its acceptability for development, and did not mean that any application would be approved. He explained that an exercise calling for sites had been undertaken and all sites submitted had been assessed. A total of 18 new potential employment sites and 40 new potential housing sites had been submitted.

The Planning Policy Team Leader gave a presentation detailing each new site which had been submitted through the call for sites exercise.

Councillor L Legrys referred to the planned railhead to be constructed at Sinope for the construction of HS2, and expressed concerns that infrastructure should to be planned in conjunction with the Planning Policy Team and needed to accord with the work on the SHELAA. He asked how these processes could be better explained to the public given the sensitivities of these issues.

The Planning Policy Team Leader acknowledged that the process was not easy to explain to local communities. He added that a press release could be issued via the Communications Team. He suggested writing to all parish and town councils to explain some of the information set out in the report.

RESOLVED THAT:

- (i) The new sites to be included in the 2019 update of the SHELAA be noted;
- (ii) The intention to commission evidence to assess the potential implications of the three mixed use sites highlighted at paragraph 4.3 of this report be noted.

7 BLACKFORDBY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - PROPOSED RESPONSE TO PRE-SUBMISSION DRAFT

The Planning Policy Team Leader presented the report to members, outlining the neighbourhood plan process and the recommended modifications to the pre-submission

draft of the neighbourhood plan relating to Policy H3 and Policy BE2 as set out in the report.

Councillor J Legrys expressed support for the neighbourhood planning process and felt that all communities should be preparing neighbourhood plans. He thanked all the volunteers involved in putting the plan together.

Councillor J Hoult thanked the clerk to the town council who had worked tirelessly on the production of the neighbourhood plan.

It was moved by Councillor J Legrys, seconded by Councillor N Smith and

RESOLVED THAT:

- (i) The suggested pre-submission (regulation 14) response to Ashby de la Zouch Town Council in relation to policies BE2 and H3 be endorsed (as set out in paragraphs 3.3 - 3.5 below);
- (ii) The additional comments already sent by officers to Ashby Town Council, aimed at improving the general robustness of the neighbourhood plan be noted (as set out in Appendix B);
- (iii) Endorsement of any further response by officers at submission (regulation 16) stage be delegated to the Strategic Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure;
- (iv) The committee notes that once the neighbourhood plan has been submitted the Strategic Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure will:
 - A) publish the plan for a six week period and invite representations;
 - B) notify consultation bodies; and
 - C) appoint an independent examiner to conduct the examination of the neighbourhood plan;
- (v) That the committee notes that following receipt of the independent examiner's report, the Strategic Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure will determine whether the conditions have been met for the neighbourhood plan to proceed to referendum.

8 SHOP FRONTS AND ADVERTISEMENTS SPD: ADOPTION

The Planning Policy Team Manager presented the report to members.

It was moved by Councillor J Bridges, seconded by Councillor A C Saffell and

RESOLVED THAT:

The revised Supplementary Planning Document be adopted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.07 pm

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE – WEDNESDAY, 2 OCTOBER 2019**

Title of report	LOCAL PLAN PARTIAL REVIEW
Contacts	<p>Councillor Robert Ashman 01530 273762 robert.ashman@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Interim Head of Planning and Infrastructure 01530 454782 chris.elston@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Planning Policy Team Manager 01530 454677 ian.nelson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p>
Purpose of report	To seek Members approval for publication of the pre-submission (Regulation 19) Partial Review of the Local Plan.
Council Priorities	<p>Local people live in high quality, affordable homes</p> <p>Support for businesses and helping people into local jobs</p> <p>Developing a clean and green district</p> <p>Our communities are safe, healthy and connected</p>
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	The cost of the review is met from existing budgets.
Link to relevant CAT	None
Risk Management	A risk assessment of the project has been undertaken. As far as possible control measures have been put in place to minimise these risks, including monthly Project Board meetings where risk is reviewed.
Equalities Impact Screening	An Equalities Impact Assessment of the Local Plan review will be undertaken as part of the Sustainability Appraisal.
Human Rights	None discernible
Transformational Government	Not applicable
Comments of Head of Paid Service	The Report is Satisfactory

Comments of Section 151 Officer	The Report is Satisfactory
Comments of Deputy Monitoring Officer	The Report is Satisfactory
Consultees	None
Background papers	Report to Cabinet 16 July 2019 minutes1.nwleics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=126&MId=2006&Ver=4 Planning Practice Guidance – Plan Making www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-making
Recommendation	<p>THAT THE LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE:</p> <p>(I) APPROVES THE PUBLICATION LOCAL PLAN PARTIAL REVIEW AS SET OUT AT APPENDIX B OF THIS REPORT;</p> <p>(II) AGREES TO PUBLISH AND INVITE REPRESENTATIONS UPON THE LOCAL PLAN PARTIAL REVIEW DOCUMENT TOGETHER WITH THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL REPORT AND HABITAT REGULATION ASSESSMENT FOR A SIX WEEK PERIOD IN ACCORDANCE WITH REGULATION 19 OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (LOCAL PLANNING) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2012;</p> <p>(III) DELEGATES AUTHORITY TO THE DIRECTOR OF PLACE, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PLANNING AND REGENERATION TO PUBLISH AN UPDATED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME REFLECTING THE NEW TIMESCALES DESCRIBED IN THIS REPORT;</p> <p>(IV) AGREES THAT THE SUBSTANTIVE REVIEW SHOULD COVER THE PERIOD TO 2039</p>

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 The North West Leicestershire Local Plan was adopted on 21 November 2017 and covers the period to 2031.

1.2 Policy S1 commits the Council to undertaking an early review of the plan. It states that:

“The District Council will commence a review of this Local Plan (defined as being publication of an invitation to make representations in accordance with Regulation 18 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012) by the end of January 2018 or within 3 months of the adoption of this Local Plan (whichever is the later). The Plan Review will be submitted for examination within two years from the commencement of the review. In the event that the reviewed plan is not submitted within two years then this Local Plan will be deemed to be out of date”.

- 1.3 The wording of Policy S1 was agreed with the Local Plan Inspector during the Examination process. The Inspector had required the wording regarding timescales so as to ensure that *“the Council is expressly committed, by adopted policy, to early review of the plan, within a stated period after any such unmet needs to be met within NWL are identified”* (paragraph 135 of Inspector’s Report).
- 1.4 The review formally commenced in February 2018 in accordance with the provisions of Policy S1. Further consultation was undertaken in November/December 2018 in accordance with the council’s Local Development Scheme.
- 1.5 To date the review has been seen as a partial review rather than a whole scale review. The Local Development Scheme envisaged that the partial review would be submitted for Examination in February 2020, again to meet the requirements of Policy S1.
- 1.6 At its meeting on 16 July 2019 Cabinet considered a report which outlined a revised approach to the Local Plan review. A copy of the report is attached at Appendix A. A key reason for the revised approach is the fact that Leicester City has yet to declare the extent of its unmet need, something which the Local Plan Inspector had clearly anticipated would happen as referred to in paragraph 1.3 above.
- 1.7 Cabinet agreed the recommendations which, in effect, mean that the council is undertaking two reviews in a parallel; a partial review which addresses the wording of Policy S1 and a substantive review. The work and consultations undertaken to date will feed in to this Substantive Review.
- 1.8 Whilst most Local Plan reviews will cover a multitude of policies, it is not unheard of for only one policy to be reviewed. Furthermore, the Planning Practice Guidance (Plan Making paragraph 069) clearly anticipates such a possibility as it states *“A local planning authority can review specific policies of an individual basis”*.
- 1.9 The purpose of this report is to outline for members more details of both the partial and substantive reviews and to seek authorisation to publish the partial review for consultation.

2.0 THE PARTIAL REVIEW

- 2.1 The proposed new wording for policy S1 is set out at Appendix B of this report. The proposed wording is similar to that in the adopted Local Plan but the timescale for submitting the review is now linked to the agreement of a Statement of Common Ground by all of the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities in respect of the redistribution of unmet housing needs instead of the adoption of the Local Plan. This approach reflects the comments of the Local Plan Inspector as set out above at paragraph 1.3 above that an early review should take place *“within a stated period after any such unmet needs to be met within NWL are identified”*.

- 2.2 Work on a Statement of Common Ground to address the redistribution of any unmet need is underway through the auspices of the Strategic Planning Group and the Member Advisory Group. Progress on this will be reported to future meetings of this Committee.
- 2.3 The Local plan partial review has also been subject to the following independent assessments as required by the Regulations:
- Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (Incorporating Equalities Impact Assessment);
 - Habitats Regulations Assessment
- 2.4 The preparation of the Local Plan is governed by legislation (The Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Localism Act 2011) and also Regulations (The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012).
- 2.5 The Local Plan which Council is being asked to approve is the ‘publication’ stage Local Plan (Regulation 19). This represents the Local Plan which the Council considers should be submitted for examination. Before it can be submitted it must be published for a six week period for representations to be made. It is proposed to do this from 7 October to 18 November 2019
- 2.6 Following receipt of representations it is intended that the Local Plan will then be submitted for examination. In order to ensure compliance with the provisions of policy S1 this will need to be by the end of February 2020.
- 2.7 Once the Local Plan is submitted an independent Planning Inspector will be appointed by the Planning Inspectorate to consider whether the Local Plan is ‘sound’. At this point the Council will no longer be in control of the timetable as this will initially be determined by the Planning Inspectorate and then by the Planning Inspector appointed to hold the examination. It is not possible to be certain about when an Examination might take place, but it could be summer 2020.
- 2.8 To be “sound”, the Local Plan should be:
- Positively prepared – the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;
 - Justified – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;
 - Effective – the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and
 - Consistent with national policy – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the [National Planning Policy] Framework.
- 2.9 Members will be aware that the Localism Act 2011 requires cooperation between local planning authorities and other public bodies to maximise the effectiveness of policies for strategic matters in Local Plans. This requirement places a legal duty on local planning

authorities, county councils in England and public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters.

- 2.10 Discussions have taken place with the other Leicestershire authorities to make them aware of the approach which the council is proposing to take. A Statement of Common Ground relating to the Partial Review only (as opposed to the Statement of Common Ground dealing with the redistribution of any unmet housing need referred to in paragraph 2.2 above) is being prepared. A verbal update regarding this will be provided at the meeting.
- 2.11 In addition to the Local Plan document the SA/SEA and HRA as outlined at paragraph 2.3 above will also be made available as part of the consultation.
- 2.12 Any representations received as part of the consultation will need to be considered before submitting the Local Plan for examination. The responses received will then be reported to a future meeting of this Committee, potentially January 2020 subject to the volume and nature of any responses received.

3.0 THE SUBSTANTIVE REVIEW

- 3.1 By its nature the substantive review will cover a broad range of issues which will, amongst other matters, extend the plan period and address development needs for that period.
- 3.2 In terms of the appropriate period for the substantive review to cover, this committee has previously agreed that the Local Plan review should cover the period up to 2036. Members will be aware that the July 2018 version of the NPPF introduced a requirement that strategic policies (those which set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development) should look ahead over a minimum 15-year period from the date of adoption. This approach is continued in the February 2019 version.
- 3.3 An end date of 2036 would require adoption in 2021. In view of the tight timescale this would require for the review to be adopted, it is recommended that the plan period be extended to 2039. Whilst this will have implications for the amount of development to be provided for, it would allow for greater certainty over a longer period of time and would help the Council to demonstrate that it is planning positively.
- 3.4 In terms of the timetable for the substantive review, the proposed wording of policy S1 in the partial review requires submission of the substantive review within 18 months of the Statement of Common Ground regarding the redistribution of any unmet need being agreed. As noted, work on such a Statement of Common Ground has commenced, although there is not a confirmed timetable for this to be concluded.
- 3.5 There are other factors to consider when determining the timetable. In particular, the next set of household projections (upon which the standard Method is based) are due to be published in September 2020. It would be prudent, therefore, for the submission version of the plan to take full account of the new projections as it will provide certainty that does not currently exist. However, in order to ensure that progress can be made on the substantive review a report considering the issue of potential housing requirements will be brought to a future meeting of this Committee to agree a 'working' housing requirement.

3.6 The following outline timetable allows for these factors as far as possible.

Consultation on draft plan (Regulation 18)	Summer 2020
Pre-submission consultation (regulation 19)	Spring 2021
Submission	Autumn 2021
Examination	Winter 2021/22
Adoption	Autumn 2022

3.7 An updated Local Development Scheme will be prepared that provides more details about both the Partial and Substantive Reviews. This is allowed for by recommendation (iii).

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**CABINET – TUESDAY, 16 JULY 2019**

Title of report	LOCAL PLAN REVIEW
Key Decision	a) Financial No b) Community Yes
Contacts	Councillor Robert Ashman 01530 273762 robert.ashman@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Interim Head of Planning and Infrastructure 01530 454782 chris.elston@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Planning Policy Team Manager 01530 454677 ian.nelson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk
Purpose of report	To seek Cabinets approval for changes to the proposed approach in respect of the Local Plan review.
Reason for Decision	Cabinet approval of the proposed approach required.
Council Priorities	Local people live in high quality, affordable homes Support for businesses and helping people into local jobs Developing a clean and green district Our communities are safe, healthy and connected
Implications: Financial/Staff	 If Cabinet agree to the recommendation then this will mean that there would be two Examinations rather than the one initially envisaged (i.e. one for the review of Policy S1 only and then one for a wider review). The Examination for the wider review will need to come from future budgets and will be built in to the budget process.
Link to relevant CAT	None

Risk Management	Policy S1 of the adopted Local Plan as currently worded represents a significant risk to the Council as having an out dated plan would leave the Council vulnerable to unwanted applications and appeals. The risk is not just financial but also reputational. The suggested approach outlined in the report offers a potential way forward which if successful would remove the risk of the plan being considered to be out-of-date, although as outlined in the report is not without its own risks.
Equalities Impact Screening	An Equalities Impact Assessment of the Local Plan review will be undertaken as part of the Sustainability Appraisal.
Human Rights	No discernible impact
Transformational Government	Not applicable
Comments of Head of Paid Service	The Report is Satisfactory
Comments of Section 151 Officer	The Report is Satisfactory
Comments of Deputy Monitoring Officer	On the advice of the external solicitor, the report is satisfactory
Consultees	Strategy Group
Background papers	<p>National Planning Policy Framework which can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2</p> <p>The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2012 which can found at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/767/contents/made</p> <p>Adopted North West Leicestershire Local Plan Local Plan 2011-2031 - North West Leicestershire District Council</p> <p>Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan Strategic Growth Plan Leicester and Leicestershire - North West Leicestershire District Council</p>
Recommendation	THAT CABINET AGREES TO RECOMMEND TO THE LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE THAT:

	<p>(I) THE INITIAL LOCAL PLAN REVIEW FOCUS UPON CHANGES TO POLICY S1 AS OUTLINED IN THE REPORT;</p> <p>(II) OFFICERS CONTINUE TO WORK ON A WIDER REVIEW AND WITH A VIEW TO SUBMITTING AS SOON AS REASONABLY PRACTICABLE AFTER THE PUBLICATION OF THE 2018-HOUSEHOLD PROJECTIONS;</p> <p>(III) TIMETABLES FOR BOTH THE INITIAL REVIEW AND WIDER REVIEW BE ESTABLISHED AS PART OF A REVISED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME</p>
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1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 The North West Leicestershire Local Plan was adopted on 21 November 2017 and covers the period to 2031.

1.2 Policy S1 commits the Council to undertaking an early review of the plan. It states that:

The District Council will commence a review of this Local Plan (defined as being publication of an invitation to make representations in accordance with Regulation 18 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012) by the end of January 2018 or within 3 months of the adoption of this Local Plan (whichever is the later). The Plan Review will be submitted for examination within two years from the commencement of the review. In the event that the reviewed plan is not submitted within two years then this Local Plan will be deemed to be out of date.

1.3 The wording of Policy S1 was agreed with the Local Plan Inspector during the Examination process. The Inspector had required the wording regarding timescales so as to ensure that “the Council is expressly committed, by adopted policy, to early review of the plan, within a stated period after any such unmet needs to be met within NWL are identified” (paragraph 135 of Inspector’s Report).

1.4 The early review was required to:

- Address a shortfall in employment land (excluding strategic B8) provision to address new evidence published whilst the plan was at examination;
- To possibly make additional housing provision as a result of the inability of one or more of the Leicestershire authorities to accommodate their own housing needs within their administrative boundaries. At the time of the examination precisely where the housing need of the Housing Market Area (“HMA”) as a whole would be met was not certain.

1.5 In respect of the latter point, Leicester City had declared in January 2017 that it was not likely to be able to meet its own housing need, although it was not able to identify the quantity of unmet need. At the time of the Examination, Oadby and Wigston also declared an unmet need but this has since been retracted.

1.6 An initial consultation under Regulation 18 of the Local Plan Regulations 2012 was undertaken between 21 February and 4 April 2018, in accordance with the timescale

established by Policy S1. This means that to comply with policy S1 the reviewed plan would have to be submitted by February 2020.

- 1.7 Further consultation was undertaken in November/December 2018 in accordance with the Local Development Scheme.
- 1.8 To date the review has been seen as a partial review rather than a whole scale review.
- 1.9 There are a number of changes which have occurred since the Local Plan was adopted and which have potential implications for the Local Plan review and its timetable. These are considered below.

2.0 CHANGES IN CIRCUMSTANCES

The National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in July 2018 (and there were subsequent further changes in February 2019). This introduced a number of new plan-making requirements, including:
 - Clear distinction between strategic and local policies;
 - Guidance on the provision of 'entry level homes';
 - Specific reference to storage and distribution uses;
 - Specific reference to lorry parking; and
 - Viability
- 2.2 In terms of strategic policies the NPPF states such policies "*should look ahead over a minimum 15 year period from adoption*".

Housing requirements

- 2.3 At the time the inspector's recommended modifications to the Local Plan were being finalised (winter 2016/17) it had been envisaged that the housing requirements for a review would be based upon the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) and that Leicester City would have declared the full extent of any unmet need and that this would have been agreed with the Leicestershire authorities as would its redistribution. However, Leicester City Council has still not formally declared the extent of its housing need that it cannot meet within its own boundaries.
- 2.4 A further issue in terms of housing requirements is the introduction by the government of the new "standard method" for calculating housing requirements. The latest figure for North West Leicestershire when using the 2014-household projections and the March 2019 affordability ratio, is 379 dwellings. This is over 100 dwellings less than that in the adopted Local Plan. It is also less than that identified through the HEDNA. There is therefore significant 'headroom' in the existing local plan for meeting need that arises elsewhere in the HMA without a formal review.
- 2.5 North West Leicestershire is in the minority of local authorities whereby the outcome from the 2016 household projections, which have been rejected by the government, results in a

higher housing requirement (529 dwellings) when using the standard method than the 2014 household projections.

- 2.6 The government has stated that it intends to publish changes to the standard methodology at some point before the next household projections are published in autumn 2020 (these would be 2018 based projections). This is partly to ensure that the outcome from the standard methodology reflects the government's stated aim of 300,000 new homes annually across England. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that the housing requirement (irrespective of any unmet need from Leicester City) will be higher than those derived from the 2014-household projections, but it is not clear as to what this is likely to be.
- 2.7 There is, therefore, considerable uncertainty regarding the housing requirement element which the review would need to plan for. In the meantime, the adopted local plan's requirement figure appears sufficient to meet need arising in North West Leicestershire and a significant contribution to need that arises elsewhere in the HMA.

Employment requirements

- 2.8 The HEDNA identifies the amount of employment land required to 2031 and 2036, except for strategic B8 uses (those of over 9,000sqm) which are identified in a separate study.
- 2.9 Since the Local Plan was adopted additional planning permissions which have been granted means that the current shortfall (allowing for potential losses of existing employment sites) is 17ha compared to 39ha in October 2016 (the figures used at the Examination).
- 2.10 Officers have concerns regarding the amount of land which the HEDNA suggested is required for B1a/b uses, not least because such an amount is contrary to past trends and also to what the market appears to want which is more B8 uses (both large and small).
- 2.11 For this reason the Local Plan consultation undertaken in late 2018 asked a specific question regarding the suitability of the HEDNA as an evidence base. Whilst there was some support for the HEDNA, there were also some representations which questioned its continuing validity for a number of reasons, including:
- The latest evidence from the Office of National Statistics shows that the overall level of jobs located in North West Leicestershire has increased substantially;
 - The HEDNA was based on assumptions that were overly optimistic with the future supply of workers and overly-pessimistic regarding the future demands of employers;
 - It over-simplifies the need and demands for employment land and how economic investment is realised;
 - It fails to address the relationships with employment land supply, need and demand in the West Midlands with which North West Leicestershire has a functional relationship; and
 - The evidence presented in HEDNA on the take-up of employment land is questionable, when compared to Valuation Office Agency data.

- 2.12 On balance, therefore, additional evidence has been commissioned to assess the continuing robustness of the HEDNA conclusions and (if necessary) to produce some alternative forecasts.
- 2.13 In terms of strategic B8 requirements, the requirements for this are set out in the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Distribution Study 2014, which was updated in 2016. It has been agreed by the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities to commission updated evidence on this issue.
- 2.14 As with housing there is significant uncertainty regarding the exact amount of employment land which would need to be identified as part of the review.

Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan

- 2.15 Members will be aware that the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities have jointly prepared and agreed a Strategic Growth Plan (SGP) covering the period 2011-50. This is a non-statutory plan, but its intended purpose was to provide a framework for future Local Plans. The SGP was formally agreed in late 2018.
- 2.16 The SGP is seeking a step change in the way that growth is delivered; focussing more development in strategic locations and reducing the amount of new development that takes place in existing towns, villages and rural areas. One of these strategic locations lies partly within North West Leicestershire and is known as the 'Leicestershire International Gateway' (The Gateway) which covers the northern part of North West Leicestershire and Charnwood. The SGP estimates that The Gateway could accommodate about 11,200 dwellings to 2050. The split between North West Leicestershire and Charnwood has to be agreed, but is likely to be at least 5,200 dwellings in North West Leicestershire.
- 2.17 Whilst the Local Plan review will not go up to 2050, the scale of development is such that it will need to be planned for well in advance and so will need to be addressed as part of the review. It is likely that some large scale developments will be required, possibly new settlements. Such developments are inherently complex and require time to compile the necessary supporting evidence.

3.0 WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW?

- 3.1 For the reasons outlined above, the circumstances are very different to those at the time the Local Plan was adopted. A particular issue is the lack of clarity regarding unmet need from Leicester City. The Local Plan Inspector had, understandably sought to try and ensure that the review was carried out speedily "*within a stated period after any such unmet needs to be met within NWL are identified*", but at this time no such needs have been identified. Indeed, doubt has been cast on the continuing robustness of the HEDNA as being a suitable evidence base to assess housing and employment land need in the HMA.
- 3.2 The Council needs to have a high degree of confidence that whatever it puts forward would be supported at examination. Compliance with the NPPF will be a key issue in this respect.
- 3.3 In order to comply with the NPPF provisions regarding strategic policies and for the review to continue to plan for the period to 2036 (as previously agreed by the Local Plan Committee), it would be necessary for the review to be adopted by April 2021. Based on

experience elsewhere it would be prudent to allow for a period of 18 months from the date of submission to adoption. This would mean that the plan would have to be submitted by late September 2019. This would meet the requirements of policy S1 in terms of the plan being submitted by February 2020. However, such a deadline is simply not feasible.

- 3.4 Moving forward an option would be to continue with the partial review and address the employment land shortfall to 2031; the same period as the adopted plan. The timetable to meet the February 2020 requirement of Policy S1 would be challenging, but potentially feasible. However, this approach would potentially conflict with the NPPF requirement for strategic policies to look ahead 15-years from adoption.
- 3.5 An alternative approach would be to continue with, but widen out, the review. This could necessitate making certain assumptions regarding possible future growth so as to maintain progress with a view to submission being as soon as possible after the 2018-household projections are known. This would help to ensure that the plan was as up-to-date as possible. Under this option the plan could potentially be adopted in early 2022 and could have an end date of 2038 or 2039, so satisfying the 15 year from date of adoption period of the NPPF. This approach would have the added advantage that by the time of submission the situation in respect of the quantum of unmet need from Leicester City should be known and agreed.
- 3.6 Whichever approach is taken the Council is faced with a significant dilemma; adhere to the provisions of policy S1 in terms of submitting the Local Plan by February 2020 or satisfying the requirement of the NPPF and have a plan that looks ahead at least 15-years from the date of adoption. Doing both is not feasible.
- 3.7 Whichever of the options outlined is pursued has associated risks. Continuing with a partial review to 2031 (the first option) runs the risk that an Inspector considers the review to be not sound as it would not look ahead 15-years. It is not clear as to whether this would still leave the remaining provisions of the adopted Local Plan intact.
- 3.8 By concentrating on the wider review and looking to plan ahead to 2038 or 2039 but missing the February 2020 deadline poses a risk for the adopted Local Plan in view of the provision in policy S1 for the plan to be considered out-of-date.
- 3.9 There are a variety of reasons why, but for the provisions of Policy S1, that the second option represents a logical choice:
 - the Local Plan was adopted less than two years ago;
 - housing provision and supply remains healthy;
 - the government has stated it will change the standard methodology which will impact current housing requirements; and
 - new household projections are due in a little over a years' time.
- 3.10 To address the issue of Policy S1, a further option would be to simply submit a review of the Local Plan as soon as possible that simply deletes or (more likely) amends the requirement for the review in policy S1.
- 3.11 Such an amendment would have to go through the normal process (i.e. consultation, submission, Examination) and be "sound", legally compliant and subject to sustainability appraisal. But the unforeseen changed circumstances arising since adoption of policy S1,

together with the unsatisfactory nature of the options outlined above, point to this as being a way forward.

- 3.12 Officers have taken external legal advice which supports such an approach.
- 3.13 It should be appreciated that this approach is not without its own risks. There is no guarantee that an Inspector would regard such an approach as being 'sound'. In these circumstances the statement that the plan would be "deemed to be out-of-date" would still form part of the policy. However, it would not have any effect as the requirement elsewhere in the policy for the plan to have been submitted would have been complied with; policy S1 does not require that the review be found 'sound'.
- 3.14 The issue of whether a plan is up-to-date is a matter for consideration by virtue of paragraph 11d of the NPPF. This requires the Council as decision maker to consider whether the relevant policies are out-of-date when determining planning applications. Where they are, the 'presumption in 'favour of sustainable development' applies. This would be the case whether the suggested approach was considered 'sound' or not. In terms of housing, paragraph 73 of the NPPF confirms that as the housing requirement in the adopted Local Plan is less than 5-years old it would still provide the appropriate basis for determining housing applications irrespective of any different housing projections which might be published (and this is the case until November 2022).

4.0 NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 As noted above a review which focussed solely upon Policy S1 would need to follow normal process. In accordance with the council's constitution, it would be for the Local Plan Committee to agree any consultation and to then agree to submit the review for Examination. Therefore, it is proposed to take a report to the Local Plan Committee on 18 September 2019 on this issue.
- 4.2 There is a greater likelihood of the suggested approach being found 'sound' if the Council can demonstrate that it is making significant progress on a wider review. Therefore, a timetable for the wider review will be prepared with a view to this taking place in parallel with the review of Policy S1. This will be included as part of the report to the Local Plan Committee in September and hence result in a new Local Development Scheme.
- 4.3 It is also proposed to discuss this matter with the other Leicestershire authorities under the Duty to Cooperate.

Why are we reviewing the Local Plan?

The North West Leicestershire Local Plan was adopted on 21 November 2017. It sets out a strategy for delivering the homes, jobs and infrastructure needed in the district between 2011 and 2031. The Council committed to start a review of the plan within three months of the date of adoption.

There are two main reasons why an immediate review was required:

1. A shortage of employment land up to 2031 compared to what is needed (as identified in our [Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment](#), or HEDNA)
2. The possible need to accommodate additional housing arising from unmet needs in Leicester city.

What has happened so far?

Work on a partial Local Plan review began with an [Issues consultation](#), under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, between 21 February and 4 April 2018. We contacted landowners, developers, local residents, neighbouring authorities, statutory consultees, Parish Councils, local interest groups and other stakeholders. The consultation was also publicised on the Council website and via social media. We received 72 responses from a range of individuals and organisations, and those responses have helped to inform our approach to the current consultation. A report summarising the consultation was prepared for the Council's [Local Plans Committee](#) in September 2018.

Between 25 June and 28 August 2018 we undertook further consultation, this time inviting the submission of potential housing and employment sites (through a call for sites exercise for the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment – SHELAA), as well as Gypsy and Traveller sites and also seeking nominations for potential local greenspace. Although work on assessing the potential housing, employment and Gypsy and Traveller sites is now underway, we are still accepting further submissions via the [‘submit a site’](#) form on the Council website.

We undertook a further consultation between 12 November 2018 and 11 January 2019 in respect of a range of emerging issues. We received 62 responses from a range of individuals and organisations. A report summarising the consultation was prepared for the Council's [Local Plans Committee](#) in June 2019.

Changes since Adoption

The District Council is committed to meeting the future development needs of the district and to do this through a review of the Local Plan. However, the circumstances have changed since the Local Plan Inspector made his recommendations to the district council and since the local plan was adopted.

These changes are summarised below.

The National Planning Policy Framework

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in July 2018 (and there were subsequent further changes in February 2019). This introduced a number of new plan-making requirements which would need to be addressed as part of a review, including:

- Clear distinction between strategic and local policies with strategic policies looking ahead “over a minimum 15 year period from adoption”;
- Guidance on the provision of ‘entry level homes’;
- Specific reference to storage and distribution uses;
- Specific reference to lorry parking; and
- Viability

Uncertain housing requirements

At the time the Inspector’s recommended modifications to the Local Plan were being finalised (winter 2016/17) it had been envisaged that the housing requirements for a review would be based upon the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) and that Leicester City would have declared the full extent of any unmet need and that this would have been agreed with the Leicestershire authorities as would its redistribution. However, Leicester City Council has still not formally declared the extent of its housing need that it cannot meet within its own boundaries.

A further issue in terms of housing requirements is the uncertainty regarding the future housing requirements which should be planned for. The government has introduced a “standard method” for calculating housing requirements. The latest figure for North West Leicestershire when using the 2014-household projections, as the government has advised, is 379 dwellings. This is over 100 dwellings less than that in the adopted Local Plan.

Furthermore, the government has stated that it intends to publish changes to the standard methodology at some point before the next household projections are published in autumn 2020 (these would be 2018 based projections). This is partly to ensure that the outcome from the standard methodology reflects the government’s stated aim of 300,000 new homes annually across England. It is reasonable to assume (based on the fact that the 2016-projections resulted in a housing figure of 529 dwellings) that the housing requirement (irrespective of any unmet need from Leicester City) will be higher than those derived from the 2014-household projections, but it is not clear as to what this is likely to be.

There is, therefore, considerable uncertainty regarding the housing requirement element which the review would need to plan for. In the meantime, the adopted local plan’s requirement figure appears sufficient to meet need arising in North West Leicestershire and a significant contribution to need that arises elsewhere in the HMA.

Uncertain employment requirements

The HEDNA identifies the amount of employment land required to 2031 and 2036, except for strategic B8 uses (i.e. warehouses those of over 9,000sqm in size) which are identified in a separate study.

Since the Local Plan was adopted additional planning permissions which have been granted means that as 1 April 2019 the shortfall was about 19ha compared to 39ha in October 2016 (the figures used at the Examination). However, since 1 April 2019 additional permissions and resolutions mean that the shortfall is only about 9Ha.

Whilst the needs identified in the HEDNA have been nearly addressed, there are concerns about its reliability from an evidence base point of view. In particular, the amount that is identified as being required for office type uses (Use Class B1a/b) is contrary to past trends and also to what the market appears to want which is more warehousing.

For this reason the Local Plan consultation undertaken in late 2018 asked a specific question regarding the suitability of the HEDNA as an evidence base. Whilst there was some support for the HEDNA, there were also some representations which questioned its continuing validity for a number of reasons, including:

- The latest evidence from the Office of National Statistics shows that the overall level of jobs located in North West Leicestershire has increased substantially;
- The HEDNA was based on assumptions that were overly optimistic with the future supply of workers and overly-pessimistic regarding the future demands of employers;
- It over-simplifies the need and demands for employment land and how economic investment is realised;
- It fails to address the relationships with employment land supply, need and demand in the West Midlands with which North West Leicestershire has a functional relationship; and
- The evidence presented in HEDNA on the take-up of employment land is questionable, when compared to Valuation Office Agency data.

Additional evidence has been commissioned to assess the continuing robustness of the HEDNA conclusions and (if necessary) to produce some alternative forecasts.

In terms of strategic B8 requirements, the requirements for this are set out in the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Distribution Study 2014, which was updated in 2016. It has been agreed by the Leicester and Leicestershire authorities to commission updated evidence on this issue.

As with housing there is significant uncertainty regarding the exact amount of employment land which would need to be identified as part of the review.

Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan

The Leicester and Leicestershire authorities have jointly prepared and agreed a Strategic Growth Plan (SGP) covering the period 2011-50. This is a non-statutory plan, but its intended purpose was to provide a framework for future Local Plans. The SGP was formally agreed in late 2018.

The SGP is seeking a step change in the way that growth is delivered; focussing more development in strategic locations and reducing the amount of new development that takes place in existing towns, villages and rural areas. One of these strategic locations lies partly within North West Leicestershire and is known as the 'Leicestershire International Gateway' (The Gateway) which covers the northern part of North West Leicestershire and Charnwood. The SGP estimates that The Gateway could accommodate about 11,200 dwellings to 2050. The split between North West Leicestershire and Charnwood has to be agreed, but is likely to be at least 5,200 dwellings in North West Leicestershire.

Whilst the Local Plan review will not go up to 2050, the scale of development is such that it will need to be planned for well in advance and so will need to be addressed as part of the review. It is likely that some large scale developments will be required, possibly new settlements. Such developments are inherently complex and require time to compile the necessary supporting evidence.

What are we now proposing?

In light of the above, we are now proposing to:

- 1) Amend Policy S1 and some of the supporting text of the adopted Local Plan. This is referred to as the '**Partial Review**'.

- 2) Continue to work on a more **Substantive Review** to address the longer term development needs of the district.

The Partial Review

It is proposed to amend Policy S1 and some of the supporting text of the adopted Local Plan as set out in the box below. Changes that the Council are proposing to policies/supporting text are shown as **bold** and underlined, and proposed deletions are shown as strikethrough.

Policy S1 – Future housing and economic development needs

Over the plan period to 2031 provision will be made to meet the housing and employment land needs of the district as identified in the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (January 2017).

This means that:

- provision will be made for the development of a minimum of 9,620 dwellings (481 dwellings per annum) which is the Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) and Housing Requirement for the district;
- provision will be made for 66 hectares of land for employment purposes (B1, B2 and B8 of less than 9,000sq metres)
- Provision will also be made for 7,300sq metres for shopping purposes.

The Council will continue to work collaboratively with the Leicester & Leicestershire Housing Market Area (HMA) authorities to establish the scale and distribution of any additional provision that may be necessary in North West Leicestershire and elsewhere in the HMA as a result of the inability of one or more authority to accommodate its own needs as identified in the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment. **This will be done through a Statement of Common Ground (SOCG) dealing with the redistribution of any unmet need from Leicester City and the submission of a replacement Local Plan will take place within 18 months of the date at which the SOCG is agreed by all of the authorities.**

~~The District Council will commence a review of this Local Plan (defined as being publication of an invitation to make representations in accordance with Regulation 18 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012) by the end of January 2018 or within 3 months of the adoption of this Local Plan (whichever is the later). The Plan Review will be submitted for examination within two years from the commencement of the review. In the event that the reviewed plan is not submitted within two years then this Local Plan will be deemed to be out of date.~~

Paragraph 5.8

~~Policy S1 recognises that there is a need to undertake an early review of the Local Plan. This is because whilst the current total provision of employment land is about 291 hectares, there is a mismatch between the type of land identified as being required in the HEDNA and the actual provision. There is~~ At the time of the examination there was a shortfall of about 29 hectares when compared to the HEDNA requirement for Class B1, B2 and B8 of less than 9,000sq metres. This reflects the fact that the HEDNA was completed towards the end of the process of preparing this plan. In addition, it is apparent that not all of the other HMA authorities will be able to accommodate their housing needs within their boundaries. The Council is committed to working with the other HMA authorities to agree how and where this unmet need will be accommodated. It may, therefore, be necessary for additional provision to be made for housing (and/or

employment) when this work is completed.

Local Plans are required to be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) incorporating a Sustainability Appraisal and a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to consider the impact of the policies and proposals of the Local Plan on sites of European significance designated for species and habitats (Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)) or birds (Special Protected Areas (SPA)). The part of the River Mease and its tributaries which lie within North West Leicestershire are designated as a Special Area of Conservation.

This partial review is therefore accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment and a Habitats Regulations Assessment.

The Sustainability Appraisal Report includes details of the range of options that have been considered ranging from 'do nothing' (i.e. not making any changes to Policy S1) to that the subject of this consultation.

The Substantive Review

Our proposed approach includes also continuing to work on a more Substantive Review which will extend the plan period beyond 2031, at least to 2036 but possibly longer to ensure that any strategic policies look ahead at least 15 years from adoption as required by the NPPF. This work will continue in parallel to the partial review. The timetable for the Substantive Review is:

Consultation on draft plan (Regulation 18)	Summer 2020
Pre-submission consultation (regulation 19)	Spring 2021
Submission	Autumn 2021
Examination	Winter 2021/22
Adoption	Autumn 2022

What are we consulting on?

This Partial Review represents the District Council's preferred approach and is published in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as Amended).

We are asking for comments on our proposed approach, including the proposed wording to policy S1, the Sustainability Appraisal Report and Habitats Regulations Assessment. We are not asking for comments on other policies in the adopted Local Plan as these issues will be dealt with as part of the Substantive Review.

Responding to this Consultation

Details of the consultation can be found at www.nwleics.gov.uk/localplanmysay

Visit this website to fill in our online response form or to download a MS Word version.

Responses can be sent to planning.policy@nwleicestershire.gov.uk or Planning Policy, North West Leicestershire District Council, Whitwick Road, Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 3FJ

Copies of the consultation material can also be found in all Council libraries and at the main Council offices in Coalville during normal opening times.

The deadline for responses is the end of 18 November 2019.

What happens next?

All comments made in response to this consultation will be assessed. At this point the Council will decide whether to submit the partial review for examination or whether to make further changes. If the partial review is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINs) for Examination, then PINs will appoint a Planning Inspector who will consider the partial review and determine whether it meets the test of 'soundness'. To be 'sound' a Local Plan must be:

- Positively prepared;
- Justified;
- Effective; and
- Consistent with national policy

The timetable and substance for discussion for an Examination will be determined by the Planning Inspector.

Only when the plan has been through these various stages and a Planning Inspector considers the plan to be 'sound' is the Council able to adopt the Local Plan. Upon its adoption it will replace the adopted Local Plan.

Once adopted this Local Plan together with the Minerals and Waste Local Plan prepared by Leicestershire County Council and any Neighbourhood Plans which have been 'made' will be the Development Plan for North West Leicestershire. The Development Plan provides the basis for determining planning applications.

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE – WEDNESDAY, 2 OCTOBER 2019

Title of report	LOCAL PLAN REVIEW – AREA OF SEPARATION STUDY
Contacts	<p>Councillor Robert Ashman 01530 273762 robert.ashman@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Interim Head of Planning and Infrastructure 01530 454782 chris.elston@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Planning Policy Team Manager 01530 454677 ian.nelson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p>
Purpose of report	To outline the outcome of a study of the Area of Separation between Coalville and Whitwick.
Council Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building Confidence in Coalville - Homes and Communities - Businesses and Jobs
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	The cost of the study has been met from existing budgets.
Link to relevant CAT	None
Risk Management	The need to review the boundaries of the Area of Separation were highlighted by the Local Plan Inspector in his report of October 2017. Maintaining the Area of Separation in a future Local Plan without reviewing its boundaries would leave the Council vulnerable at the Examination that will take place at a future date. Commissioning an independent study will enable the Council to demonstrate that it has acted upon the Inspector's advice.
Equalities Impact Screening	An Equalities Impact Assessment of the Local Plan review will be undertaken as part of the Sustainability Appraisal.
Human Rights	None discernible
Transformational Government	Not applicable

Comments of Head of Paid Service	The Report is Satisfactory
Comments of Section 151 Officer	The Report is Satisfactory
Comments of Monitoring Officer	The Report is Satisfactory
Consultees	None
Background papers	<p>Adopted North West Leicestershire Local Plan</p> <p>www.nwleics.gov.uk/pages/local_plan</p> <p>Report on the Examination of the North West Leicestershire Local Plan (October 2017)</p> <p>www.nwleics.gov.uk/pages/local_plan_examination</p>
Recommendation	<p>THAT THE LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE NOTES:</p> <p>(I) THE OUTCOME OF THE AREA OF SEPARATION STUDY; AND</p> <p>(II) THAT THE AREA OF SEPARATION STUDY FORMS PART OF THE COUNCIL'S EVIDENCE BASE TO SUPPORT THE LOCAL PLAN SUBSTANTIVE REVIEW</p>

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Policy En5 of the Local Plan establishes an Area of Separation between Coalville and Whitwick. The purpose of the policy is to seek to maintain the physical separation between Coalville and Whitwick so as to ensure that they maintain their respective character and identity.
- 1.2 The extent of the Area of Separation is identified on the plan at Appendix A of this report.
- 1.3 Prior to its designation as an Area of Separation, the land in question had been identified in the previous Local Plan as part of a larger Green Wedge. Parts of the area had been the subject of a number of planning applications for housing development which the Council refused and which had subsequently been dismissed at appeal.
- 1.4 The issue of the Area of Separation was debated at the Local Plan Examination in early 2017. The Inspector did not recommend any changes to the policy nor its boundaries, but in respect of the latter he did note that "*On balance, I consider there to be overriding merit in the judgement of the Council that the AoSs, as designated, are justified for the life of this Plan*". He went on to state that "*Importantly though, on the evidence provided to this*

Examination, there is scope for reconsideration of the detailed boundaries and land uses of the AoSs, in the event that it becomes necessary, at any time in the future, for the Plan to be reviewed in the light of increased development needs”.

- 1.5 In effect, the Inspector was flagging up that any review would have to consider the need for possible changes to the boundaries of the Area of Separation, in the context of development needs.
- 1.6 To ensure that the Inspector’s views are considered, a study was commissioned to assess the boundaries of the Area of Separation and advise of any changes which might be required.

2.0 THE STUDY

- 2.1 The study was undertaken by The Landscape Partnership, a company with over thirty years’ experience in matters relating to landscape assessments and similar work.
- 2.2 A copy of the report is attached at Appendix B and C of this report.
- 2.3 The methodology (section 2 of the report at Appendix B) involved a combination of both desk top study but also on-site appraisal and assessment. The Area of Separation was divided in to 24 land units comprising areas of common landscape character to assess their individual role and functionality. Each unit was then assessed against a set of 8 common criteria.
- 2.4 The criteria were selected to evaluate how land units contribute to the Area of Separation by:
 - maintaining the openness of the land,
 - protecting the identity and distinctiveness of the settlements and
 - preventing coalescence.
- 2.5 The study focuses on the importance of land units in terms of the role or functionality they play in providing a physical, visual and perceptual separation of Coalville and Whitwick.
- 2.6 Each land unit is then categorised, having regard to the criteria used, as being a ‘Primary’, ‘Secondary’ or ‘Incidental’ contribution based on the following definitions:
 - **Primary** - the land unit comprises a fundamental component of the openness that separates adjacent settlements in terms of landscape character and visual perception.
 - **Secondary** - the land unit in combination with other units provides an important component of the openness that separates adjacent settlements or different parts of the same settlement in terms of landscape character and visual perception.
 - **Incidental** - the land unit makes a limited contribution to the openness that separates adjacent settlements in terms of landscape character and visual perception.
- 2.7 The results of the assessment and the categorisation assigned to each land unit are set out at Figure 12 of Appendix C. Of the 24 land units 11 are judged to make a Primary contribution, 8 a Secondary contribution and 4 an Incidental contribution whilst 2 small

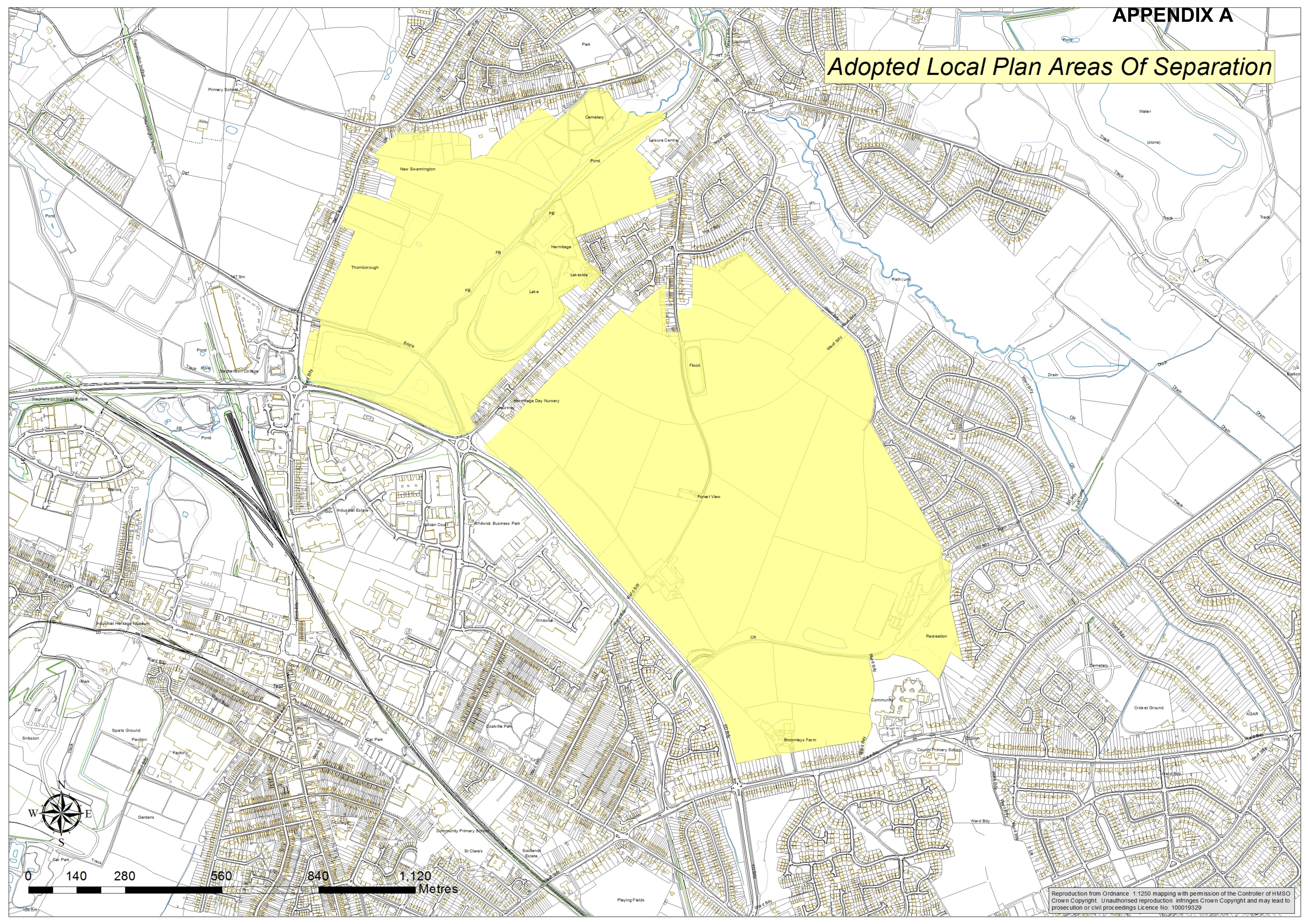
areas are considered to not make a contribution because the particular areas have been subject to some small scale development.

- 2.8 Notwithstanding the different categorisations used, the study notes (paragraph 2.17) that *“All three categories are regarded as demonstrating characteristics which merit being included in the AoS. However, it is important to recognise that some units are of relatively greater importance to the AoS and hence the use of the underlined phases above”*.
- 2.9 Those areas identified as providing a Primary or Secondary contribution are (the study notes at paragraph 2.18) *“clearly appropriate for inclusion within the AoS within the Local Plan review”*, whilst those that make an Incidental contribution (paragraph 2.19) *“are of more limited importance to the AoS overall e.g. by being well contained or relating more strongly to the settlement edge alone. The removal of these units from the AoS would not undermine the remainder of the designation should a justified alternative use be identified. However, based on their current land use and functionality it is considered that these units make a contribution albeit limited and should at the current time be retained within the AoS”*.

3.0 NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 The study will form part of the Council's evidence base to support the 'substantive' review of the Local Plan. All evidence base documents are, in the interests of transparency, placed in to the public domain on the Council's website.
- 3.2 The principle of maintaining the physical separation between different settlements is a legitimate planning consideration. The council has a longstanding commitment to maintaining the physical separation of Coalville and Whitwick. This approach has been supported by Inspectors at a number of major appeals, most recently in May 2017.
- 3.3 The study outlined in this report provides the Council with independent evidence to help define what the boundaries of an Area of Separation should be. Consideration of the studies recommendations will be taken forward as part of the Local Plan 'substantive' review in due course.

Adopted Local Plan Areas Of Separation



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Area of Separation Study

Coalville Urban Area

on behalf of

North West Leicestershire District Council

Issue Version

July 2019

Quality Control
Area of Separation Study
Coalville Urban Area

Checked by Project Manager:	Approved by:
Signature:	Signature:
Name: Jonathan Billingsley	Name: Jonathan Billingsley
Title: Director	Title: Director
Date: 24 th April 2019	Date: 1 st July 2019

The Landscape Partnership is registered with the Landscape Institute and is a member of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment

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1 INTRODUCTION

Brief and policy background

- 1.1 North West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC) requires an assessment of the existing Area of Separation (AoS) that is located with the Coalville Urban Area as defined in the North West Leicestershire Local Plan (2011-2031) and located between Coalville and Whitwick. The location of the AoS is shown on Figures 01-04 and 10-13 within Appendix 3.
- 1.2 The Landscape Partnership Ltd were appointed by NWLDC in July 2018 to carry out the study which has been carried out by a suitably experienced Chartered Landscape Architect.
- 1.3 The aim of the study is to provide a technical assessment of the AoS both in its component parts and overall.
- 1.4 The principle of maintaining some form of physical separation between Coalville and Whitwick has formed part of NWLDC planning policy for a number of decades. Previously this was in the form of a Green Wedge and latterly as an AoS.
- 1.5 Policy En5 in the 2017 Local Plan defines the current extent of the AoS in spatial terms on Inset Map 10 in the Local Plan.
- 1.6 The supporting text for Policy En5 states:

It is important to ensure that individual settlements retain their own character and identity. This is recognised in the Countryside policy (Policy S3) where the potential impact upon the separation between settlements is an important consideration in determining proposals for development. However, in the Coalville Urban Area there are two large, open, undeveloped areas of land which are within the Limits to Development and not subject to the countryside policies, as they are surrounded by built development, but which perform a very important role in maintaining the physical separation between Coalville and Whitwick. Development in this area, if permitted, would result in the physical coalescence of Coalville and Whitwick and the loss of the separate identity of the two settlements. Therefore, these open areas are identified as Areas of Separation and subject to the policy below.

- 1.7 The policy then states:

(1) Land between Coalville and Whitwick, as identified on the Policies Map, is designated as an Area of Separation where only agricultural, forestry, nature conservation, leisure and sport and recreation uses will be allowed. Any other proposed uses will need to demonstrate why they cannot be accommodated elsewhere within the district.

(2) Development will not be permitted which, either individually or cumulatively, would demonstrably adversely affect or diminish the present open and undeveloped character of the area.

- 1.8 The Inspectors Report (October 2017) of the Examination in Public of the North West Leicestershire Local Plan covered the Area of Separation (AoS) at paragraphs 72-83. Extracts from the Inspectors report included:

'73. In contrast with the surrounding built up areas, the Area of Separation is distinctly semi-rural or settlement fringe in character.....

75. With respect to the western AoS, the SFA (Settlement Fringe Analysis) concluded that the character of the area was common to many urban fringes but recognised its importance to the separation of Whitwick, New Swannington, Thornborough and Coalville, despite surrounding built development.

76. With respect to the eastern AoS, the SFA recommended the retention of woodland and the enhancement of gateway rural views between Whitwick and Coalville. At the same time, the SFA did not rule out some level of development, with potential for mitigation.

77. There is very strong local support within Whitwick for the designation of the AoS in the interests of maintaining settlement identity. This approach has previously received qualified support at appeal. The evidence of the Council, in defence of Policy En5, is based on its judgements that the SFA strongly suggests that development opportunities in the western AoS are extremely limited and that, in the eastern AoS, landscape harm would exceed development benefit.

78. On the other hand, the AoS designation is equally strongly opposed by those with development interests, particularly in the eastern area.these objections also address the quality of the evidence on which the boundaries of the AoSs and the constraints of Policy En5 are based.

79. With reference to national policy, AoS is not recognised as a protective designation by the NPPF. However, core principles of the NPPF are that planning should take account of the different roles and characteristics of different areas with reference to their relative environmental value, should deliver conservation of the natural landscape and should identify where development would be inappropriate. The AoSs are different from surrounding areas in their level of built development, topography and landscape and are of recognised local value in avoiding the coalescence of distinct built up areas.

80. Read in isolation, Policy En5 is restrictive and inflexible. However, in permitting rural and recreational land uses, it does not impose a complete ban on development. Nor does it impede development required to meet the housing and employment requirements of the Plan, where these can be accommodated elsewhere within the scope of the Plan Strategy. In the context of the Plan as whole, Policy En5 is justified in its terms, provided the defined boundaries of the AoSs, to which it relates, are also justified on robust evidence.

81. Land within the SFA has been considered for development in previous studies in connection with the former draft Core Strategy, which was withdrawn in 2013. Moreover, whilst the conclusions of the SFA appear robust, they are notably equivocal as to the value of all of the land comprising the AoSs now designated by Policy En5. The local support is plainly heartfelt and genuine. However, this support, and the Council evidence in favour of the designation of the AoSs, is clearly subjective. Moreover, previous appeal decisions and High Court judgments favouring the AoSs are essentially site-specific and do not provide a direct, strategic comparison.

82. It is concluded above that the spatial distribution of new development by the Plan across the Settlement Hierarchy is broadly justified. On balance, I consider there to be overriding merit in the judgement of the Council that the AoSs, as designated, are justified for the life of this Plan, especially taking into account the established commitment to the extensive South East Coalville Urban Extension. Given the AoS designation is justified for the purpose of this Plan, there is no inconsistency between Policy En5 and the aspects of national policy, summarised above, recognising local differences.

83. Importantly though, on the evidence provided to this Examination, there is scope for reconsideration of the detailed boundaries and land uses of the AoSs, in the event that it becomes necessary, at any time in the future, for the Plan to be reviewed in the light of increased development needs.

- 1.9 The Inspector's Report therefore suggested a reconsideration of both the detailed boundaries and the land uses of the AoS.
- 1.10 It should be noted that the new NPPF (July 2018) has removed the list of core planning principles including reference to the '*different roles and characteristics of different areas*'. However, a new equivalent paragraph, 127 makes reference to planning policies and decisions ensuring that development (inter alia) should be, '*sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting*.' This approach and wording is considered to demonstrate a similar intent to the core planning principle relied on in the 2012 version of the NPPF.

2 METHODOLOGY

Desk Study

2.1 The study included a desktop review including the following:

- Extent of existing Area of Separation
- Topography of study area
- Land uses within the AoS and adjacent local area
- Landscape Character Areas at the national, county and district scale respectively
- Historic development of settlement based on historic OS plans
- Landscape and heritage designations within the study area
- Relevant Local Planning Policy

Field work

2.2 Field work followed from the collection of data from the desktop study and assessed the characteristics of the AoS by viewing and making informed professional judgements from public locations on local roads, public rights of way and other publicly accessible land. The majority of the field work was carried out in July 2018, with further focused visits in October 2018 and March 2019.

2.3 The desk study, field work and following report assess and provide information at two Stages.

Stage A. Overview of the Area of Separation study area

- Landscape Character Context
- Topographical patterns – ridges, valleys etc.
- Main vegetation blocks
- Landscape Change
- Location of existing built up areas and settlements edge
- Character of settlement/development edge
- Distance between settlements

- Character of undeveloped land between settlements
- Key views into and from the study area

Stage B. Assessment of Land Units

- 2.4 The study area is then sub-divided into smaller land 'units' comprising coherent areas of common landscape character to assess their individual role and functionality within the AoS as a whole. Each unit is assessed against 8 criteria as set out below in paragraph 2.10. The criteria are categorised on a scale from A-E. The definitions for A-E of each criterion are based on a scale from 'A' which is judged to make the least contribution to the purpose of the AoS and 'E' makes the greatest contribution to the AoS. The definitions are set out in Appendix 01.
- 2.5 The scale of land units has been identified as appropriate to the local characteristics and function of the land within the AoS. As a result, while they will have a common character there may be some considerable variation in the scale between units.
- 2.6 The identification and definition of land units is based on a combination of desk study and field work with the final decision based on the identification of a common landscape character and function.
- 2.7 The criteria have been selected to evaluate how land units contribute to the AoS by:
- maintaining the openness of the land,
 - protecting the identity and distinctiveness of the settlements and
 - preventing coalescence.
- 2.8 Coalescence can be defined as, 'the process of coming or growing together to form one thing or system' (Cambridge English Dictionary). On this basis, the concept of coalescence is engaged not only when two settlements physically join, but also as they are perceived as coming closer together as a result of incremental development. Therefore, in the context of the coalescence of settlements, a reduction in the gap between settlements could also be described as part of the process of coalescence and potentially harmful to the identity of the settlements involved and the AoS.
- 2.9 This study focuses on the importance of land units in terms of the role or functionality they play in providing a physical, visual and perceptual separation of settlements. There are two main named settlements which relate to the AoS; Coalville and Whitwick. Their respective settlement patterns mean that the existing built areas are spread out around and between the study area including a number of linear ribbon developments following local roads and related suburban areas. Therefore, due to this characteristic the consideration of separation and coalescence has been considered not just between the two principal settlements of Coalville and Whitwick but also between the different parts of the same

settlement e.g. between development along Hermitage Road and Thornborough Road both of which are in Whitwick parish. However, in the assessment of units the role in separation between different parts of the same settlement carries relatively less weight than the separation between the two main settlements.

- 2.10 The criteria used for Stage B of this study can be classed into three groups: 'Physical', 'Perceptual' and 'Value'. The Physical criteria include the main natural features of an area namely landform/topography and vegetation. The Perceptual criteria relate to how people can view or appreciate an area, whether from public or private locations and how the area relates to established settlement and adjoining land. The Value criteria include how the area is used for recreation and the overall scenic value. Further clarification of the criteria is provided below:

Physical criteria

1. **Topography** - the pattern of landform can reinforce the separation between settlements (e.g. a ridge between settlements) or alternatively it may support linkage (e.g. in a valley landscape with inter-visibility across valley slopes). Alternatively, landform may play a more neutral role (e.g. if the land is broadly level).
2. **Vegetation** - the presence of features such as trees, hedges and woodland which have the effect of screening or enclosure can have a marked influence on the sense of separation provided a unit. Where there is a higher proportion of established woody vegetation this can reinforce and strengthen the sense of separation between settlements. Conversely, when vegetation cover is more limited and the landscape more open the sense of separation is reduced.

Perceptual criteria

3. **Public visibility** - the degree of openness to public view from roads, rights of way and publicly accessible land influences the perceptual role a land unit performs in the locality. Locations with open public views can strongly reveal the openness and sense of separation. Conversely, locations with limited access and/or appreciation of the landscape would have a reduced role. Locations where there is inter-visibility from or between settlements will be of a relatively greater sensitivity.
4. **Private views** – residential views from settlements can form part of a local community's appreciation of the character of the landscape between settlements. Residential locations with open views into the landscape would have a greater connectivity compared to those which are strongly filtered. In addition, locations where there is clear inter-visibility between settlements will be of greater sensitivity.
5. **Contribution to the character and setting of settlements** - the character of an area of land can affect the appreciation of a neighbouring settlement or development (e.g. where properties in a settlement front onto open countryside and there could be a strong historic, visual or functional relationship with the adjacent land). Conversely, physical barriers such as major roads, railway lines

and associated earthworks or where buildings back onto an area may reinforce separation despite the proximity.

6. **Landscape linkage** - the relationship between different land units is an important factor that underlines their combined role in the landscape. These can include physical and/or visual links that form part of a wider composition. In identifying coherent areas of separation, the sum of the individual parts of a landscape may often be greater than the contribution of individual land units in isolation.

Value criteria

7. **Scenic Quality** - the scenic value of an area reflects a combination of elements and factors, both physical and perceptual. Assessing the relative scenic value can also involve balancing of beneficial and adverse features. Areas with a pleasing mix of elements, in good condition and with limited detractors are more likely to be highly valued. The scenic quality may also include panoramic views both within and/or out of the unit where appropriate.
8. **Recreational value** - the degree to which a land unit can be appreciated and enjoyed for recreational use can contribute towards its value for the community. Land that is used for specific purposes e.g. open access land, play areas or playing fields will have a local and community value for recreation. Rights of way provide value, particularly where routes are well maintained and provide convenient links to and between residential areas.

2.11 Within each land unit the above criteria are assessed based on a 5-point scale (A-E) using the definitions set out in Appendix 01. The results are shown in a tabular form providing a 'profile' to illustrate the relative importance of each criteria to the land unit in contributing towards the overall separation of settlements (see Appendix 02).

2.12 In relation to identifying suitable criteria for 'value' there are no suitable landscape based designations within or adjacent to the AoS and for this reason the presence or absence of designations was omitted from the criteria as all units would be rated A. While the study area is within the National Forest and partly within Charnwood Forest Regional Park these designations were not considered to be a reflection of a determining landscape value designations for this study.

2.13 It is important to recognise that no weighting has been applied to any of the individual criteria but rather the results (as presented in the tables in Appendix 02) show the range of factors that have been considered for each land unit and where they sit in the descriptive scale for each criterion. It is not the intention to add up the entries for each criterion to give an overall numerical 'score'. Rather the tables aim to pictorially inform the descriptive text below each table. However, the relative importance of each criteria may vary between each land unit for a range of reasons e.g. a ridge may in itself make a notable contribution compared to other factors. Therefore, one should consider both the spread of criteria on the scale of factors and the contribution of each criterion.

- 2.14 Where the assessor considered that the land unit does not clearly fall within a single description (A-E) for any criteria then more than one category (A-E) is 'shaded', with the most relevant description ticked in the table.
- 2.15 A descriptive narrative is then provided for each land unit in Appendix 02 covering the following headings:
- Land Unit description including location, size (ha), land use etc
 - Commentary on the profile
 - Contribution to physical separation between settlements
 - Contribution to the identity of settlements
 - Contribution to open character and links with other land units
 - Landscape value
- 2.16 Finally, an overall assessment is made for each land unit on its contribution to the separation of the settlements involved and its importance in preventing coalescence. This is categorised as the land unit providing either: a 'Primary', 'Secondary' or 'Incidental' contribution based on the following definitions:
- **Primary** - the land unit comprises a fundamental component of the openness that separates adjacent settlements in terms of landscape character and visual perception.
 - **Secondary** - the land unit in combination with other units provides an important component of the openness that separates adjacent settlements or different parts of the same settlement in terms of landscape character and visual perception.
 - **Incidental** - the land unit makes a limited contribution to the openness that separates adjacent settlements in terms of landscape character and visual perception.
- 2.17 All three categories are regarded as demonstrating characteristics which merit being included in the AoS. However, it is important to recognise that some units are of relatively greater importance to the AoS and hence the use of the underlined phases above.
- 2.18 Land units that are identified as providing a Primary or Secondary contribution to the sense of separation between settlements are considered to be clearly appropriate for inclusion within the AoS within the Local Plan review.
- 2.19 Land units that are identified as making an Incidental contribution are of more limited importance to the AoS overall e.g. by being well contained or relating more strongly to the settlement edge alone. The

removal of these units from the AoS would not undermine the remainder of the designation should a justified alternative use be identified. However, based on their current land use and functionality it is considered that these units make a contribution albeit limited and should at the current time be retained within the AoS.

2.20 There are a small number of locations where built development has taken place to the fringes of the designated AoS and now form part of the settlement. Therefore, these are recommended for removal from the AoS.

Outputs

2.21 The outputs of the study are:

- An outline of the background and policy context;
- A review of the landscape context as a whole supported by illustrative drawings of: topography, rights of way, vegetation, historic development etc.;
- For each land unit within the AoS an assessment of the 8 criteria and a description of the role of the land unit in relation to the openness of the landscape and identity of the settlements;
- A summary and conclusion setting out the merit in retaining the existing AoS in whole or in part and any specific guidance on potential adjustments to the existing boundaries based on the findings of the study and
- A GIS layer of the land units within the proposed AoS.

3 CONTEXT FOR THE STUDY AREA

3.1 The AoS is located within a wider landscape context which has been subject to a number of character studies and assessments ranging from a national to more local scale and as outlined below.

Landscape Character

National Level

3.2 The study area is located within National Character Area (NCA) 73 Charnwood which is an extensive area of landscape broadly contained by Leicester, Loughborough, Coalville and Shepshed. The NCA description states that Charnwood is a unique landscape, marked out by its upland qualities, which contrast with the surrounding gentle lowlands. It is formed by mosaic of heathland, farmland, parkland and woodland. The underlying Precambrian geology has given rise to a distinctive area of land characterised by exposures of rugged, rocky outcrops. It is a relatively well wooded landscape, with many areas of mixed, deciduous and coniferous woodlands. It is noted that large villages lie on the southern, western and eastern fringes which would include Whitwick.

3.3 Key Characteristic within the NCA of relevance to the study area include:

- Upland qualities, including extensive open summits and distinctive rocky outcrops, rising from the surrounding lowland undulating farmland.
- Thin, acidic, infertile soils are found on upland slopes; mudstones in the valley bottoms produce a deeper, fertile soil.
- A well wooded character, with many areas of mixed, deciduous and coniferous woodlands. Large, ancient, pollarded oaks are a feature of country parks.
- Land use is a distinctive mixture of woodland, predominantly pastoral farmland, heathland and parkland.

3.4 While the study area is located fully within NCA 73 Charnwood it shares very few of the key characteristics listed for the NCA e.g. upland qualities, thin acidic soils, well wooded character, pastoral farmland, historic parks, diversity of habitats or traditional buildings in the Charnwood villages. The study area and AoS is therefore at best a transitional area to the outer extent of the core of the Charnwood NCA. In the AoS land use is more dominated by either arable cropping, horse grazing or recreational uses and then largely contained by built development to its edges.

3.5 The Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEOs) in the NCA do not really apply to the study area. The only potential exception is within SE04 where the objective is to, 'manage and expand the native

woodlands throughout Charnwood to reinforce the wooded character, to increase the potential for biomass, access and recreation, and to regulate climate change and water quality.' This objective has been supported by additional woodland planting in two locations within the AoS.

Regional Level

- 3.6 At the regional scale the study area is located within Character Type 10d: Forested Ancient Hills as defined within the East Midlands Regional Character Assessment. ¹
- 3.7 The key characteristics listed within the regional study are very similar to those for NCA 73, which is to be expected as the RCA covers the same geographical area as the NCA. In this respect the study area again lies at the fringes of the core of the character area. It is noted that the woodland cover overall in the RCA is much greater than in the neighbouring lowland areas and that it is likely to increase within the western part of the Charnwood Forest that is located in the National Forest. There is evidence that this change has recently taken place within the AoS by the planting of two woodland areas in land units 9 and 13 (see Figure 11).
- 3.8 The RCA description states that during the 20th century the landscape character evolved with an expansion of settlements on the perimeter of the upland areas and loss of open areas, including a change from pasture to arable use. There has also been a loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees as a result of agricultural intensification.
- 3.9 Within the study area there are examples of how the geology of Charnwood Forest has influenced its appearance and character e.g. by the use of the Precambrian rocks within older buildings such as the former village school and in boundary walls within parts of Whitwick.
- 3.10 It is of note that under the built development section on landscape change and management it includes within 'Forces for change' that, *'large-scale modern development is damaging landscape character, creating visual intrusion, resulting in the loss of surrounding landscape features and increasing the risk of coalescence of outlying villages... Proposals also include sustainable urban extensions at Coalville.'* In the 'Shaping the Future' section relating to built development it states, *'the aim should be to protect the character of the landscape, and limit visual impact of any new development by locating it on previously developed land or close to existing settlement.'*
- 3.11 In relation to the forestry and woodland section within landscape change and management the RCA states that, *'new woodland planting would be generally appropriate, making a contribution to increasing the overall woodland coverage in the region and integrating new development into the landscape.'*

¹ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5635681403535360>

Indeed, much of this landscape is within The National Forest, which encourages new planting and appropriate management.'

- 3.12 In relation to tourism and leisure, the RCA states that, *'the management of public access should be encouraged, helping to conserve the natural environment, whilst enhancing Charnwood Forest as a recreational and educational resource. This should be undertaken in co-ordination with the sub-regional green infrastructure strategy, using less vulnerable assets to accommodate leisure activities and encouraging sustainable access.'*

County Level

- 3.13 According to the Leicestershire Character Assessment, the AoS study area is located at the junction of two character areas: Charnwood Forest and The Coalfield (see Figure 01). This additional level of detail compared to the NCA and RCA assessments recognises the presence of the coalfield and former collieries within and around the settlement of Coalville.
- 3.14 The description for the Coalfield describes the LCA as, *an area of gently undulating landform, dominated by mixed farmland and the past and present effects of coalmining and clay extraction. It is bounded to the east by the steep rise to Charnwood Forest.The Coalfield character area is distinguished by a denser settlement pattern than almost any other part of Leicestershire. Large former mining villages characterised by 19th century terraced housing follow the main road lines. Roadside groups of cottages are also characteristic. Many towns and villages have recent residential development at their fringes., Although urban and industrial influences are rarely far away, there remains substantial areas of open, mainly arable, farmland. The area has few woodlands but hedges, hedgerow trees and small copses sometimes give a wooded effect locally..... Coalville is the main town but large villages, many with former coalmining associations, are scattered throughout this part of the area. The Bardon 21 warehousing development to the east of Coalville has expanded rapidly onto greenfield sites in recent years. Bardon Quarry lies just outside character area. The views of Bardon Hill and the traffic associated with the quarry are also notable features of this part of the area.*
- 3.15 The description for the Charnwood Forest LCA of the County level identifies very similar characteristics to those at the NCA and RCA level.
- 3.16 Whilst not within the remit of this study, TLPs observation of the study area is that the description for The Coalfield LCA more strongly reflect the characteristics within and around the AoS than the description of the Charnwood Forest does. The boundary drawn between the two LCA's that runs across the AoS does not reflect any marked changes in the field but rather the underlying geology. Clearer evidence of the change to the Charnwood Forest LCA characteristics is found to the north-east where the landform rises more steeply and there is a greater presence of woodland.

District Level

3.17 The Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Assessment was carried out in 2008 to inform the boundary of the Charnwood Forest Regional Park. The geographical scope of the Charnwood Forest Landscape Character Assessment extended over the eastern part of the AoS study. The extent of this study extended broadly to the same boundary between The Coalfield and Charnwood Forest as in the County scale study. The remaining area to the west is not covered by the study.

3.18 The Charnwood Forest Regional Park is supported by Policy En4 in the North West Leicestershire Local Plan which states,

(1) Within the Charnwood Forest, the Council will work in partnership with Leicestershire County Council, Charnwood Borough Council, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and other partners to protect and enhance the landscape, biodiversity, natural history and cultural heritage of the Charnwood Forest Regional Park (CFRP).

(2) Priority will be given to those proposals that: (a) Maintain the traditional working landscape of the forest, particularly those which involve farming or rural diversification or tourism, including green tourism initiatives; and 106 (b) Enhance the biodiversity of the CFRP, consistent with the aims of the Charnwood National Character Area profile (SEO3); and (c) Provide new recreation facilities appropriate to the character of the area; and (d) Provide access to and from the rural areas into and within the Regional Park by non-vehicular means.

(3) Any new development within the CFRP will be expected to respect the character and appearance of area in terms of design and materials used.

3.19 The purpose of the policy is to protect and enhance the landscape and environmental assets of the area. The priority is on supporting the traditional working landscape, enhancing biodiversity, providing new recreation facilities and access by non-vehicular means. Furthermore, any new development should respect the character of the area. The north-east part of the AoS is covered by Policy En4 to the extent as shown on Figure 03.

National Forest

3.20 The whole of the AoS is included within the National Forest as supported by Policy En3 in the 2011-2031 North West Leicestershire Local Plan. The National Forest Area covers an extensive area that extends well outside NWLD. Policy En3 aims to work with the National Forest Company to: *diversify and support the economy in relation to the woodland economy, create an attractive sustainable environment, provide*

a range of leisure opportunities for local communities and visitors; and achieve the National Forest Company's woodland cover target.

New developments within the National Forest will contribute towards the creation of the forest by including provision of tree planting and other landscape areas within them Landscaping does not just include woodland planting and the appropriate mix of landscaping features will depend upon the setting and the opportunities that the site presents.

Within the National Forest new development should ensure that: (a) The siting and scale of the proposed development is appropriately related to its setting within the Forest; and (b) The proposed development respects and does not adversely affect the character and appearance of the National Forest or the wider countryside;...

- 3.21 The National Forest is an important feature from an economic, social and environmental point of view within NWL as evidenced by the above policy. Two land units within the AoS have recently been planted to create woodland features and habitats as part of the National Forest. There is potential for further areas in the AoS to be included in similar schemes.

2010 Settlement Fringe Study

- 3.22 The AoS was included within the 2010 Settlement Fringe study undertaken by TEP. This assessed the rural /urban fringes of a number of the larger settlements within North West Leicestershire, including Coalville. 10 areas were assessed around Coalville, including areas 2 and 3 that covered the extent of the AoS. The study reviewed the various LCA at different scales from National to National Forest scale and also assessed various criteria related to both landscape quality and visual quality.
- 3.23 Within the 2010 study both parts of the AoS were considered to have Moderate/High potential to achieve mitigation that may allow for some development while including mitigation features e.g. retaining view corridors, open space and woodland.

2017 Landscape Character Study and Landscape Sensitivity Study

- 3.24 The above countywide study was carried out by LUC for Leicestershire County Council. The study involved a review of the LCAs within the county and placed the AoS within both Charnwood Forest and The Coalfield. The former LCA was identified as having a Medium - High sensitivity to change from residential (2-3 storeys) and commercial development (B1 and B2) while the latter was assessed as having a Medium sensitivity to similar types of change.
- 3.25 Various sensitivities were identified for each LCA. Sensitivities for the Coalfield included, *'respect the form and vernacular of existing settlements within the landscape,'* Guidance opportunities for enhancing landscape character included:

- *Retain the pattern of hedgerows and hedgerow trees and incorporate buffer planting to major transport corridors*
- *Seek to conserve and create linkages between areas of woodland and improve habitat connectivity*
- *Explore what scale of new woodland planting would be appropriate within the landscape as part of the National Forest initiative.*
- *Plan for successful integration of potential new development in the landscape through sensitive design and siting ... to enhance sense of place*

4 STUDY AREA

- 4.1 The AoS as defined by Policy En5 and shown on Inset Map 10 in the Local Plan comprises two areas of open land each contained by built development to all sides. In previous studies by NWLDC covering the AoS (when designated as a Green Wedge at the time) the two parts of the current AoS were combined with a larger area to the west and were hence referred to as the Central and East areas. Based on the present extent and location of the two parts of the AoS they are referred to in this report as Area A i.e. the land to the south-east (formerly East) and Area B i.e. land to the north-west (formerly Central) as shown on Figures 01-04 and 10-11.
- 4.2 Area A is bounded by the A511 Stephenson Way to the west, properties along and adjacent to Hermitage Road, Green Lane and George Street to the north, development both along and adjacent to Hall Lane to the east and development fronting Broom Leys Road to the south. The area extends to approximately 112 ha.
- 4.3 Area B is bounded by the A511 Stephenson Way to the south-west, properties on Hermitage Road, Lakeshore Crescent and Grove Road to the south, and properties along Thornborough Road and Church Lane to the north. The area extends to approximately 58 ha.

Topography

- 4.4 The topography of the study area as illustrated by Figure 02 is typically gently undulating and much less pronounced than the higher ground to the east and south east within the core of Charnwood Forest. The AoS reaches its highest point to the south-east of Area A at approximately 167m AOD from where the land slopes gently down to the north-west to an elevation of circa 146m AOD. The landform of the area locally rises to the north-east of Area A leading up towards the edge of Whitwick before then falling back down towards the settlement at George Street and Green Lane. There are opportunities for wider views across the area and beyond to higher ground to the north, east and south.
- 4.5 The topography of Area B is focused around a valley feature of the Grace Dieu Brook that runs from south-west to the north-east. The floor of the valley falls from circa 142m to 135m. The valley sides rise both to the north-west at a maximum of 146m and to the south-east to a similar elevation. Valley slopes vary between 1 in 40 and 1 in 80. Within Area B there are a number of localised artificial topographical landform features relating to the past industrial activity including: those associated with the Hermitage Brick and Terra Cotta Works (which partly occupied the existing amenity lake) and the alignment of the disused Charnwood Forest Railway, where it passes in a more marked cutting leading under Market Place at Whitwick.

Soils

- 4.6 The soils within Area A to the south of the AoS are from the SALOP (511m) series which are based on a reddish till geology, according to the Rothamstead soils data. These soils are a slowly permeable and seasonally waterlogged reddish loamy soil overlying clay. The soils within Area B to the north are from the Hodnet series (572c) which are based on a Permo-Triassic and Carboniferous reddish mudstone, siltstone and sandstone and reflect the historic presence of coalmining. These soils are a fine reddish and coarse loamy soil with slight seasonal waterlogging.

Vegetation

- 4.7 There is a variable extent of tree cover within the study area relating to current and former land uses as illustrated on the aerial photographs at Figures 10 and 11. Within Area A the field structure is largely defined by native hedgerows in a good condition. However, it is noteworthy that there are very few individual field trees within these hedges. There are a number of linear tree belts and areas of established trees and hedgerows vegetation, most notably along the line of the disused mineral railway cycleway which runs from the A511 overbridge up to the approach track leading to the Coalville Rugby Club (Memorial Ground) on Hall Road. This corridor of vegetation includes a number of mature oak trees. Further notable tree belts and linear planting include those: along the A511 Stephenson Way, around and within the Memorial Ground, at Sharpley Avenue Recreation Ground and to the rear of the amenity area and the allotments off George Street/Hall Lane. Two new woodlands, Harold Smalley Wood and Thomas Ashford Wood have been recently planted as part of the National Forest and are located to the northern part of Area A.
- 4.8 Area B of the AoS includes a more variable pattern of vegetation. Established historic hedgerows are present within the area, particularly along the line of field boundaries and access routes and rights of way e.g. Bridle Road (Bridleway 08). A number of these features have been allowed to grow tall and include a few mature hedgerow trees and are mainly located to the north of the brook. A further strong belt of vegetation follows the line of the Grace Dieu Brook eastwards together with trees along either side of the alignment of the former railway line. The belts also include areas of established mature vegetation along the watercourse south of the cemetery. There are a number of mature belts of trees associated with the Hermitage Recreation Ground, and in particular around the amenity lake with further substantial belts of trees within and around the disused municipal golf course to the south-east. A number of tree belts also provide relative enclosure of the adjacent uses e.g. around the allotments on Thornborough Road and the trees within Whitwick Cemetery.

Land-use

- 4.9 The majority of the land-use in Area A comprises agricultural land. At the time of the field work (July 2018) the majority was being used for arable use including a mix of arable cropping and linseed. Further areas, particularly to the south at both Broom Leys Farm and Glebe Farm are used for horse grazing.

There are a few areas of recreational use including the formal private sports pitches of Coalville Rugby Club and the publicly accessible Sharpley Avenue Recreation Ground to the south-east. In the northern part of Area A there is an allotment site and further area of amenity grassland. The two areas of new woodland are located to the north of Area A and will develop into native woodland features, with some limited permissive access.

- 4.10 Land-use in Area B includes more of a mix of recreational uses with formal sports pitches, informal areas, a water body and disused golf course within the Hermitage Recreation Ground. Whitwick Cemetery is located to the north-east of the area and Thornborough Road allotments to the north-west. To the fringes of the area there are a number of smaller paddocks and an area of grazing. The remaining agricultural use comprises three fields on the northern slopes of the valley.

Landscape change

- 4.11 The historic OS plans provided at Figures 05 to 09 illustrate the change in the settlement pattern of Coalville and Whitwick over the last 130 years in the vicinity of the AoS. The current extent of built development has been added to each of the historic plans to illustrate the extent of change between the date of the map and the current situation.
- 4.12 Coalville was established as a Victorian industrial town in a green field location in the 1830s following sinking the main pit in 1826. By the time of the 1887-88 OS plan (see Figure 05) Coalville is centred around the intersection between the High Street and the mainline railway. At this time there were a number of industrial sites including Whitwick Colliery (located to the west of the current A511) Snibston Colliery in the centre of Coalville and a number of brick and tile factories associated with the various railway lines. At this time there was very limited housing to the north-east of Coalville with a number of regular rectilinear fields being present in the areas surrounding the town. The village of Whitwick was concentrated along Market Place, Castle Street and Vicarage Street, with further fragmented linear ribbon development extending along the radiating roads including Silver Street, Hermitage Road and Green Lane. At this time very few of the current houses along Hermitage Road, Thornborough Road and Church Lane were in existence. Whitwick Cemetery and the associated Lodge were present, then set some distance from the village but close to St John's the Baptist Parish church. A small settlement existed at New Swannington centred around the minor road junctions. Glebe Farm and Constable Lane Farm (now Broom Leys Farm) were both present and all the intervening land between Broom Leys and Whitwick comprised a patchwork of agricultural fields.
- 4.13 By 1903-1904 (see Figure 06) further industrialisation had occurred, including the construction of the Charnwood Forest Branch railway line serving both Whitwick Colliery and the Hermitage Brick and Terra Cotta Works. Residential development within Coalville had expanded north of the London Road, including Oxford Street and a new recreation ground at The Park. Within Whitwick some of the ribbon development along Hermitage Road and Silver Street had taken place comprising both

Victorian/Edwardian villas and terraces, some of which included commercial businesses, e.g. a 'hosiery manufactory'.

- 4.14 By 1931-1932 (see Figure 07) a further mineral railway had been constructed to the south of Area A running from the established railway line to the east toward Pedlar Tor Quarry. Development had also taken place to the south of Area A along Broom Leys Road and Meadow Lane in the form of detached and semi-detached houses fronting the road with longer rear gardens. Within Whitwick an Elastic Web Manufacturing factory had been built opposite the cemetery together with further terrace housing along Church Lane to the north of Area B. Within Coalville, there had been further development by this time, e.g. Bakewell Street.
- 4.15 By 1955 (see Figure 08) the first estate development, now forming Sharpley Avenue, was present together with a number of other local authority housing schemes within Whitwick, including locations at both George Street and Hall Lane. By the 1950s many of the previously vacant plots along Hermitage Road had also been infilled to at least one side of the road by either single depth plot or shorter cul-de-sacs e.g. Grove Road. To the south of Area A further infill had also occurred along Broom Leys Road in the intervening years
- 4.16 In the years from 1955 and leading up to 1992-1993 (see Figure 09) there had been extensive development and redevelopment around much of the AoS. Whitwick Colliery reached its peak in 1969/1970 but was closed in the 1980s and redeveloped for Whitwick Business Park. The Brick and Tile Works to the Northern edge of Coalville was also redeveloped for a new Industrial estate off Comet Way and Vulcan Way. The Hermitage Brick and Tile works were also redeveloped forming the core of the Hermitage Recreation Ground. During the same time period the railway running close to the edge of Area A and through Area B was dismantled and Stevenson Way/A511 relief road for Coalville was constructed, which now forms the built edge of Coalville to the east. To the east of Area A extensive residential development took place along Hall Road extending to the south-east edge of Whitwick parish (the line of the mineral railway). Further, infill residential development took place within Whitwick village and along Hermitage Road, Church Lane and Thornborough Road, providing the almost continuous enclosure of development around the AoS that is present today. From the 1950s there was also a degree of field amalgamation and enlargement. This occurred both within Area A and perhaps more notably within Area B with the loss of a number of field boundaries, including many of the distinctive narrow strip fields on the northern side of the valley.

Character of settlements

- 4.17 Coalville and Whitwick both form part of what the adopted local plan refers to as the Coalville Urban Area. Coalville is the largest settlement in NWLDC. The town grew rapidly in the 19th century as a mining and manufacturing town and is seen to be a product of the Industrial Revolution in Leicestershire. The original industries have now ceased and the town contains a number of second generation industrial

sites on the site of former collieries and manufacturing plants. The town centre is focused around the original town with the core of the area being designated a Conservation Area. The landmark building is the clock tower in Memorial Square. Much of the housing stock in the town centre comprises Victorian and early 20th century brick terraces. The town boundary follows the current alignment of the A511 adjacent to the AoS up to the southern extent where it then follows the line of the disused mineral railway/cycleway (see Figure03). Land to the south-east of the Coalville town boundary is largely within the suburb of Greenhill which expanded from the first part of the 20th century along Broom Leys Road, Greenhill Road, Blackwood Road and Meadow Lane and with progressive infill mainly in the second part of the 20th century. The built character of this area is of a lower density and well vegetated appearance. The land now occupied by Broom Leys Farm (Units 1 and 2 in the AoS) is the only undeveloped part of Coalville in this location.

- 4.18 Whitwick is a settlement that has spread considerably within its parish boundary over the centuries which also includes New Swannington. The population is c 8,600 (2011). The village was recorded in the Domesday Book and has a site (but not visible remains) of a motte and bailey castle now designated a Scheduled Monument. The historic core of the village is clustered around Market Place (where a thriving weekly market and annual fair was held), Vicarage Street and Castle Street. The industrial changes from the 19th and 20th century brought about a major expansion and change to the settlement. Much of the housing stock from the 19th century comprises brick terraces along the network of connecting lanes. The early and mid-20th century brought a considerable sub-urban expansion. However, by the late 20th century the network of suitable and available housing land (excluding the AoS) was largely developed which means that the current urban form around the AoS includes very few developments or change over the last 25 years. Furthermore, the linking roads and in particular Hermitage Road and Church Lane are narrow with close frontage development and on road parking creating a congested feel. Other linking roads e.g. Hall Lane and Thornborough Road have building lines set further back and are more sub-urban in character and appearance. More modern development has taken place within Whitwick further to the north, but these areas are set apart from the AoS.

Distance between settlements

- 4.19 The typical distances across the two parts of the AoS are shown on Figure 04. Area A to the south extends to approximately 1300m north-west to south-east and 940m from north-east to the south-west. The smaller valley Area B to the north varies between 520m to 350m in width and with a length along the valley of 1180m.

Key views into and from the study area

- 4.20 There are a number of views within and into the study area as shown on Figure 04. A number of identified key or representative views are described below, including where relevant the unit numbers as shown on Figure 12 and described separately within Appendix 02. Views include:

-
- A. A range of views south from the cycleway which runs along the line of the dismantled mineral railway. There are open views from the cycleway over Unit 1. The views are restricted to within Unit 1 and the adjacent development along Broom Leys Road and Coalville Community Hospital but provide an accessible view over the open landscape.
- B. Elevated panoramic views to the north-east and south-east from the cycleway/Footpath 06 which crosses the A511/Stevenson Way. The views include the undeveloped foreground (Units 5 and 8 to the north-east and Unit 1 to the south-east) but also include distant views beyond the AoS up towards the wooded skylines of Forest Rock Wood to the north-east and Bardon Hill to the south-east. These views allow a direct connection with the wider landscape of the Charnwood Forest beyond the AoS.
- C- F. These locations represent the wide-open views from within and across Units 5 and 8 within the core of the AoS. The views reflect the open character of the agricultural landscape to the foreground and middle distance being typically bounded by clipped hedgerows. Many of the views contain views of residential development within Whitwick on the horizon.
- G-H. These locations represent notable public views from within the 1960s to 1970s residential development along Hall Lane. Viewpoint G is a framed view from Tiverton Avenue across the AoS, while Viewpoint H is a further framed view out to the arable landscape when travelling along Hall Lane.
- I. Viewpoint I represents a section of Hall Lane, with residential development only occurring on the east side of the road allowing for open public views directly into the AoS.
- J-K. These viewpoints are from slightly elevated locations from Footpath 04 looking south (J) and south-east (K) over the open character of the AoS. Viewpoint J provides a wide panoramic view from Coalville round to Bardon Hill. It is noted that the foreground has recently been planted with native woodland (Unit 9) and this view will become reduced as the planting establishes. Viewpoint K currently is over arable fields, with the development along Hall Lane relatively prominent in the background.
- L. This viewpoint represents the view from the amenity area to the south-east of Hermitage Road (Unit 12) where there are views both over the AoS and also towards the higher wooded skyline of Bardon Hill in the distance.
- M. This viewpoint represents one of the main public approaches into Hermitage Recreation Ground looking across the Grace Dieu Brook valley and the diverse character of the northern section of the AoS. This includes the ornamental fishing lake, various recreational facilities and the sloping agricultural land to the north-west.

- N. This viewpoint represents views from Bridle Road (Bridleway 08). These include both framed views along the Green Lane and also wider views at a field gate looking south-east across the agricultural slopes and Grace Dieu Brook valley and to the well vegetated slopes within the Hermitage Road Recreation Ground. There are also distant views across and beyond the AoS to the wooded skyline south-east but less so to the south.
 - O. This viewpoint illustrates the more open views from the arable fields on the northern slopes of the valley with the facilities, and blocks of vegetation associated with the Hermitage Recreation Ground being present on the southern valley slopes.
 - P. This viewpoint represents views, both within the Whitwick Cemetery and along Footpath 09. This is a view along the line of the valley with a mix of land uses, including paddocks, arable and woodland, with distant views of some of the larger commercial buildings within Coalville being present amongst woodland planting near and beyond the A511.
 - R. This viewpoint is from the A511 and provides a framed view through the roadside vegetation into the former municipal golf course.
- 4.21 Figure 04 also illustrates a number of other more restricted views into the AoS. These typically occur where there is some public access in the vicinity, but the presence of hedgerows or narrow entry points along rights of way restrict the views into and appreciation of the AoS that lies beyond and behind.

5 SUMMARY OF LAND UNITS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AOS

5.1 The study area was assessed, and 23 land units were identified (as shown on Figure 12) based on common characteristics. The individual returns for each unit are provided in Appendix 02. The main points arising from the assessment of the units are:

Area A – south-east

- a. Eight land units were identified as making a 'Primary' contribution to the openness between the surrounding settlements in Area A. These are Units 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 13.
- b. Units 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 13 form the majority of the open agricultural/woodland character and together also comprise the core of the landscape that separates Coalville from Whitwick. These units relate strongly to each other. Any development in these areas would physically and perceptually significantly erode the open characteristics of the AoS and the separation the landscape provides between Coalville and Whitwick.
- c. Units 6, 7 and 13 also provide strong visual relationships between the open land and the adjacent urban areas and hence any new development in these locations would notably reduce the appreciation of the open character and reduce the physical and visual separation between the settlements.
- d. Development to the south-west of Area A along the A511, including Units 5 and 8, would be physically and visually isolated from Whitwick. Furthermore, development in this location would breach the strong containing line of the A511 corridor and lack integration with the settlement of Coalville.
- e. Unit 4 comprises the grounds of Coalville Rugby Club where the land use is primarily open in character as it used for sports pitches. Despite this open internal character, the unit is contained from wider views by belts of mature and semi-mature tree planting to the perimeter. However, the unit still comprises a significant part of the overall AoS between Whitwick and Coalville. Development within the unit would notably erode the sense of separation and lead towards coalescence.
- f. Units 9 and 10 combine to form a locally elevated area of land to the south of Whitwick and which physically and visually separates the village from the open character of the AoS to the south. This land is sensitive to built development as it would notably weaken the existing sense of separation.
- g. Units 9 and 13 have recently largely been planted and their character is in a state of transition. Over time the woodland is likely to mature to form notable features within the AoS. These units are therefore unlikely to be suitable for future development.

-
- h. Four land units in Area A were assessed as making a 'Secondary' contribution to the openness of the land within the defined AoS. These are Units 1, 2, 12 and 14.
 - i. Unit 1 makes an important contribution to the southern part of the AoS. However, this separation is essentially between different parts of the settlement of Coalville, including that fronting Broom Leys Road, A511 and Coalville Community Hospital rather than separating Coalville from Whitwick. The dense vegetation north of the cycleway screens the unit from the majority of the AoS to the north and from any direct connections with Whitwick. Unit 2 is a relatively small area and is visually contained by vegetation but there is a functional link with Unit 1 being part of the same farm. Built development within Units 1 and 2 is likely to have a significant effect on the open character of this part of the AoS and the contribution the land makes to the undeveloped edge of Coalville and most notably as perceived from the recreational route to the north. However, development would have a relatively limited effect on the remainder of the AoS to the north due to the level topography and intervening vegetation in Units 3, 4 and 5.
 - j. Unit 12 comprises part of an accessible amenity area related to Whitwick with the remainder of the open space to the north-west being outside the AoS although functionally being strongly related. The unit includes areas of secondary woodland, which partially contain the influence of adjacent built form. There are also opportunities for wide-ranging views to the south over the AoS. The land unit is therefore considered to make a Secondary contribution and should be safeguarded from further built development. The AoS should be extended in this location to include all of the existing open space up to Hermitage Road.
 - k. Unit 14 comprises the majority of a single field to the north-west of Area A. The unit is relatively contained physically and visually by roadside trees and or hedges. The northern section of the field fronting Hermitage Road is currently excluded from the AoS. Ideally this strip of land closest to Hermitage road area should be incorporated into the AoS to reinforce the separation of settlements. However, residential development has been permitted on this area. In the event that this permission is not implemented then consideration should be given to extending the AoS to include this area. If this area was to be included in the AoS then the land unit should be reclassified as making a Primary contribution due to its undeveloped gateway location. However, if an addition to the AoS up to Hermitage Road is not agreed then Unit 14 (as currently identified) remains an important component of the AoS (albeit of a secondary nature) not least because of its location on the border between Coalville and Whitwick.
 - l. Two units are assessed as being making an 'Incidental' contribution to the openness of the AoS. These are units 3 and 11. Both units comprise recreational land uses and are more closely associated with the adjacent residential areas and visually contained from a wider relationship with the AoS.

- m. Unit 3 relates to the housing on Sharpley Avenue and is well screened from the rest of the AoS by established woodland and scrub.
- n. Unit 11 supports allotments and amenity grassland and is related to Hall Lane and George Street being visually detached from the remainder of the AoS separated by established tree belts to the south-east and south-west.

Area B – north-west

- o. Three land units were assessed as making a 'Primary' contribution to the openness between the surrounding settlement in Area B. These are Units 15, 16 and 17.
- p. Units 15, 16 and 17 comprise the majority of the open agricultural/recreational character in Area B and together form the core of the landscape that separates Coalville from Whitwick and also the two linear parts of Whitwick along Hermitage Road and Church Lane /Thornborough Road. The land use of Units 15 and 17 are quite different but represent opposite sides of the same valley feature that visually draws the character together. The vegetation in both Units 15 and 16 help to screen views of the adjacent urban areas and the A511 corridor. The western part of Unit 16 is more physically and visually contained from Units 15 and 17 and adjacent settlement by landform and established copses within and to the perimeter of the former golf course. The open agricultural landscape within Unit 17 allows for some cross-valley views to the south-east within and beyond the AoS.
- q. Four units were assessed as making a 'Secondary' contribution to the openness of the land within Area B of the AoS. These are Units 20, 21, 22 and 23.
- r. Unit 20 is a remnant linear strip field that runs down the valley slopes. It is visually well enclosed by vegetation with footpaths crossing the land. The narrow form and isolation of the unit makes it unsuitable for development.
- s. Units 21 and 22 to the north-east are also of a smaller scale and physically detached from the core units of Area B (Units 15, 16 and 17). Unit 21 comprises an area of grazing and Unit 22 a cemetery. Both units are closely related to the edge of Whitwick along Church Lane and provide an important part of the separation between two areas of existing development within Whitwick. There are views from the public footpath and within the cemetery to the south-west across the undeveloped character of the AoS with distant glimpses to the industrial development on the edge of Coalville. Any development within the cemetery is highly unlikely due to its current use. Development within Unit 21 is also less suited and would erode the smaller scale urban fringe character of this part of the AoS.

- t. Unit 23 forms part of the well vegetated corridor of the Sustrans Route along the former railway line and Grace Dieu Brook and should be managed in its existing character.
 - u. Two land units 18 and 19 are assessed as making an 'Incidental' contribution to the openness of the AoS.
 - v. Unit 18 comprises allotments and extended garden plots. The landform slopes to the north and away from the main valley. This topographical pattern in association with established tree belts and hedges to the perimeter contain the unit from wider views. In this respect the unit makes a more limited contribution to the AoS. If development on the unit was considered to be acceptable it would have to be set back from the ridgeline and belts of established vegetation retained to restrict adverse effects on the open valley landscape to the south.
 - w. Unit 19 is also located on land that slopes north and towards the housing on Church Lane/Thornborough Road and is equally well contained by mature hedges. In this respect the unit also makes a limited contribution to the AoS. Any potential development should be sensitive to the adjacent housing.
 - x. Two locations within Area B were identified (as shown on Figure 12) within the periphery of the AoS where small residential developments have taken place. These include the residential close of properties at Lakeside View adjacent to Unit 15 and the triangular area north of Unit 21 which includes one dwelling. It is recommended that these areas should be omitted from the AoS and the boundary redrawn to exclude them.
- 5.2 Overall the AoS designation defines two important areas of land (Area A and Area B) separating Coalville and Whitwick. The boundary of the AoS identified in the adopted Local Plan is considered to be appropriate save for the exclusion of two small areas and two minor extensions to Units 12 and 14 as shown on Figure 13.
- 5.3 All the individual land units assessed as forming a 'Primary' Contribution to the AoS are considered to be essential to retaining the physical and visual separation between the settlements and their distinct identity. However, it is recommended that all units assessed as making a 'Primary' or 'Secondary' contribution should be retained within the AoS to prevent the erosion of the AoS as a whole.
- 5.4 The units identified as 'Incidental' are considered to be of more limited importance in maintaining separation, preventing coalescence and supporting the identity of settlements. However, it is recommended that the Incidental units are still retained within the AoS unless and until there is a demonstrable need for development to take place within the AoS that cannot be accommodated elsewhere within the authority. In these circumstances it is recommended that the AoS boundary could

be adjusted to exclude Units 3, 11, 18 and 19 on a case by case basis without a loss in integrity of the AoS.

- 5.5 The most sensitive locations are those where there are physical and/or visual links into, within and across the AoS from public locations on roads and rights of way where the loss of connection to the open landscape would be most harmful. These locations include where: Unit 7 fronts Hall Lane, from Unit 12 (in association with the open space fronting Hermitage Road) and from the various footpaths and bridleways that pass through the AoS.
- 5.6 Public access on rights of way is a beneficial feature through much of the AoS and in particular through much of Area B. Access is more limited through the core to Area A between Hall Road and Green Lane. Improvements to these links would be of benefit to the community.
- 5.7 Landscape enhancements have taken place within the AoS in the last few years including Units 9 and 13 where new woodland have been planted as part of the National Forest. These initiatives will help to reduce the visual impact of existing built development to the edge of the AoS e.g. by Unit 13, restricting views of housing along Hermitage Road. There is scope for further similar enhancements within the AoS.
- 5.8 Any development which is considered to be acceptable, whether a compatible land use for the AoS (as defined in Policy En5) or not, should include comprehensive mitigation as part of any consent to maintain the functionality of the remainder of the AoS. This would need to demonstrate the mitigation would be deliverable and able to prevent weakening the physical or perceived sense of separation which may otherwise lead towards coalescence.

Area of Separation Study

Coalville Urban Area

on behalf of

North West Leicestershire District Council

Appendix 1 - Land Unit Criteria

July 2019

Appendix 01

Table A – Area of Separation Criteria

NB. Where a circumstance does not fit clearly within one category (A – E) more than one may be shaded on the profile table to show the range with the one most appropriate ticked

Criteria	Factors to measure criteria (where A makes the least contribution and E makes the most contribution to the Area of Separation)
Physical Criteria	
Topography	A= Landform strongly reinforces connectivity between settlements e.g. opposite steep valley slopes B= Landform reinforces connectivity between settlements C= Landform plays a neutral role in separation – flat/minimal variation in levels D= Rolling /undulating landform provides some separation between settlements E= Landform provides full separation between settlements e.g. ridge
Vegetation	A= Largely open with minimal vegetation B= Limited enclosure by poor/low hedges with few or no trees C= Moderately enclosed by vegetation – medium scale clipped hedges and hedgerow trees, small woodlands, fragmented shelterbelts D= Semi-enclosed by mature vegetation - tall hedges, tree-belts or woodland E= Dense pattern of mature vegetation providing enclosure– tall hedges, tree-belts or woodland
Perceptual criteria	
Public visibility	A= Well contained from public views and indication of minimal usage B= Generally well-contained from public views and or indication of limited usage C= Partially contained from public views with indication of moderate usage D= Moderately open to public views with indication of moderate/high usage E= Very open to public views with indication of high usage
Private views	A= Well-contained from private views on the edge of settlements B= Generally well contained from private views on the edge of settlements C= Partially contained from private views on the edge of settlements D= Moderately open to private views on the edge of settlements E= Very open to a number of private views on the edge of settlements
Contribution to the character and setting of settlements	A= Unit makes a very limited contribution to the character of the adjacent settlement/s B= Unit makes a limited contribution to the character of the adjacent settlement/s C= Unit makes moderate contribution to the character of the adjacent settlement/s D= Unit makes notable contribution to the character of the adjacent settlement/s E= Unit makes major contribution to the character of the adjacent settlement/s
Landscape Linkage	A= Unit is isolated from other units B= Unit has limited physical or visual linkage to other units C= Unit has moderate physical or visual linkage to other units D= Unit has moderately strong physical or visual linkage to other units E= Units has strong physical or visual linkage to other units

Appendix 01

Table A – Area of Separation Criteria

Criteria	Factors to measure criteria (where A makes the least contribution and E makes the most contribution to the Area of Separation)
Value Criteria	
Scenic Quality	A= Unit is a low scenic value with a relatively high number of detractors B= Unit is of moderate to low scenic value with a moderate number of detractors C= Unit is of moderate scenic value with few detractors D= Unit is of moderate to high scenic value E= Unit is of high scenic value
Recreational Value	A= Unit has no specific recreational value e.g. no facilities, access or rights-of-way B= Units has a moderate to low recreational value with limited facilities C= Unit has a moderate recreational value D= Unit has a moderate to high recreational value E= Unit as a high recreational value with a number of facilities and/or evidence of high use

Area of Separation Study

Coalville Urban Area

on behalf of

North West Leicestershire District Council

Appendix 2 - Land Unit Returns

July 2019

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 1**

Size = 11.48 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises the majority of Broomleys Farm to the south of the dismantled railway and north of the properties fronting Broom Leys Road. The unit includes the recreational route on the line of the former railway due to its strong visual relationship with the rest of the unit. The unit is bounded to the east by Coalville Community Hospital and to the west by Unit 2, which also forms part of Broomleys Farm. The land-use comprises horse paddocks and a small working farm that also supports a livery business. The land unit has been identified based on its common characteristics and relatively open and unified character.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography			√		
	Vegetation			√		
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)				√	
	Private Views			√		
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements			√		
	Landscape linkage		√			
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value			√		

Commentary on profile

The unit occupies an area of gently undulating ground which slopes from east to west between approximately 162 and 159m AOD. The land slopes at typically 1 in 100 and there is a localised area of higher ground to the north east of the unit, which provides some limited containment from some viewpoints. The field units are divided by a combination of established hedgerows, but mainly post and rail fences of poor appearance. There is one internal, hedgerow that runs north-south and contains a number of mature trees which provides some localised visual and physical separation. Despite the general lack of notable internal subdivision, there is a strong hedgerow to the west of the unit on the boundary with Unit 2 and also a substantive area of mature vegetation to and beyond the northern boundary following the line of the former mineral railway which now forms a recreational route. To the southern boundary there are intermittent sections of vegetation to the rear gardens of the properties on Broom Leys Road. Public visibility is principally from views on the recreational route that runs to the north on the former mineral railway from where there are open views across the unit. Glimpsed views are also present from Footpath 06. Private views are more limited and relate to the individual houses that back onto the site to the south and also views from Coalville Community Hospital to the east which is relatively elevated to the site.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

It is considered that the land unit forms an important part of the retained physical gap and separation between the urban area of Coalville west of the A511 and the suburban development of Broom Leys Road/Greenhill to the south and east. The impression provided by the unit is still one of open undeveloped land extending between these two distinct parts of the built area despite both technically being within Coalville.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Contribution to the identity of settlements

It is considered that the unit makes no material contribution to the character of Whitwick due to the enclosure by vegetation to the north. However, the unit makes a notable contribution to the landscape setting of the Broom Leys Road area of Coalville. There are some continuous open views southwards from the recreational route that follows the northern boundary and also from the overbridge across the A511 extending first over the land unit, then to the well-vegetated residential area of Greenhill and eventually up towards Bardon Hill. In these views the open aspect across the unit combined with the sylvan character around Greenhill helps to maintain a mature landscape setting for the edge of the settlement. When viewed from Broom Leys Road while there are a few filtered and brief glimpses into the unit there are no notable views due to the presence of largely continuous ribbon development along the road.

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

The unit makes a notable contribution to the open character of the undeveloped land to the south of the disused mineral railway and up to the edge of the development on Broom Leys Road. There are strong links with the adjacent Unit 2 to the west being part of the same farm. However, visual and perceptual links to other units to the north are generally precluded by the density of intervening vegetation. In this respect Units 1 and 2 have an important relationship to Coalville but a reduced relationship with Whitwick.

Landscape value

The unit is considered to be of moderate scenic value due to the relatively open views across paddocks and with established hedges and tree groups to sections of the perimeter and one internal hedgerow. The majority of the land unit provides no public recreational use although the recreational route to the northern boundary provides a well-used link between Coalville and Whitwick/Greenhill. The livery stables and horse paddocks provide private recreational use. As result the recreational value is considered to be moderate.

Overall contribution to the separation of settlements and avoidance of coalescence

Primary

Secondary ✓

Incidental

The land unit makes an important contribution to the open undeveloped and rural fringe character to the edge of Coalville including the Broom Leys Road and Greenhill areas. However, the unit makes a more limited contribution the separation of Coalville from Whitwick and for this reason it is assessed as making a Secondary contribution to the Area of Separation.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 2**

Size = 1.98 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18 and 26/10/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises the single triangular shaped and most westerly field associated with Broomleys Farm located east of A511 Stephenson Way and north of the properties fronting Broom Leys Road and sharing its third boundary with Unit 1. The land-use is currently laid to horse pasture while also used for a mix of other seasonal activities.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography			√		
	Vegetation				√	
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)			√		
	Private Views			√		
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements		√			
	Landscape linkage		√			
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value		√			

Commentary on profile

The topography is broadly flat ranging by 2m from 158 -160m AOD. The unit is bounded by vegetation to the three sides. There is a mature hedgerow with hedgerow trees to the western boundary with the A511 and also strong hedgerow with individual trees to much of the eastern boundary adjacent to Unit 1. The southern boundary comprises a number of residential properties that back onto the land which include long gardens and a number of established trees and areas of shrubbery. As a result, the unit feels well enclosed. Footpath 06 runs along the eastern boundary of the unit providing open views throughout. There are intermittent private views from the residential properties to the southern boundary, at the access point from Broom Leys Farm and filtered views in the winter months from the A511.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit is a relatively small parcel of land which makes a small contribution towards the physical separation between settlements.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

Due to the size of the unit and its location it makes a modest contribution towards the identity of settlements. The core of Coalville is located to the west of the A511 and the unit makes no noteworthy contribution this part of the town. However, there is a limited contribution to the properties to the rear of Broom Leys Road which is appreciated from the public footpath which passes through the unit.

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

There are some limited links with Unit 1 to the east but minimal other linkage to any other units within the Area of Separation. Elevated views from the A511 cycleway overbridge are relatively restricted over this triangular field by dense hedges and tree cover.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 3**

Size = 2.85 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises the area of open space known as Sharpley Avenue Playing Fields. The north-west boundary is marked by the line of the dismantled mineral railway, the eastern boundary by the housing on Sharpley Avenue and to the south by the rear of Coalville Community Hospital and houses on Broom Leys Road/Meadow Lane. The land-use comprises a public amenity area which contains a play area, skateboard park, surface footpaths, amenity grass areas and established secondary woodland.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography			√		
	Vegetation				√	
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)					√
	Private Views				√	
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements		√			
	Landscape linkage	√				
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value				√	

Commentary on profile

The landform is broadly level ranging from 165-168m AOD. The unit is very well enclosed by established secondary vegetation to the south, west and north west boundaries. The woodland areas to the south of the site extend to circa 100m in depth with established vegetation occupying approximately one third of the unit in total. There is vegetation to the northern boundary with Unit 4 comprising areas of dense scrub and establishing trees. The site is fully open to public views as it forms part of a community open space facility. Footpath 019A which runs from Broom Leys up to Perran Avenue also passes through the unit. However, due to the strong level of vegetative containment to the north and west there are no views from outside to the north or west within the adjacent parts of the Area of Separation. There are private views from the properties on Sharpley Avenue to the north-east of the unit where close boarded timber fencing to rear gardens marks the boundary. Most of the open views from the adjacent housing are from first floor windows.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit occupies a relatively small area directly adjacent to Sharpley Avenue and at 180m in width comprises only a small part of the physical separation between existing settlements.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The unit makes a contribution to the immediate character of Sharpley Avenue. However, this relationship is restricted as the properties back onto the open space with access provided via a short length of roadway with no frontage development. This arrangement of existing built form tends to make the area feel tucked away. The unit makes no notable contribution to the character and identity of Coalville or Whitwick and only a locally and limited contribution to the local area of Greenhill.

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

The unit makes a limited contribution to the open character of the Area of Separation with few links to adjacent Unit 4 which is largely separated by established vegetation.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Landscape value

The unit is not affected by any landscape designation but is considered to be of moderate scenic value due to the relatively open views across the amenity areas and surrounding established woodland. The land unit is fully accessible and provides a valuable public facility with play facilities and informal recreation opportunities as well as the link between Coalville and Whitwick/Greenhill along the line of the disused railway. As result the recreational value is considered to be high.

Overall contribution of the Land Unit to the separation of settlements and avoidance of coalescence

= Primary Secondary **Incidental ✓**

While the land unit is an area of public open space it makes a limited contribution to the separation of Coalville from Whitwick due to its small scale, land use and the physical containment and separation from adjacent land units. For these reasons it is assessed as making an Incidental contribution to the Area of Separation.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Land Unit No = 4

Size = 3.73Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises the Memorial Ground home to Coalville Rugby Football Club. The land is bounded to the south by the line of the dismantled railway, to the east by the edge of Hall Lane/Whitwick and to the north and west by two established field boundaries within the core of the Area of Separation. The grounds contain playing fields accommodating four rugby pitches with the first-team pitch located closest to the clubhouse to the east of the unit. There are areas of car parking and hard standing closer to the eastern boundary and these areas are currently used for car boot sales. A tree-lined access track leads to the grounds from Hall Lane, although this lies outside the Area of Separation.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography			√		
	Vegetation					√
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)		√			
	Private Views	√				
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements		√			
	Landscape linkage		√			
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality		√			
	Recreational Value				√	

Commentary on profile

The landform falls gently from east to west ranging from a height of circa 167m AOD down to the lowest part the site on the southern boundary at circa 160m AOD. There is also a surface water drainage pond to the lower lying part of the site to the south which drains the sports pitches and provides some wildlife interest. The pitches and parking areas are subdivided by two internal hedgerows which formed part of the historic hedgerow pattern present on the 1887-88 OS map. The perimeter of the unit has been planted with native trees and shrubs to form semi-mature perimeter belts approximately 15 to 20m in depth around the whole of the site. These serve to visually contain the presence of the sports pitches from most perimeter views. There are some glimpsed views from the Units 1 and 3 to the south. In addition, there are local views at the site access point from Footpath 019A. There are no private views from houses to the rugby club due to the containment provide by vegetation. There are floodlights around the first-team pitch would bring some localised visual intrusion when in use.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit extends to approximately 600m at its maximum distance from east to west which is approximately three quarters of the distance of the gap between Coalville/A511 and Whitwick. Therefore, the unit makes a significant contribution towards the physical separation between these two settlements.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

Due to the way in which the rugby club grounds are contained by established vegetation the land use makes a limited contribution to the identity and character of Whitwick. The presence of the perimeter and internal vegetation means that residents from Hall Lane, Whitwick and users of the rights of way in the vicinity are not visually aware of the sportsground apart from when the floodlights are in use.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

The unit lies adjacent to Units 1, 3, 5, 6 and 8. However, there is limited intervisibility between the units due to the containing character formed by the enclosing vegetation. The built form of the pavilion is also relatively well contained with only the taller floodlights visible above the surrounding tree cover.

Landscape value

Due to the primary character of the unit being a formal sports facility and the associated functional built forms, floodlights and sport pitches the unit it is considered to have a moderate to low scenic value. However, this is partially offset by the retained vegetation both to the perimeters and internally and the water feature. The grounds are a private facility for users of the club with no public access. However, the grounds are clearly well used by its patrons and are therefore of moderate to high recreational value.

Overall contribution of the Land Unit to the separation of settlements and avoidance of coalescence

= **Primary** ✓ Secondary Incidental

The land unit is well contained by the vegetation around the perimeter which visually separates it from the adjacent units. While the existing land use exerts a limited effect on the surrounding area the unit still compromises a notable part of the overall Area of Separation between Whitwick and Coalville. For these reasons it is assessed as making a Primary contribution to the Area of Separation.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 5**

Size = 6.4 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18 and 26/10/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises the buildings at Glebe Farm and the three areas of grazing associated with the farm. The unit is bounded by the A511 to the west, the line of the former dismantled railway to the south and by arable fields to the north and east. The land use comprises a number of horse-grazed paddocks. A number of agricultural buildings are located alongside the farm, including the Glebe Von Wood Kennels.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography			√		
	Vegetation			√		
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)				√	
	Private Views		√			
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements		√			
	Landscape linkage			√		
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality		√			
	Recreational Value			√		

Commentary on profile

The landform is very gently sloping from circa 159m AOD in the south to 155m AOD in the north with a typical gradient of circa 1 in 100. Vegetation to the western boundary with the A511 comprises a relatively strong hedgerow and tree line. Retained hedgerows within and around the unit are mainly native and in a moderate condition, but with some intermittent sections and lengths of unsympathetic conifers closer to Glebe Farm buildings. The southern boundary is marked by dense vegetation associated with the cycleway overbridge and the line of disused railway. Public views of the land unit are clearly available from two rights of way across the site; Footpath 03 that runs from Coalville to Green Lane and Footpath 06 that runs parallel with the A511. There are also panoramic elevated views from the A511 overbridge over Unit 5 and then further across the Area of Separation up to the higher ground within Charnwood Forest. There are also filtered views from the A511 in the winter months. The only private views of the unit are from Glebe Farm and the neighbouring cottages on Green Lane.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit forms the western part of Area A extending up to 200m in depth which equates to about a quarter of the distance between Coalville/A511 and properties off Hall Lane within Whitwick to the east. The Stephenson Way/A511 corridor also forms a notable physical boundary between Coalville and the Area of Separation.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The section of Coalville to the west of the A511 comprises the Long Lane development (built around the turn of the 21st century) and Whitwick Business Park (although not in Whitwick) on Stenson Road. The character and form of both developments is inward looking backing onto the A511, which forms an additional barrier to Stephenson Way and the Area of Separation to the east. The land unit forms part of the wider open agricultural area that occupies the majority of Area A. The paddocks are relatively contained in views from the east of the Area of Separation. However, the appreciation of the openness is immediately gained from

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

the rights of way within the unit after leaving Coalville and crossing the A511. In this respect the unit and the associated vegetation contribute to providing a rural and open character close to the edge of the town.

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

The unit has strong links with Unit 8, with which together forms a substantial part of the large scale open rural character in the centre of the Area A of the Area of Separation and to a lesser extent with Units 1, 2 and 4 which are more contained by vegetation.

Landscape value

The unit is considered to be of moderate to low scenic quality due to the presence of a number of detractors including the functional agricultural buildings/kennels at Glebe Farm and relatively poor condition of some of the boundary fences and hedges. The existing rights of way provide some recreational value and links between Coalville and Whitwick. As a result, the recreational value is considered to be moderate.

Overall contribution of the Land Unit to the separation of settlements and avoidance of coalescence

= **Primary** ✓ Secondary Incidental

The unit is in a slightly degraded condition but makes an important contribution to the functionality of the Area of Separation in combination with Unit 8. The unit is also clearly distinct from Coalville both physically and in terms of land use. For these reasons the unit is assessed as making a Primary contribution to the Area of Separation.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Land Unit No = 6

Size = 13.81 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises three arable fields to the west of the established residential development off Hall Lane including Tiverton Avenue and Mickleden Green. The southern boundary is formed by the perimeter of Coalville Rugby club while the western boundary is marked by an established hedgerow.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography			√		
	Vegetation		√			
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)		√			
	Private Views				√	
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements			√		
	Landscape linkage					√
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value	√				

Commentary on profile

Landform gently falls from east to west from approximately 167m AOD to 158m AOD. The modest fall in landform would suggest there would be views across the Area Separation to the west. However, there are limited opportunities for public views to the west due to the extent of private housing that backs on the unit, subtle changes in landform and presence of hedgerows. The three fields (and formerly 5 fields from at least 1955) are internally marked by the established clipped hedgerows. Semi-mature vegetation forms a strong physical and visual boundary to the south adjacent to the Coalville Rugby club while to the rear of the residential properties on Tiverton Avenue and Stainsdale Green there is no notable boundary vegetation, which makes the housing a prominent and unsympathetic feature both at close quarters and also from greater distances to the west. There are limited public views of the land unit with the main opportunity being along Tiverton Avenue, where a cycle route runs close to the corner of the unit, although the internal hedgerows contain most views to within the first field. Views back from Green Lane are also partly filtered by the slightly rising ground and the boundary hedgerows.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit occupies a distance of up to 400m which comprises approximately half the width of the Area of Separation from east to west between Tiverton Avenue and the A511/Coalville. In this respect the unit comprises an important part of the physical separation between Whitwick and Coalville which is emphasised by the open character of the Area of Separation at this point.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The unit demonstrates an open rural character which extends directly up to the relatively harsh residential development on Tiverton Avenue and Stainsdale Green. This interface provides an attractive outlook from the residential areas of Whitwick, but the rural character is diminished by the lack of any notable softening at the unit's eastern boundary. The unit makes a limited contribution to the identity and setting of Coalville.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

The unit has strong links with Units 7 and 8, with which this unit forms a core part of the large scale open rural character in the centre of Area A of the Area of Separation. The links with Unit 4 is more limited due to the strong boundary vegetation to the south.

Landscape value

The unit is considered to be of moderate scenic quality with no internal detractors, although the housing backing onto the unit to the east is a detractor albeit located outside the unit. There are no recreational facilities or access within the unit and it is therefore considered to have no recreational value.

Overall contribution of the Land Unit to the separation of settlements and avoidance of coalescence

= **Primary** ✓ Secondary Incidental

The unit has an open rural character with strong visual and functional links to Units 7 and 8. Together they form a core part of the Area of Separation. The unit is therefore assessed as making a Primary contribution to the Area of Separation.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 7**

Size = 6.4 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises an area of arable land to the west of Hall Lane, Whitwick. The north-west and western boundaries are marked by established hedgerows. Land use comprises three arable fields.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography		√			
	Vegetation		√			
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)					√
	Private Views					√
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements			√		
	Landscape linkage				√	
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value	√				

Commentary on profile

The landform slopes in the form of a gentle bowl up from Hall Lane at its lowest point at circa 156m AOD to the west and north to 159m AOD. This local topography pattern in combination with the hedgerows to the south-west of the unit restricts views beyond the unit to the west. The unit is bounded by a mix of clipped hedges and tall hedges to each of the field units. The taller hedges are present along a section of Hall Lane north of Rosslyn Road and also to the north-west boundary adjacent to Unit 11. The southern section of Hall Lane to the south-east has a more open aspect with no hedging but intermittent trees within the highway verge. This open aspect from Hall Lane is distinctive in relation to the Area of Separation since it is the most open section of public road to the east, where there are public views into the open and undeveloped character of the Area of Separation and also across towards Coalville to the west. The views into the rural character of Unit 7 can be appreciated both when directly adjacent to the unit and also on the approach along Hall Lane (to the south-east) when travelling in a north-west direction. There are also a number of private views from houses fronting or adjacent Hall Lane which can also see into and across this unit.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit occupies circa 180m of the 980m of the width of the Area of Separation between Hall Lane and the A511/Coalville. In this respect the unit comprises an important part of the physical separation between Whitwick and Coalville but relatively less in distance terms in comparison to the adjacent Unit 6.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The unit provides an open rural character which extends directly up to Hall Lane, with a mix of tall hedges and a significant section of open frontage. This interface provides a unique (for the Area Separation) and attractive outlook from both a length of well used public road and residential areas to appreciate the rural character of the Area of Separation. The distinct identity of this part of Whitwick is reinforced by this arrangement area. The unit makes a limited contribution to the identity and setting of Coalville due to the distance, slightly rising intervening ground and presence of local hedgerows.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

The unit has strong links with Units 6, 8 and 9 with which together forms a core part of the large scale open rural character in the centre of the Area A of the Area of Separation. There is also a limited interface with Units 10 and 11 but these are largely separated by strong rows of mature vegetation to the north-west of the unit.

Landscape value

The unit is considered to be of moderate scenic quality with no internal detractors, although the housing fronting the unit along Hall Road is a local detractor albeit outside the unit. There are no recreational facilities or access within the unit and it is therefore considered to have no recreational value.

Overall contribution of the Land Unit to the separation of settlements and avoidance of coalescence

= Primary ✓ Secondary Incidental

The unit has an open rural character with strong visual and functional links to Units 6, 8 and 9. Together they form a core part of the Area of Separation. The open public aspect to Hall Lane is a key feature of the unit that helps to emphasise the rural character and distinct separation between Coalville and Whitwick. The unit is therefore assessed as making a Primary contribution to the Area of Separation.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 8**

Size = 33.56 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18 and 26/10/18

Land Unit Description

The Unit comprises an extensive area of open agricultural land to the centre of the Area of Separation. This extends from the A511 and boundary of Coalville in the west across Green Lane and towards Whitwick and Units 6 and 7 to the east. The land-use is all currently arable under a linseed crop, which could form part of a crop rotation process.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography			√		
	Vegetation		√			
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)				√	
	Private Views			√		
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements				√	
	Landscape linkage					√
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value		√			

Commentary on profile

The landform gently slopes from the east to west within the unit from approximately 158m to 151m AOD together with local undulations to the north following Green Lane in a minor valley. The vegetation pattern within the unit is formed by a number of established clipped hedgerows that follow the traditional field pattern of the area. Since the 1950s a number of the original hedgerows have been removed, although the broad structure largely remains. There are very few individual trees within the hedgerows which notably adds to the character. There are a pair of brick built semi-detached terrace style cottages (Forest View) located within the centre of the area on Green Lane. Public views of the unit are concentrated on locations along Green Lane/Footpath 03. However, due to the height of the hedgerow views are seasonally restricted to the field gates and open sections of the Lane. There are also views from a section of Footpath 06 which runs parallel and closer to the A511. In a number of locations there are expansive views over the unit and adjacent areas, and also further east and south up to the wooded higher ground associated with Charnwood Forest. This includes filtered views through hedgerows in the winter months along the A511. Private views either relate to those at the cottages on Green Lane within the unit or more distant views principally from properties to the edge of Whitwick e.g. along Hermitage Road and Hall Lane.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit comprises the single largest component of the Area of Separation extending approximately 800m across a 950m width of the land that separates Whitwick and Coalville/A511 between east and west. Therefore, the unit comprises a fundamental component of the Area of Separation.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The unit exhibits a large-scale rural character within the Area of Separation that helps to define the distinctiveness and separation of the settlements of Whitwick and Coalville from each other. The land associated with the unit and adjacent Units 5, 6, 7, 9, 13 and 14 up to the built edge create a rural character that is distinct from both the more urban character of Coalville and the extended industrial village character of Whitwick.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

The unit makes a marked contribution to the open character of the Area of Separation. This is due to both its size and relationship at the centre of Area A of the Area of Separation. There are strong links between adjacent units including Units 5, 6, 9 and 13.

Landscape value

The unit is considered to be of moderate scenic quality with no internal detractors, although the presence of more distant views to the elevated and wooded ground within the Charnwood Forest provide further beneficial features from certain viewpoints. Recreational facilities within the unit are restricted to the public rights of way and Green Lane which provide some access through the core of the Area of Separation. However, there are also areas with no public access (e.g. between Green Lane and Hall Lane) and the unit is therefore considered to have medium to low recreational value.

Overall contribution of the Land Unit to the separation of settlements and avoidance of coalescence

= **Primary** ✓ Secondary Incidental

The unit is the single largest unit by area and extent and located in the centre of the Area of Separation A. Its open character means it provides a critical component in the functionality of the Area of Separation. It also combines with a number of other adjacent units of similar open rural character. For these reasons the unit is assessed as making a Primary contribution to the Area of Separation.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Land Unit No = 9

Size = 5.99 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises an area of gently rising ground that has recently largely been planted with a mix of native trees and shrubs and areas of meadow as part of the National Forest. The area also contains a SuDS feature for surface water drainage adjacent to Green Lane. The unit is bounded by Green Lane to the west, arable land to the south-east and by grassland and arable land to the north and east within Units 7, 8 and 10.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography				√	
	Vegetation			√		
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)				√	
	Private Views	√				
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements			√		
	Landscape linkage				√	
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value			√		

Commentary on profile

The landform forms part of a local area of high ground which falls from circa 156m AOD at the north-east of the unit down to circa 149m AOD to the south west of the unit in the location of the SuDS. The single field (previously enlarged from two fields present in 1903) is bounded by the established native hedgerow to the perimeter. There are a few individual trees to the north and north-east perimeter and also a seasonal pond to the north-east corner. The unit has been largely planted with native trees and shrubs during the last three years. The plantation is fenced off from the public to benefit wildlife and conservation. The plantation forms part of the National Forest initiative and has been named after Thomas Ashford of Whitwick who was awarded the Victoria Cross for services of gallantry during the Anglo Afghan War in 1880. Other parts of the field have been sown to meadow grass. A substantive SuDS basin (130x40m) is present adjacent to Green Lane. Public views of the unit are visible from Footpath 04 which runs within the northern boundary of the unit. From this footpath there are currently open views to the south of the unit, over much of Area A of the Area of Separation, and with wide panoramic views beyond towards Coalville up to Bardon Hill and Charnwood Forest. There are also views to the unit from Green Lane, travelling northwards. Private views are generally from a distance and include the cottages at Forest View and properties along Hall Lane.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit is approximately 300m x 220m in size and occupies approximately a third of the distance between Hall Lane Whitwick and A511/Coalville.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The land unit is located on gently rising ground to the south of the closest properties along Green Lane and George Street, Whitwick. Despite the relatively modest rise in landform the topography and the associated hedgerows help to contain views towards and from Whitwick to the north. The young woodland planting will establish and mature to create a notable woodland feature which will add to the character of this part of the Area of Separation and further visually separate Whitwick from the open land to the south and west.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

This will also provide a reinforcement of character and connectivity with the areas of wooded higher ground within the Charnwood Forest to the east of Whitwick.

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

The unit is located within the agricultural landscape and contributes to the open character and sense of separation between Whitwick and Coalville and also between different parts of Whitwick. The existing character of the land unit links with adjacent Units 7, 8, 13, and 10.

Landscape value

The unit is considered to be of moderate scenic quality with no internal detractors, although the presence of more distant views to the elevated ground around Charnwood Forest provide beneficial outlooks from certain viewpoints. It is likely that these views will be contained as the young woodland establishes and reduce the scope for outward views. However, the maturing woodland will over time introduce a new attractive characteristic to be appreciated both from within and further from the unit. Recreational use within the unit is restricted to the Footpath 04 which provides some public access to the perimeter. There is an interpretation board for the wood along the route. However, there is no public access within the main woodland area and the unit is therefore considered to have medium to low recreational value overall.

Overall contribution of the Land Unit to the separation of settlements and avoidance of coalescence

= **Primary** ✓ Secondary Incidental

The land unit comprises an important part of the Area of Separation with the main factors underlining its role being the relatively elevated sloping topography, its visibility from public locations and its location and linkage with adjacent units and beyond the Area of Separation to all directions. For these reasons the unit is assessed a making a Primary contribution to the Area of Separation.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Land Unit No = 10

Size = 3.56 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises two fields of rough grassland bounded by mature hedges on locally elevated ground to the south of properties within Whitwick along Green Lane and George Street.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography					√
	Vegetation				√	
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)			√		
	Private Views			√		
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements				√	
	Landscape linkage		√			
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value			√		

Commentary on profile

The landform slopes from the south-east corner down to the west from approximately 158m AOD to 148m AOD on Green Lane. Slopes typically vary between 1 in 20 and 1 in 25 which represents a relatively steep gradient for the locality. The two fields are subdivided by relatively tall overgrown hedges with a number of individual trees. There is a clipped hedge at the interface with Green Lane and a boundary of back garden fences from the properties Green Lane. Footpath 04 passes through the eastern corner of the two fields allowing for public views of the unit. There are a few other informal footpaths both across and around the two fields that link with Whitwick village. There are also public views from Green Lane up to the rising ground. From the elevated section of Footpath 04, there are some long-distance views to the north-west extending as far as the Peak District on a clear day. Private views are from properties that either front or back onto the land unit along Green Lane and George Street.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit is closely related to the edge of Whitwick and occupies an area of approximately 200m x 250m. While this is not a large unit the rising ground and associated vegetation combine to provide clear sense of separation from Whitwick village in views from the south. In this respect the unit plays an important role in providing a clear sense of separation of Whitwick from Coalville.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The rising ground of the unit relates most clearly to the existing residential development directly adjacent on Green Lane and George Street. The undeveloped nature of the land helps to reinforce the small scale 19th and early 20th century character of the village in this location which nestles at the foot of the slopes. From the more elevated section of the unit, the distant views extend over and beyond Whitwick which is largely contained within mature tree cover. Along Green Lane there are few individual properties and short runs of Victorian terraces which reflect a relatively historic character.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

The unit provides an important element of the local landscape on the edge of the settlement of Whitwick that strengthens the open character. This is reinforced by the local elevation and hedges/tree groups that emphasise the landform and the natural break that the unit provides restricting the influence of Whitwick into the Area of Separation to the south. Links with adjacent units are relatively restricted due to the containment provided by hedges. The strongest visual and physical links with other units in the Area of Separation are with the recently planted Units 9 and 13 and also with other links to the settlement edge of Whitwick to the north and north-west. Overtime as the woodland planting within Unit 9 matures the unit is likely to become more enclosed from the wider Area of Separation.

Landscape value

The unit is considered to be of moderate scenic quality with no internal detractors and with distant views to the elevated ground to the north providing beneficial outlooks from elevated viewpoints. Recreational facilities within the unit are officially restricted to Footpath 04 that cross the south-east but there are a number of informal footpath routes around the area and for this reason there is considered to be a medium recreational value.

Overall contribution of the Land Unit to the separation of settlements and avoidance of coalescence

= **Primary** ✓ Secondary Incidental

The unit in combination with Units 9 and 11 form an area of local higher ground with tall hedges and tree groups that contain the presence of Whitwick from the south and reinforce the separation of the two settlements. For these reasons the unit is assessed as making a Primary contribution to the Area of Separation.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Land Unit No = 11

Size = 1.8 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises an area of land adjacent to the built edge of Whitwick backing onto properties along Hall Lane to the east and George Street to the north. The northern part of the site comprises the Walker Flats Allotments which are managed by the Whitwick Parish Council, and an additional area of informal amenity space to the south.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography			√		
	Vegetation				√	
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)			√		
	Private Views					√
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements		√			
	Landscape linkage	√				
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value					√

Commentary on profile

The landform falls from a high point to the south at circa 160m AOD down to the edge of Whitwick at 154m AOD to the north adjacent to George Street. The open amenity land to the south is bounded by a strong belt of established trees to both the south-east and south-west, which restrict views from the wider landscape. Footpath 04 runs through the southern corner of the amenity area and then follows a poorly maintained route onto Hall Lane. There are open views from properties adjacent to the unit principally on Hall Lane but also on George Street.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit is a relatively small being circa 180m x 90m and closely relates to the edge of the adjacent part of Whitwick. The unit does not provide any notable separation from Coalville or other outlying parts of Whitwick. The mature trees to the south-east and south-west reinforce the close association with Whitwick and relative detachment from the wider Area of Separation.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The unit adds to the suburban village edge character of Whitwick with land uses that reflect the adjacent residential areas rather than the more open rural uses to the south.

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

The unit internally provides an open character. However, the land is relatively small, directly adjacent to the edge of Whitwick on two sides and contained by established trees to the remaining two sides next to the wider open landscape. There are few visual links with adjacent areas, particularly in the summer months when the trees are in leaf. In the winter months there would be filtered views to Units 7 and 10. Therefore, the unit makes a small contribution to the overall open character of the Area of Separation.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Landscape value

The unit is considered to be of moderate scenic quality with no marked internal detractors. The allotments contain a number of functional structures and features but is a typical example of this type of facility. Recreational facilities include a section of Footpath 04 that runs to the south-east, active allotments and an area of amenity space. For these reasons the unit is considered to have a high recreational value.

Overall contribution of the Land Unit to the separation of settlements and avoidance of coalescence

= Primary Secondary **Incidental ✓**

The unit is relatively detached physically and visually from the majority of the Area of Separation by tree belts and more closely relates to the adjacent village edge both visually from adjacent houses and functionally by related recreational land uses. For these reasons the unit is assessed as making an Incidental contribution to the Area of Separation.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Land Unit No = 12

Size = 0.93 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises an area of informal open space. The amenity uses extend beyond the defined Area of Separation to the north-west up to Hermitage Road including an equipped play area. The unit contains areas of semi-natural vegetation to the east which back onto properties on Green Lane. Blocks of prominent and visually unsympathetic three-storey townhouses are located adjacent to the northern boundary.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography		√			
	Vegetation			√		
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)					√
	Private Views					√
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements			√		
	Landscape linkage				√	
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value				√	

Commentary on profile

The landform is broadly level at between 150 and 152m AOD within the unit but occupies an area of locally elevated ground which falls gently to the south towards Green Lane and more steeply to the north across Hermitage Road a gradient of circa 1 in 25. The south-west boundary is marked by a clipped hedgerow and areas of secondary woodland are associated with the eastern part of the land. The land is fully open to public access with wide ranging public views across the unit. There are also outward views to the south towards the prominent wooded skyline of Bardon Hill both from within the unit and also from the frontage of the open space on Hermitage Road. Views are also available at the entrance gate into the young woodland of Unit 13. There are a number of clear views from adjacent housing including the three storey town houses on Weavers Close.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit is a small area of land c 100 x 130m in extent and is closely associated with the edge of Whitwick and Hermitage Road and Weavers Close in particular. It plays a limited role in the separation between Whitwick and Coalville.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The land use for informal recreation provides part of the local setting to the adjacent residential areas. In this respect the character of the land relates directly to the existing settlement rather than the neighbouring agricultural land and young woodland. However, the unit in combination with the associated open land beyond the designated Area of Separation leading towards Hermitage Road provides opportunities for some views directly into and across the Area of Separation from the surrounding urban area. Therefore, this unit provides for an important connection to the open agricultural landscape of Area of Separation to the south and also distant views to Bardon Hill.

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

There are links with adjacent Units 13 and 8 and visual links much further to the south and outside the Area of Separation. The unit relates most strongly with the remaining part of the open space outside the

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

designated Area of Separation. There is a strong case to include the whole of the open space up to Hermitage Road within the Area of Separation.

Landscape value

The unit is considered to be of moderate scenic quality. The positive features are the attractive distant views out of the unit and the areas of semi-natural vegetation. However, these features are offset by the presence of features on adjacent land including the primary coloured play equipment and unsympathetic three storey properties on Weavers Close. Recreational use extends to the whole unit and the adjacent land to the north and is therefore considered to have medium/high recreational value.

Overall contribution of the Land Unit to the separation of settlements and avoidance of coalescence

= Primary **Secondary** √ Incidental

The unit is small in size and its uses relate to the adjacent edge of Whitwick including both residential and open space uses. However, the unit also allows for important south facing views across the open Area of Separation and where Coalville has a very limited visual presence. For these reasons the unit is assessed as making a Secondary contribution to the Area of Separation. There is a case to extend the existing Area of Separation up to Hermitage Road to reinforce the separate identity of Whitwick from Coalville by the visibility of the intervening open land.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 13**

Size = 8.41 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises two fields of former arable land that have recently been planted with a mix of native trees and shrubs and areas of wildflower meadow as part of the National Forest. The unit is bounded to the north-west by the rear of properties on Hermitage Road, Unit 14 to the south-west and by areas of retained agricultural land within Unit 8 to the south-east. There is also a boundary with the amenity area of Unit 12 to the north-east.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography			√		
	Vegetation			√		
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)			√		
	Private Views				√	
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements				√	
	Landscape linkage				√	
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value			√		

Commentary on profile

The landform falls from circa 152m AOD at the north-east down to circa 148m AOD in the south-west. The two field units (previously enlarged from three fields present in 1903) are bounded by established native hedgerows to most of the perimeter. There are four individual trees to the southern boundary of the eastern field and a number of other trees along the boundary and within rear gardens of the properties backing onto the land along Hermitage Road. The unit has been largely planted with native trees and shrubs during the last three years. The plantation is fenced off from the public, but a permissive footpath route has been provided within and through the young woodland connecting the amenity area off Hermitage Road/Weavers Close with Footpath 06 to the south-west. The plantation forms part of the National Forest initiative and has been named after Harold Smalley resident of Whitwick who was a Japanese prisoner of war during World War II and later died at the age of 101. Other parts of the woodland margins have been sown to meadow grass. Public views of the unit are available from the amenity area to the north-east, to a limited extent on Footpath 06 and most notably from the permissive path that passes through the unit. There are some more distant views of the unit from Green Lane towards the roofscape of the houses along Hermitage Road, but the land within Unit 13 is not visible. Private views are principally from the rear of properties on Hermitage Road with other elevated views from the three-storey townhouses on Weavers Close.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit is approximately 450 x 200m in size and occupies a location close to the parish boundary (which follows the A511) between Whitwick and Coalville. Therefore, while built development along Hermitage Road all but joins with Coalville at the A511 this land unit provides an important part of the separation between the two settlements.

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Contribution to the identity of settlements

The land unit is located on gently sloping ground to the south-east of properties fronting Hermitage Road. The previous use for arable and grazing land provided a rural setting to the rear of the linear built development along Hermitage Road. The recent change of land use to woodland will create a notable woodland feature which will in time reinforce the sense of separation of the established residential development along Hermitage Road from the retained open land.

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

The unit contributes to the open character and the separation both between Whitwick and Coalville as two separate settlements. The unit also helps provide some separation between different parts of Whitwick along Hermitage Road and Weavers Close. The existing character of the land unit links with adjacent Units 8, 9, 12 and 14, but most strongly with the open landscape of Unit 8. The open character will slowly reduce as the planting establishes and this will help to reduce the impact of built form along Hermitage Road on the open character to the south. As the woodland matures it will provide connectivity with other areas of woodland within the Area of Separation at Unit 9, with the established tree planting along the A511 corridor and also towards the areas of woodland on the higher ground to the east of Whitwick within Charnwood Forest.

Landscape value

The unit is considered to be of moderate scenic quality with no internal detractors, although the presence of more distant views to the elevated ground of the Charnwood Forest provide a beneficial outlook from certain viewpoints. However, it is likely that these views will be contained as the young woodland establishes and reduce the scope for outward views. Recreational use within the unit is restricted to the permissive footpath through the land area along which is an interpretation board. However, there is no further public access within the main woodland area and the unit is therefore considered to have medium recreational value overall.

Overall contribution of the Land Unit to the separation of settlements and avoidance of coalescence

= **Primary** ✓ Secondary Incidental

The existing character of the unit provides strong linkages to adjacent open areas, most notably Unit 8. There is also a strong relationship with the rear of residential properties on Hermitage Road and therefore, the unit provides an important part of the separation and avoidance of coalescence between Whitwick and Coalville, which lies relatively close to the south-west. For these reasons the unit is assessed as making a Primary contribution to the Area of Separation.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 14** Size = 1.95 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18, 26/10/18 and 14/3/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises the majority of a single rectangular field of rough grass to the west of the Area of Separation. The unit lies adjacent to the A511 and Coalville/Whitwick parish boundary to the west, close to Hermitage Road to the north and the area of new woodland planting to the east. A section of the field fronting Hermitage Road to a depth of approximately 45m is excluded from the designated Area of Separation.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography			√		
	Vegetation				√	
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)			√		
	Private Views		√			
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements			√		
	Landscape linkage			√		
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value		√			

Commentary on profile

The landform falls relatively steeply from 150m AOD in the south-east down to 145m AOD in the north-west at Hermitage Road at a gradient of circa 1 in 30. The unit is enclosed by mature hedges to three sides and by trees and hedges along the A511 to the remaining boundary to the west. This combination of landform and vegetation creates a relatively separate character from Units 8 and 13. However, this section of the field closer to Hermitage Road that is excluded from the Area of Separation is not marked by any feature on the ground and is essentially part of the same land unit in character terms. There are open public views from a section of Footpath 06 which runs from Hermitage Road to the south-west and parallel to the A511. This route also connects with the permissive path through the new woodland of Unit 13. There are filtered views in the winter months into and across the unit from the A511 between roadside tree belts. Private views are restricted to the terrace properties fronting Hermitage Road to the north of the unit and these are partly screened by the mature hedge on the road frontage (located outside the land unit) which largely restricts similar public views into the unit from street level.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit is a relatively small area of land circa 225 x 95m in extent within Whitwick parish but located very close to the parish boundary between Whitwick and Coalville which follows the A511. The land relates to the open landscape to the east within Whitwick.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The unit forms the larger part of the last remaining undeveloped field which marks the end of the settlement of Whitwick along Hermitage Road before reaching the A511 and Coalville. The section of the field outside the designated Area of Separation is a short break in the built road frontage (c 70m in width) and while there are limited views into the unit or across the Area of Separation this undeveloped break is important preventing coalescence between Coalville and Whitwick and maintaining the separate identity of the two settlements. There is a case to extend the Area of Separation up to Hermitage Road to include the whole field to reinforce the separation of settlements and prevent coalescence. However, since the time of the

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survey work, planning permission for residential development has been granted on the area outside the Area of Separation fronting Hermitage Road. The current boundary runs through the middle of the field and is not marked by any physical feature on the ground, but only reflects the adjacent depth of development along Hermitage Road.

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

The unit has an open undeveloped character, but this is not readily appreciated from the wider Area of Separation. However, its location at the junction of the settlements of Whitwick and Coalville places it at an important position where land should be retained in an open condition to prevent coalescence between the settlements. There are physical links along Footpath 06 to Units 13 and 8 but limited visual links to other areas due to the pattern of enclosing landform and vegetation to the perimeter.

Landscape value

The unit is considered to be of moderate to low scenic quality with no internal detractors. Recreational use within the unit is restricted to Footpath 06 which shows evidence of moderate to low usage.

Overall contribution of the Land Unit to the separation of settlements and avoidance of coalescence

= Primary

Secondary ✓

Incidental

The character of the unit is relatively enclosed by the sloping landform and boundary vegetation, with few visual links to adjacent units and is set back from Hermitage Road. For these reasons the unit is assessed as currently making a Secondary contribution to the Area of Separation.

However, the narrow strip of land fronting Hermitage Road, located outside the Area of Separation, forms an important break in the pattern of built development and provides the last physical gap in this locality between the settlements of Whitwick and Coalville. There is a case to extend the defined Area of Separation up to Hermitage Road to include whole field which forms Unit 14. In the event that the recent planning permission is not implemented, then consideration should be given to extending the AoS to include this area. If this were to happen then the unit would make a Primary contribution and prevent coalescence of the two settlements forming a gateway location into Whitwick. If this change was made the roadside hedgerow could also be managed to enhance the visual links from Hermitage Road across and beyond the Area of Separation.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 15**

Size = 14.23 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises the majority of Hermitage Recreation Ground which is an important recreational facility for Whitwick and the whole of the Coalville Urban Area and beyond. The facilities include: a 3G all-weather pitch, play area, sports pitches, putting green, fishing lake, model railway and parking. In addition, there are areas of informal amenity land, tree planting, footpaths and cycle routes. The Hermitage Leisure Centre is located to the east and adjacent to the Recreation Ground but is located outside the Area of Separation. The unit is bound by the rear of properties on Hermitage Road, Grove Road and Lakeshore Crescent to the south, Silver Street and the Leisure centre to the east, the cycleway to the north and the disused municipal golf course (Unit 16) to the west.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography		√			
	Vegetation				√	
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)					√
	Private Views				√	
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements				√	
	Landscape linkage				√	
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value					√

Commentary on profile

The unit occupies the southern sloping sides of the shallow valley of the Grace Dieu Brook that forms the principal feature of Area B of the Area of Separation. Levels slope from 145m AOD in the south close to Hermitage Road down to c 138m AOD along the course of the stream. Sections of the valley slopes are relatively gentle e.g. across the sports pitches to the east while in other locations the landform is more varied, having been altered by past industrial activity e.g. in the location of the fishing lake which was part of the former Hermitage Brick and Terra Cotta tile factory works. The lake is a notable component of the unit and includes some steeper side slopes and a central island. The valley slopes are visible from the opposite northern slopes of the valley, most noticeably from Unit 17. The recreation ground includes a number of belts of established trees. The majority of these are located on the steeper side slopes around the lake and on the island and also in copses to the rear of properties on Hermitage Road. There are remnant hedges and tree lines that surround and sub-divide the playing pitches to the east and provide screening of the adjacent housing areas to the south. The mature secondary woodland along the disused railway/cycleway provides a strong vegetated boundary to the north closer to the stream. The recreation ground is fully open to public use and therefore public views are widespread throughout including from the cycleway. Private views are concentrated along the southern boundary from adjacent properties with a number of these houses having open and elevated views overlooking the park.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The recreation ground forms a substantive part of Area B of the Area of Separation being c 750 x 225m in extent and covering most to the southern valley sides. The unit therefore occupies approximately a quarter part of Area B of the Area of Separation, which also equates to up to half the width of the open land between the existing built development on Hermitage Road, Thornborough Road/Church Lane and leading towards Coalville.

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Contribution to the identity of settlements

The recreation ground includes a diverse range of open space uses including formal and informal sports, a large water body and areas of semi-natural vegetation and amenity grassland. These create a suburban style park close to the edge of the rural area with a mix of landscape types and uses. The part of the park to the east is generally enclosed from the wider landscape by strong belts of vegetation and therefore relates strongly to the adjacent housing on Grove Road and Lakeshore Crescent and Hermitage Leisure Centre. In contrast the western part of the unit provides a stronger interface with the sloping agricultural land to the north of the Grace Dieu Brook. The areas of woodland around the lake provides softening of the built development along Hermitage Road within this part of the recreation ground and helps to accommodate the adjacent built forms within the open valley landscape.

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

There are strong visual and functional links from the western part of the unit to the open agricultural slopes to the north-west within Unit 17, but these links decrease when moving eastwards within the unit due to the presence of vegetation along the valley corridor and lack of rights of way providing physical connectivity. There are also links at the western edge of the unit to the former municipal golf course within Unit 16.

Landscape value

The unit is considered to be of moderate scenic quality with a mix of characteristics and features, some of which are visually positive (e.g. lake and planting) and some negative (e.g. all-weather courts with floodlights and parking areas). Recreational use is extensive being a public facility and is therefore considered to have high recreational value.

Overall contribution of the Land Unit to the separation of settlements and avoidance of coalescence

= Primary ✓ Secondary Incidental

The unit forms the southern valley slopes of the Grace Dieu Brook valley and has strong visual and physical links with the slopes to the north of the valley. There is a high level of public usage for a variety of recreational uses. The mature vegetation also helps to contain the presence of built development to the south. For these reasons the unit has been assessed as making a Primary contribution to the Area of Separation.

Three properties at Lakeside View had been constructed within the defined Area of Separation. It would be logical to redefine the Area of Separation to exclude these three properties.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 16**

Size = 11.68 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18 and 14/3/18

Land Unit Description

The unit largely comprises the extent of the former municipal golf course that has ceased to operate but is still maintained as areas of mown grass and woodland planting between the former fairways. The unit also includes three small fields to the west and roadside planting along the A511. The unit is bound by A511 to the south, Thornborough Road to the west, Hermitage Road to the east and Units, 15 and 17, to the north. The Bridle Road right of way cuts through the unit to the south-east and provides the boundary with Unit 17 to the west.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography			√		
	Vegetation				√	
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)				√	
	Private Views		√			
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements			√		
	Landscape linkage			√		
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value			√		

Commentary on profile

The landform typically gently slopes from south-west to north-east leading into the Grace Dieu Brook valley with levels varying between 145m AOB and 140m AOD. There are areas to the north-west and towards the A511 where there are steeper banks around the edge of the former golf course, including where land rises up to the Bridle Road and Thornborough Road. In terms of vegetation there are extensive areas of woodland planting adjacent to the A511/Stephenson Way which largely provide screening from the main road and the adjacent industrial areas to the south, apart from a short break circa 50m wide. There are further areas of dense native planting and hedging on the cutting slopes close to Bridle Road and Thornborough Road including around the three small field units. Linear copses of trees planted between fairways of the golf course have also established within the unit to provide internal compartmentalisation of the openness and to soften the impact of houses along Hermitage Road. Bridle Road (Bridleway 08) runs as a green lane through the unit with established hedgerows and individual hedgerow trees to either side of the route. There are relatively open, public views of the unit from the rights of way including Bridleway 08, Footpath 09 and for a short section of the A511. Access over the south-west of the golf course is not encouraged but is available to the north-east of Bridle Road and to the north-west. There are limited private views over the unit with the closest properties being on Hermitage Road and cottages on Thornborough Road. Views are typically from rear gardens and are generally contained by established vegetation.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The former golf course occupies an L-shaped piece of land that extends from 540m and 240m on the longest axes of the unit. The unit is located at the south-west extent of Area B of the Area of Separation and provides an important physical separation between the adjacent industrial and commercial areas beyond the A511 to the west and south within Coalville and the open character of the remainder of the Area of Separation to the north-east.

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Contribution to the identity of settlements

The presence of the dense areas of woodland planting copses associated with the former golf course help to contain the effects of the A511 and the various commercial and industrial areas within Coalville. Therefore, the unit and its mix of open spaces and vegetated character provide an important contribution to restrict the influence of the character of Coalville and also help safeguard the more rural character between Thornborough Road and Hermitage Road.

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

The unit makes a notable contribution to the open character of the Area of Separation. There is a limited influence of built forms to the fringes due to the enclosing vegetation although there are a few framed views and glimpses to Stephenson College to the north-west. There are localised visual and physical links between Units 15 and 17 to the north-east but vegetation and hedges provide visual containment to much of the unit. The land to the west of the unit is contained by rising ground and established planting on the earth banks and along the A511 corridor.

Landscape value

The unit is considered to be of moderate scenic quality with no internal detractors. The former golf course has a relatively neglected character since its original recreational use has been discontinued. However, recreational routes are available on Bridleway 08, Footpath 09 which together provide part of the Bosworth Trail – Sustrans Route 52. Therefore, the unit is considered to have medium recreational value overall.

Overall contribution of the Land Unit to the separation of settlements and avoidance of coalescence

= **Primary** ✓ Secondary Incidental

There is open public visibility where rights of way pass through the unit, from informal recreational use of the land and for a short section of the A511. There are good levels of enclosure provided by tree belts and tall hedges which generally contain views from the wider Area of Separation and also restrict the influence of built forms within Coalville to the south and west and within Whitwick to the south-east along Hermitage Road. Therefore, the unit is assessed as making a Primary contribution to the Area of Separation.

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Land Unit No = 17

Size = 18.61 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises three irregular shaped arable fields to the north-east facing slopes of the Grace Dieu Brook valley. The fields have experienced considerable enlargement since 1955 with the loss of the internal field boundaries, which historically comprised narrow strip fields running down valley slopes. The unit is bounded by Bridle Road to the south-west, the rear of properties fronting Thornborough Road to the north-west, Grace Dieu Brook to the south-east and Unit 20 to the north-east.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography		√			
	Vegetation		√			
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)				√	
	Private Views			√		
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements				√	
	Landscape linkage				√	
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value		√			

Commentary on profile

The unit occupies the northern sides of the shallow valley of the Grace Dieu Brook that forms Area B of the Area of Separation. Levels range from 149m AOD in the north-west close to Thornborough Road down to circa 138m AOD along the course of the stream within the valley. The valley slopes vary from circa 1 in 40 to less than 1 in 100 (closer to Thornborough Road). The steeper valley sides are partly visible from the opposite sides of the valley within Hermitage Recreation Ground (Unit 15). The fields are mainly bounded by native hedges of variable height some being taller with associated trees while the two internal hedges are clipped. There is a strong line of riparian trees along the brook. Public views are available from the three rights of way, Footpaths 09, 10 and 11 that pass through the unit and provide links to Bridle Road, Thornborough Road, Church Lane and Hermitage Recreation Ground. The routes pass both across open fields and along field edges. Lengths of Footpath 11 are poorly maintained within Units 17 and 18 and infrequently used at least in the summer months due to the presence of tall crops e.g. sweetcorn. There are also cross valley views to the east from Bridleway 08 and from Thornborough Road where Footpath 10 enters the unit. Private views are concentrated along the northern boundary where properties along Thornborough Road back onto the unit.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit is a large component of the northern part of the Area of Separation being circa 575 x 480m in extent and covering approximately two thirds of the northern valley sides and up to two thirds of the width between Hermitage Road and Thornborough Road/Church Lane. The unit is therefore an important component in providing the physical separation between the existing development along Hermitage Road and Thornborough Road which are both parts of Whitwick parish. The unit also comprises large part of the land separating existing development along Church Road and Thornborough Road from Coalville to the south-west.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The agricultural valley slopes make an important contribution to the character of the surrounding settlement. The character of the adjacent settlement (which is part of Whitwick parish) is formed by ribbon development following the line of Thornborough Road. When travelling along the road one has a very limited appreciation of the open valley behind. However, when within the valley the open fields and also the associated open land to the south of the brook rise up to meet the rear of the properties that flank the higher ground to both north and south. The character of the unit therefore provides part of the inner core of an open valley landscape which is defined by built development on the higher ground and skyline.

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

The unit makes a strong contribution to the open character of the Area of Separation by both extending over a large area and being visible from a number of vantage points largely within or to the edge of the Area of Separation both within and outside the unit. The current agriculture land use also allows for sweeping views to the north and south. There are physical and visual links across the valley slopes to the south most notably to the recreation ground in Unit 15. There are also some longer-range views up to the Charnwood Forest to the south. The links to other adjacent areas including Units 16, 18, 19 and 20 are less marked due to intervening tall hedges and tree belts.

Landscape value

The unit is considered to be of moderate scenic quality with few detractors. Recreational use is contained to the three public footpaths, which have evidence of medium to low usage. As a result, the unit is considered to have medium recreational value.

Overall contribution of the Land Unit to the separation of settlements and avoidance of coalescence

= Primary ✓	Secondary	Incidental
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The pattern of topography and very open character visually draws the two sides the valley closer together, which potentially could reduce the sense of separation. However, due to the relatively large scale of the unit and the strong relationship with the opposite valley slopes within Unit 15 the sense of separation between the two linear parts of Whitwick and the associated separation from Coalville is effectively maintained. Therefore, the unit is assessed as making a Primary contribution to the Area of Separation.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 18**

Size = 3.31 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises the Thornborough Road Allotments (managed by Whitwick Parish Council) and two areas of extended garden/paddock plots to the rear of houses on Thornborough Road. There is a copse of birch trees and a triangular area of rough grassland to the south-east of the allotments. The unit is bounded by Thornborough Road frontage and the rear gardens of properties fronting Thornborough Road to the north-west and then by Unit 17 to the remaining three sides.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography				√	
	Vegetation				√	
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)		√			
	Private Views	√				
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements		√			
	Landscape linkage	√				
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value				√	

Commentary on profile

The land slopes at a typical gradient of 1 in 30 from the crest of the valley slopes to the south-east at c 148m AOD northwards to c 140m AOD on Thornborough Road. This change in level and orientation means that the land faces north and the slopes are more contained from the Grace Dieu Brook valley landscape to the south. In this respect the land faces more towards the existing development on Thornborough Road. The unit is generally well contained by vegetation including tall mature hedges around the garden plots and taller trees around the allotments. The most open aspect is to Thornborough Road which is bounded by a clipped hedge and two mature trees. Public views are restricted to those from Thornborough Road and on the Footpath 11 to the south-east. There are no views to the extended garden plots. Private views are available for the allotment holders and from residences opposite although a number of these properties are single storey and set back from the road.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit is c 200 x 180m in extent and represents a relatively small parcel of land. The unit is primarily orientated towards the properties on Thornborough Road and hence fulfils less of a function of physical separation between settlements by making an incursion into the Area of Separation. However, at a local scale the unit does provide an undeveloped break along a built frontage of Thornborough Road.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The unit represents one of the few undeveloped gaps along Thornborough Road that can be seen by the public. However, the visible part of land comprises allotments occupied by a large number of temporary structures including sheds, fences and shelters. There are no distant views beyond the unit into the valley to the south, with the southern section of the unit marked by a belt of trees to the skyline. The current land-use therefore provides a typical urban fringe/suburban feature within the context of existing ribbon housing rather than making a notable contribution to the Area of Separation. The garden/plotland to the rear of properties on Thornborough Road is largely hidden from view and makes a limited contribution to the

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Land Unit No = 19

Size = 1.98 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises two small paddocks, stabling and a ménage to the north-west of the Area of Separation. The area is bounded by properties on both Church Lane and Thornborough Road to the north and west and the length of mature hedgerow to the southern boundary, within Unit 17.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography				√	
	Vegetation				√	
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)	√				
	Private Views				√	
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements		√			
	Landscape linkage		√			
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value	√				

Commentary on profile

The topography slopes from a high point in the south-east at approximately 144m AOD to the north and west down to 140m AOD at the rear of the residential properties that back onto the unit on Thornborough Road and Church Lane. The southern boundary of the unit represents a local crest from the valley to the south and the land unit slopes gently back towards Church Lane and Thornborough Road. Gradients are typically 1 in 40. The unit is bounded by tall established hedgerows and established trees to the south and east which contain views into the unit from the valley to the south. There is an established conifer hedgerow which sub-divides the unit into two. The boundaries to rear gardens that back onto the unit are of variable height and type some benefiting from views onto the paddocks and others being more enclosed. Public views of the unit are very limited and although Footpath 10 passes outside the southern boundary views into the land are precluded by the density of the hedgerow apart from at one field gate to the south-east corner. Private views relate to properties along Thornborough Road and Church Lane.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit is relatively small being approximately 240m in length and 90m in width. It plays a negligible role in the physical separation of settlements and its position and orientation relates to the rear of a group of established neighbouring residential properties. Due to the narrowness of the unit the land plays no notable part in separating the two parts of Whitwick along Church Lane and Hermitage Road and plays no material part in the separation from Coalville.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The two paddocks make a small contribution to the identity of this part of the settlement. The unit is not readily perceived from public viewpoints and therefore the contribution is limited to the setting of the rear of a number of private properties that back onto the land.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

The unit makes a small contribution to the open character by being undeveloped but no notable contribution to the wider Area of Separation. The unit lies adjacent to Unit 17 and Unit 20. There are limited views from Unit 17 and is only visible at the interface with Unit 20.

Landscape value

The unit is considered to be of moderate scenic quality with a mix of some attractive features including established native hedges and some more functional equestrian buildings including stabling and a ménage. There are no public recreational facilities on the site and hence the recreational value is considered to be low.

Overall contribution of the Land Unit to the separation of settlements and avoidance of coalescence

= Primary Secondary **Incidental** ✓

The unit is contained by vegetation and landform and is orientated towards the adjacent residential properties. There is limited connectivity with wider Area of Separation and is therefore assessed as making an Incidental contribution to the Area of Separation.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 20**

Size = 0.81 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises a narrow strip of grassland that is strongly contained by established hedges and leads down the valley slopes towards a stream.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography		✓			
	Vegetation					✓
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)				✓	
	Private Views	✓				
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements			✓		
	Landscape linkage			✓		
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			✓		
	Recreational Value			✓		

Commentary on profile

The land falls from approximately 144m AOD in the west to 138m AOD in the east. The gradients are approximately 1 in 50 from the upper slopes down towards the Grace Dieu Brook. The field also exhibits evidence of ridge and furrow running down the slope following the long field boundaries. The field is enclosed by tall mature hedges to all sides including mature trees to the south-east in the valley bottom. Public views are available from Footpaths 9 and 10 that pass through the unit. There are no notable private views due to the enclosure by hedging.

Contribution to physical separation settlements

The unit is a remnant narrow strip field approximately 30m wide and 230m long. The unit forms a narrow finger of land that extends approximately two-thirds of the distance between the two areas of the settlement of Whitwick and therefore represents a small but characterful part of the physical separation.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The unit represents a residual part of the historic character on this side of the valley. The field was typical of a number of the linear strip fields that ran down the valley slopes (as illustrated on old OS maps - Figures 05-08 in Appendices to the main report). This pattern reflects both the original open cultivated fields and the later enclosure by hedgerows that supported livestock. Therefore, the existing character makes a contribution to the understanding and identity of settlement pattern in this locality by the retention of some previous patterns of land use and structure close to the edge of the built area along Church Lane.

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

The unit is entirely free of built development or structures and therefore despite its small size contributes to the open character of the area which is readily perceived from users of the rights of way that cross the area. There are physical links via rights-of-way to Units 17 and 21 adjacent to the area. There are views down the unit to the mature vegetation in Unit 23 and also long views across the area from the edge of the cemetery in Unit 22.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Landscape value

The unit is considered to be of moderate scenic quality with some attractive features including established native hedges and views leading down towards a stream corridor. There are two public footpaths which cross the site and hence the recreational value is considered to be medium.

Overall contribution of the Land Unit to the separation of settlements and avoidance of coalescence

= Primary

Secondary ✓

Incidental

This narrow linear unit is small but physically well contained from adjacent units. It provides a historically characterful yet modest part of the Area of Separation. For these reasons the unit is assessed as making a Secondary contribution to the Area of Separation.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 21**

Size = 2.77 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises a number of grazed paddocks to the north-east of the Area of Separation. The area is bounded by Unit 20 to the south, the cemetery to the east and the rear of properties fronting Church Lane to the north.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography		√			
	Vegetation			√		
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)			√		
	Private Views				√	
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements			√		
	Landscape linkage				√	
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value		√			

Commentary on profile

The topography slopes gently from the north at approximately 142m AOD down towards the stream corridor to the south-east at approximately 136m AOD. The northern of the two fields contains evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation within the structure of a former narrow strip field. The unit is variably enclosed by established hedgerows some of which are fragmented. There are strong hedgerows to the south-west boundary and lines of mature trees to the south-east boundary with the stream corridor. There are open views from Footpath 09 which passes through the unit up to Church Lane adjacent to the cemetery. Private views relate to properties fronting Church Lane.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit is located close to one of the narrower edges of the Area of Separation and relates quite strongly to both the adjacent established residential development to the north and also mature vegetation following the stream corridor. The width of the unit is approximately 200m running down the valley slopes and a similar dimension along the valley slopes. In this part of the valley Unit 21 occupies half of the width of the Area of Separation between the development on Church Lane and the housing south of Hermitage Recreation Ground at Lakeshore Crescent and Grove Road. In this respect the unit makes an important contribution to the physical separation between these two parts of Whitwick. The unit also makes a notable contribution to the visual separation of Whitwick from Coalville in views looking south-west along the valley on Footpath 09 and at the cemetery towards Coalville.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

In common with the character of the adjacent Unit 20 the unit represents a residual part of the historic character on this side of the valley. The fields units are largely retained but in poorer condition. This pattern reflects both the original open cultivated fields and later enclosure by hedgerows that supported livestock. Therefore, the existing character makes a contribution to the understanding and history and identity of the settlement pattern in this locality by the retention of some previous patterns of land use and structure close to the edge of the built area along Church Lane.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

The unit is largely free of built development or structures and therefore despite its small size contributes to the open character of the area which is appreciated by users of the right of way that cross the area. There appears to be some incursion into Unit 21 by residential development in the most northerly corner. There are physical links via rights-of-way to Units 20 and alongside Unit 22 adjacent. There are also long views across the unit from the edge of the cemetery over Unit 17 with glimpses to some of the commercial properties in Coalville beyond the A511 in the distance.

Landscape value

The unit is considered to be of moderate scenic quality with some attractive features including established native hedges and views leading down towards the stream corridor and up the valley to the south-west. There is one public footpath which crosses the site and hence the recreational value is considered to be low to medium.

Overall contribution of the Land Unit to the separation of settlements and avoidance of coalescence

= **Primary** ✓ Secondary Incidental

The unit is relatively well enclosed from the remainder of the Area of Separation apart from Unit 22. The unit retains its historic structure but is in a relatively poor condition. The unit helps to provide a notable part of the separation between two parts of Whitwick but has a more limited influence on the separation of Whitwick from Coalville. For these reasons the unit is assessed as making a Secondary contribution to the Area of Separation.

A single property has been built to the north of the unit within the defined Area of Separation. It would be logical to redefine the Area of Separation to exclude this property.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 22**

Size = 2.69 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises Whitwick Cemetery, which dates from the Victorian period. The grounds are well maintained and contain a network of internal roads and surfaced footpaths and regularly arranged gravestones. The original cemetery is approximately square in shape and fronts Church Lane being accessed by a formal lychgate with a stonewall marking the boundary and cemetery Lodge adjacent to the entrance. A more recent extension has taken place to the south-west occupying part of the former paddocks that previously would have formed part of Unit 21.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography		√			
	Vegetation				√	
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)				√	
	Private Views			√		
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements				√	
	Landscape linkage				√	
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value		√			

Commentary on profile

The landform slopes from Church Lane at approximately 146m AOD down to the south corner at approximately 136m AOD. To the edge of the cemetery, closest to the stream the land falls more steeply down to the Grace Dieu Brook. The cemetery contains a number of mature trees including lime trees to the northern perimeter and specimen yews and cedars within the original burial ground. The planting to the southern boundary on the stream corridor is both dense and tall. There are some areas of ornamental planting to the entrance and fringes of the graves. This cemetery is publicly accessible at main entrance gate during daylight hours. There are a few private views from the rear of the properties adjacent to the cemetery.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The current extent of the cemetery is approximately 120m from north-west to south-east and 200 m from north-east to south-west. At this narrow part of the Area of Separation the cemetery represents an important part of the physical separation between two parts of Whitwick. However, the unit makes no material contribution to the physical separation between Whitwick and Coalville.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The cemetery represents an accessible and visible area of open space at the edge of the built-up area along Church Lane, Whitwick. There are framed distant views: from Church Lane, both from within the cemetery and also from the track that leads towards Footpath 09 on the northern boundary. At the time that the cemetery was first established there were no houses in the vicinity, but it has now become partially absorbed within the urban fabric along Church Lane and forms a typical component of the Victorian and early 20th century settlement character along the road. Furthermore, the location of the cemetery on relatively elevated ground allows for views to the south-west providing visual connections to the wider, undeveloped landscape within the Area of Separation. In this respect the unit makes a relatively strong

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

contribution to the identity of the settlement since it both relates to the urban streetscape and provides visual connection to the undeveloped landscape.

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

The cemetery makes a notable contribution to the open character of the Area of Separation. Although the site is a formal burial ground the character is nevertheless open and attractive. There are strong visual links from the unit towards Units 21, 20 and 17 and as far as Unit 16 beyond which the industrial estates of Coalville can be seen in the distance. The mature vegetation with Unit 23 forms a string feature to the south-east.

Landscape value

The unit is considered to be of moderate scenic quality with some attractive features including specimen trees and native woodland adding to the character. There are no public footpaths through the cemetery, although Footpath 09 passes outside to the northern boundary. The cemetery is not generally used for recreation, but it provides a space for quiet reflection and hence the recreational value is considered to be low to medium.

Overall contribution of the Land Unit to the separation of settlements and avoidance of coalescence

= Primary

Secondary ✓

Incidental

The unit is relatively well enclosed from the remainder of the Area of Separation apart from Unit 21. The unit comprises an important and characterful part of the separation between two parts of Whitwick but has a more limited influence on the separation from Coalville. For these reasons the unit is assessed as making a Secondary contribution to the Area of Separation.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals**Land Unit No = 23**

Size = 2.12 Ha

Surveyor = JB

Date Surveyed = 25/7/18

Land Unit Description

The unit comprises a linear character area composed of a section of the former Charnwood Forest Railway and a length of the Grace Dieu Brook watercourse.

Criteria Group	Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
1. Physical Features	Topography				√	
	Vegetation					√
2. Perceptual Factors	Public Visibility (Roads, open space and rights of way)					√
	Private Views		√			
	Contribution to the character and setting of settlements				√	
	Landscape linkage				√	
3. Landscape Value	Scenic Quality			√		
	Recreational Value					√

Commentary on profile

The landform comprises the narrow artificial earthworks corridor of the former railway cutting with some steep side slopes. The base of the former railway line falls very gradually around 138m AOD. The more natural course of the Grace Dieu Brook flows to the north-west and parallel to the former railway line. The whole corridor is strongly vegetated by a mix of native regenerating woodland both on the cuttings of the former railway and also within the floodplain of the stream corridor. The railway corridor now provides a section of Sustrans Route 52 - Bosworth Trail. This route is well used by cyclists and pedestrians and provides views along the enclosed character of the corridor. There are limited private views into this corridor, although there are properties backing onto the stream fronting Church Lane.

Contribution to physical separation between settlements

The unit represents a linear feature circa 420m in length and 50m in width between two sections of Whitwick located on Church Lane and Silver Street. In isolation the corridor provides a narrow but important part of this separating character with the vegetation being equally if not more important than the physical distance. The Unit makes no notable contribution to the separation from Coalville.

Contribution to the identity of settlements

The wooded character of the corridor combines two important features of the natural and historic character of Whitwick which have been retained and enhanced for amenity, biodiversity and recreational use. The presence of the corridor provides strength to the identity of the settlement of Whitwick as a whole.

Contribution to open character and links with other land units

The character of the unit is enclosed and therefore there is a limited contribution to the open character. However, this part of the corridor links to further sections of the Bosworth Trail to the west and east and the associated vegetation of the route very reinforces the rural fringe character of the Area of Separation. In this respect the unit links with adjacent Units 15, 17, 20, 21 and 22.

Appendix 02 Land Unit Appraisals

Landscape value

The unit is considered to be of moderate scenic quality with some attractive features including established mature trees on the corridor. The right of way/cycleway forming the Bosworth Trail is a well-used resource and therefore the recreational value is considered to be high.

Overall contribution of the Land Unit to the separation of settlements and avoidance of coalescence

= Primary Secondary ✓ Incidental

The unit is very well enclosed by vegetation from the remainder of the Area of Separation adjacent parts of the urban area of Whitwick. The unit comprises a distinctive feature between two parts of Whitwick but has a negligible influence on the separation from Coalville. For this reason the unit is assessed as making a Secondary contribution to the Area of Separation.

Area of Separation Study

Coalville Urban Area

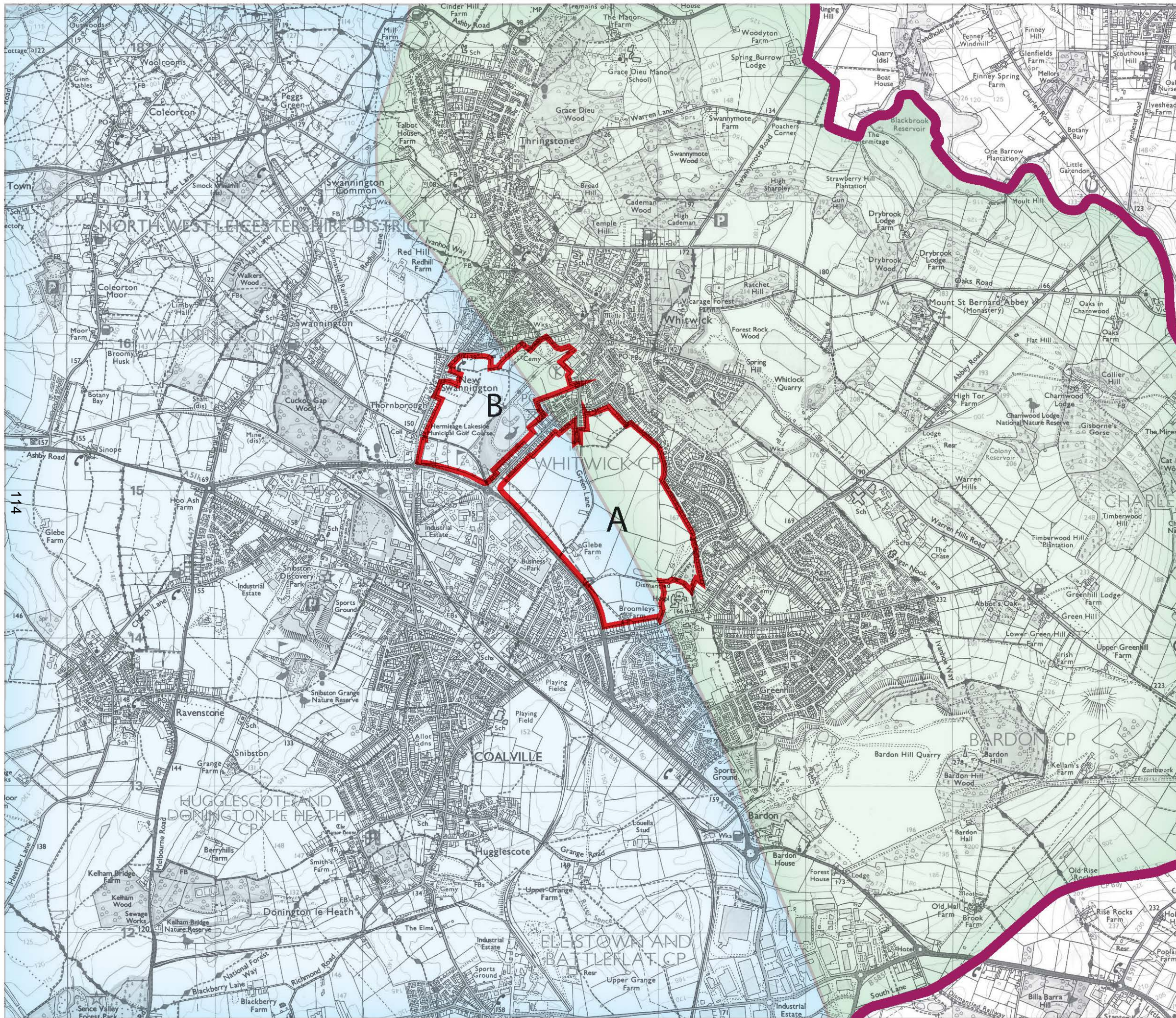
on behalf of

North West Leicestershire District Council







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Appendix 3 Figures 1-13

July 2019



Key

-  Area of Separation
 -  Area A - South-East
 -  Area B - North-West
 -  North West Leicestershire boundary
 -  Charnwood Forest
 -  The Coalfield
- NB:
Landscape Character Areas based on
Leicestershire Character Assesment

B18061 - Area of Separation Study

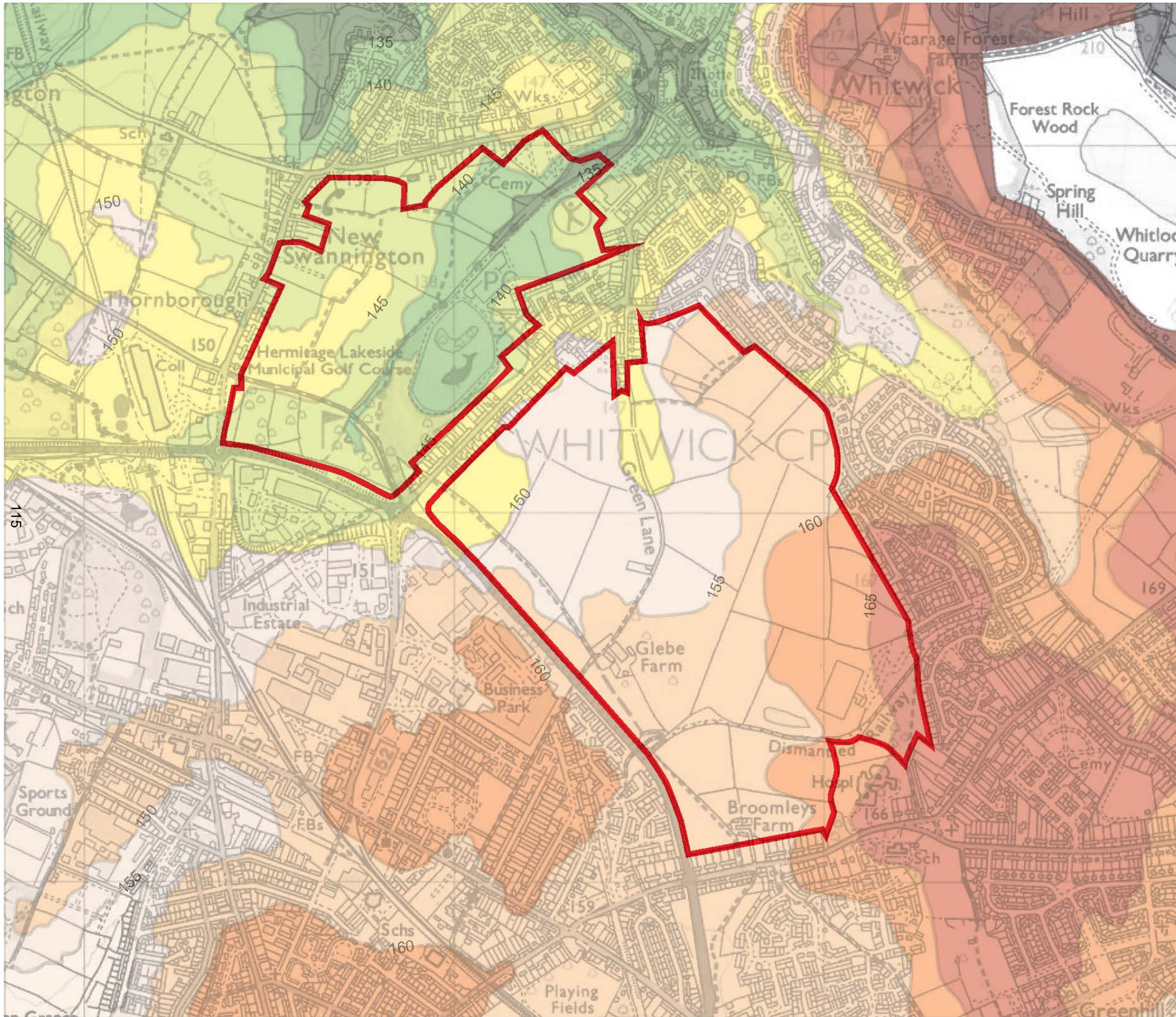
Study Area and
Landscape Character Areas

Figure 01


Scale: 1:25,000 @ A3

October 2018

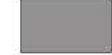




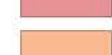










Key

 Area of Separation

Topography

-  195-200m
-  185-195m
-  180-185m
-  170-175m
-  165-170m
-  160-165m
-  155-160m
-  150-155m
-  145-150m
-  140-145m
-  135-140m
-  130-136m

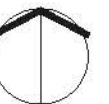
B18061 - Area of Separation Study

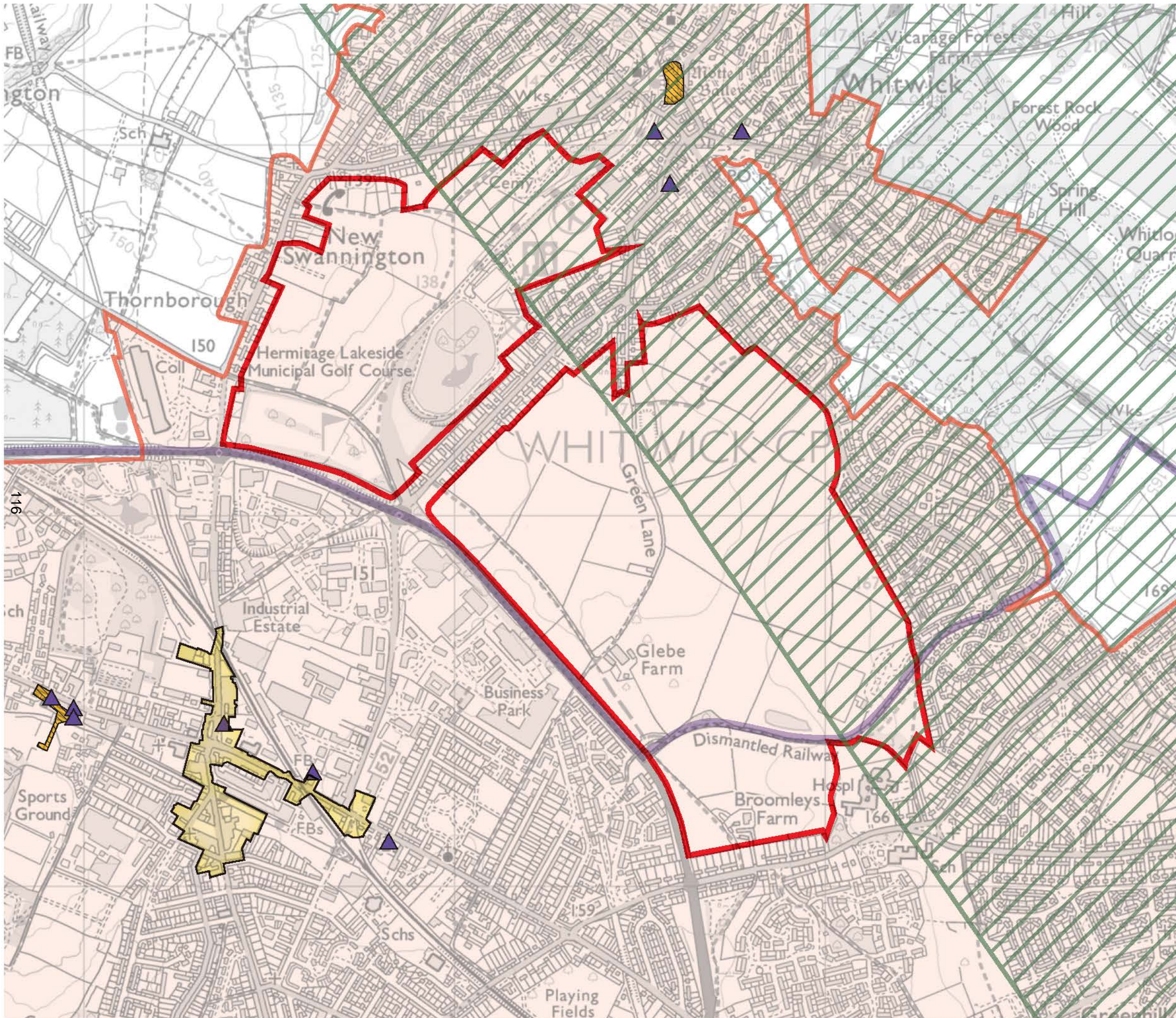
Topography

Figure 02


Scale: 1:10,000 @ A3

October 2018





Key

-  Area of Separation
-  Whitwick Parish Boundary
-  Scheduled Monuments
-  Grade II listed buildings
-  Coalville Conservation Area
-  Charnwood Forest Regional Park
-  Coalville urban area

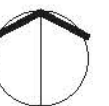
B18061 - Area of Separation Study

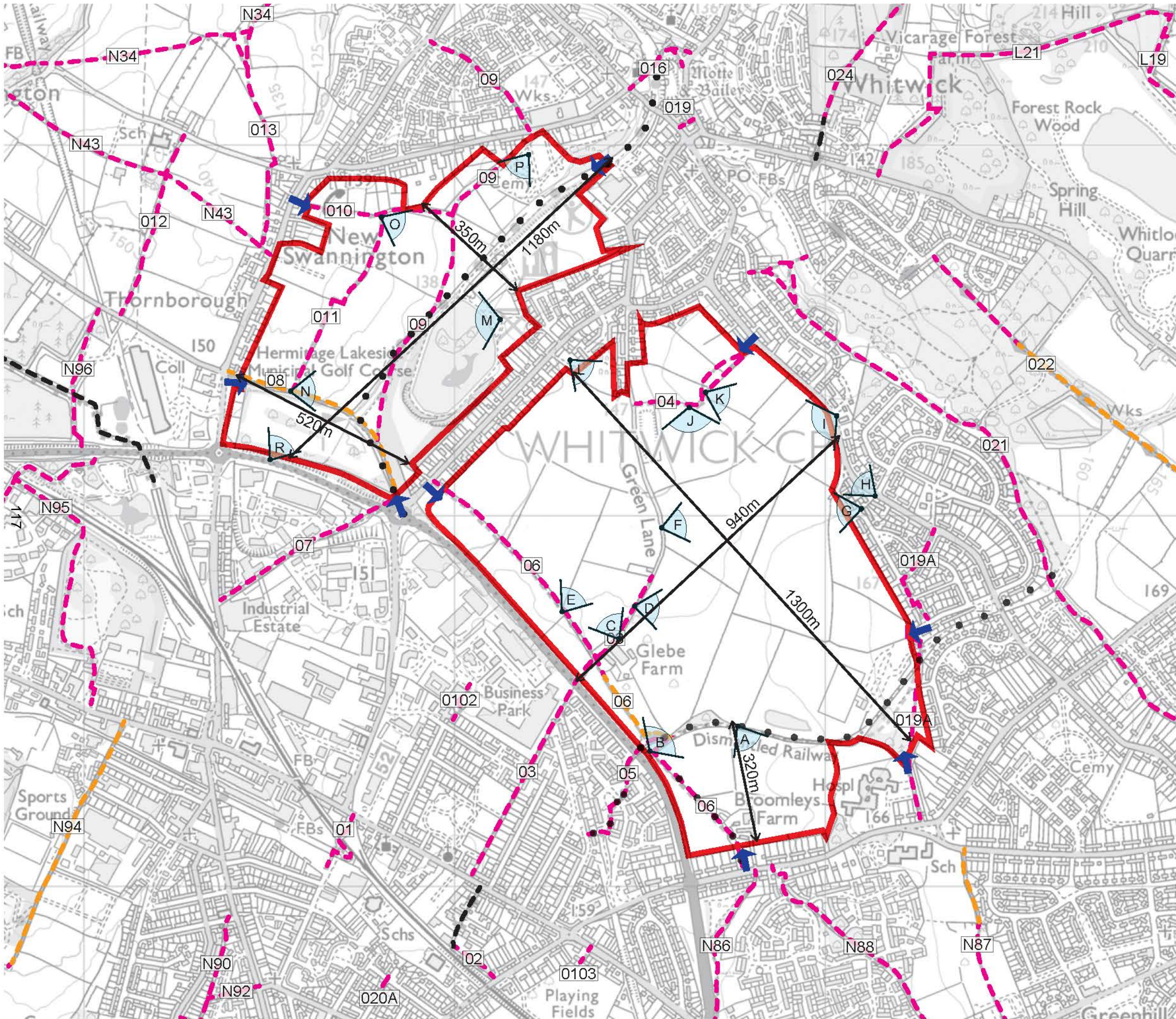
Designations

Figure 03

Scale: 1:10,000 @ A3

October 2018





Key

- Area of Separation
- Cycleway
- Physical Gaps

Public Rights of Way

- Public Footpaths
- Public Bridleways
- Byways

Views

- Key views across the Area of Separation
- Restricted views into the Area of Separation

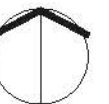
B18061 - Area of Separation Study

Rights of Way and Views

Figure 04

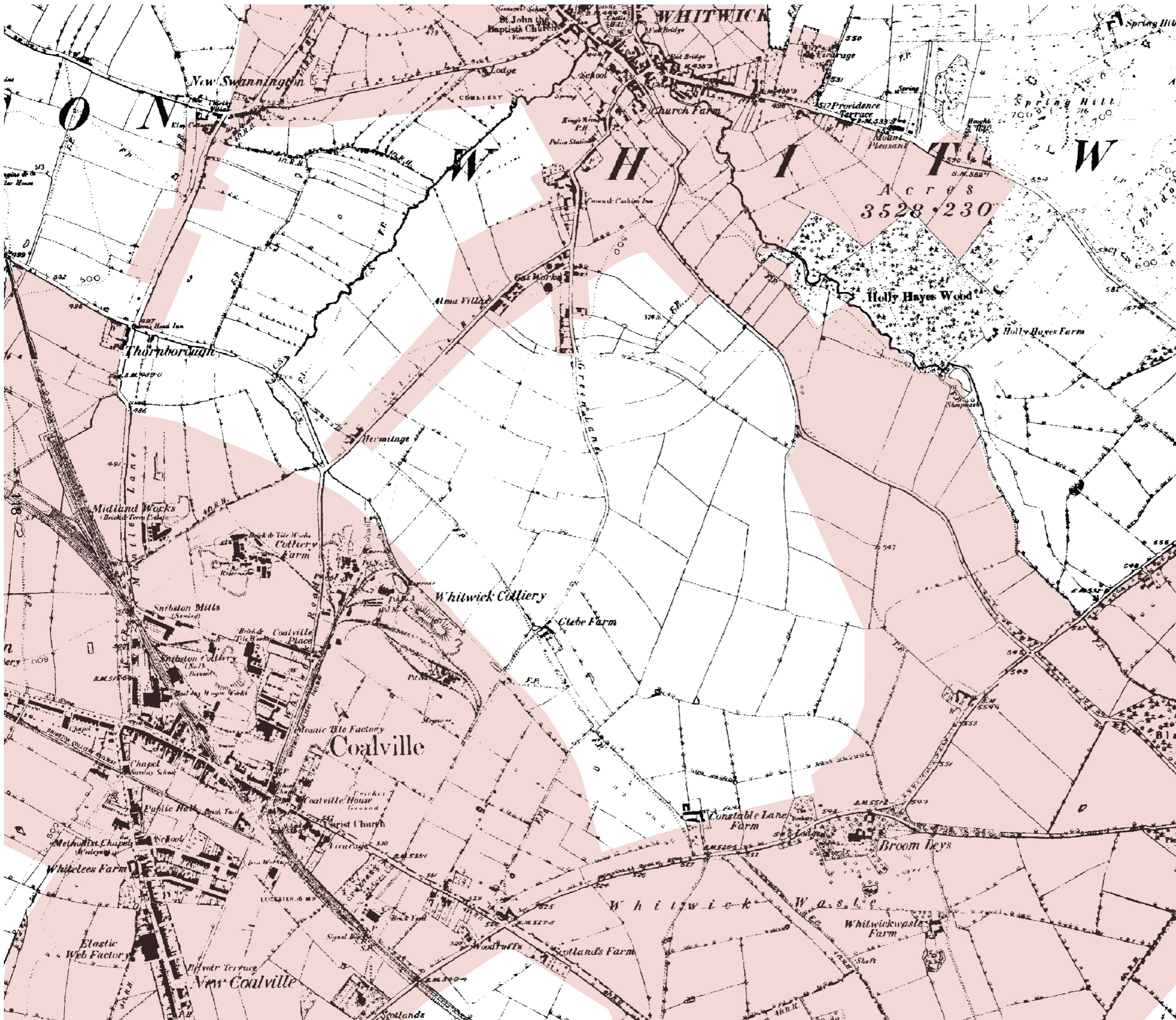
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October 2018



Key

Urban extents 2015



B18061 - Area of Separation Study

1887-1889 OS Plan

Figure 05

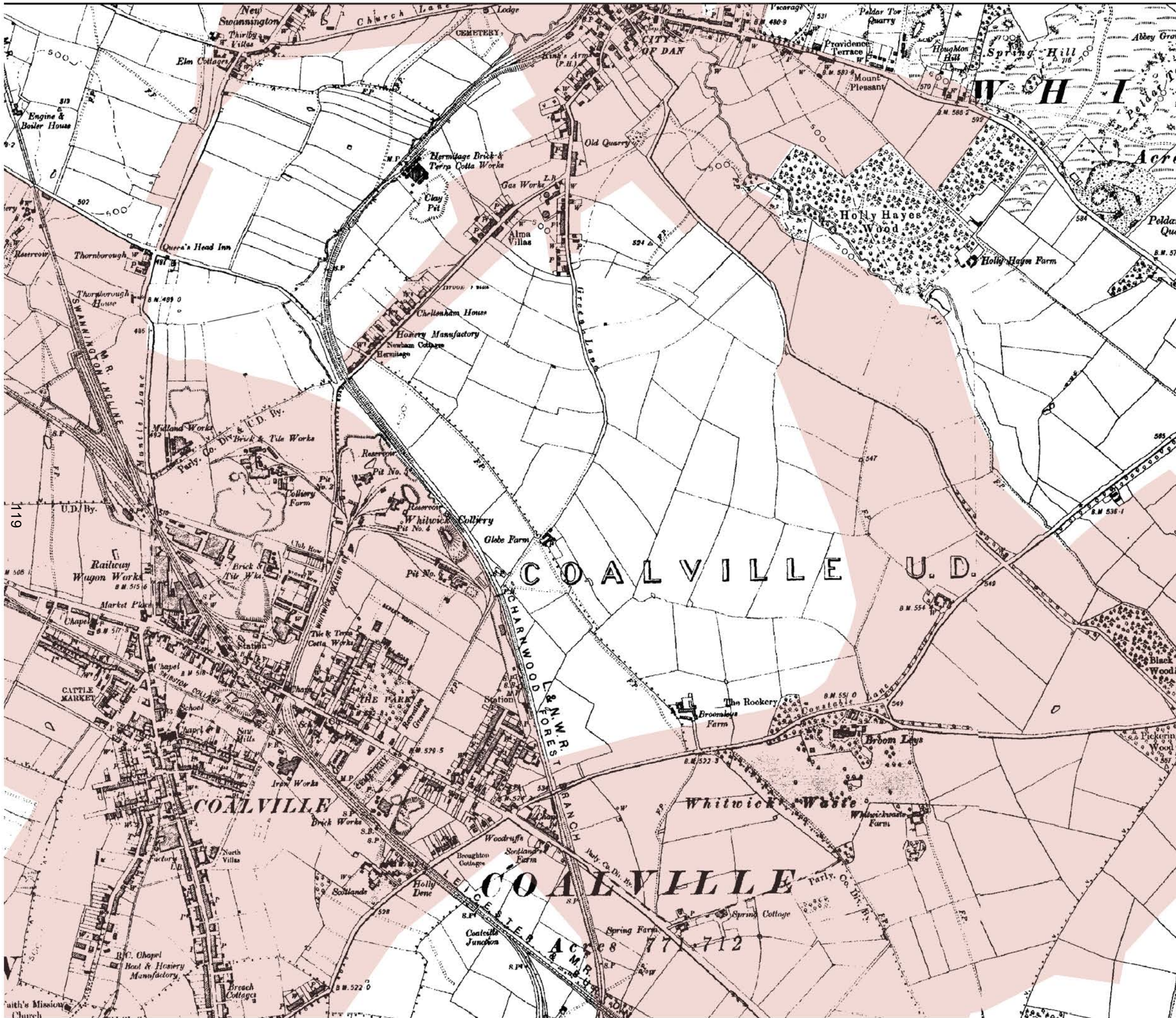
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August 2018



Key

Urban extents 2015



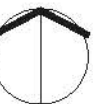
B18061 - Area of Separation Study

1903-1904 OS Plan

Figure 06

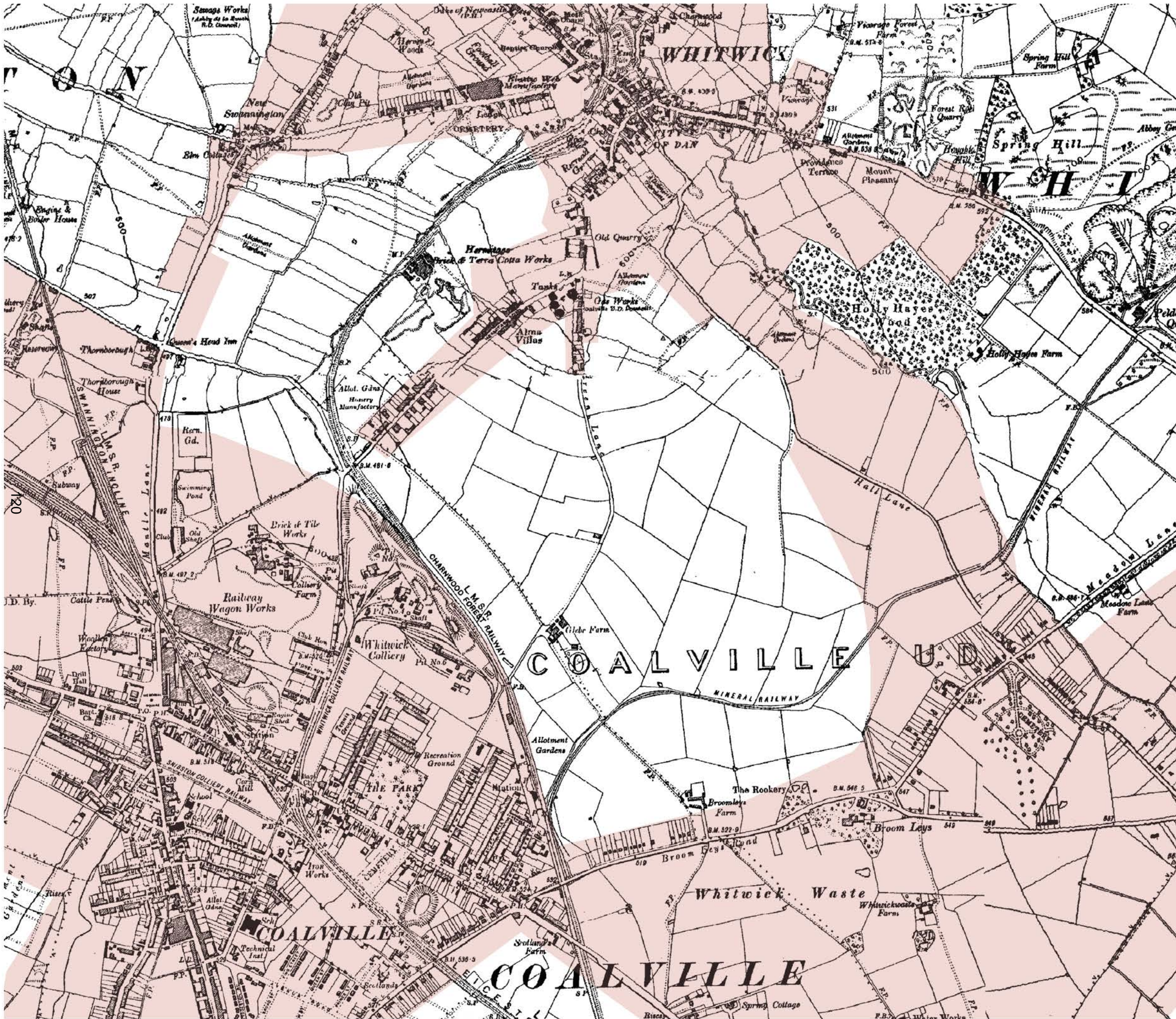
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August 2018



Key

Urban extents 2015



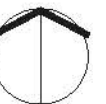
B18061 - Area of Separation Study

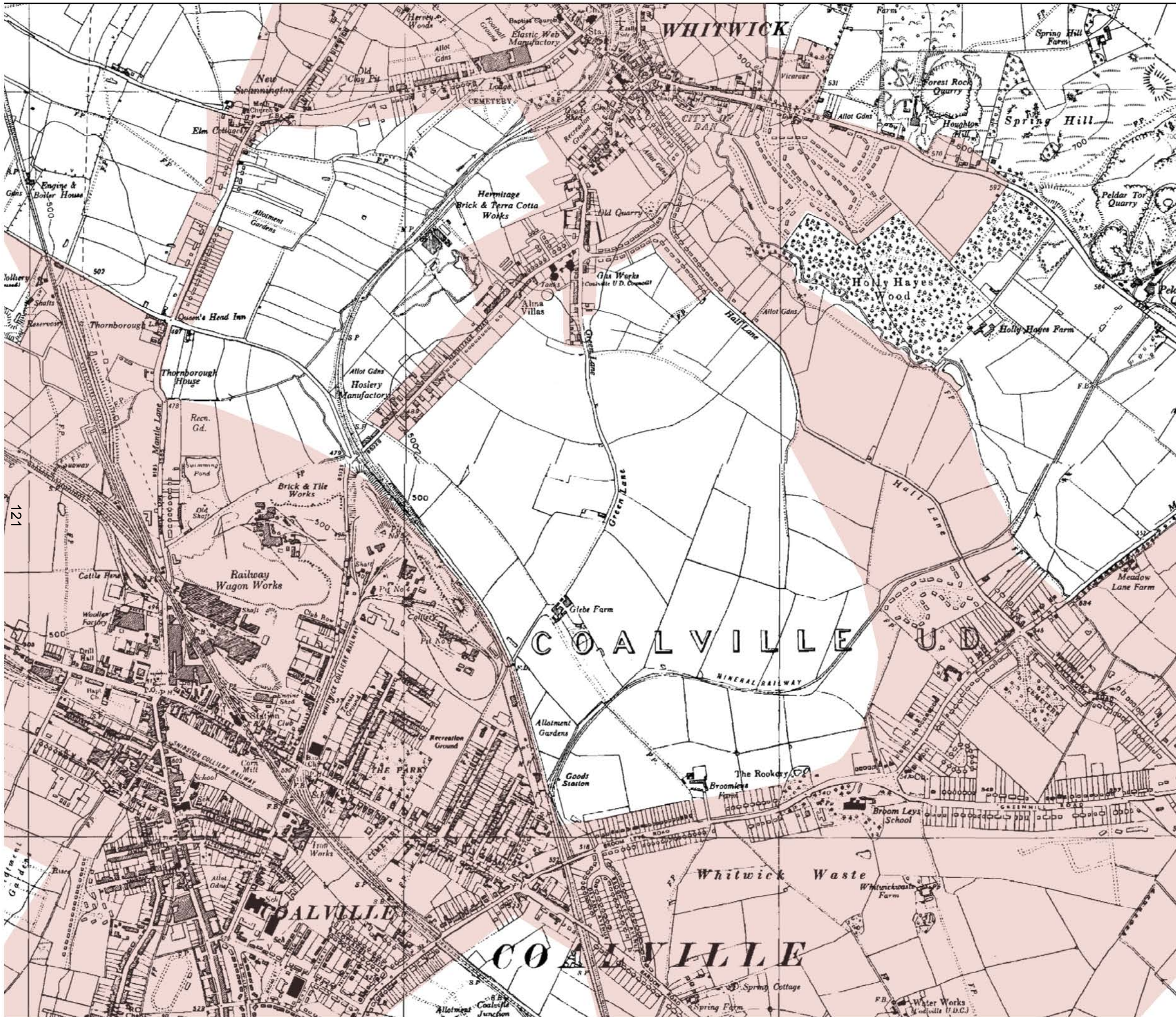
1922-1931 OS Plan

Figure 07

Scale: 1:10,000 @ A3

August 2018





Key

Urban extents 2015

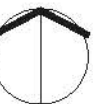
B18061 - Area of Separation Study

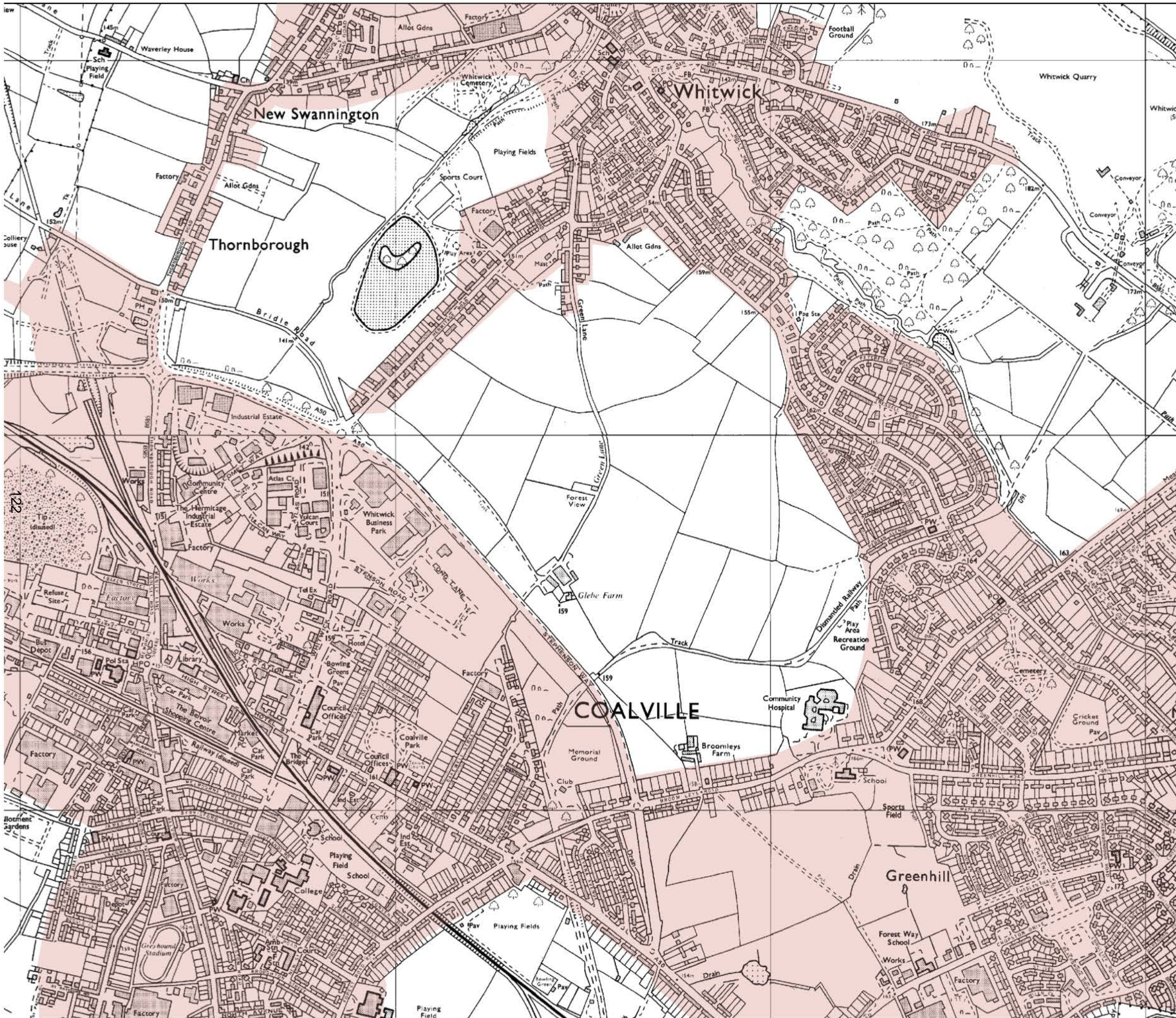
1955 OS Plan

Figure 08

Scale: 1:10,000 @ A3

August 2018





Key

Urban extents 2015

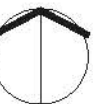
B18061 - Area of Separation Study

1992-1993 OS Plan



Figure 09

Scale: 1:10,000 @ A3

August 2018



Key

-  Area of Separation - Area A
-  New Planting



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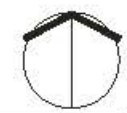
B18061 - Area of Separation Study

Aerial Photograph - Area A - south-east

Figure 10

Scale: NTS @A3

October 2018



Key

 Area of Separation - Area B



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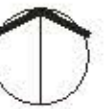
B18061 - Area of Separation Study

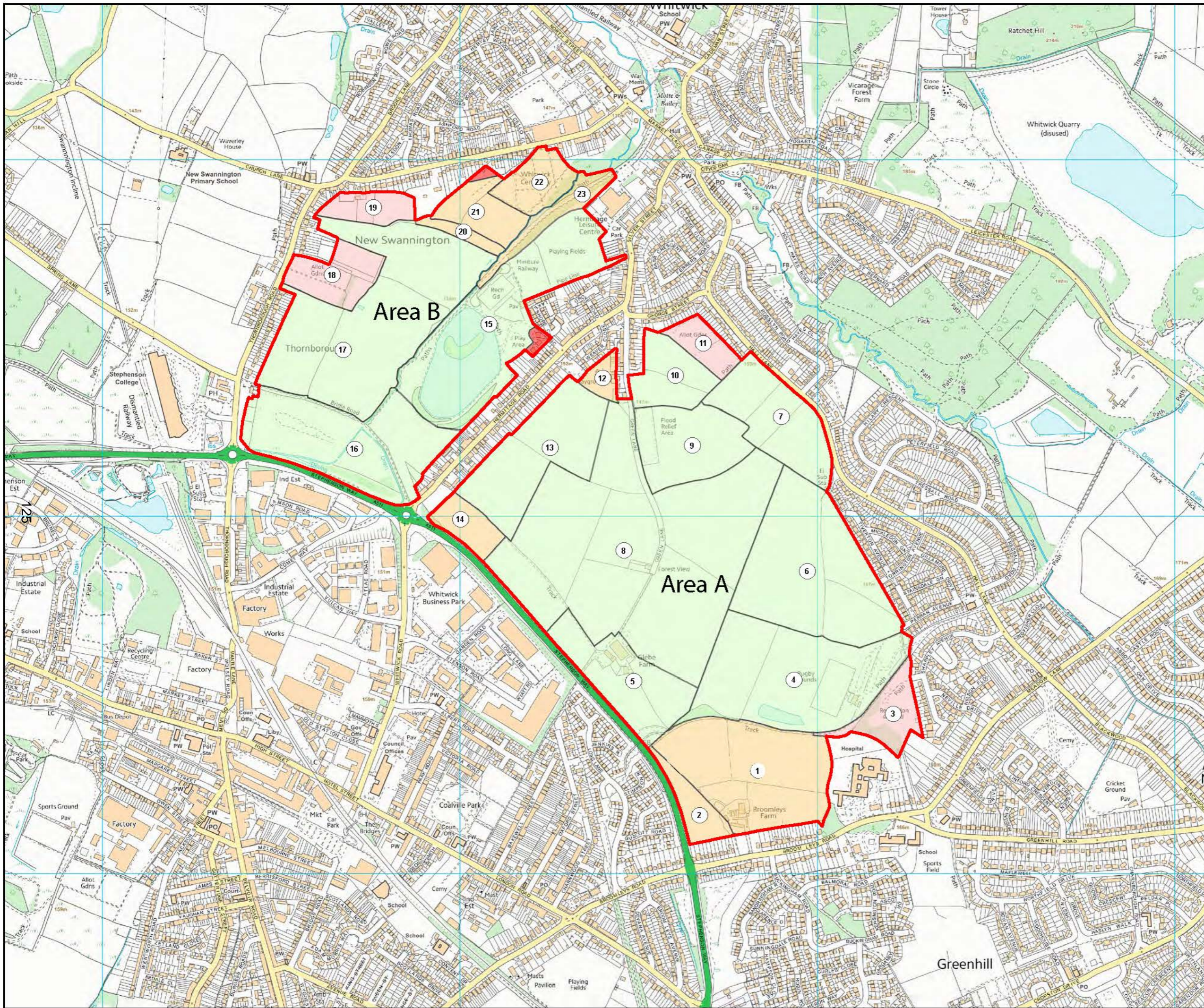
Aerial Photograph - Area B north-west

Figure 11

Scale: NTS @ A3

October 2018





Key **APPENDIX C**

Area of Separation

Area A - South-east

Area B - North-west

Units

Contribution to the Area of Separation

Primary

Secondary

Incidental

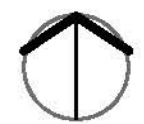
None

B18061 Area of Separation Study





Land Units

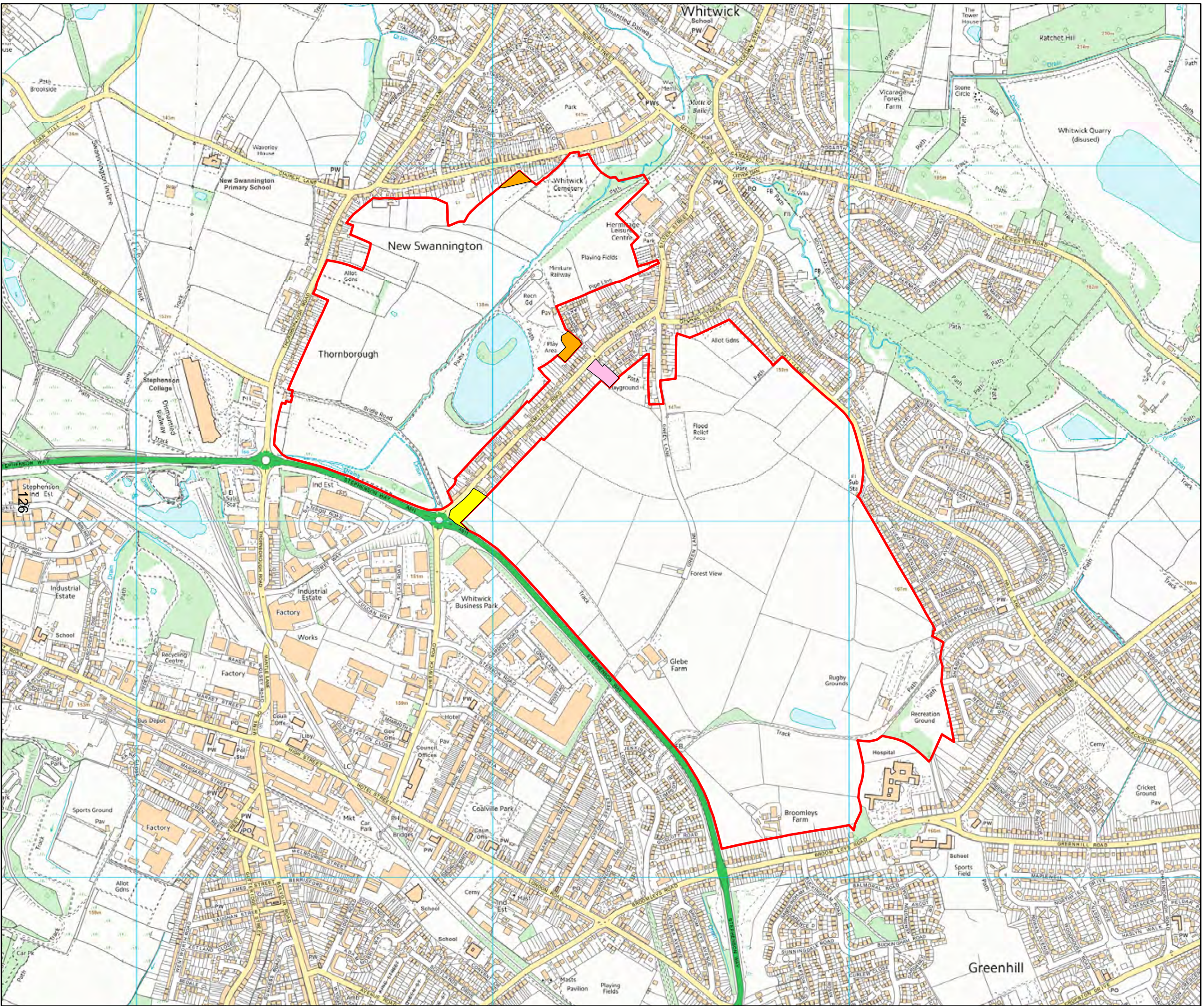
Figure 12

Scale 1:10,000 @ A3
August 2018



APPENDIX C

- Key
-  Area of Separation
 -  Proposed deletion from Area of Separation
 -  Proposed Addition to Area of Separation
 -  Potential addition to Area of Separation



B18061 Area of Separation

Proposed changes to the Area of Separation boundary

Figure 13

Scale 1:10,000 @ A3
July 2019

