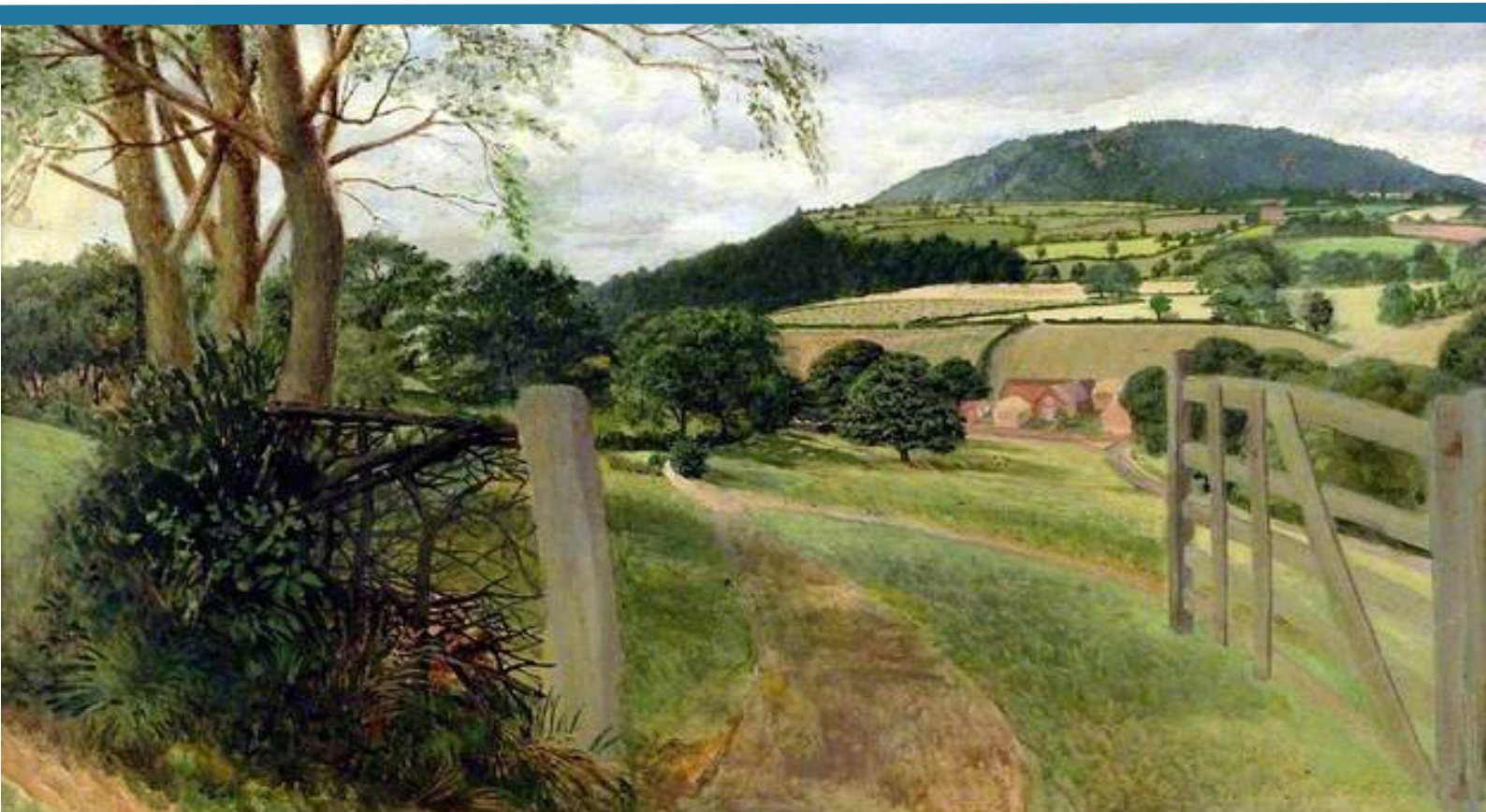


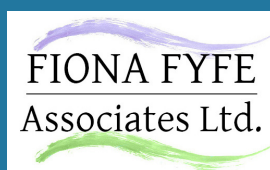
Telford & Wrekin STRATEGIC LANDSCAPES STUDY

Final Report
December 2015



*The Wrekin from Coalbrookdale, Shropshire by William Henry Gates (1854-1935) Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery ,
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Fiona Fyfe Associates
with
Countryside and Douglas Harman Landscape Planning



Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank all members of the project team for their excellent contributions to the project: Douglas Harman for sharing the fieldwork and contributing to the write-up, and Jonathan Porter of Countryside for the GIS and cartography. Thanks are also due to the client team (specifically Lawrence Munyuki and Michael Vout of Telford & Wrekin Council) for sharing their knowledge, enthusiasm and advice throughout the project.

All photographs in this document have been taken by Fiona Fyfe.

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Executive Summary

The Telford & Wrekin Local Plan (2011-2031) is currently being produced. It identifies three areas as Strategic Landscapes, namely the **Weald Moors**, **Lilleshall Village** and **Wrekin Forest**. Each has a different and distinctive landscape character, and all contribute to the overall quality of the Borough.

The purpose of the Telford & Wrekin Strategic Landscapes Study ('the study') is to provide an Evidence Base relating to the Strategic Landscapes. Its aim is to 'identify and assess the Strategic Landscapes and their sensitivity to development and change'. The objectives of the study are:

- To identify and evaluate the significant landscape characteristics, special qualities and key sensitivities of each Strategic Landscape.
- To identify the extent of each Strategic Landscape.
- To identify the broad parameters and nature of change which are compatible with the appropriate protection and conservation of the each Strategic Landscape.

The study has involved a combination of desk studies, fieldwork, cartography and writing, to produce consistent and detailed information on the Strategic Landscapes to fulfil the objectives above. The study was commissioned by Telford & Wrekin Council, and has been prepared by Fiona Fyfe Associates with Douglas Harman Landscape Planning and Countryside. The work was carried out between September and December 2015.

Part 1 of the study contains a short introduction to outline the background and context of the work. It introduces the terminology used, and the approach and methodology adopted for assessing the landscape and defining the Strategic Landscape boundaries.

Part 2 of the study contains a series of three profiles, one for each of the Strategic Landscapes described above. Each profile presents a **landscape character appraisal**, comprising a detailed analysis of the natural, cultural and perceptual factors which combine to create the distinctive characters of the three landscapes. The functions and condition of each landscape are also described. The profiles then present a **sensitivity appraisal** for each Strategic Landscape, including the special qualities of the landscape and its visual attributes. This is followed by a section on the **forces for change** affecting (or likely to affect) each Strategic Landscape. **Planning and management principles** provide guidance on appropriate development and change to ensure that the special qualities, views and character of each Strategic Landscape are not compromised, and (where relevant) enhanced.

Finally, each Strategic Landscape is provided with a boundary based on the application of consistent, landscape character-based criteria.



1. The Weald Moors near Kynnersley Drive



2. View towards Lilleshall Hill from Pitchcroft Lane



3. Wrekin Forest sunrise from the A5

1.0 Background

1.1 Commissioning

This study was commissioned by Telford & Wrekin Council in August 2015. It was undertaken by Fiona Fyfe Associates, with Countryside and Douglas Harman Landscape Planning, between September and December 2015.

1.2 Purpose

This study provides an analysis of three Strategic Landscapes, through understanding and description of landscape character, and the associated landscape and visual sensitivities. It also provides principles regarding development and change to ensure that the special qualities of each Strategic Landscape are not compromised.

The aim of the study is to *Identify and assess the Strategic Landscapes and their sensitivity to development and change*. The objectives of the study are:

- To identify and evaluate the significant landscape characteristics, special qualities and key sensitivities of each Strategic Landscape.
- To identify the extent of each Strategic Landscape.
- To identify the broad parameters and nature of change which are compatible with the appropriate protection and conservation of the each Strategic Landscape.

1.3 Format of Study

The study is set out in two parts. Part 1 contains introductory material, including a summary of the project purposes, the study areas, the approach and the methodology used to undertake the study. Part 2 contains a series of profiles, one for each of the three Strategic Landscapes identified. Each profile contains the following sections:

Introduction:

- Location and context
- Summary description

Landscape Character Appraisal:

This section describes the various components of the landscape, how it has evolved, the functions of the landscape and its quality and condition.

- Summary of key characteristics (including natural, cultural and perceptual landscape characteristics)
- Historical development of the landscape
- Landscape Character Types
- Natural Influences and sites
- Cultural influences and sites

- Visual and perceptual qualities
- Functions of the landscape
- Green infrastructure and ecosystem services
- Landscape quality and condition

Sensitivity Appraisal:

This section identifies the sensitivities of the Strategic Landscape in terms of its special qualities and views. It is important that any development or changes in management which occur within the Strategic Landscape (or in its vicinity) is not detrimental to the special qualities of the landscape, or associated views.

- Special Qualities of the landscape
- Views and visibility

Forces for change affecting the landscape:

This section outlines the main changes that are likely to affect the character and quality of the Strategic Landscape. These may be in response to environmental changes, development pressures, economic conditions and changes in land management.

Planning and management principles:

This section contains principles for planning and management within the Strategic Landscape. They are intended to ensure that development and change are accommodated within the landscape, without compromising its character or special qualities, or having a detrimental impact upon important views.

Any development involving Planning Permission is required to provide adequate reasoning and justification for its design. This guidance supports that requirement by providing information about the qualities, character and sensitivity of each Strategic Landscape as well as guidance regarding the type of development change which would be appropriate in order to protect those qualities and character.

Boundary:

This section describes the boundaries of each Strategic Landscape, the criteria for inclusion of land within the boundary, and justification of the chosen boundary. A map of the boundary is provided for each Strategic Landscape.

Appendix A contains a glossary of acronyms and technical terms; Appendix B contains key references and sources of further information; Appendix C provides tabulated information on the green infrastructure functions associated with each Strategic Landscape; Appendix D provides detailed information on ecosystem services, and Appendix E contains relevant extracts from the Shropshire Landscape Typology.

1.4 Planning Policy Context

European Landscape Convention

The European Landscape Convention (ELC) promotes the protection, management and planning of European landscapes and establishes the general legal principles by which national policies on landscape issues must be guided. The European Landscape Convention came into force in the UK in 2007.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by “protecting and enhancing valued landscapes”.

Local Planning policy

At the time of production of this study the existing and relevant local planning policy comprises the following documents:

Core Strategy (2007)

Wrekin Local Plan (2007) Saved Policies

Telford & Wrekin Local Plan

At the time of the study the Council was producing the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan. This plan makes reference to three areas as Strategic Landscapes:

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

The new Local Plan seeks to protect these landscapes from inappropriate development which would cause detrimental change to the quality of the landscape.

The locations of the three Strategic Landscapes within the Borough are shown in *Fig. 1*.

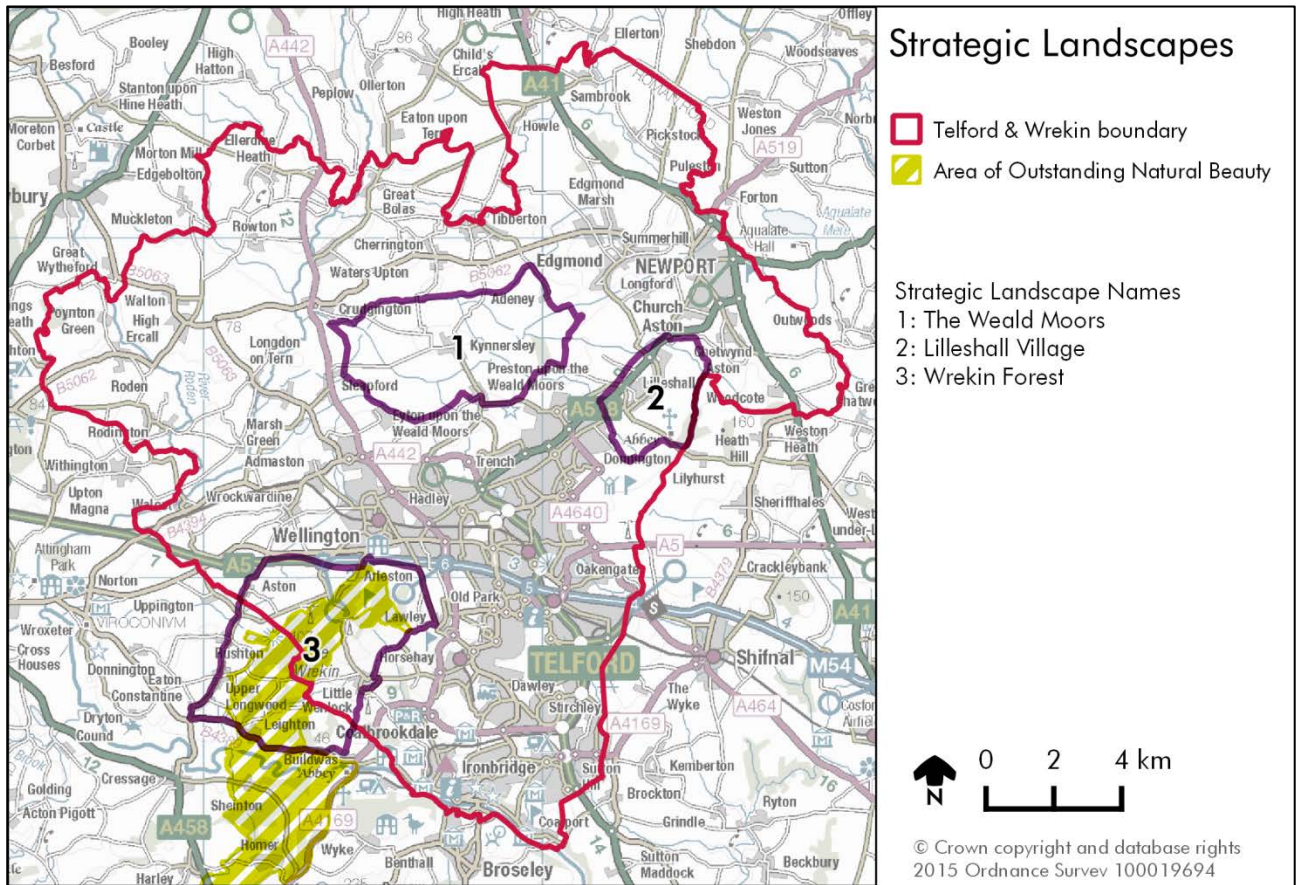


Fig. 1: Location of Strategic Landscapes within Telford & Wrekin Borough

2.0 Approach and Methodology

2.1 Current Best Practice Guidance

The study is in line with the Best Practice guidance which is current at the time of writing (November 2015):

An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (Natural England, 2014)

This document sets out the recommended methodology for undertaking landscape character assessments. It emphasises the holistic concept of landscape (i.e. considering natural, cultural and perceptual factors) which is endorsed in the European Landscape Convention. It also recognises the importance of landscape character assessment as an evidence base to support a range of decisions and applications.

Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland, Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity (The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2003)

This document is currently being reviewed, but is still valid at the time of writing. It provides detailed discussion of factors to consider when assessing the sensitivity of landscape and its capacity to accommodate development. Two types of landscape sensitivity are considered: **landscape sensitivity to a specific type of change**, and **landscape character sensitivity**. The latter is described as *‘the sensitivity of the landscape as a whole, in terms of its overall character, its quality and condition, the aesthetic aspects of its character, and also the sensitivity of individual elements contributing to the landscape’ (Topic Paper 6 p. 5).*

Landscape character sensitivity is a useful concept in studies such as this one, where landscape character is a key factor in the designation of areas. Once the landscape character and its special qualities are understood, it is possible to make recommendations to promote their protection and enhancement in the future. In considering landscape sensitivity, it is also important to consider the visual sensitivity of the landscape, i.e. its *‘general visibility and the potential scope to mitigate the visual effects of any change that may take place’ (Topic Paper 6 p.5)*

Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) 3rd Edition (Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013)

This document provides guidance for those carrying out Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIA) for development proposals, and it also a useful tool for planning authorities to use when assessing planning applications. It stresses the importance of producing LVIA's which are specific for both the type of development being proposed and the particular location. The document explains that in order to identify the landscape and visual impacts of a proposed development, it is necessary to have a suitable Landscape Character Assessment. It states that *‘Local Authority assessments provide more detail on the types of landscape that occur in the study area. They can be mapped to show how the proposals relate to them and the descriptions and definition of key characteristics can*

be used to inform the description of the landscapes that may be affected by the proposal'. (GLVIA 3rd Ed. p. 79). The special qualities of the Strategic Landscapes identified in this study will therefore be a useful tool in this process.

The document also identifies the need to understand the value of landscapes when undertaking LVIA's, including *'local planning documents which may show the extent of and policies for local planning designations'*. (GLVIA 3rd Ed. p.82). Box 5.1 (p. 84) provides a list of factors which can help in the identification of valued landscapes. These include landscape quality (condition); scenic quality; conservation interests; recreation value and perceptual aspects.

GLVIA 3rd Ed. also considers in detail the assessment of visual impacts of proposed developments. Amongst the factors to consider are the values attached to views, including *'recognition of the value attached to particular views, for example in relation to heritage assets, or through planning designations'*. Again, this study should inform this process.

2.2 Terminology

A glossary of acronyms and technical terms is provided in Appendix A. In addition to the terms relating to landscape sensitivity described above, the following definitions have been used in the production of this study, taken from *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* (Natural England, 2014).

Landscape: *'An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'* [European Landscape Convention]

Landscape Character: *'A distinct and recognisable pattern of elements, or characteristics, in the landscape that make one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.'*

Landscape Quality (or condition): *'is based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape, and about its intactness, from visual, functional and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements which make up the character in any one place.'*

Landscape Character Type *'These are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogenous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different areas in different parts of the country, but wherever they occur, they share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation, historical land use and settlement pattern.'*

2.3 Green infrastructure and ecosystem services

The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) defines green infrastructure as:

A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.

Telford & Wrekin Council has undertaken an extensive study of the Borough's green infrastructure, and identified a wide range of green infrastructure functions (for example habitat for wildlife; public

recreation and water storage). The Strategic Landscapes Study has used this information, and therefore ties in with existing work undertaken by the Council. The green infrastructure functions identified within each Strategic Landscape are described within this study, in order to demonstrate the many and varied functions of the Strategic Landscapes. Appendix B contains a series of tables (one for each Strategic Landscape) which describe the extent to which they contribute to the green infrastructure functions previously identified by the Council. This information is also summarised in the Strategic Landscape Profiles. For example, the Weald Moors make an important contribution to ground water storage, whilst the Wrekin Forest makes an important contribution to timber production.

The **ecosystem approach** is closely related to green infrastructure. It identifies functions of the landscape as a series of **ecosystem services**, which extend beyond those functions recognised in the green infrastructure work.

Ecosystem services can be described as *the multiple benefits gained by people from the natural environment*. They are classified into four categories, as follows:

- **Provisioning Services:** Products obtained from ecosystems, including food, fibre, fuel, medicines and fresh water.
- **Regulatory services:** Benefits obtained from the regulation of ecosystem processes, e.g. air quality regulation, climate regulation, water regulation.
- **Cultural Services:** Non-material benefits people obtain from ecosystems, including recreation, aesthetic experiences and spiritual enrichment.
- **Supporting services:** Services that are necessary for the production of all other ecosystem services, including soil formation, photosynthesis and water cycling.

The Strategic Landscape Profiles contain a summary of their key contributions to ecosystem services. Further information on the ecosystem approach is provided in Appendix D.

2.4 Defining the extents of Strategic Landscapes

A key element of the project is defining the boundaries of the Strategic Landscapes (set out at the end of each of the Strategic Landscape Profiles in Part 2). To do this, the landscape character of each Strategic Landscape and its surrounding area has been assessed in terms of its natural, cultural and perceptual aspects. With a detailed understanding of landscape character and quality, it is possible to then identify the geographic extents of the area in which an observer feels to be within a specific landscape (rather than looking at it from a distance). In essence, each Strategic Landscape is defined through the experience of consistent character and quality, and the associated special qualities, that underpins sense of place. It is more than a simple visual connection (with the Wrekin or Lilleshall Monument for example); it also takes account of underlying geological connections, habitats, and cultural connections within the landscape. The boundary of the Wrekin Forest Strategic Landscape also takes account of the undeveloped setting of the Shropshire Hills AONB in key views from roads, footpaths, viewpoints and settlements.

It is very unusual for changes in landscape character to be abrupt; rather, it is often a gradual process of transition. However, for planning purposes such as defining the extents of the Strategic Landscapes, it is necessary to identify a suitable boundary within the zone of transition. In all cases we have used a boundary which is clearly identifiable on the ground. Where a suitable road/ track exists, we have used a road or track. Clearly-visible natural features have also been used such as watercourses or woodland edges. Where necessary we have followed field boundaries (marked by hedgerows or ditches) for short sections.

When drawing the boundary we have avoided splitting designated sites (for example Sites of Special Scientific Interest or Scheduled Monuments). The only exception to this is where the boundary of Lilleshall Hall Registered Park and Garden continues beyond the Telford & Wrekin Borough boundary.

2.5 The Shropshire Landscape Typology

Telford & Wrekin is covered by the Shropshire Landscape Typology, prepared by Shropshire County Council in 2006. This is a County-level study, which identifies 27 different Landscape Types across Shropshire. Some Landscape Types (such as the Lowland Moors) have very limited distribution, whilst others (such as the Estate Farmlands) occur widely across the county.

Each of the Strategic Landscapes described in this study contains a different combination of Landscape Types. The Strategic Landscape Profiles in Part 2 contain map extracts from the Shropshire Landscape Typology showing which Landscape Types are present. The key characteristics of these Landscape Types (as described in the Shropshire Landscape Typology) are provided in Appendix E of this study.

The Shropshire Landscape Typology is at a county-wide scale, and was undertaken primarily using desk-based assessment techniques. The Landscape Character Appraisal for Strategic Landscapes has been done at a local scale, and takes into account the findings of both desk studies and fieldwork. It therefore contains a greater level of detail, and reflects more closely the landscape as experienced on the ground.

2.6 Stages of Work

The study is the result of five stages of work, as summarised below.

Stage 1: Project Inception

- Project start-up meeting to agree methodology, milestones and outputs.
- Site visit with the client.
- Exchange of GIS datasets, and other relevant documents.

Stage 2: Desk Studies

- Extensive background reading relating to landscape character and features, including existing Landscape Character Assessments; books/ studies about the area, Wrekin Forest Plan, AONB Management Plan, Village Appraisals, aerial photographs and other relevant documentation relating to landscape character, sensitivity, features and condition.
- Assimilation and reading of relevant national and local planning policy documents.
- Research into other landscape and historic environment sources, including (for example) citations for natural and cultural site designations; historic maps; Historic Landscape Characterisation.
- Building of project GIS, and mapping of designated sites.

Stage 3: Fieldwork

- The fieldwork was carried out over four days by two chartered landscape architects. It involved visiting each of the three Strategic Landscapes (and the viewpoints which overlook them) and completing comprehensive and detailed fieldwork sheets recording (for example) the natural, cultural and perceptual qualities of the landscapes, their functions, condition, visibility, numbers and types of viewers, key views and any other relevant observations.
- Mapping the extents of the three strategic landscape areas (at 1: 25K scale) based on their landscape character and sense of place.
- Comprehensive photo coverage of key views, landscape features etc.

Stage 4: Writing Up and Outputs

- Preparation and compilation of text, maps and photographs.
- Issue of draft study to the client for comment.

Stage 5: Final edits and issue

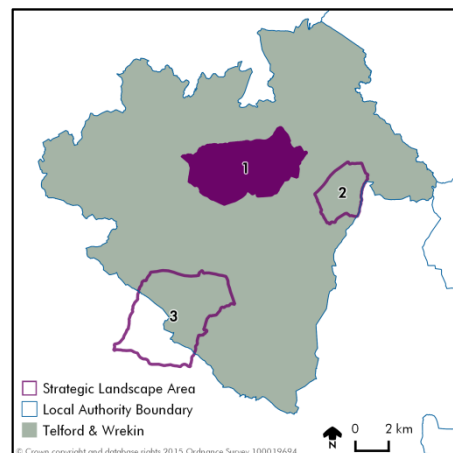
- Feedback from the client on the draft study.
- Meetings and feedback with local stakeholders.
- Incorporation of comments, proof reading and final edits.
- Final study and supporting GIS data.

The Weald Moors Strategic Landscape

Introduction

Location and Context

The Weald Moors is located to the north of Wellington and the Leegomery, Hadley Castle and Hortonwood areas of Telford. The village of Kynnersley is in the centre of the area, and the village of Preston Upon the Weald Moors is in the south.



4. A typical view looking north across Eyton Moor towards the Strine Brook

Summary Description

The Weald Moors Strategic Landscape is characterised by its combination of low-lying topography, wooded skylines, network of tree-lined streams and ditches, quiet rural lanes and lack of settlement. Despite its proximity to Telford, it feels relatively tranquil and peaceful and has a strongly rural character. Trees and woodland focus views inwards across the open Moors, and screen views of recent development outside the area. This creates a sense of physical and visual isolation and detachment.

There are long views across the Moors, dominated by big skies above low, treed horizons. The presence of trees and woodland, and diverse patterns of agricultural land use, combine to create seasonal changes in colour and texture. Historically, the area was a wet peat bog, used as common land, and this is still reflected in its relative lack of settlement, roads and footpaths. Its subsequent drainage has created a distinctive low-lying agricultural landscape containing numerous sinuous streams (known as 'strines') and straight drainage channels. There are also surviving traces of later canals which crossed the area.

Landscape Character Appraisal

Key Characteristics

- Underlying **geology** of Permian sandstone, overlain by peaty soils which developed as bog in a shallow depression occupied by a post-glacial lake. Clay soils occur in the centre and periphery.
- A predominantly flat **landform**, with 'islands' of slightly raised land, most noticeably around Kynnersley and around the margins of the area. The Weald Moors are drained by a complex network of streams and artificial drainage ditches.
- **Semi-natural habitats** include blocks of wet woodland and riparian habitats along streams and ditches.
- A **well-treed** landscape, comprising regular-shaped blocks of deciduous wet woodland/plantation, shelter belts, lines of trees (often pollarded willows) following streams and ditches, and field trees (predominantly oak).
- **Field boundaries** are generally trimmed hedgerows along roads, and hedges or ditches between fields. Fields are generally large and regular in shape, reflecting the area's relatively late enclosure.
- Nucleated and distinctive predominantly brick-built villages of Kinnersley and Preston Upon the Weald Moors located on slightly elevated land in the centre of the area. Elsewhere, **settlement** is limited to scattered farms and estate cottages.
- Excepting occasional woodland and settlement, **land use** is almost entirely agricultural, comprising a mix of arable and pastoral fields, and some biomass crops.
- Very limited **road network** within the area, comprising narrow rural lanes and tracks. Some are signed quiet lanes. Lines of electricity poles along roads are relatively prominent in this flat landscape.
- **Historic features** include earthworks of a prehistoric fort at Wall, Preston Hall, and traces of the canal network with some surviving canal structures. There are also old winding lanes following higher land.
- A relatively **tranquil** area, with a sense of visual and physical **detachment** from surrounding urban development. It is peaceful, with sounds dominated by birdsong and agricultural machinery.
- **Long views** across open fields, sometimes framed by trees. Horizons are generally low, and include woodland and silhouettes of trees. Skyscapes and light have a strong influence on the 'mood' of the area.
- There are relatively few **distinctive landmarks** within the area, largely because of the flat topography. Occasional glimpses of the Wrekin or Lilleshall Monument on the skyline provide orientation.



5. Straight road & reed-fringed ditches at Crudington Moor



6. Eyton Lock on the Shrewsbury Canal



7. Estate cottages in Kynnersley village

Historical Development of the Landscape

Until relatively recently, the Weald Moors comprised an extensive peat bog with pockets of open water. Much of the area was therefore unsuitable for settlement, although there were pockets of higher land. The large Iron-Age hillfort at Wall was constructed on one of these 'islands'. It contains several rings of banks and ditches, and is unusual in that it sited on low ground rather than a hilltop. Nevertheless, it has extensive views across the surrounding moors.

During medieval times, the area was still a wetland, used as common land for seasonal grazing, fishing, and the gathering of peat for fuel. Today, the parish boundaries still form a 'spoked wheel' pattern around the Weald Moors, reflecting the historic need for many different parishes to have access to common land. The villages of Kynnersley and Preston Upon the Weald Moors developed on raised 'islands' in the Moors, and the twisting lanes which followed slightly drier land across the Moors still survive.

The post-medieval period saw great changes to the Weald Moors landscape, when the wetland was drained, and the common land enclosed into parcels of farmland allocated to individual landowners. The process of enclosure involved the construction of drainage ditches ('Commission Drain' can still be seen on maps today), straight roads and regular-shaped fields, often bounded by ditches or hawthorn hedgerows. In 1835, the Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal opened a canal branch linking Norbury Junction (east of Newport) with the Shrewsbury Canal at Wappenshall. Maps from this time show the canal, and an aqueduct east of Kynnersley. The canal was abandoned in 1944. The second half of the 20th Century saw amalgamation of fields, intensification of agricultural production, and some loss of hedgerows.

Constituent Landscape Character Types

See section 2.5 for an explanation of the Shropshire Landscape Typology and how it relates to this study.

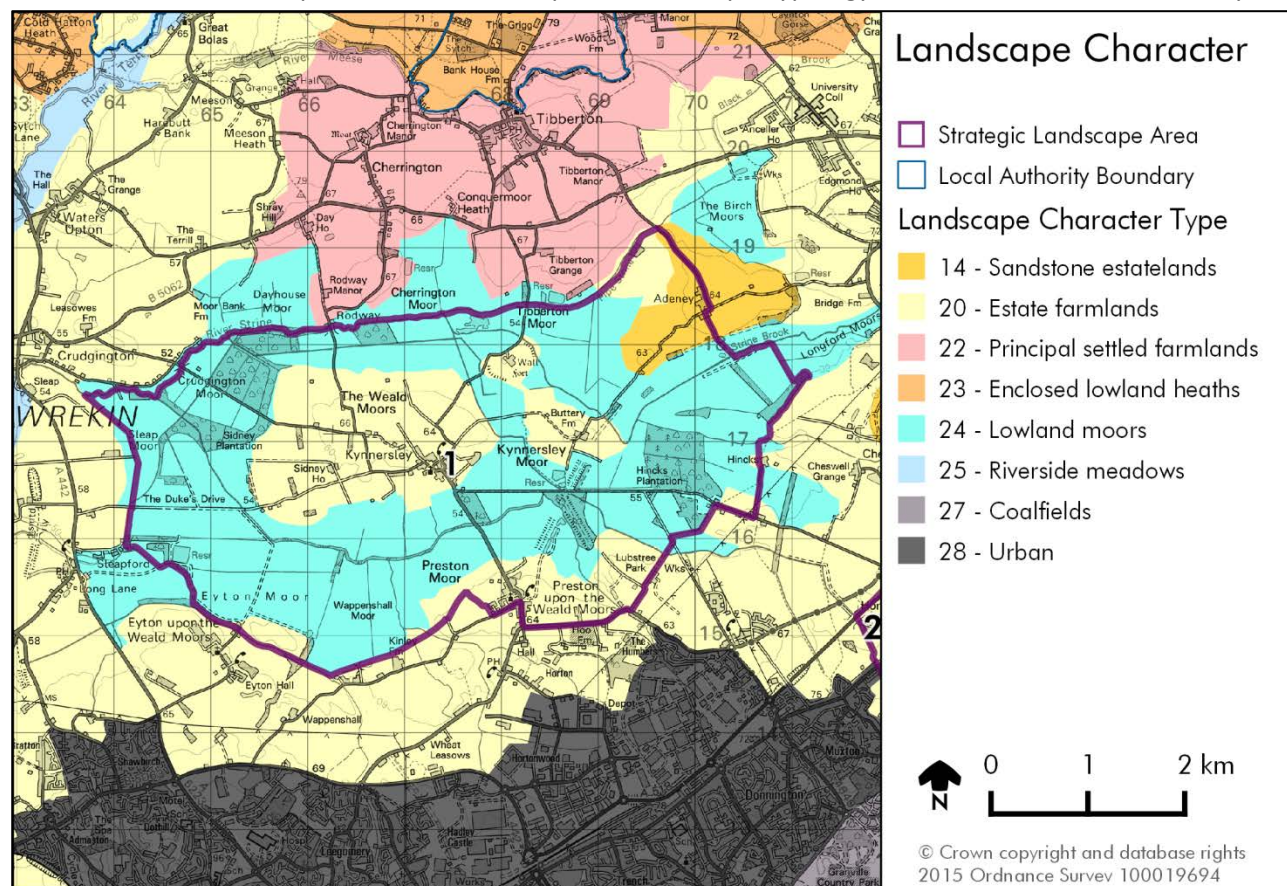


Fig. 2: Landscape Character Types in the Weald Moors Strategic Landscape

The Shropshire Landscape Typology illustrates two key Landscape Character Types within the Weald Moors, shown on *fig.2*. More detail on these Types is provided in Appendix E. The key Types are:

- Lowland Moors (covering much of the area)
- Estate Farmlands (covering the raised ground around Kynnersley and at the periphery of the area).

Natural Influences and sites (See *fig. 3* for the locations of designated sites)

- Former raised bog has created a distinctive flat landform, hydrology and drainage pattern.
- Kynnersley Moor Woods designated Local Wildlife Site.
- Blocks of wet woodland throughout the area.
- Riparian habitats along streams and drainage ditches. (see *photo 8*).

Cultural Influences and sites (See *fig. 4* for the locations of designated sites)

- The Wall Iron-Age fort is a Scheduled Monument (see *photo 9*).
- Clusters of Listed Buildings in Kynnersley and Preston Upon the Weald Moors. Buttery Farmhouse is also listed.
- Duke of Sutherland estate architecture in Kynnersley village, and in farms and cottages across the area (See *photo 7*).
- Ancient twisting roads following drier land, contrasting with straight roads associated with post-medieval drainage and enclosure (See *photo 5*).
- Remnants of canals and associated structures, including Wappenshall Canal Bridge (Scheduled Monument) and Eyton lock-keeper's cottage (listed building) (See *photo 6*).
- Preston Hospital (listed grade 1) was built as almshouses in 1725.

Visual and perceptual qualities

- A strong sense of place with a very distinctive rural and undeveloped character.
- A landscape with strong horizontal lines, in which skies appear large. Horizons are generally low and treed. Where vertical features (e.g. electricity poles) occur, they are often noticeable.
- Straight roads and artificial drainage ditches contrast with the sinuous courses of natural streams (known locally as 'strines').
- Lines of trees (particularly mature willows along streams) are distinctive features in views.
- Deciduous woodland and trees create seasonally-changing patterns of colour and texture within the landscape.
- Long views across the flat, open Moors, often framed by trees and woodland. (see *photo 10*)
- Occasional distant glimpses of the Wrekin or Lilleshall monument provide orientation.
- A strong sense of relative peace and tranquillity, with rural sounds. Within the Weald Moors, vegetation and landform create a sense of separation and detachment from nearby urban areas. There is very little non-agricultural development within the area.



8. The Strine Brook, north of Preston Upon the Weald Moors



9. The Wall Iron-Age Hillfort



10. View with willows and the Wrekin on the horizon

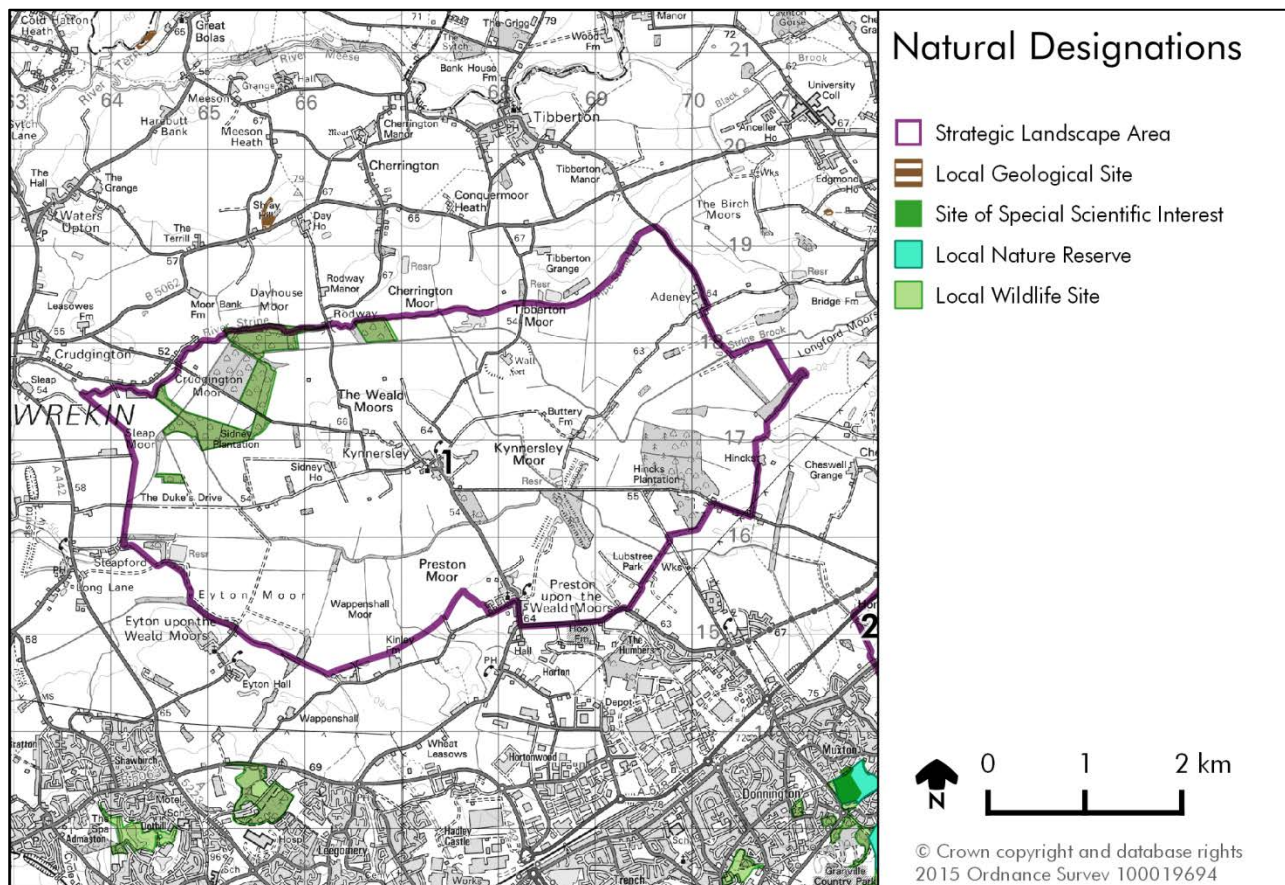


Fig. 3: Natural designations in the Weald Moors Strategic Landscape

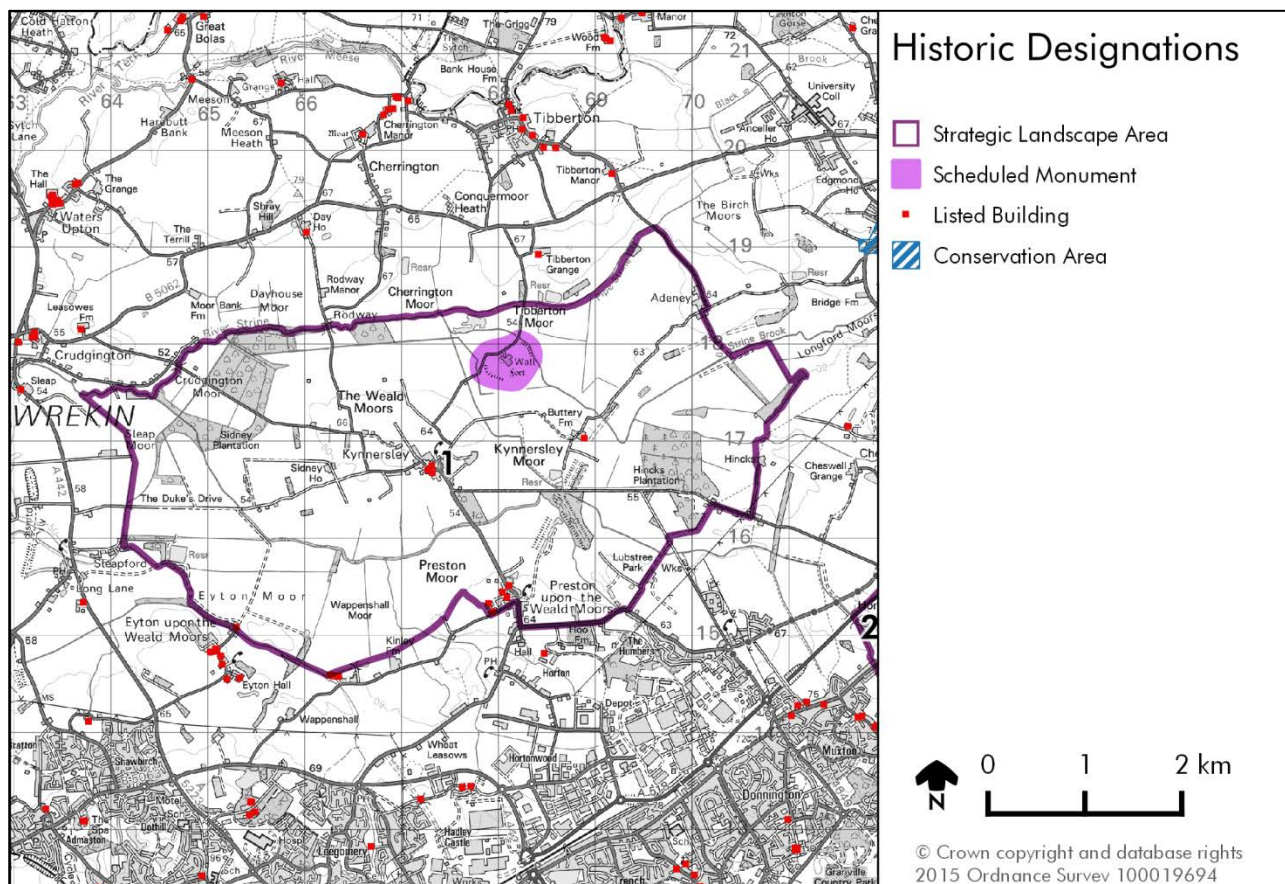


Fig. 4: Historic designations in the Weald Moors Strategic Landscape

Functions

The signed quiet lanes and restricted byways within the area are popular for **recreation**, particularly walking and cycling. There is potential to further improve the accessibility of the area for recreation. The landscape is also important in terms of its **hydrology**. It contains surface reservoirs, and there is also a large sewage works adjacent to the area. The Weald Moors are an important **component of views** from higher ground, including in views from the B5062 which follows the ridge to the north of the area, in views westwards from the popular viewpoint at the Lilleshall Monument, and in views north from the Wrekin. The Weald Moors also form **the landscape setting** to the villages of Kynnersley and Preston Upon the Weald Moors.

Green Infrastructure (See section 2.3)

A full list showing how the Weald Moors contribute to green infrastructure functions is shown in Appendix C. The green infrastructure functions which are present across most or all of this landscape are:

- Aesthetic qualities
- Carbon Storage
- Food production
- Inaccessible water storage
- Water conveyance
- Water interception
- Noise absorption

Ecosystem Services (See section 2.3 and Appendix D for an explanation of terminology)

The Weald Moors make a major contribution to **provisioning services**, primarily through food production, but also timber production and biomass crops. Reservoirs provide fresh water. The Weald Moors also provide **regulatory services**, including water regulation, carbon storage (in peat) and regulation of air quality. **Cultural services** include recreation and positive aesthetic experiences. The Weald Moors also contribute to **supporting services**, including photosynthesis and water cycling.

Landscape quality and condition

This is a landscape which retains its integrity (i.e. its sense of completeness, with many historic features still intact and present in the landscape). The lack of recent development and change is highlighted by the fact that it is still possible to navigate the area with a map from 1835. The area is generally well-managed and in a good condition- for example woodlands are looked-after and field boundaries are stockproof. It retains most of its structural elements (i.e. the physical features such as woodland, field boundaries, lanes and shelter belts which determine its physical form and appearance), although some field boundaries have been lost. Some individual features (for example traditional brick farm buildings) are in a poor state of repair, and some appear to be abandoned. There are occasional incongruous features, such as large modern agricultural sheds which do not fit with their surroundings in terms of their large scale, artificial colours or prominent location. Nevertheless the area is a good example of a relatively rare landscape type both locally and nationally. It has a strong landscape character (described earlier in this Profile) and a very distinctive sense of place, which makes it recognisably different from other parts of the Borough.

Sensitivity Appraisal

This section identifies the sensitivities of the Weald Moors Strategic Landscape in terms of its special qualities and views. It is important that any development or changes in management which occur within or around the Strategic Landscape is not detrimental to the special qualities of the landscape, or associated views.

Special Qualities of the Landscape

- Flat, low-lying topography on a former peat bog, with slightly raised 'islands' occupied by villages.
- A strong sense of visual enclosure created by the pattern of woodland blocks, shelter belts and lines of trees. These block views of surrounding urban areas.
- An intricate network of sinuous streams lined with willow trees, and straight drainage ditches.
- Long inward views across the open Moors, often framed by trees.
- A sense of peace and tranquillity, with very little visible development.
- A strongly rural landscape, with little settlement and relatively few roads.
- Low, wooded horizons and big skies.
- A sense of history in the landscape, stemming from the presence of historic landscape features, including prehistoric fort, quiet medieval lanes and villages, canals, and the landscape legacy of post-medieval drainage and subsequent agriculture.

Visibility

- The low-lying landform does not form a prominent horizon, but the area is visible in elevated views from surrounding higher land.
- Within the area there are long views across the Weald Moors, but these are often framed by trees and woodland.
- The surrounding trees and woodland screen views of development and urban areas beyond the Weald Moors, enhancing the Weald Moors' undeveloped character.
- Residents viewing the landscape from within the area include the occupants of Kynnersley and Preston Upon the Weald Moors, and the scattered farms and cottages throughout the area. There are also views into the area from some adjacent settlements, e.g. Crudgington.
- Recreational users include walkers and cyclists on quiet lanes, and people enjoying views from nearby high ground (e.g. Lilleshall Monument).



11. Cherrington Moor from Wall Bridge

Forces for change affecting the landscape

This section outlines the main changes that are likely to affect the character of the Weald Moors landscape. Landscapes are dynamic, constantly evolving in response to environmental changes, development pressures, economic conditions (for example amalgamation of farm holdings) and changes in land management (alterations in agricultural grant schemes, for example). Sometimes the resulting changes are large in scale; sometimes they are small. Some are immediate, and others are incremental. Some of the changes are within the capacity of the planning system to control, whilst others are outside it. The following section contains principles for planning and management within the area, in order to guide these changes in a way which protect and enhance the special qualities of the landscape.

- Large scale residential (i.e. 10 units or greater) or industrial development around the fringes of the area could detract from the prevailing undeveloped character of the landscape if it is visible in views from within the Strategic Landscape.
- An increase in the frequency or size of vehicles using rural lanes would reduce tranquillity and damage the character of rural lanes. This could also be affected by urban-style highways works such as kerbs, speed humps and signage, which would be detrimental to the area's rural character and introduce suburbanising influences.
- Vertical features such as large pylons, wind turbines and communications masts could impact on horizons, detracting from views across the open Moors by increasing visual clutter. They could also introduce urban features which would undermine the rural character.
- Inappropriately sited and designed development which has not sensitively responded to the design and layout of the existing settlement pattern (nucleated villages and scattered farms) would compromise and erode the rural character and create a more suburban feel.
- Small-scale development which is not sympathetic to existing building styles, scales and materials could also be detrimental to the distinctive local character of the built environment.
- Drying-out of peat soils is likely to affect the fertility of the land and trigger changes in agricultural management. Development, and changes in land management practices such as increased groundwater pumping, could further affect the hydrology of the Weald Moors.
- Agricultural diversification/ amalgamation, if not carefully managed can erode traditional land use patterns (for example, growing biofuel crops instead of food crops), and lead to the abandonment of traditional farm buildings (See *photos 12 and 13*).
- Agricultural intensification can result in the loss of field boundaries, field trees, field margins, and other important landscape features.
- Lack of management of woodlands and trees (for example pollarding willows) will result in poor tree health and eventual loss.
- The use of non-native / naturalised planting such as *Leylandii*, especially in visually prominent locations, will contrast with the semi natural character of vegetation within the area.
- Climate change may lead to increased temperatures, and greater frequency of extreme weather events such as storms, drought and flooding. These may impact on hydrology, habitats, land uses and farming practices.



12. Biomass crops near Aqueduct Plantation



13. Abandoned traditional farmyard, Adeney

Planning and Management Principles: Accommodating Change and Development

The following principles are intended to ensure that development and change are accommodated within the landscape, without compromising the special qualities of the Weald Moors, and to help prevent detrimental impacts on views.

The overall aim is to protect the undeveloped nature of the Weald Moors and to conserve and enhance the experience of tranquillity, the traditional rural character and the landscape pattern of open fields, woodland blocks and tree-lined watercourses. Sites designated for their natural or historic value should be protected and well-managed.

- Resist large scale residential development within the Strategic Landscape which would compromise the pattern of nucleated small villages and scattered dwellings. Also resist other large structures that would compromise the prevailing undeveloped and open character of the area.
- Ensure that any development in the vicinity of the Strategic Landscape is not detrimental to the special qualities of the area. The design and masterplanning of any such development should allow an adequate buffer around the Strategic Landscape, and should incorporate mitigation planting which is in keeping with the existing character of the Weald Moors (for example, blocks of mixed woodland including wet woodland species such as willow, alder, hazel and birch).
- Protect the horizons in views from within the Weald Moors, avoiding development which would be visible on the horizon in views across the open landscape.
- Any small-scale residential development in the area (such as individual dwellings or small clusters of houses) should fit with the existing settlement pattern of nucleated villages and scattered farms. They should be sympathetic to the character of existing buildings in terms of materials, scale and design. Particular regard should be given to the local vernacular of estate architecture, with brick-built dwellings and farm buildings. Particular attention should also be paid to road frontages, avoiding suburban-style gates, walls, planting and fences.
- New agricultural buildings should also be carefully sited, for example to remain below the skyline in key views from roads and footpaths, to relate to existing farm buildings where possible, and to avoid open locations. They should be unobtrusive in their colour and materials, although the precise nature of this requirement will vary. For example, where an agricultural building is seen

against a wooded backdrop, use of Yorkshire boarding is likely to help the building to blend into its wooded setting.

- Encourage the restoration of traditional brick barns and farm buildings in a manner which conserves their character and appearance. Where traditional farm buildings are no longer required for their original purpose, identify potential alternative uses with minimal impact on their outward appearance in the landscape, for example conversion to use by small businesses.
- Develop building design guidance to conserve and enhance the vernacular character of villages and rural buildings. For example, promote use of local materials, appropriate building heights, scale, massing, and other characteristic design details. Guidance should also be provided on road frontages, boundary treatments and planting schemes to enhance the rural character of the area, and avoid suburbanisation.
- Seek opportunities for the establishment of new cycle and footpath routes across the Moors that link to the wider Public Rights of Way network and cycle network.
- Manage watercourses, enhancing their ecological value where possible, for example through provision of reed margins. Consider options for re-wetting of former wetland areas and controlling drying-out of peat soils.
- Seek opportunities for field boundary restoration where hedgerows have been lost. This helps to restore the pattern of the landscape and avoids large, featureless 'prairie fields.'
- Keep woodland and trees in active management, replacing over-mature trees, to ensure their continued presence in the landscape. Avoid uncharacteristic vegetation such as Leylandii hedges and shelterbelts that contrast with the surrounding semi-natural character.
- Conserve the character of rural lanes and features such as finger posts. Avoid traffic management schemes such as kerbs and unnecessary signage in order to retain the rural character and avoid visual clutter along roads.



14. The Weald Moors as seen looking west from the Lilleshall Monument

Boundary

The boundary illustrated in *Fig. 5* shows the extent of the Weald Moors Strategic Landscape. It is the area in which an observer feels to be within the Weald Moors landscape as described above, rather than looking at it from a distance. See section 2.4 for a more detailed methodology on the definition of Strategic Landscape boundaries.

The northern boundary

The northern boundary of the Strategic Landscape follows the River Strine (later becoming the Pipe Strine) from Crudginton Green to Oxford Bridge. For much of its length, the River Strine/ Pipe Strine is lined with trees which make a defined northern boundary to the area. Although there are some areas of flat land to the north of the River Strine/ Pipe Strine which have much in common with the Weald Moors, views from these areas are more strongly influenced by the rising land which forms a ridge to the north followed by the B5062 (the Principal Settled Farmlands Landscape Type as shown in *fig. 2*.) All of the Local Wildlife Sites are included within the boundary.

The eastern boundary

The eastern boundary follows a rural lane to Adeney, including Adeney Manor. This is an area of notable field boundary loss, and the road is a clearly-defined line within the landscape. It then follows tracks to the Strine Brook. It follows the Strine Brook and woodland edges around Cheswell Wood, before following field boundaries and a track past Hinks Farm to Kynnersley Drive. This section of the boundary excludes the flat land alongside the Strine Brook towards Newport, as this area has more of a valley floor character than the expansive feel of the Weald Moors.

The southern boundary

The Southern boundary follows Kynnersley Drive, woodland edges then a field boundary and tracks past Lubstree Park to Humber Lane. It excludes areas which are influenced by urban development on the northern fringe of Telford, and also areas of transitional landscape character between the Weald Moors and the Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape to the east.

It follows the lane into Preston Upon the Weald Moors Village, then the lane towards Wappenshall. It includes Preston Hospital and the majority of Preston Upon the Weald Moors village, due to their strong visual and cultural connections with the Weald Moors, and their contributions to the distinctive built form of the area.

The boundary then follows a field boundary to the west of Preston Hospital to meet the old canal route, which it follows into Wappenshall to the north of Kinley Farm. This boundary reflects the change in character from the Estate Farmlands landscape type to the south (which is also affected by views towards the urban edge of Telford) to the open, expansive, flat, undeveloped character of the Weald Moors landscape. The old canal route also has cultural connections with the history of the area.

The boundary continues along the well-treed route of the disused Shropshire Union Canal to the north of Wappenshall and Eyton. This line of trees along the canal forms a clear line in the landscape (present in both winter and summer) and separates the Weald Moors from the Estate Farmlands landscape type to the south. The visual importance of this line of trees was also noted in the Council's Village Appraisals. On crossing the canal northwards there is a notable sense of arrival into the Weald Moors.

The Western boundary

The Western boundary follows the clear feature of the Hurley Brook, including the reservoir and its surrounding trees. It then heads north and follows a series of vegetation-lined field drains before re-joining the River Strine near Crudgington Green. The boundary includes areas which exhibit the special qualities of the Weald Moors landscape, but excludes areas influenced by the A442 and associated development.

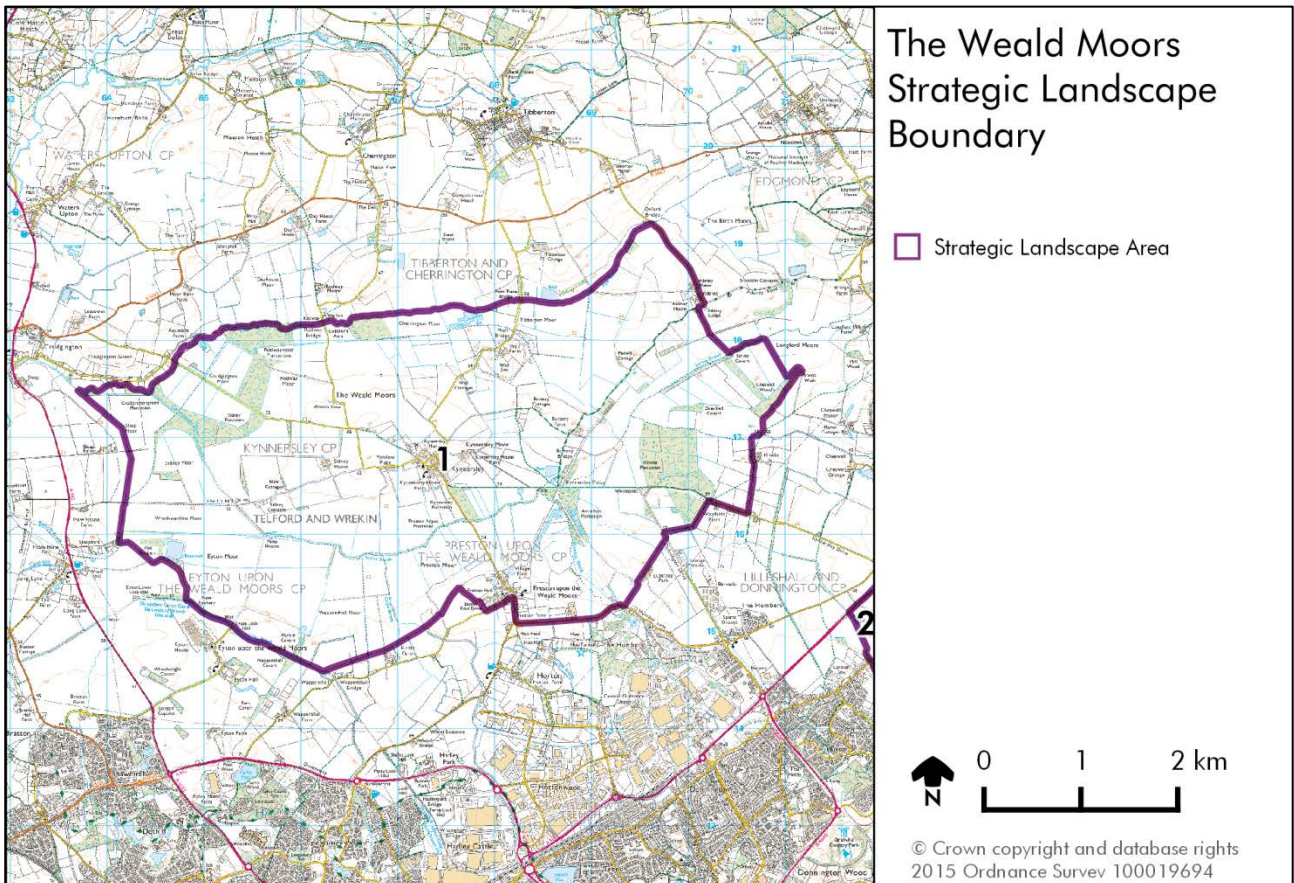


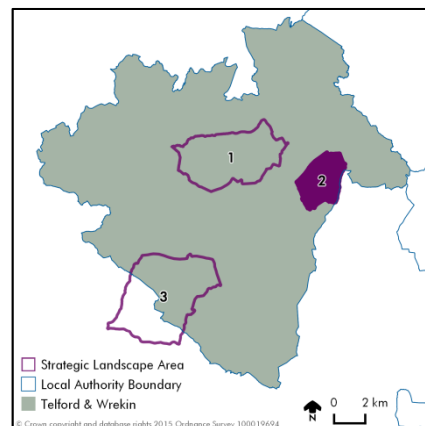
Fig. 5: The Weald Moors Strategic Landscape boundary

Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape

Introduction

Location and Context

Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape is located to the north-east of Telford, between Muxton and Newport. It contains the village of Lilleshall, the Lilleshall monument and surrounding land.



15. A typical view of the Lilleshall Monument within its landscape setting. This is taken looking north from the footpath from Muxton towards Lilleshall.

Summary Description

This landscape is dominated by the Lilleshall Monument and geological outcrop, which form a prominent feature on the horizon. The monument is seen from within its landscape setting of Lilleshall village and surrounding fields, with views of the monument uninterrupted by main roads or large buildings. This is a rich cultural landscape, containing Lilleshall village and Abbey, as well industrial archaeology including limekilns and canal features. It is an attractive rural landscape containing a mosaic of hedged fields and woodland, with the presence of the Monument creating a strong sense of place.

The landscape contributes to the approach to Telford from the north-east, and the rural setting of Lilleshall village and Monument. It also forms a strategic gap between the urban edge of Telford and the market town of Newport. The Monument is a popular viewpoint, with long views in all directions. The Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape forms the foreground to these views.

Landscape Character Appraisal

Key Characteristics

- A **geological** outcrop of volcanic rock and Carboniferous limestone, forming a north-south ridge within a wider area of Permian sandstone. The area to the east of the village is overlain by glacial deposits which have formed clay soils.
- **Landform** includes a pronounced and steep limestone outcrop, rising to 132m above sea level and 60m above surrounding land. The surrounding land is gently undulating. It rises to a ridge to the east which encloses views, and slopes down to the Weald Moors to the west. There are several small streams and ponds (some in former quarries).
- **Semi-natural habitats** include woodland in former quarries, and woodland blocks. There are some wet areas in valley floors, and associated with the old canal.
- **Field boundaries** comprise a good network of mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees (predominantly oaks) over much of the area. The mosaic of fields vary in size and shape, reflecting different phases of historic enclosure.
- Outside Lilleshall village, **land use** is agricultural, with a mixture of arable land and pasture. There are several scattered farms (some large) within the area.
- Lilleshall **village** is situated on the limestone outcrop. It is linear in form, with several phases of development. The historic core is centred around the church towards the south of the village, and contains several Duke of Sutherland estate cottages.
- The A518 **road** runs close to the western boundary of the area. A network of older lanes provides access to the village and farms, and links to settlements beyond the Strategic Landscape.
- **Historic features** include Lilleshall Abbey, Lilleshall Monument, Industrial archaeology, mill ponds and canal features. There are also numerous historic buildings.
- The Monument forms a **focal point** for views from within the area. It dominates the skyline and creates a strong sense of place.
- The Monument is also a popular **viewpoint**, with long views across the Strategic Landscape and countryside and towns beyond.
- A strong **rural character** and **undeveloped** appearance. A peaceful landscape with pockets of **tranquillity**, especially around Lilleshall Abbey.



16. Lilleshall Abbey



17. View from the Old Canal, looking towards the village and Monument.



18. View from Lilleshall Monument, looking east towards Abbey Wood.

Historical Development of the Landscape

Lilleshall village is thought to have been established in Saxon times, and takes its name from 'Liller's Hill'. The 1086 Domesday survey records 10 villagers, 5 smallholders and 7 others. At this time the village had land for 19 ploughs, 1 league of woodland and 1 mill.

Lilleshall Abbey was founded in the 1140s, and remained an Augustinian Abbey until the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1538. It was a large and wealthy abbey, with income from a thriving land-based economy. Following dissolution of the Abbey, its lands were bought by a wool merchant who built Lilleshall Hall, and incorporated the Abbey and woods into his own ornamental grounds. His descendants became the local landowners lords Gower, Granville and Sutherland. As well as the physical remains of the Abbey, there are also surviving place names suggesting ecclesiastical land use, such as Grange Farm and Abbey Farm.

The complex field patterns around Lilleshall suggest a relatively slow process of enclosure. Some of the smaller, irregular fields represent early phases of enclosure. Others (generally large and regular in shape) result from Parliamentary enclosure in the 18th and 19th Centuries. Amalgamation of fields and loss of hedgerows has also occurred since the mid-20th Century. The 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of the area (1835) shows a similar pattern of roads and settlement to that visible today. It also shows quarries and lime works to the north of the village (the limekilns can still be seen) and several large pools to the east of the village which have since been filled in. The map shows a branch of the Shrewsbury canal passing through the area, with a wharf near Pitchcroft which connected to the road and railway. Traces of the canal (including the site of an incline plane) are still visible in today's landscape.

Constituent Landscape Character Types

See section 2.5 for an explanation of the Shropshire Landscape Typology and how it relates to this study

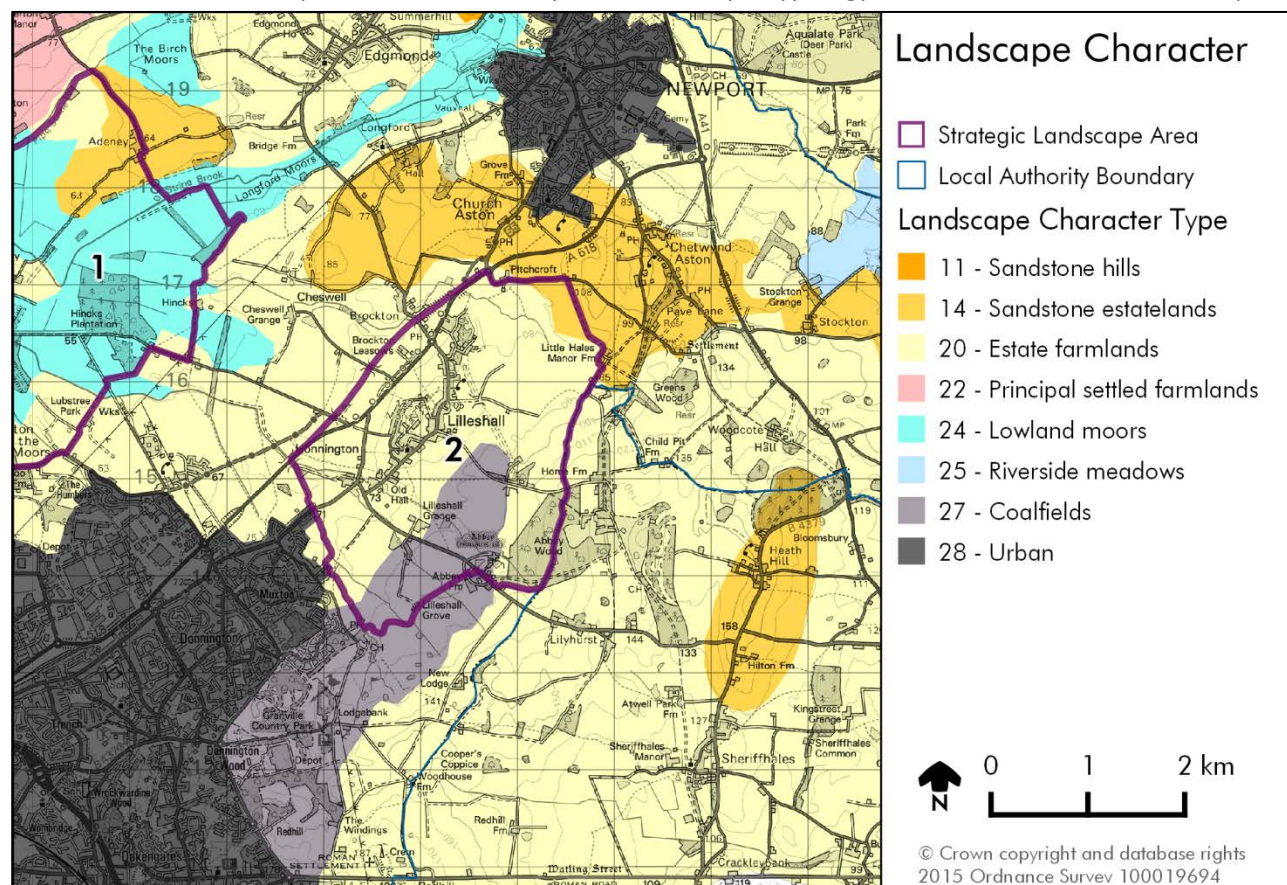


Fig. 6: Landscape Character Types in the Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape

The Shropshire Landscape Typology shows two key Landscape Character Types within the Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape, (see *fig. 6*). More detail on these Types is provided in Appendix E. The key Types are:

- Estate Farmlands (covering the vast majority of the area)
- Coalfields (covering the south-east of the area, around Lilleshall Abbey).

Natural Influences and sites (See *fig. 7* for the locations of designated sites)

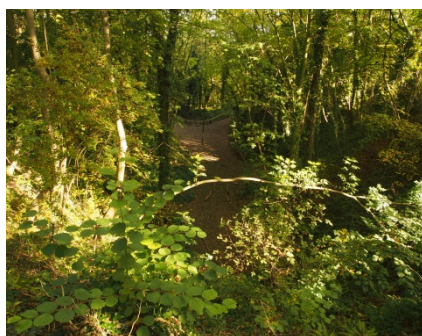
- Underlying geological outcrop of Lilleshall Hill (designated RIGS). Another RIGS site occurs in the former limestone quarry at Barracks Lane.
- Local Wildlife Sites at Lilleshall Hill (acid grassland) & Barracks Lane Quarry (grassland, wetland, woodland).
- Ancient Woodland at Abbey Wood.
- Network of mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees.

Cultural Influences and sites (See *fig. 8* for the locations of designated sites)

- Lilleshall Abbey and environs designated a Scheduled Monument (see *photo 18*).
- Lilleshall Monument, an obelisk erected in 1833, in honour of the First Duke of Sutherland, by the tenants of his Shropshire farms.
- Cluster of Listed Buildings in Lilleshall Village (including the 13th Century church of St Michael and All Angels, which is visible on the horizon in some views). Several farmhouses within the Strategic Landscape are also listed.
- Examples of Duke of Sutherland Estate architecture in farm buildings and village cottages.
- Industrial archaeology features including limekilns and trackways at Barracks Lane Quarry.
- Traces of historic railway and canal networks, including site of inclined plane (see *photo 19*).
- Network of historic roads, tracks, mill ponds, farms and field patterns, including surviving ridge and furrow on open land within the village.
- The Registered Park and Garden at Lilleshall Hall forms an important visual and cultural backdrop to the eastern edge of the area.

Visual and perceptual qualities

- The Lilleshall Monument forms a prominent feature on the skyline, providing a sense of place and orientation (see *photos 15, 17, 20, 22, 23*)
- Expansive views from the Monument across the Strategic Landscape and the countryside beyond (see *photos 14, 18, 21, 24*).
- A strong rural feel throughout the area. Away from settlements and main roads, the area feels undeveloped, tranquil and peaceful.
- Seasonal changes in the colour and texture of the landscape, due to the presence of deciduous trees and woodland, and the crop cycles on arable land.
- A strong sense of time-depth, due to presence of historic features and patterns within the landscape.



19. Barrack Lane quarry Local Wildlife Site and RIGS



20. Monument as seen from within Lilleshall village



21. Near view of the Monument, with the Wrekin beyond

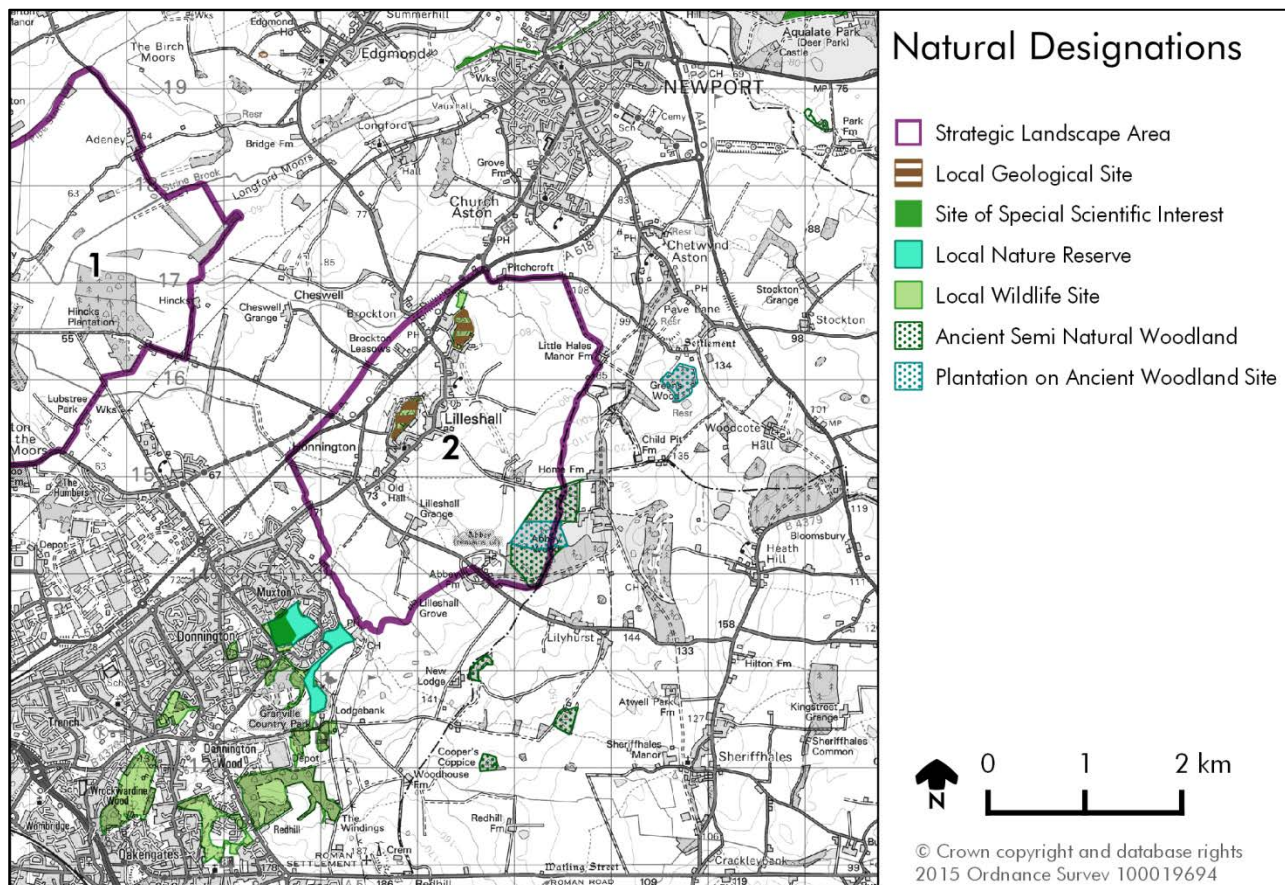


Fig. 7: Natural designations in the Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape

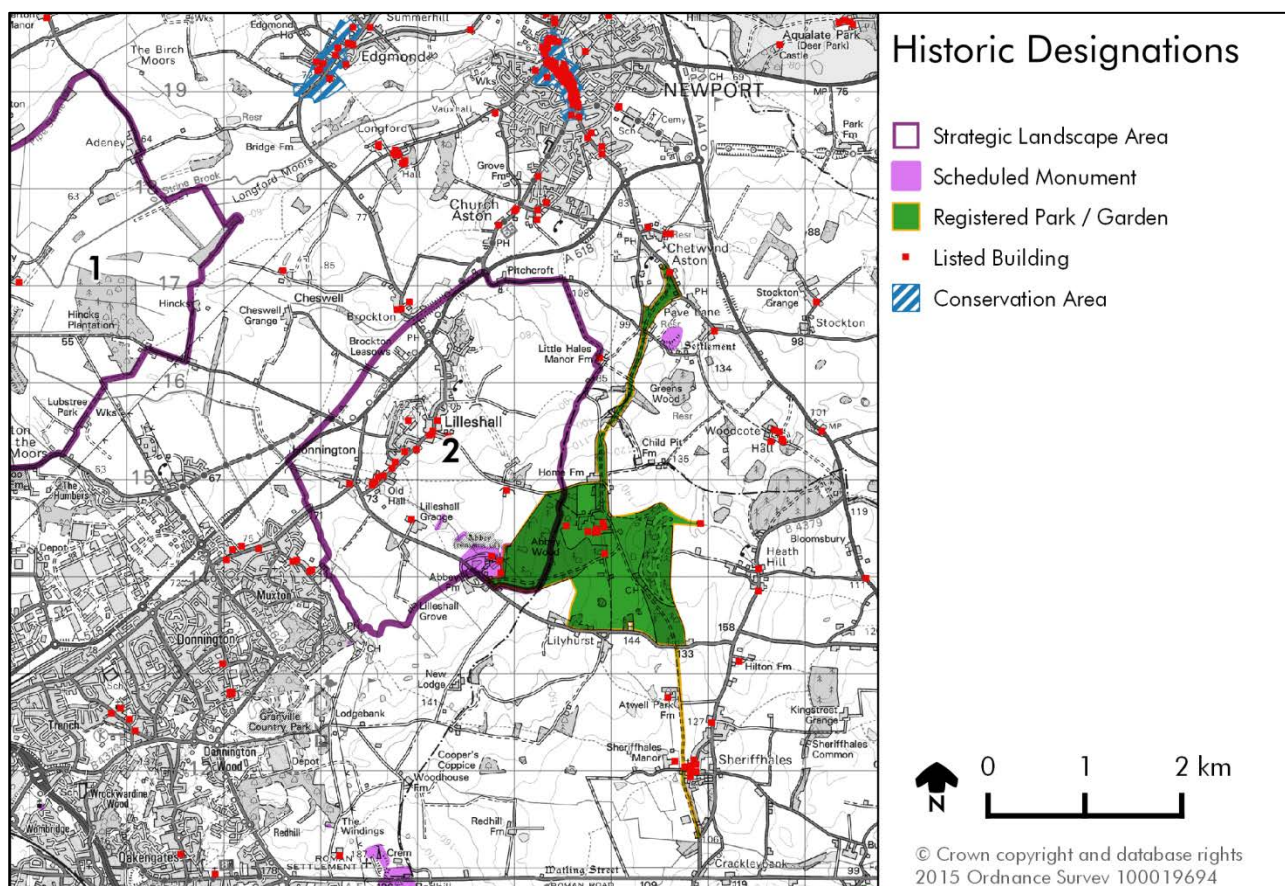


Fig. 8: Historic designations in the Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape

Functions

Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape forms an important **strategic gap** between the settlements of Telford and Newport, preventing the coalescence of these settlements with the village of Lilleshall. It also contributes to the **approach** to Telford from the north-east along the A518, and the **landscape setting** of the villages of Lilleshall and Muxton, the Scheduled Monument of Lilleshall Abbey, and the popular viewpoint of Lilleshall Monument. The network of footpaths within the area is popular for **recreation**, particularly the paths and common land on Lilleshall Hill, around the Monument. Lilleshall Abbey (managed by English Heritage) has free public access, as does the Local Wildlife Site at Barrack Lane Quarry.

Green Infrastructure (See section 2.3)

A full list showing how Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape contributes to green infrastructure functions is provided in Appendix C. The green infrastructure functions which are present across most or all of this landscape are:

- Aesthetic qualities
- Cultural asset
- Food production
- Heritage
- Separation of built-up areas

Ecosystem Services (See section 2.3 and Appendix D for an explanation of terminology)

The arable and livestock farming which take place across the area contribute to **provisioning services**. **Regulatory services** are provided by the many small ponds within the area, which regulate water, and by the trees and woodlands, which regulate air quality. Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape provides a number of **cultural services**, including recreation and positive aesthetic experiences. These occur throughout the area, but particularly at popular recreation sites such as the Monument and Lilleshall abbey. In addition, the area contributes to **supporting services** such as photosynthesis and water cycling.

Landscape quality and condition

This is an attractive landscape, with a strong sense of place and visual focus provided by the striking landform of Lilleshall Hill and its associated Monument. Field patterns are generally intact (although there has been some hedgerow loss and field amalgamation in parts of the area) and the landscape has a strong pattern of trees and hedgerows, particularly around Lilleshall village. The area contains a rich cultural landscape, with a wide range of historic features from different eras, from a Medieval Abbey to 19th Century industrial archaeology. It is a good example of the Estate Farmlands Landscape Character Type, centred around the tenants' Monument to the Duke of Sutherland. The A518 and its associated roundabouts have a localised influence on the western part of the area, and there are some very large farm buildings apparent in views looking out of the area towards the north-east.

Sensitivity Appraisal

This section identifies the sensitivities of the Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape in terms of its special qualities and views. It is important that any development or changes in management which occur within or around Strategic Landscape is not detrimental to the special qualities of the landscape, or associated views.

Special Qualities of the Landscape

- The distinctive geology and topography of Lilleshall Hill and its associated Monument, which are prominent and elevated features on the horizon and create a strong sense of place.
- Views upwards towards the Monument, often framed by trees and hedgerows, and uninterrupted by large-scale development or main roads.
- An irregular mosaic of arable and pastoral fields which form the setting to Lilleshall village and Monument.
- Expansive views from the Monument across the surrounding area. The distant parts of these views are often well-treed, for example Abbey Wood to the east, urban trees of Telford to the south, and the woodland blocks of the Weald Moors to the west. Lilleshall village and Strategic Landscape forms the foreground to these views.
- Historic and cultural features including well known sites (such as Lilleshall Abbey) and less well-known features, such as the old canal and disused railway. Together they create a landscape with a strong sense of history.
- Despite the proximity of Telford, there is a strongly-rural feel in much of the area, with a sense of tranquillity away from main roads and settlements.
- Important functions separating Lilleshall from surrounding urban areas, and forming the approach to Telford from the north-east.

Visibility

- Lilleshall Hill and Monument form a prominent skyline feature in views from the surrounding area.
- Key views both towards and from Lilleshall Hill and Monument (see above).
- Residents viewing the landscape from within the area include the residents of Lilleshall village (many of whom have elevated views across the village setting), and residents of farms and scattered houses.
- Lilleshall Hill is a popular walk for both local people and visitors. Other recreational users visit Lilleshall Abbey, Barrack Quarry, or walk/ cycle the network of lanes and footpaths.



22. View south towards Lilleshall Hill from Pitchcroft Lane

Forces for change affecting the landscape

This section outlines the main changes that are likely to affect the character of the Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape. Landscapes are dynamic, constantly evolving in response to environmental changes, development pressures, economic conditions (for example amalgamation of farm holdings) and changes in land management (alterations in agricultural grant schemes, for example). Sometimes the resulting changes are large in scale; sometimes they are small. Some are immediate, and others are incremental. Some of the changes are within the capacity of the planning system to control, whilst others are outside it. The following section contains principles for planning and management within the area, in order to guide these changes in a way which protect and enhance the special qualities of the landscape.

- Further urban encroachment from the surrounding larger settlements of Telford and Newport, potentially detracting from the undeveloped and open setting of the village, impacting on uninterrupted views towards the Monument, and eroding the strong sense of rural character.
- Poorly-sited or designed residential development within (or on the fringes of) Lilleshall village, which has not responded sensitivity to the existing settlement pattern and its appearance within the landscape, could potentially detract from the village's current form and impact on views towards the village and its distinctive skyline.
- Incremental suburbanisation of the area, through (for example) property boundary treatments and highways interventions such as kerbs, speed humps and signage which are not sympathetic to the rural character.
- Potential development beyond the area impacting on important views towards and from the Monument. This is likely to be a particular problem if development includes vertical/ high features such as pylons, turbines and masts which would be seen on horizons. Extensive horizontal developments (such as solar farms) may also be particularly apparent when seen from elevated viewpoints.
- Historic features within the landscape can be lost if they are no longer used (for example canals and associated sites), or if people are not aware of their presence.
- Agricultural diversification/ amalgamation, if not carefully managed, can erode traditional land use patterns (for example, growing biofuel crops instead of food crops), and lead to the abandonment of traditional farm buildings.
- Agricultural intensification can result in the loss of field boundaries, field trees, field margins, and other important landscape features.
- Lack of management of hedgerow and field trees will lead to their eventual loss from the landscape.
- Climate change may lead to increased temperatures, and greater frequency of extreme weather events such as storms, drought and flooding. These may impact on (for example) habitats, land uses and farming practices.



23. Large scale agricultural buildings and amalgamated fields to the north-east of Lilleshall

Planning and Management Principles: Accommodating change and development

The following principles are intended to ensure that development and change are accommodated within the Lilleshall Village landscape, without compromising its special qualities, and to help prevent detrimental impacts on views.

The overall aim is to protect the undeveloped landscape setting of Lilleshall and the associated monument, and the uninterrupted views towards it. Natural and cultural landscape features should be protected, well-managed and appreciated.

- Resist large scale residential development (i.e. 10 units or greater) within the Strategic Landscape, and ensure that any development in the vicinity is not detrimental to the special qualities of the area and its views.
- Resist further encroachment of Muxton into the Strategic Landscape and seek opportunities to strengthen the existing urban fringe with further woodland planting where required.
- Protect the distinctive profile and character of Lilleshall Hill and the undeveloped open views towards it.
- Conserve the distinctive settlement pattern of Lilleshall village, and ensure any further development in and around the village is small scale, and sympathetic in terms of its siting, design and materials.
- Carefully consider property boundaries in both existing and future developments. Avoid suburban-style gates, walls, planting and fences, particularly when they are visible from roads and footpaths within the surrounding landscape.
- Protect and manage the undeveloped and semi-natural character of the open summit and slopes of Lilleshall Hill.
- New agricultural buildings should be carefully sited, for example to avoid blocking views towards the skyline of Lilleshall Hill in key views from roads and footpaths. Where possible, new agricultural buildings should relate to existing farm buildings and avoid open locations. They should be unobtrusive in their colour and materials, although the precise nature of this requirement will vary. For example, where an agricultural building is seen against a wooded backdrop, use of Yorkshire boarding is likely to help the building to blend into its wooded setting.

- Encourage the restoration of traditional farm buildings in a manner which conserves their character and appearance within the landscape. Where traditional farm buildings are no longer required for their original purpose, identify potential alternative uses with minimal impact on their outward appearance in the landscape, for example conversion to use by small businesses.
- Protect and manage the historic features within the landscape. These range from well-known sites such as Lilleshall Abbey to former canal routes which are now only visible as traces within the landscape. Raising local awareness of historic sites and their value (for example through a 'canal trail' around the village) will aid this process. Routes could include circular walks from Lilleshall village, and from the edge of Muxton. They should utilise existing footpaths where possible, and link features of cultural and natural interest.
- Seek opportunities for field boundary restoration where hedgerows have been lost. This helps to restore the pattern of the landscape and avoids large, featureless 'prairie fields.' It also encourages biodiversity by creating 'habitat corridors' of connected hedgerows, copses and woodland.
- Keep hedgerow and field trees in active management, replacing over-mature trees, to ensure their continued presence in the landscape. Avoid uncharacteristic vegetation such as Leylandii hedges and shelterbelts, which contrast with the semi-natural character of existing trees, hedgerows woodlands within the landscape.
- Encourage positive management of semi-natural habitats, for example in woodlands, coppice on a rotational basis where appropriate, and aim to achieve a range of age and species diversity.
- Conserve the character of rural lanes and features such as roadside hedgerows. Avoid traffic management schemes such as kerbs and unnecessary signage in order to retain the rural character and avoid visual clutter along roads.



24. View south towards Telford from the Lilleshall Monument

Boundary

The boundary illustrated in *fig 9* shows the extent of the Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape. It is the area in which an observer feels to be within the Lilleshall Village landscape as described above, rather than looking at it from a distance. See section 2.4 for a more detailed methodology on the definition of Strategic Landscape boundaries.

The northern boundary

The northern boundary of the area follows Pitchcroft Lane between Pitchcroft roundabout and the track to Little Hales Manor Farm. From here there are views south and south-west across fields and hedgerows towards the Monument on the horizon. Beyond the lane, the visual connection with the Monument is less evident, and there are fewer historic and cultural connections with Lilleshall village. The boundary includes the Local Wildlife Site at Barrack's Lane Quarry, and the non-designated industrial archaeological sites (associated with the canal and quarrying industry) in the field immediately to the south of the roundabout.

The eastern boundary

The eastern boundary follows the track to Little Hales Manor Farm (excluding the farm buildings) then follows the byway to Little Hales Lodge for a short distance. It then follows the Borough Boundary, including the parts of Abbey Wood Ancient Woodland and Lilleshall Hall Registered Park and Garden within the Borough. It then follows the boundary of the Registered Park and Garden to Lillyhurst Road, which it follows for a short distance to Abbey Farm. The boundary includes all the Scheduled Monument at Lilleshall Abbey and the associated Listed Buildings, but excludes land outside the Telford & Wrekin Borough boundary.

The southern boundary

The southern part of the boundary follows field boundaries around Abbey Farm (excluding the farm) to Lilleshall Grove. It then skirts around the edge of the Golf Course (excluding the golf course as it is of different character to the Lilleshall Village landscape) before following a stream between paddocks on the edge of Muxton. The boundary then diverts from the stream and follows the urban edge around one field, to include a field crossed by a footpath with clear views of the Monument. The boundary then re-joins the stream, which it follows (crossing Wellington Road) to the A518. The area within boundary has a rural character and strong visual association with the Monument. The area outside the boundary is more influenced by the urban edge of Muxton.

The western boundary

The western boundary follows the A518 for a short distance before following the route of the old railway line across fields, under extant bridges and along surviving embankments until it rejoins the A518 to the north of Lilleshall village. The boundary then follows the A518 up to the Pitchcroft roundabout. The boundary enables the fields which form the immediate western setting of the Monument to be included, along with historic landscape features such as the railway line and former canal wharf near Pitchcroft. The area of transitional landscape between the Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape and the Weald Moors Strategic Landscape is not included, as it does not strongly exhibit the landscape character of either area.

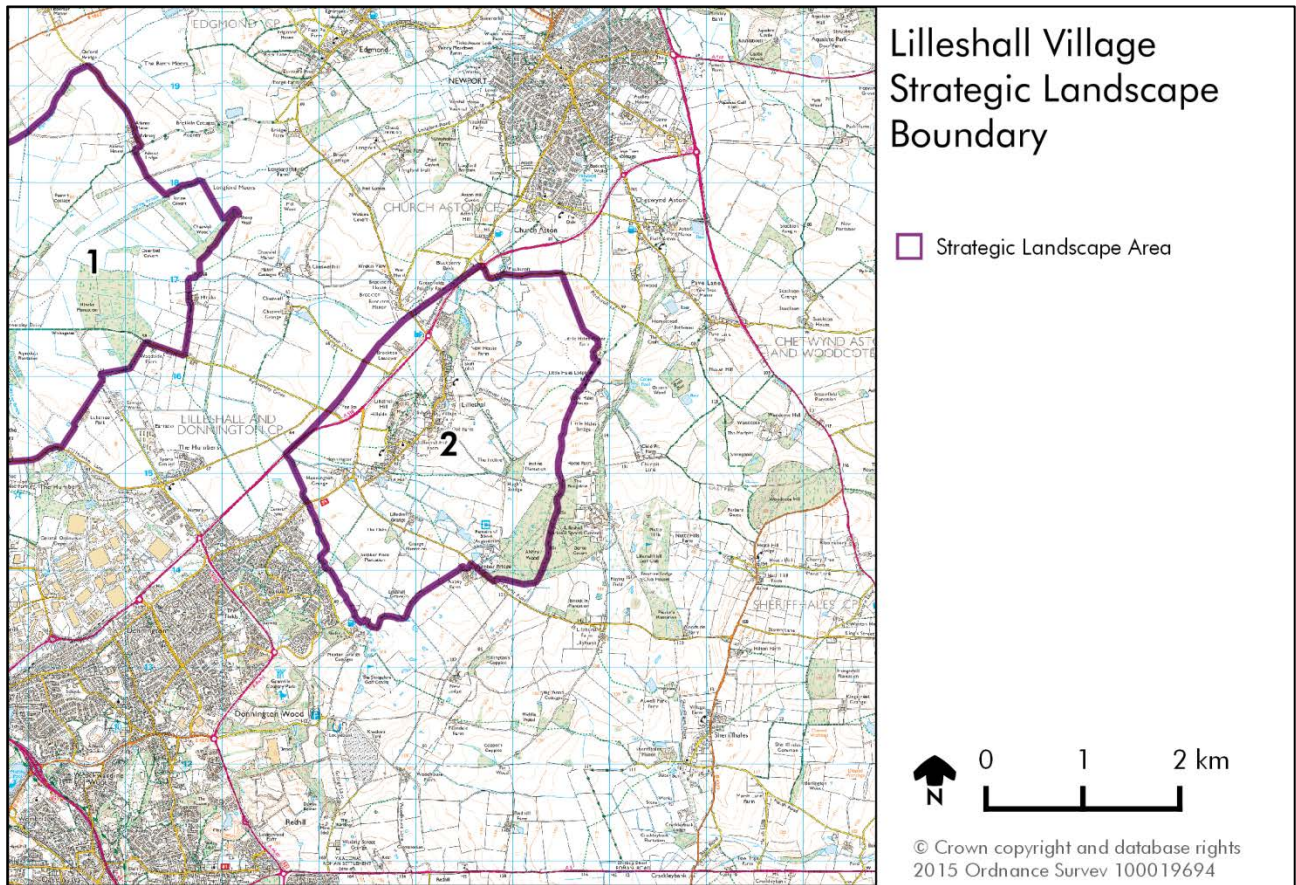


Fig. 9: Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape Boundary

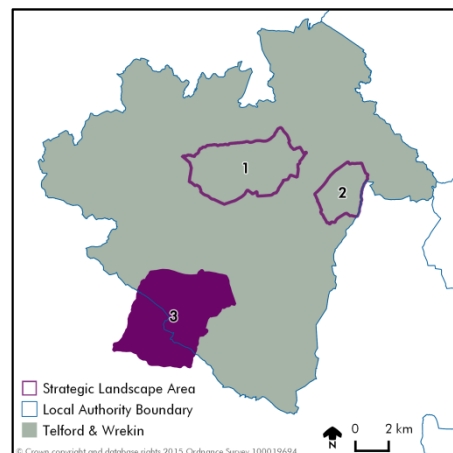
Wrekin Forest Strategic Landscape

Introduction

Location and Context

The Wrekin Forest is located in the south-west of the Borough, to the south of Wellington. It extends outside the Borough boundary into the Shropshire Council area, and includes the northern part of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The villages of Little Wenlock, New Works, Leighton, Garmston, Eaton Constantine and Aston are fully or partially within the area.

Note: Detailed information on the Wrekin Forest and its management issues may be found in the *Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan 2014-2019* and *The Wrekin Forest Plan 2015-2020*.



25. View from the summit of the Wrekin, looking east over Wrekin Forest.

Summary Description

The Wrekin and Ercall Hills are a regional landmark and can be seen from much of Telford & Wrekin Borough and beyond. Their whale-backed ridge dominates the horizon, creating a dramatic backdrop to both urban and rural areas. Whilst its landform is a constant presence, its colour and atmosphere vary with weather and season: from the fresh greens and bluebells of spring, to the rich golden colours of autumn, to the ethereal outline of the ridge above swirling clouds of mist. It is a rich source of local legend, language and culture. It is of high scenic quality, designated at a national level for its natural beauty.

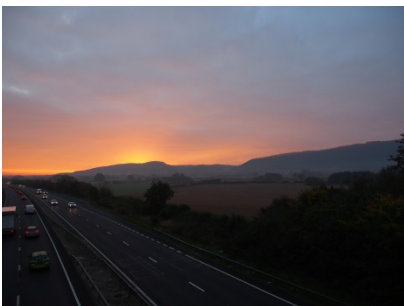
The Wrekin Forest Strategic Landscape includes the Wrekin itself, but also the land which surrounds it and forms its setting. This landscape has a strong and distinctive character, based on the proximity of the Wrekin, the presence of extensive woodland, ancient road and settlement patterns and a long history of farming and industry. It is an intimate landscape, often enclosed by trees and woodland, but with sudden long views. Much of the area has a sense of tranquillity and timelessness, especially away from the motorway. The panoramic views from the summit of the Wrekin are exhilarating and inspirational.

The Wrekin Forest is extremely popular for recreation, with local people from all walks of life enjoying the woodland paths to the summit and appreciating the views and atmosphere.

Landscape Character Appraisal

Key Characteristics

- One of the most diverse areas of **geology** in the UK, comprising layers of hard volcanic rocks and slightly softer sedimentary rocks creating the Wrekin and the Ercall. The lower parts of the Wrekin Forest were covered with glacially-deposited material, creating today's clay soils.
- **Landform** of linear whaleback ridge including the Wrekin (407m above sea level), the Ercall (265m) and Little Hill (232m) slopes down the west. The eastern part of the Wrekin Forest is relatively high and gently undulating, with occasional incised dingles.
- Narrow **streams** following steep incised valleys (dingles). Occasional ponds and reservoirs.
- **Semi-natural habitats** include extensive deciduous woodland (much of it ancient), wooded dingles, veteran trees and scattered pockets of grassland and heath.
- A complex **field pattern**, with its irregular patchwork reflecting a long history of clearance. Field boundaries are generally hedged, with some hedgerow trees.
- Main **land uses** include woodland, farmland (mostly pasture, but some arable), recreation (car park, golf course, hotel etc.) and some restored industrial sites.
- Nucleated villages of Little Wenlock and Garmston, and more dispersed **settlements** of Leighton, Eaton Constantine and Aston. Scattered farms and hamlets occur along lanes and tracks throughout the area.
- **Access** comprises a network of winding lanes and tracks, often sunken. Good and well-used footpath network, including the Shropshire Way and National Cycle Route 45. M54/ A5 runs along northern boundary.
- A very rich **historic landscape**, including prehistoric hillfort and barrows on the Wrekin, medieval lanes and villages, historic field patterns, ancient woodland, industrial archaeology, and World War Two remains.
- **High scenic quality**, with some parts designated nationally as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- An important component of **local and regional identity**, with a strong cultural tradition of folklore and language. It is the subject of many paintings and poems, and is also very popular locally for recreation.
- Outstanding **views** from the Wrekin, over a very wide area. The distinctive outline of the Wrekin is also a key landmark in views from both urban and rural areas.
- Sense of **openness** and **exhilaration** on summit contrasts with **enclosed, peaceful**, rural feel of the surrounding area.



26. Sunrise over the Ercall and Wrekin, as seen from the A5.



27. Woodland path up the Wrekin from the main car park.



28. Enjoying the view from the summit of the Wrekin.

Historical Development of the Landscape

The significance of the Wrekin in terms of its views both from and over the surrounding landscape has been appreciated since prehistoric times. The summit contains the remains of Bronze Age settlement and barrows (burial mounds), as well as the earthworks of a later Iron Age hillfort.

In medieval times, the Wrekin was a royal deer-hunting forest. Much of the landscape we see today has changed little since then- villages, lanes, tracks, farms, fields and mills have all been present for hundreds of years. Some of the oldest fields are 'assarts'- irregular shaped fields which were carved out of the woodland. In general, the field patterns to the west of the Wrekin are more recent than those to the east. Woodland remains an important part of the area's landscape character, and there are extensive areas of ancient woodland. However, this woodland would have been managed, for example through coppicing, as wood was required for many uses including building, pit props, fuel and charcoal. The multiple trunks of old coppice trees can still be seen. Less obvious (but still present) today are the traces of centuries of industry within the Wrekin Forest, particularly coal mining and limestone quarrying.

The popularity of the landscape for recreation has also left its mark on the landscape. In 1889, a refreshment pavilion was constructed at Forest Glen which stood for 100 years before being moved to Blists Hill museum. Halfway House, on the main path up the Wrekin, also provided refreshments. The Forest Glen site is now a well-used car park. Relatively recent changes have included the construction of the M54 along the northern edge of the area, forestry plantations on the slopes of the Wrekin, and extensive opencast coal mines (subsequently restored) around Huntington Lane and Little Wenlock.

Constituent Landscape Character Types

See section 2.5 for an explanation of the Shropshire Landscape Typology and how it relates to this study.

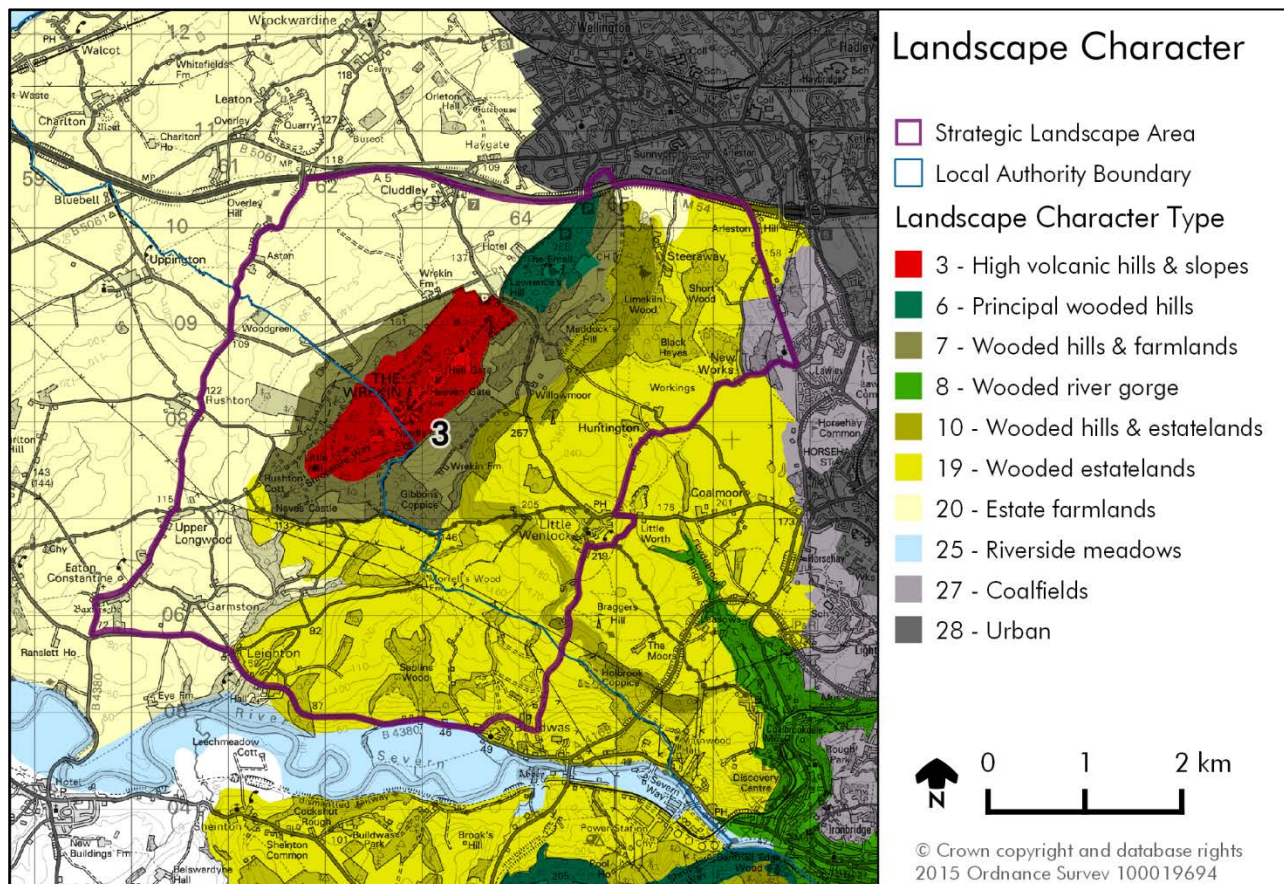


Fig. 10: Landscape Character Types within Wrekin Forest Strategic Landscape

The Shropshire Landscape Typology illustrates a number of Landscape Character Types within the Wrekin Forest Strategic Landscape, as shown on *fig. 10*. These are:

- High Volcanic Hills and Slopes (covering the summit of the Wrekin and Little Hill).
- Principle Wooded Hills (the Ercall).
- Wooded Hills and Farmlands (the east, south and west flanks of the Wrekin).
- Wooded Estatelands (the remainder of land to the east of the Wrekin).
- Estate Farmlands (the remainder of land to the west of the Wrekin).

Natural Influences and sites (See *fig. 11* for the locations of designated sites)

- Underlying geology of the Wrekin and Ercall comprises layers of hard volcanic rock (including some of the oldest rocks in Britain), and later sedimentary rocks. The rocks and their fault systems are of great geological interest. Wrekin Hill, Ercall Hill, Forest Glen and Maddock's Hill Quarry are all designated RIGS, and the area has played an important role in understanding the wider geology of Britain.
- SSSI designation covers the higher land of the Wrekin and Ercall Hill, designated for their geological interest (the best and most varied exposures of Uriconian rocks in England), the range of woodland vegetation and heathland habitats. Chermes Dingle is designated SSSI for its geological fossil exposures which show the evolution of trilobites and other fossils through time.
- Extensive ancient woodland, containing range of species including oak, ash, beech, yew, birch and holly. There are a number of veteran trees of various species within the area (see *photo 27*).
- Numerous Local Wildlife Sites including the Wrekin (non SSSI area), Limekiln Wood, Shortwood, Saplins' Wood, Devil's Dingle and Marmers Covert (see *photo 30*).
- Local Nature Reserves at Ercall Wood and Limekiln Wood.

Cultural Influences and sites (See *fig. 12* for the locations of designated sites)

- Three Scheduled Monuments, including two large hillforts, a round barrow and a late Bronze Age settlement and WW2 military remains on the Wrekin; a group of round barrows at Willowsmoor and coal mining remains near New Works. Wrekin hillfort is thought to have been the capital of the Cornovii tribe prior to the Roman conquest (see *photos 32 and 36*).
- Clusters of listed buildings in villages, and several listed farm houses and rural buildings.
- Little Wenlock village occupies a prominent and elevated position within the landscape.
- Industrial archaeology including quarries, limekilns, coal mining pits, and New Works miners' cottages.
- Historic features within the landscape, including woods, lanes, tracks, villages, farms and fields.
- Rich cultural history, and inspiration for legend, language, art and literature, including (for example) 'A Shropshire Lad' by A.E. Housman: *Its forest fleece the Wrekin heaves*.
- A long history of recreational use by local people and visitors (see *photo 28*).

Visual and perceptual qualities

- A landscape of strong textures (woodland, plantation etc.) and seasonally-changing colours.
- Complex landscape pattern forming irregular patchwork of woods and fields when viewed from above (see *photo 25*).
- The enclosed, calm and intimate feel of woodland and farmland contrasts with the openness, exhilaration and 'top of the world' feeling experienced on the summit of the Wrekin.
- A peaceful, rural and relatively tranquil landscape, locally influenced by busy roads.
- Outstanding views across Shropshire, Wales and the West Midlands from high land.
- The Wrekin is a landmark on the skyline in views across a wide area, and represents home for many local people. Its distinctive landform creates a strong and unique sense of place (see *photo 26*).
- A landscape of high scenic quality, partially within the Shropshire Hills AONB.



29. Woodland & assart fields on the eastern side of the Wrekin



30. Golf Course and limekiln wood, as seen from the Ercall



31. Wooded Dingle north of Leighton

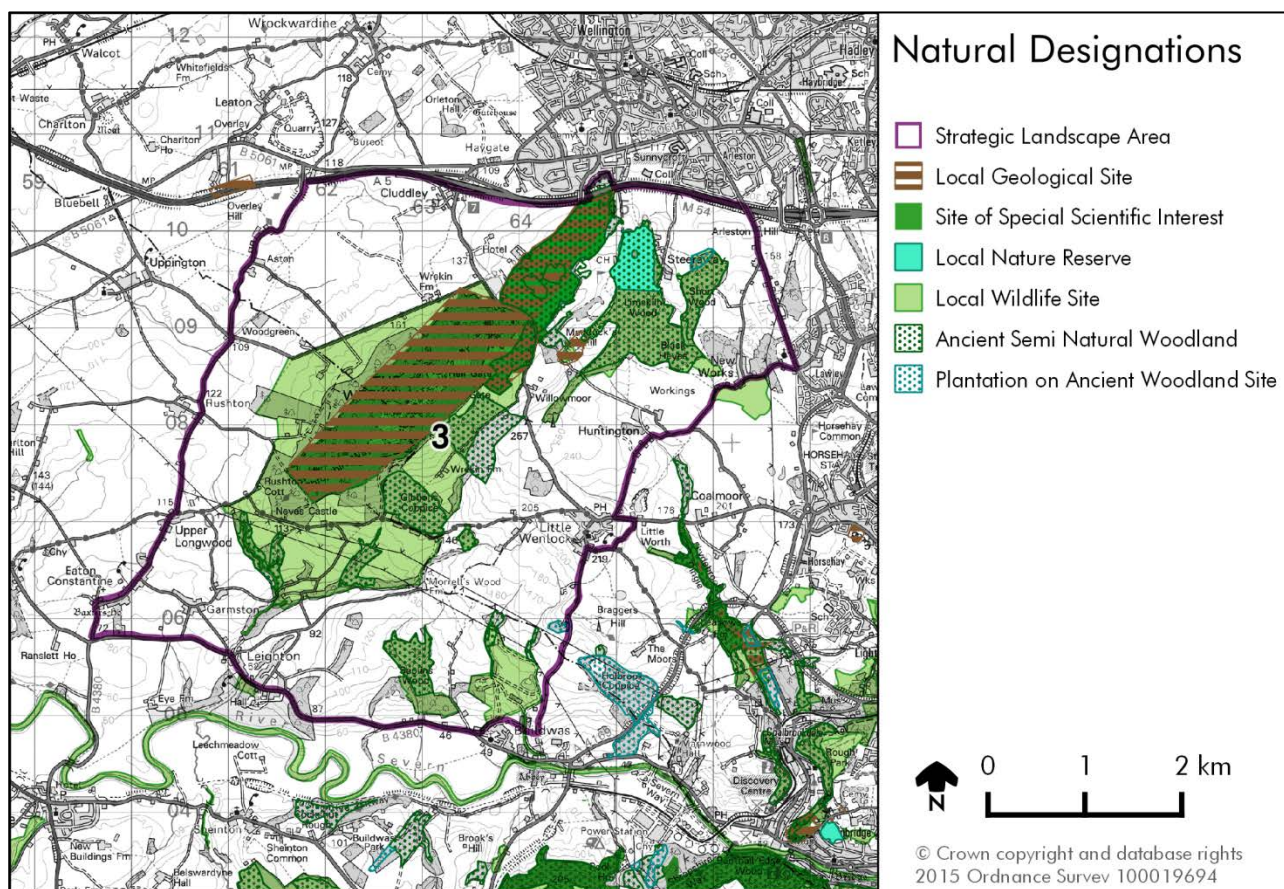


Fig. 11: Natural designations within Wrekin Forest Strategic Landscape

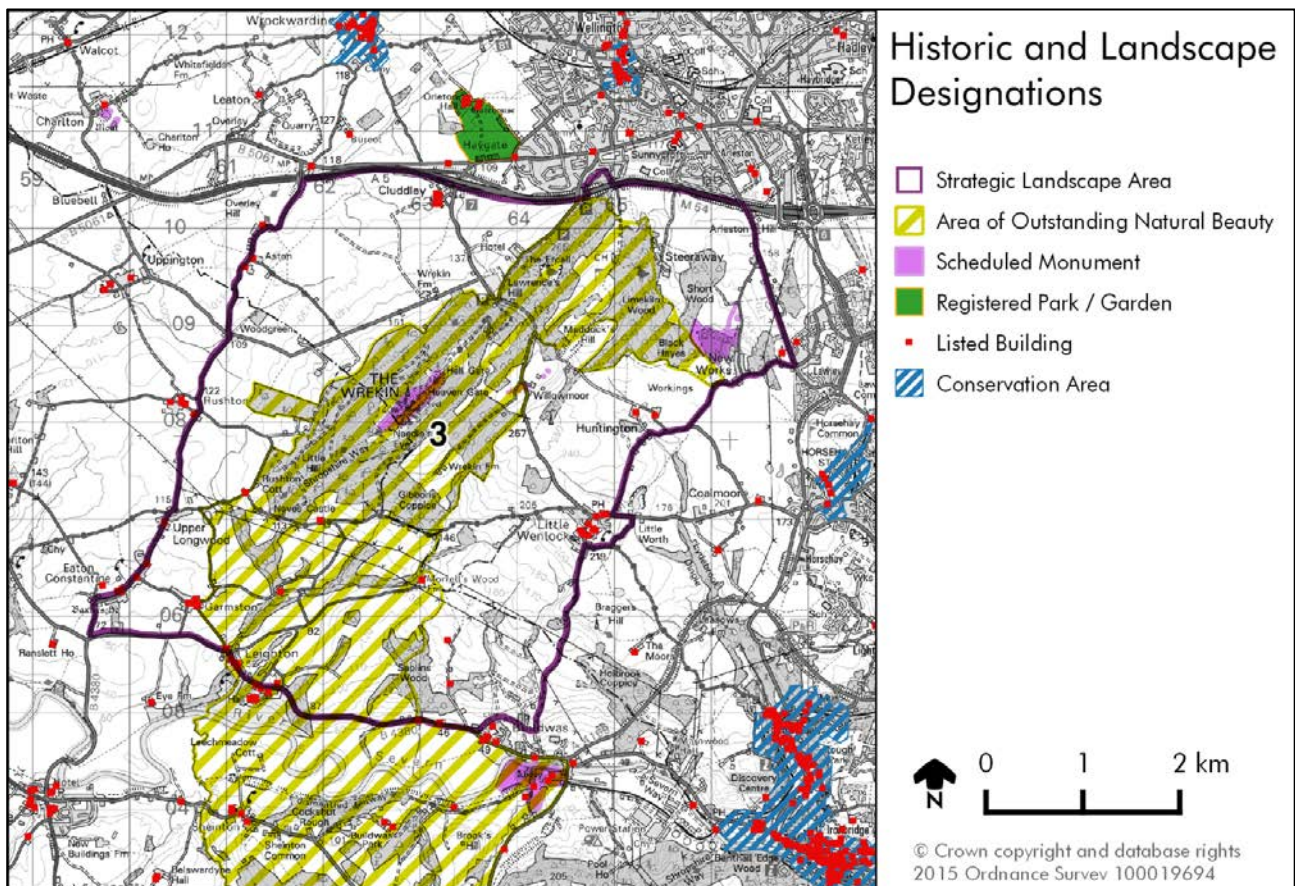


Fig. 12: Historic and Landscape Designations within Wrekin Forest Strategic Landscape

Functions

The landscape of Wrekin Forest fulfils a number of important functions. It is very popular with local people and visitors for informal **recreation and leisure**, including walking, cycling, visiting the Nature Reserves, etc. The car parks and paths are very well-used by a wide range of people. The landscape provides **outdoor learning** for a variety of subjects, including geology, natural history and archaeology. The Wrekin forms the **backdrop and skyline** to the settlements of Wellington and Telford, and is also viewed from the A5/M54, from where it is a key feature in the **approach** to the town from the west. It forms the **landscape setting** to the settlements within the Strategic Landscape, including Little Wenlock. The Wrekin has a strong sense of place and contributes to the **local identity** of many residents. It makes an important contribution to the **culture** of the area through its influence on local language, and as a source of inspiration for art, poetry legend.

Green Infrastructure (See section 2.3)

A full list showing how Wrekin Forest Strategic Landscape contributes to green infrastructure functions is shown in Appendix C. The green infrastructure functions which are present across most or all of this landscape are:

- Aesthetic qualities
- Carbon Storage
- Corridor for Wildlife
- Cultural Asset
- Green travel route
- Ground stabilisation
- Habitat for wildlife
- Heritage
- Learning
- Noise absorption
- Pollutant removal from soil/ water
- Recreation- public
- Shading from the sun
- Timber production
- Trapping air pollutants

Ecosystem Services (See section 2.3 and Appendix D for an explanation of terminology)

Provisioning services include food from farmland, and timber from woodland. The extensive tree cover contributes to **regulatory services**, such as regulation of air quality, climate and water. The Wrekin Forest landscape provides a number of **cultural services**, including recreation, spiritual enrichment and positive aesthetic experiences. The area also contributes to **supporting services**, particularly photosynthesis.

Landscape quality and condition

The Wrekin Forest landscape is generally in good condition and well-managed, although there are pressures from recreation and a need to positively manage biodiversity and archaeological sites in some parts of the area. For example, concentrated numbers of visitors on the summit of the Wrekin have led to path erosion, and damage to archaeological earthworks and habitats.

The Wrekin landscape largely retains its structural elements (i.e. the physical features such as woodland, hedgerows and lanes which determine its physical form and appearance). However, there has been loss of landscape structure at the periphery of the area due to opencast mining (which is ongoing beyond the Strategic Landscape area boundary). Where landscape structure has been lost through opencast mining, there are opportunities to reinstate landscape features such as hedgerows as part of the restoration process. Urban and urban fringe development beyond the northern and eastern boundaries of the area also has a localised impact on landscape quality.

There are relatively few incongruous features (i.e. features which stand out due to their design, scale or location) within the Strategic Landscape area; those visible include communications masts, and prominent modern houses on the edges of villages. The area is of high scenic quality, with the parts within the AONB designated at a national level for their natural beauty. It contains good examples of several landscape character types which are rare within Shropshire, and indeed nationally.

Other documents, specifically the *Wrekin Forest Plan 2015-2020* and the *AONB Management Plan 2014-2019* (which endorses the Wrekin Forest Plan) provide more detail on issues of landscape quality and condition, as well as making management recommendations to address them.



32. The summit of the Wrekin, showing prehistoric hillfort site, heath vegetation, mast, and erosion of paths

Sensitivity Appraisal

This section identifies the sensitivities of the Wrekin Forest Strategic Landscape in terms of its special qualities and views. It is important that any development or changes in management which occur within or around the Strategic Landscape is not detrimental to the special qualities of the landscape, or associated views.

Special Qualities of the Landscape

- Outstanding scenic quality, particularly within the area designated AONB.
- The area is dominated by the presence of the Wrekin, with views towards it often framed by trees.
- The surrounding landscape forms the undeveloped setting of the Wrekin in key views towards it from roads, settlements and footpaths.
- The distinctive skyline of the Wrekin is a strong part of local and regional identity. It forms the backdrop to urban and rural areas and has inspired legends, art and poetry.
- Continual changes in colour, texture and mood affecting views of the Wrekin, due to seasonal and weather-based changes.
- A long history of recreational use. It remains an extremely popular area for outdoor recreation by local people and visitors, making a valuable contribution to public health and people's physical and mental wellbeing.
- Stunning panoramic views from high ground, with an undeveloped rural landscape forming the foreground. These open views contrast with the enclosed feel of woodland and farmland.
- Unique geology and associated landforms, including whale-back ridge and steep incised valleys.
- Extensive ancient woodland, designated for its nature conservation value.
- Irregular-shaped fields and blocks of woodland create an uneven patchwork landscape when viewed from above.
- A rich historic farmed and wooded landscape, containing cultural features spanning millennia.
- A network of historic rural lanes, tracks and footpaths.
- High scenic quality, including the northern part of the Shropshire Hills AONB.
- A strongly-rural feel, with a sense of peace and tranquillity away from roads and settlements, and exhilaration on summits.

Visibility

- The Wrekin is a prominent local and regional landmark, seen from both urban and rural areas. There are important views towards it and from it, as described above.
- Although development exists on the lower northern slopes (south of the M54), The Wrekin is still seen within an undeveloped rural setting from the M54 and the edge of the urban area, as well as in views from the east, south and west.
- Abrupt changes in topography mean that parts of the area are viewed from below, whilst other parts are viewed from above.
- Extensive woodland can reduce visibility within the area, but is less effective in screening development in elevated views from above.
- Local people viewing the landscape from within the area include residents of villages and farms.
- Other people viewing the Wrekin Forest from outside the Strategic Landscape include residents of many parts of Telford & Wrekin and the surrounding villages, and travellers on the M54/A5.

- The Wrekin Forest landscape is viewed by large numbers of people enjoying outdoor recreation within the area. Many of these people also enjoy the expansive views from the summit, looking down on the Wrekin Forest and over the surrounding landscape beyond.

Forces for change affecting the landscape

This section outlines the main changes that are likely to affect the character of the Wrekin Forest landscape. Landscapes are dynamic, constantly evolving in response to environmental changes, development pressures, economic conditions (for example amalgamation of farm holdings) and changes in land management (alterations in agricultural grant schemes, for example). Sometimes the resulting changes are large in scale; sometimes they are small. Some are immediate, and others are incremental. Some of the changes are within the capacity of the planning system to control, whilst others are outside it. The following section contains principles for planning and management within the area, in order to guide these changes in a way which protect and enhance the special qualities of the landscape.

Note- Key Issues are also identified in the *Wrekin Forest Plan 2015-2020* and the *Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan 2014-2019*.

- Vertical features such as pylons and masts on elevated horizons are visually prominent on the skyline.
- Loss of the undeveloped setting of the Wrekin and the Shropshire Hills AONB (as seen from roads, villages and the urban edges of Wellington and Telford).
- Pressure for large scale residential development (i.e. above 10 units) and other types of development (e.g. industrial use) around the fringes of the Strategic Landscape, and areas immediately adjacent, which would impact on landscape character and increase levels of urban influence. Areas which are particularly vulnerable include areas close to transport corridors, and areas which are currently or previously opencast.
- Small scale development (such as new houses, farm buildings or visitor attractions) within the area could be detrimental to local character if they are not sympathetic to existing settlement patterns, building styles, scales, materials and boundary treatments.
- Lack of co-ordinated management of biodiversity, recreation, access and archaeological sites due to complex patterns of land ownership can result in damage to the fabric of the area, biodiversity and archaeology. It can also reduce the quality of the recreational experience.
- Localised impacts on views towards the Wrekin and on the tranquillity of the landscape from main roads, development and opencast mining beyond the Strategic Landscape boundary.
- Poor/ uncoordinated management of woodland and other habitats could result in loss of species diversity, and a decline in the visual quality and structure of the landscape.
- Tree diseases pose a threat to several species within the area, including oak and ash.
- A wide range of recreation pressures and a lack of co-ordinated visitor management and facilities may undermine the visitor experience and result in a decline in recreational use. This in turn could affect the health and wellbeing of the local population.

- Traffic pressures, particularly around popular car parks and along narrow lanes reduce tranquillity and damage the rural character. The rural character of lanes can also be affected by urban-style highways works such as kerbs, speed humps and signage.
- Agriculture is likely to become more market driven with intensification of production and farm diversification and amalgamation. The situation is exacerbated by changes to agricultural grant schemes. This may result in changes in agricultural land uses and landscape pattern, and changing requirements for farm buildings.
- Ongoing restoration of coal mines presents opportunities for enhancing landscape character.
- Climate change may lead to summer drought, wetter winters and increased frequency and intensity of storms, affecting trees, woodlands and other important habitats, as well as farming practices. It may also increase the vulnerability of trees to pests and diseases.



33. *Erosion of land surface at the Wrekin summit*



34. *Damage to trees in Ercall Wood*



35. *The Wrekin in its landscape setting from the north-west.*

Planning and Management Principles: Accommodating Change and Development

The following principles are intended to ensure that development and change are accommodated within the landscape, without compromising the special qualities of the Wrekin Forest landscape, and to help prevent detrimental impacts on views.

The overall aim is to protect the special qualities of the iconic landscape of the Wrekin, and its setting and views. The tranquillity of the area should be protected, and enhanced where possible. The recommendations of the *Wrekin Forest Plan 2015-2020* and the *Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan 2014-2019* should be followed to facilitate co-ordinated management of biodiversity, farming, geology, archaeology, recreation and leisure.

- Protect the sensitive and undeveloped setting of the Wrekin and the Shropshire Hills AONB, particularly in key views from roads and settlements.
- Resist large scale residential and industrial development within, or in the vicinity of, the Strategic Landscape, in order to protect the area's special qualities.
- Ensure that any small-scale development within, or in the vicinity of, the Strategic Landscape (for example individual dwellings or visitor facilities) should be sympathetic to the character of existing buildings in terms of scale, materials and design. They should not compromise views of the Wrekin or the AONB in key views from roads or footpaths.

- Avoid construction of further pylons, masts or other vertical elements, in order to avoid visual clutter and further interruption of important skylines.
- Conserve the character of rural lanes and features such as sunken sections, hedgerows and traditional finger posts. Avoid suburban-style traffic calming measures, kerbs and signage, in order to protect the rural character of lanes.
- Ensure new agricultural buildings are sympathetic to their landscape setting in terms of their scale, siting, materials and design. They should be unobtrusive in their colour and materials, and should sit below the skyline to minimise their impacts in views
- Where traditional farm buildings are no longer required for their original purpose, identify potential alternative uses with minimal impact on their outward appearance in the landscape, for example conversion to use as visitor/ recreation facilities.
- Promote recreation within the carrying capacity of the area, for example through provision of a shuttle bus to relieve traffic pressures; cycle racks at Forest Glen carpark; improved visitor facilities at Forest Glen; management (where required) of paths and surfaces, and enhanced awareness of the area's geological, archaeological, historical and conservation interest. Consider new circular walks and trails around less well-known parts of the area to take pressure off honeypot sites.
- Manage the biodiversity, woodland, veteran trees, hedgerows, grassland and heathland of the area in accordance with the actions set out in the *Wrekin Forest Plan 2015-2020* and the *Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan 2014-2019*.
- For all forms of landscape management, promote a co-ordinated approach to management of the area as set out in the *Wrekin Forest Plan 2015-2020* and the *Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan 2014-2019*.
- Have regard to other planning considerations set out in the *Wrekin Forest Plan 2015-2020*.



36. The Ercall as seen looking north from the Wrekin. The hillfort ramparts known as 'Heaven's Gate' are in the foreground, and the Weald Moors and Lilleshall Village are visible in the distance

Boundary

The boundary illustrated in *fig 13* shows the extent of the Wrekin Forest Strategic Landscape. It is the area in which an observer feels to be within the Wrekin Forest landscape as described above, rather than looking at it from a distance. It contains the elevated areas of the Wrekin, and the undeveloped countryside which forms its setting. See section 2.4 for a more detailed methodology on the definition of Strategic Landscape boundaries.

The northern boundary

The northern boundary of the area follows the A5/ M54 between the bridge near Burcotgate and Dawley Road bridge. At the north end of the Er call it deviates from the motorway to include the small area of woodland 'cut off' when the M54 was constructed. This is to enable the separated woodland to be managed in a similar manner to the rest of the woodland. The northern boundary includes the undeveloped land which forms the setting of the Wrekin in views from the edge of Wellington and from the M54, and also is important foreground in views from the Wrekin.

The eastern boundary

The eastern boundary of the area follows Dawley Road until its junction with the lane to Little Wenlock through Huntington. This enables Lawley Furnaces (which have cultural connections to the Wrekin Forest) to be included, and a geological outlier which relates to the Wrekin.

The boundary then follows the lane to Little Wenlock, through Huntington. On the outskirts of Little Wenlock the boundary turns east along the road to Coalmoor for a short distance, before turning south and then west along Coalbrookdale Road. The boundary includes all of the AONB within Telford & Wrekin Borough; the Scheduled Monument at New Works; the Local Wildlife Sites at Limekiln Woods; historic miners' cottages at New Works; Little Wenlock village, and the fields which form the setting to Little Wenlock village. It excludes land to the east of the lane between Lawley and Little Wenlock because the aspect, landscape and visual associations of this are more closely related to Coalbrookdale than the Wrekin, and it does not have the same sense of place as land further west. Lydbrook Dingle SSSI has been excluded in its entirety because Lydbrook Dingle runs into Coalbrookdale, and therefore relates directly to the Coalbrookdale landscape, rather than to the Wrekin. It also avoids splitting the SSSI designation across the Strategic Landscape boundary.

To the south of Little Wenlock the boundary turns south along Buildwas Lane, which it follows until the northern edge of a poultry farm east of Buildwas village. The Local Wildlife Site at Devil's Dingle is included. Buildwas Lane is considered to be a suitable boundary between the included land to the west, which relates to the Wrekin in terms of its landscape and views, and land to the east, which relates more closely to Coalbrookdale and the Ironbridge Gorge.

The southern boundary

The southern boundary follows field boundaries around the northern edge of Buildwas village, and then follows the B4380 through Leighton until it reaches a crossroads south of Eaton Constantine. Buildwas village is excluded as its position close to the river Severn, and its views across the floodplain, mean that it has stronger physical and cultural connections to the Severn Valley than to the Wrekin. The southern boundary includes the AONB, several dingles, and designated SSSI and Local Wildlife Sites. It also forms the

setting to the Wrekin in views from the south, and the foreground in elevated views south from the summit.

The western boundary

The western boundary follows rural lanes through Eaton Constantine, Upper Longwood, to the east of Rushton, then north through Aston to join with the A5 near Burcotgate. It includes the AONB, Local Wildlife Sites, and the setting of the Wrekin when viewed from lanes and villages to the west. The presence of the Wrekin and Ercall Hills give it a strong sense of place. This area also forms the foreground to views west from elevated land. To the west of the boundary, the landscape is less visually dominated by the Wrekin and is of more typical Estate Farmlands landscape type.

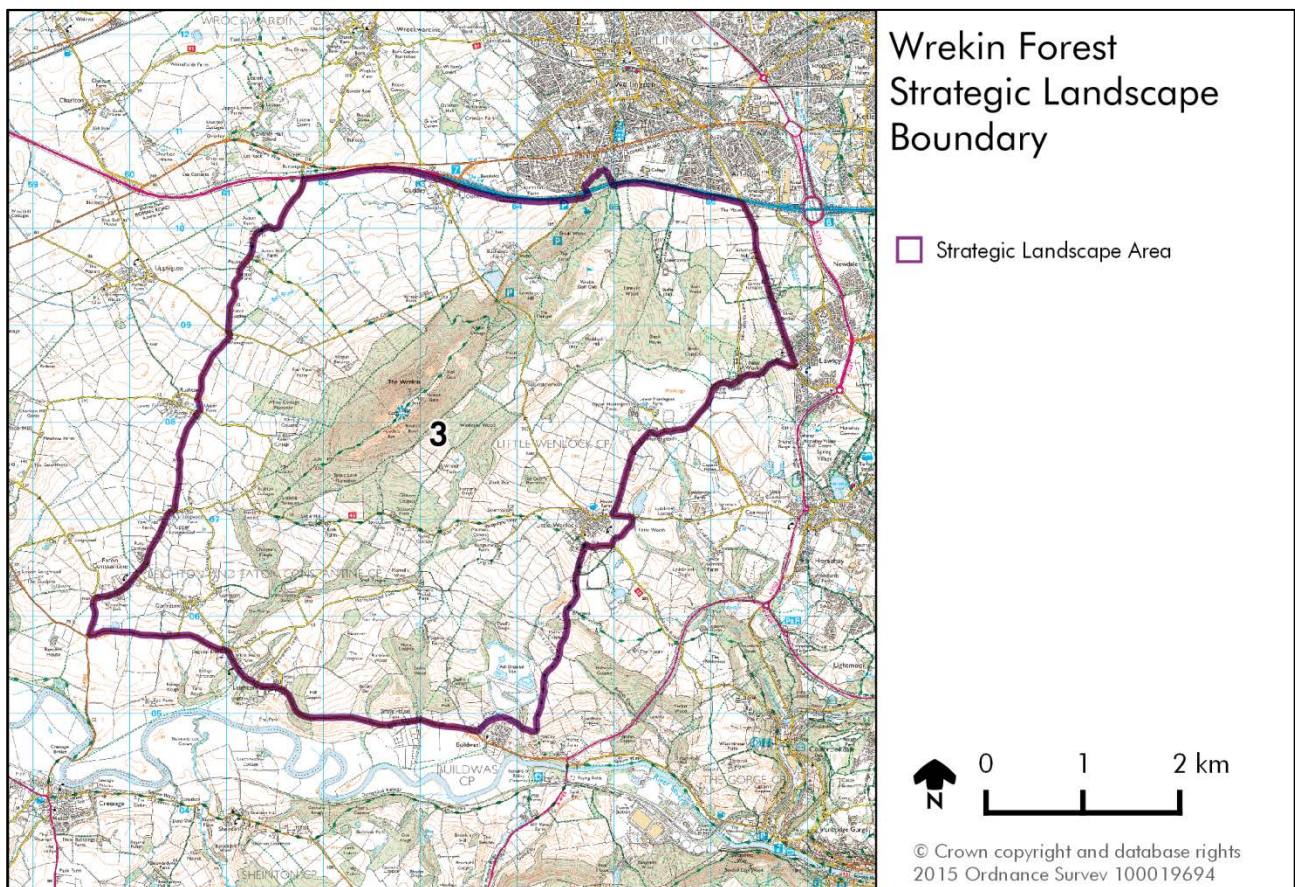


Fig. 13: Wrekin Forest Strategic Landscape Boundary

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Glossary of Acronyms and Technical Terms

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
GI	Green infrastructure
GIS	Geographic Information System
LCT	Landscape Character Type
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
RIGS	Regionally Important Geological Site
SM	Scheduled Monument
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest

Ancient Woodland: Woodland (in England and Wales) which has continuously existed since before 1600.

Assart fields: Fields cleared informally from woodland or common. They are generally irregular in shape.

Coppicing: Method of managing woodland in which trees are cut every few years, to encourage re-growth of small-diameter branches.

Ecosystem Services: The multiple benefits gained by people from the natural environment.

Green infrastructure: A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefit for local communities.

Inclined plane: Flat surface set at an angle, to enable canal barges to be moved up a slope. The weight of the downward boat helped raise the ascending boat.

Landscape: An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/ or human factors' [European Landscape Convention]

Landscape Character Type: Distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogenous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different areas in different parts of the country, but wherever they occur, they share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation, historical land use and settlement pattern.

Landscape Character: 'A distinct and recognisable pattern of elements, or characteristics, in the landscape that make one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.'

Landscape Quality (or Condition): 'is based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape, and about its intactness, from visual, functional and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements which make up the character in any one place.'

Overall Landscape Sensitivity: This term should be used to refer primarily to the inherent sensitivity of the landscape itself, irrespective of the type of change that may be under consideration. It is likely to be most relevant in work at the strategic level...landscape sensitivity can be defined as embracing a combination of:

1) the sensitivity of the landscape resource (in terms of both its character as a whole and the individual elements contributing to character); 2) the visual sensitivity of the landscape, assessed in terms of a combination of factors such as views, visibility, the number and nature of people perceiving the landscape and the scope to mitigate visual impact. [From *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland, Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity* (The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2003) p.3-4]

Landscape Sensitivity: The extent to which a landscape can accept change of a particular type and scale without unacceptable adverse effects on its character. [From *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* (Natural England, 2014) p.55]

Lime Kiln: Furnace where limestone was burnt to provide lime for fertiliser, builders' mortar etc.

Nucleated (settlement): Settlement with a distinct core with buildings closely grouped together.

Opencast(ing): Mining method in which surface earth and rock are moved to allow access to minerals below.

Ridge and furrow: Linear earthworks forming a striped pattern, formed by historic ploughing techniques.

Riparian: Of, or on, a riverbank

Sedimentary Rocks: Rocks formed from material deposited by water, ice or wind

Veteran Trees: Trees that are or look old relative to others of the same species. Characteristics include a very large girth for the species, hollow or hollowing trunk, and a large quantity of dead wood in the canopy.

APPENDIX B: Key References and Sources of Further Information

CPM LCA Study of Shropshire Hills AONB Boundary 2006

Evans, G. (1993) *Telford's Living Landscape*

Shropshire County Council (2006) *The Shropshire Landscape Typology*

Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty *Management Plan 2014-2019*

Telford & Wrekin Council *Green Infrastructure Framework Evidence and Analysis Document*

Telford & Wrekin Council *Local Green Infrastructure Needs Study*

Telford & Wrekin Council *Local Plan 2011-2031 Consultation Draft*

Telford & Wrekin Council *Village Appraisals- District Wide Plan*

Telford & Wrekin Council *Village Appraisals Part 2 (1999)*

Telford & Wrekin Council *Wrekin Local Plan 1995-2006*

UK Coal Mining Ltd *Huntington Lane Surface Mine Site- Restoration and Aftercare Strategy*

Wrekin Forest Partnership/ Pete Lambert *The Wrekin Forest Plan 2015-2020*

British Geological Survey:

www.bgs.ac.uk/

Shropshire Geology:

<http://www.shropshiregeology.org.uk/shropgeol/wrekin/wrekinmain.html>

Canal History:

<http://www.shropshireunion.org.uk/the-canals/maps>

Nationally-Designated Sites (with links to citations):

www.magic.gov.uk

Maps:

Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 Explorer Series 242

Cassini Historic Map set 127 (dated 1835, 1902 and 1921)

British Geological Survey 1:625,000 Bedrock Geology UK South

GIS Datasets provided by Telford & Wrekin Council:

Built-up areas

Conservation areas

GI Typology

Historic Parks and Gardens

Historic Landscape Characterisation

Landscape Sensitivity 2014

Landscape Character Types

Listed Buildings

Local Geological Sites

Local Wildlife Sites

Public Rights of Way

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Strategic Footpaths

APPENDIX C: Green Infrastructure Functions of Strategic Landscapes

Key:

Function is not apparent in the landscape	x
Function is present across small parts of the landscape	✓
Function is present across much of the landscape	✓✓
Function is present across most or all of the landscape	✓✓✓

The Weald Moors

Function	Present in this SLA?	Notes
Accessible Water Storage	✓✓	Occasional reservoirs
Aesthetic	✓✓✓	Open and undeveloped moors with enclosing woodlands.
Biofuels Production	✓✓	Several crops of miscanthus
Burial Space	✓	Burial grounds at Kynnersley and Preston Upon the Weald Moors
Carbon Storage	✓✓✓	Extensive peat soils important for sequestration.
Corridor for Wildlife	✓✓	Network of riparian trees/ woodlands along streams and ditches
Cultural Asset	✓✓	Historic Canal features, Prehistoric fort at Wall, Vernacular buildings including Duke of Sutherland Estate cottages and farms.
Evaporative cooling	✓✓	Pattern of reservoirs
Flow reduction through surface roughness	✓✓	Through woodlands and reeds
Food production	✓✓✓	Extensive arable and livestock
Green travel route	✓✓	Signed quiet lanes
Ground stabilisation	✓	Woodland blocks
Habitat for wildlife	✓✓	Network of riparian woodlands and woodland blocks
Heritage	✓✓	See cultural assets above
Inaccessible water storage	✓✓✓	Extensive areas of peat soils
Learning	✓	Forest school
Noise absorption	✓✓✓	Good network of surrounding woodlands
Pollutant removal from soil/ water	✓✓	Filtration by reeds
Recreation- private	✓	Shooting
Recreation- public	✓	Waking and cycling along road network
Recreation – public but with	x	

restrictions		
Separation of built up areas	✓	Limited
Shading from the sun	✓	Woodlands along rural lanes
Timber production	✓	Limited to small plantations
Trapping air pollutants	✓	Limited
Water conveyance	✓✓✓	Extensive network of brooks and ditches
Water infiltration	✓✓✓	Extensive peatlands and open farmland
Water interception	✓✓✓	Extensive peatlands and open farmland
Wind shelter	✓✓	Good network of surrounding woodlands and shelter belts

Lilleshall

Function	Present in this SLA?	Notes
Accessible Water Storage	✓✓	There are number of ponds/reservoirs scattered across the landscape
Aesthetic	✓✓✓	Very distinctive monument on hill and associated village
Biofuels Production	x	None currently observed
Burial Space	✓	Lilleshall church
Carbon Storage	✓	Woodland blocks
Corridor for Wildlife	✓✓	Disused canal, good network of hedgerows
Cultural Asset	✓✓✓	Monument, village, Lilleshall Abbey & parkland landscape, industrial archaeology
Evaporative cooling	✓	Pools
Flow reduction through surface roughness	✓	Woodlands and some rough pastures
Food production	✓✓✓	Extensive arable
Green travel route	✓✓	Good network of footpaths and cycle routes
Ground stabilisation	x	
Habitat for wildlife	✓✓	Local Nature Reserve, woodland and hedgerows
Heritage	✓✓✓	Monument, village, Lilleshall Abbey & parkland landscape, industrial archaeology
Inaccessible water storage	✓	Ground water storage
Learning	✓	Local school
Noise absorption	✓	Woodland blocks
Pollutant removal from soil/ water	x	
Recreation- private	✓	Possible shooting

Recreation- public	✓✓	Good network of footpaths and cycle paths
Recreation – public but with restrictions	✓	Cricket club, Lilleshall village
Separation of built up areas	✓✓✓	Separates Church Aston (southern edge of Newport) and Muxton (north-east edge of Telford urban area)
Shading from the sun	✓	Woodland blocks
Timber production	✓	Woodland blocks
Trapping air pollutants	✓	Woodland blocks
Water conveyance	✓	Streams and ditches
Water infiltration	✓✓	Open farmland
Water interception	✓	Open farmland
Wind shelter	✓	Woodland blocks and mature hedgerows

Wrekin Forest

Function	Present in this SLA?	Notes
Accessible Water Storage	✓	Limited to several small reservoirs
Aesthetic	✓✓✓	Very distinctive landform, landcover & views, highly visible from settlements and roads
Biofuels Production	x	None apparent
Burial Space	✓✓	Burial grounds at Little Wenlock and Lawley
Carbon Storage	✓✓✓	Extensive coverage of woodlands provide carbon storage
Corridor for Wildlife	✓✓✓	Extensive network of trees, woodlands and hedges connecting designated sites
Cultural Asset	✓✓✓	The Wrekin is integral to the cultural identity of the Borough, and has inspired legend, art and literature
Evaporative cooling	✓	Limited to reservoirs
Flow reduction through surface roughness	✓✓	Rough pastures and woodlands
Food production	✓✓	Mainly livestock although some arable
Green travel route	✓✓✓	Extensive network of footpaths, cycle routes and quiet lanes.
Ground stabilisation	✓✓✓	Extensive coverage of woodlands
Habitat for wildlife	✓✓✓	Extensive coverage designated sites
Heritage	✓✓✓	Extensive coverage of designated sites, historic landscape features and industrial archaeology
Inaccessible water storage	✓	Aquifers and groundwater
Learning	✓✓✓	Opportunities for outdoor learning across the landscape
Noise absorption	✓✓✓	Extensive coverage of woodlands
Pollutant removal from soil/	✓✓✓	Extensive coverage of woodlands

water		
Recreation- private	✓	Occasional shooting & fishing
Recreation- public	✓✓✓	Very popular locally for informal outdoor recreation, particularly paths up the Wrekin
Recreation – public but with restrictions	✓	Golf course
Separation of built up areas	✓✓	Separates Wellington and the southern part of Telford
Shading from the sun	✓✓✓	Extensive coverage of woodlands
Timber production	✓✓✓	Extensive coverage of woodlands
Trapping air pollutants	✓✓✓	Extensive coverage of woodlands
Water conveyance	✓	Limited to small surface streams
Water infiltration	✓✓	Occurs across farmland and woodland
Water interception	✓✓	Occurs across farmland and woodland
Wind shelter	✓✓	Extensive coverage of woodlands. Steep-sided valleys also provide shelter

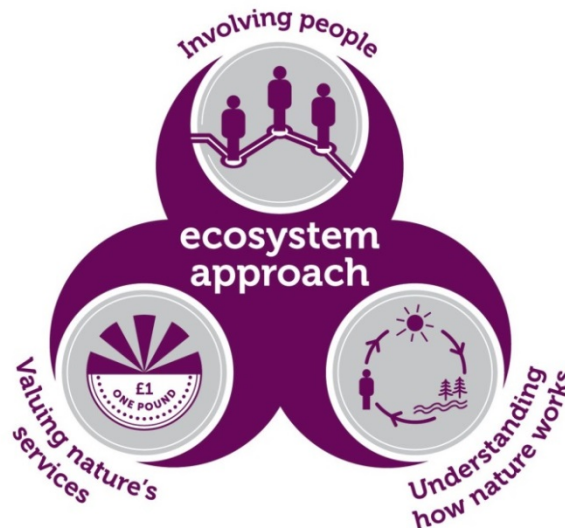
APPENDIX D: Introduction to ecosystem services

The ecosystem approach is about managing the environment for the benefit of people and nature. It is summed up by three principles:

Involving people – putting people at the centre of ecosystem management by involving them at the heart of decision-making.

Understanding how nature works – working in harmony with ecosystem processes and functions, and the benefits (or ‘services’) they provide. Thinking about the whole ‘system’, not just its individual parts.

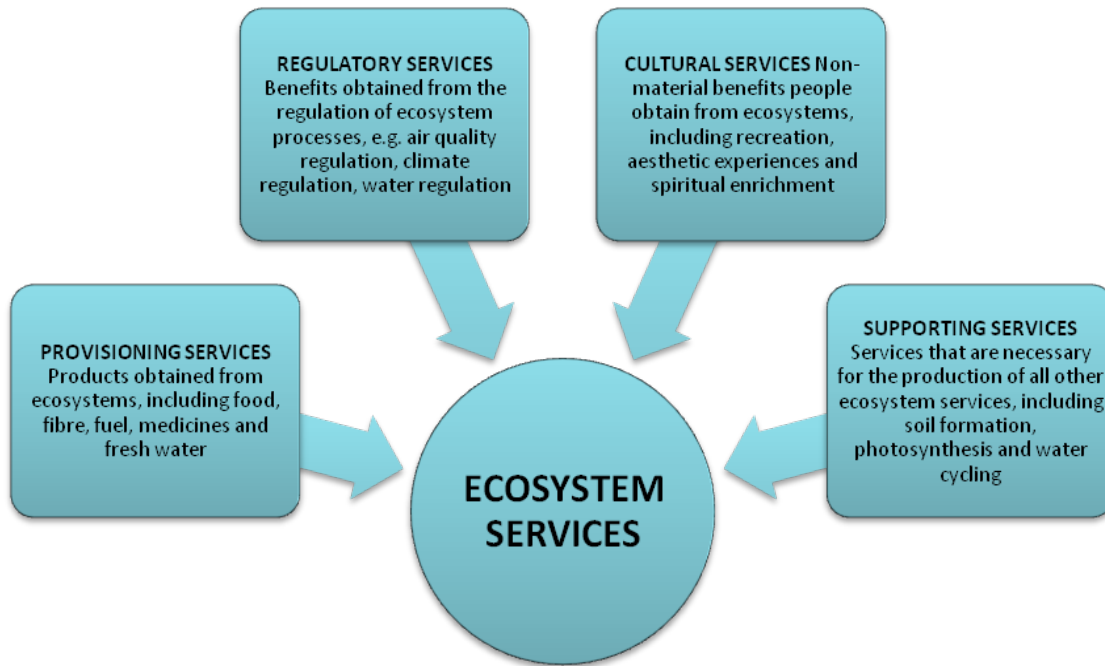
Valuing nature’s services – understanding how people value nature, including monetary and non-monetary value, and the effect on their well-being.



Components of the Ecosystem Approach (Ecosystems Knowledge Network)

The ecosystem approach recognises that nature provides us with benefits including food, clean water and opportunities for recreation. Using the approach helps maintain and enhance these benefits, whilst enabling prosperous communities to develop. It provides a way of thinking about the value of nature, justifying its importance in planning and decision-making at all levels. The approach contributes to actions aimed at improving people’s health, boosting the local economy, regenerating communities and reducing risks from adverse events such as flooding.

Ecosystem services can be described as *the multiple benefits gained by people from the natural environment*. They are classified into four categories, as shown in the diagram below.



Ecosystem Services

APPENDIX E: Extracts from the Shropshire Landscape Typology

This appendix lists the landscape types found within the Telford & Wrekin Strategic Landscapes, and their key characteristics as described within The Shropshire Landscape Typology.

High Volcanic Hills and Slopes

- Precambrian volcanic geology;
- Prominent hills with notable steep slopes;
- Unsettled, unenclosed landscape with few signs of habitation;
- Rough grazing.

Principal Wooded Hills

- Prominent, sloping topography;
- Interlocking pattern of large blocks of woodland with ancient character;
- Wooded land use with occasional hedged pastoral fields;
- Low density dispersed settlement pattern.

Wooded Hills and Farmlands

- Prominent, sloping topography;
- Hedged fields with predominantly ancient origins;
- Large discrete woodlands with ancient character;
- Mixed farming land use;
- Dispersed settlement pattern;
- Medium scale landscapes with framed views.

Wooded Hills and Estatelands

- Prominent, sloping topography;
- Large discrete blocks of woodland with ancient character;
- Mixed farming land use;
- Clustered settlement pattern of hamlets and villages;
- Medium-large scale landscapes offering filtered views.

Wooded Estatelands

- Rolling landform;
- Large blocks of ancient woodland;
- Large country houses with associated parklands;
- Mixed agricultural land use.

Estate Farmlands

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

Lowland Moors

- Flat, low-lying topography;
- Peaty soils;
- Wet ditches and drains;
- Open, unsettled landscape.

Coalfields

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