

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Renewable Energy Technologies

Swindon Borough Council

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LEPUS CONSULTING
LANDSCAPE, ECOLOGY, PLANNING & URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for Renewable Energy Technologies

Swindon Borough Council

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Cover photo: Rolling chalk downland in the North Wessex Downs National Landscape

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This assessment is based on the best available published information at the time of writing. No attempt to verify secondary data sources has been made and they have been assumed to be accurate as published. This report was prepared between January and April 2025 and is subject to and limited by the information available during this time.

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Abbreviations

AOD	Above Ordnance Datum
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
GLVIA	Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
ha	Hectares
LCA	Landscape Character Area
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LPA	Local Planning Authority
m	Metre
NCA	National Character Area
NFI	National Forest Inventory
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
OS	Ordnance Survey
PPG	Planning Practice Guidance
PRoW	Public Rights of Way
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SBC	Swindon Borough Council
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest

1 Introduction

1.1 Appointment and scope of work

- 1.1.1 Swindon Borough Council (SBC) is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan, which will provide for the development needs of the borough until at least 2043. Lepus Consulting has been appointed by SBC to undertake a Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (LSA) of renewable energy technologies to support the development of the New Local Plan¹.
- 1.1.2 Lepus Consulting is a multi-disciplinary environmental assessment and planning practice, based in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, specialising in landscape appraisal and management.

1.2 Swindon New Local Plan

- 1.2.1 The Swindon Local Plan 2026 was adopted in 2015. A Local Plan 'Review' was commenced under an early review direction from the Inspector, with a plan period to 2036. Following a Decision by SBC in December 2022, the production of a Local Plan review has been replaced by the Local Development Scheme (LDS) for a 'New Local Plan' to 2043. An update to the LDS is scheduled which indicates that consultation on the Regulation 18 and 19 of the new Local Plan is programmed for Spring and Autumn 2025. This LSA will inform the Regulation 18 stage plan for public consultation from March 2025.

1.3 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

- 1.3.1 LSA is the process of assessing the resilience, or robustness of landscape character and the visual resource (and valued characteristics) to defined change or changes arising from development proposals. It can help decision makers to understand likely changes and the nature of change should the development scenarios be taken forward.
- 1.3.2 The LSA for renewable energy technologies will inform the location of renewable energy development for the local plan. The results will be used by the Local Planning Authority and Parish Councils' Neighbourhood Planning Groups. The assessments will be used to influence where, and how much, development might be located in the areas of lesser landscape sensitivity, without undesirable impacts and effects on landscape character, ecosystem services and the visual resource.
- 1.3.3 The assessment units are the eight Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) derived from the Swindon Borough Landscape Character Assessment (prepared by Lepus in 2025). This LSA evaluates the sensitivity of each LCA to wind turbines, land-based solar PV installations and biomass plants.

¹ Swindon Borough Council. Swindon Local Plan 2026 and New Local Plan – New Local Plan. Available at: https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20113/local_plan_and_planning_policy/635/swindon_local_plan_2026_and_new_local_plan/2 [Accessed: 30/12/24].

1.4 Geographic context of Swindon

- 1.4.1 The borough of Swindon covers 230km² (or 23,000ha) and is located within the county of Wiltshire in the South West region of England. Swindon's southern and western boundaries meet Wiltshire District, with Cotswold District to the north and Vale of White Horse District to the east. Swindon is approximately 70 miles to the west of central London and 35 miles to the east of central Bristol. A map showing the location of Swindon and surrounding Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) is presented in **Figure 1.1**.
- 1.4.2 The borough includes the town of Swindon, the market town of Highworth, the large village of Wroughton, and a number of smaller villages and hamlets. Part of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)) is located within the borough, to the south. A baseline review of natural, cultural and social aspects of the borough can be found in **Chapter 4**.

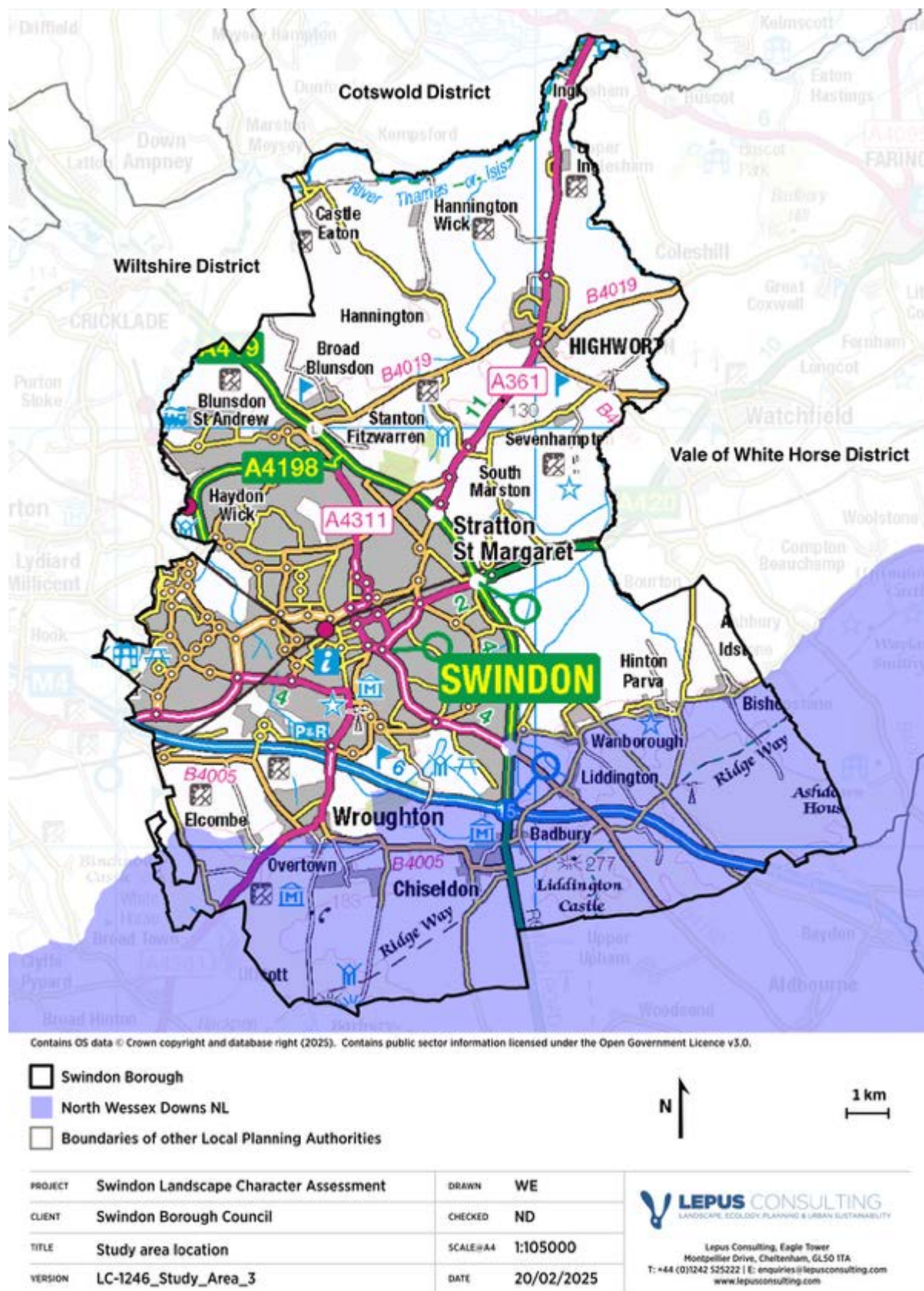


Figure 1.1: Study area location map

2 Planning policy

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This Landscape Character Assessment has been undertaken within the context of relevant planning policy. Planning policy and other material considerations are taken from the following:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)²
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)³
- Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026⁴

2.1.2 Further details of these planning policies are provided below.

2.2 National Planning Policy Framework

2.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) acts as guidance for local planning authorities, both in plan preparation and making decisions about planning applications. The environmental objective of the NPPF is:

“to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”

2.2.2 NPPF paragraphs relevant to landscape character are set out in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1: NPPF paragraphs relevant to landscape character

Paragraph 135	<i>“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments: ...c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);”</i>
Paragraph 187	<i>the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.”</i>

² Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (December 2024) National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> [Accessed: 30/12/24]

³ Planning Practice Guidance (2021) Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance> [Accessed: 24/09/24].

⁴ Swindon Borough Council (2015) Swindon Local Plan 2026. Available at: https://www.swindon.gov.uk/downloads/file/3988/swindon_borough_local_plan_2026 [Accessed: 30/12/24].

2.3 Planning Practice Guidance

- 2.3.1 The Government publishes Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)⁵ to accompany the NPPF. In relation to landscape matters, the Natural Environment PPG provides broad guidance primarily relating to the development of local planning policy and accompanying evidence.
- 2.3.2 Landscape matters are included as part of the guidance on the natural environment, specifically information about how policies can conserve and enhance landscapes and how the character of landscapes can be assessed.⁶

2.4 Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026

- 2.4.1 The Swindon Local Plan was formally adopted in March 2015⁷. The Council is currently in the process of developing a New Local Plan. Policy EN5: Landscape Character and Historic Landscape, from the Local Plan 2026 has been reproduced in **Table 2.2**.

Table 2.2: Policy EN5 from Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026

Policy EN5: Landscape Character and Historic Landscape	<i>“a. Proposals for development will only be permitted when:</i> <i>the intrinsic character, diversity and local distinctness of landscape within Swindon Borough are protected, conserved and enhanced;</i> <i>the design of the development and materials used are sympathetic to the surrounding landscape;</i> <i>unacceptable impacts upon the landscape are avoided; and,</i> <i>where other negative impacts are considered unavoidable, they are satisfactorily mitigated.</i> <i>b. In meeting the requirements of EN5a, applications for development should demonstrate how they have taken into account Landscape Character Assessment and assessed the potential impact of the proposal upon the following attributes of the landscape:</i> <i>existing landscape form, features, topography and character;</i> <i>the contribution of the landscape to biodiversity and wildlife;</i> <i>local geology and geo-diversity;</i> <i>views, visual amenity and the landscape setting;</i> <i>valuable historic and heritage areas and assets;</i> <i>environmental amenity such as tranquillity & noise, pollution and light pollution; and,</i> <i>the existing social, physical, economic and environmental roles and functions of the landscape at the local and strategic scale (for example as a place of cultural and leisure activity, living, employment and separation of settlements).</i> <i>c. The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a nationally recognised area of landscape protection. Proposals within the Borough which are within and or abuts the North Wessex Downs AONB must accord with relevant criteria set out in the AONB Management Plan and [in]... the NPPF. Proposals outside the AONB should not adversely affect its setting.”</i>
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⁵ Planning Practice Guidance (2021) Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance> [Accessed: 24/09/24].

⁶ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (December 2024) National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> [Accessed: 30/12/24]

⁷ Swindon Borough Council (2015) Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026. Available at: https://www.swindon.gov.uk/downloads/file/3988/swindon_borough_local_plan_2026 [Accessed 30/12/24].

3 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Methodology

3.1 Overview

- 3.1.1 LSA is the process of assessing the resilience, or robustness of landscape character, the visual resource and valued characteristics to defined change or changes arising from development proposals. It can help decision makers to understand likely changes and the nature of change should the development scenarios be taken forward.
- 3.1.2 The susceptibility of landscape character and the visual resource, to the prescribed changes, combined with value, inform judgements regarding sensitivity. Definitions of landscape character, sensitivity, susceptibility and value are provided in **Table 3.1** and the process of assessing landscape sensitivity is presented in **Figure 3.1**.
- 3.1.3 The methodology for this study has been derived principally from:
- Natural England (2019) 'An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management'⁸
- 3.1.4 The methodology is also informed by the following publications:
- 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual and Impact Assessment Third Edition' (2013)⁹
 - The Countryside Agency Topic Paper 6 (2002) 'Techniques and criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity'¹⁰
 - Natural England (2014) 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment'¹¹
 - Landscape Institute (2021) 'Assessing landscape value outside national designations' Technical Guidance Note 02/21¹²
- 3.1.5 The assessment can be summarised as having three key stages:
- 1) Define the purpose and scope of the project
 - 2) Gather information to inform the project (desk study and field study)
 - 3) Assess landscape sensitivity of the LCAs (desk study and field study)

⁸ Natural England (2019) 'An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management' Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/817928/landscape-sensitivity-assessment-2019.pdf [Accessed: 16/01/25]

⁹ Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition) Abingdon: Routledge

¹⁰ The Countryside Agency (2002) Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity. Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5601625141936128> [Accessed: 16/01/25]

¹¹ Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscape-character-assessments-identify-and-describe-landscape-types> [Accessed: 16/01/25]

¹² Landscape Institute (2021) 'Assessing landscape value outside national designations' TGN 02/21 Available at <https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/publication/tgn-02-21-assessing-landscape-value-outside-national-designations/> [Accessed: 16/01/25]

Table 3.1: Landscape character, sensitivity, susceptibility and value definitions¹³

Landscape character	A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.
Landscape value	The relative value or importance attached to a landscape (often as a basis for designation or recognition), which expresses national or local consensus, because of its quality, special qualities including perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness, cultural associations or other conservation issues.
Landscape sensitivity	Within the context of spatial planning and land management, landscape sensitivity is a term applied to landscape character and the associated visual resource, combining judgements of their susceptibility to the specific development type / development scenario or other change being considered together with the value(s) related to that landscape and visual resource. Landscape sensitivity may be regarded as a measure of the resilience, or robustness, of a landscape to withstand specified change arising from development types or land management practices, without undue negative effects on the landscape and visual baseline and their value.
Landscape susceptibility	Within the context of spatial planning and land management, landscape susceptibility is the degree to which a defined landscape and its associated visual qualities and attributes might respond to the specific development type/development scenario or other change without undue negative effects on landscape character and the visual resource.

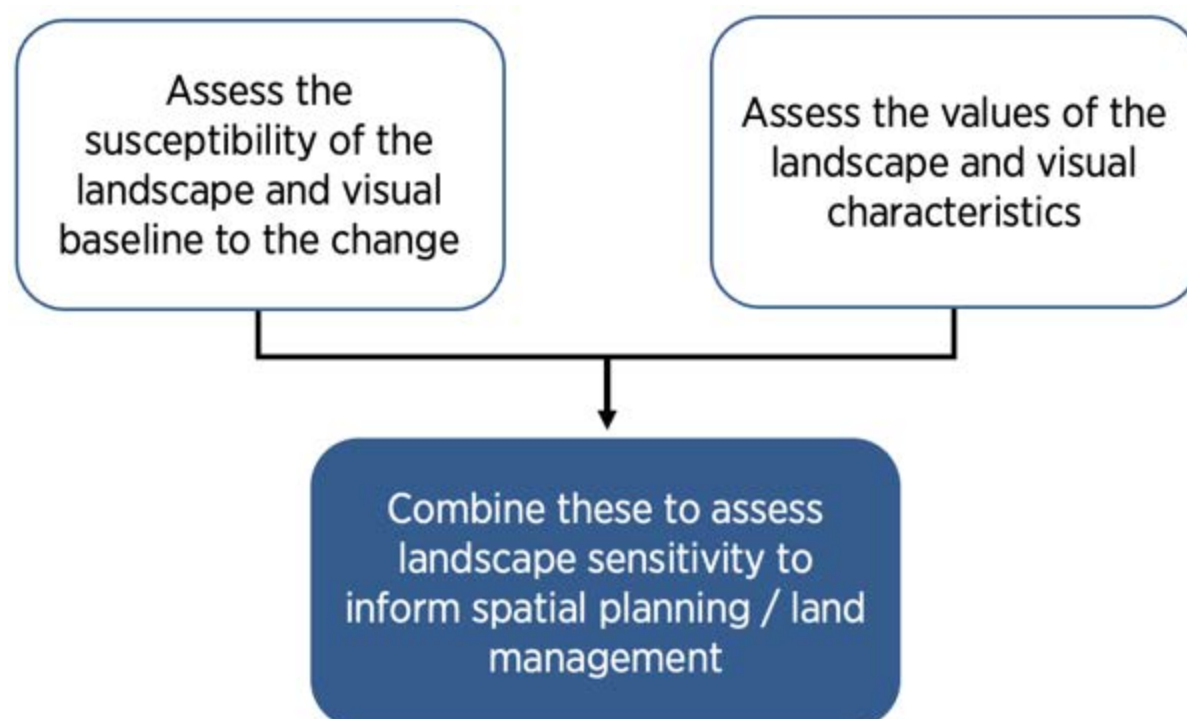


Figure 3.1: Assessing landscape sensitivity

3.1.6 The process of LSA is set out on the flowchart from Natural England in **Figure 3.2**.

¹³ Natural England (2019) 'An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management' Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/817928/landscape-sensitivity-assessment-2019.pdf [Accessed: 16/01/25]

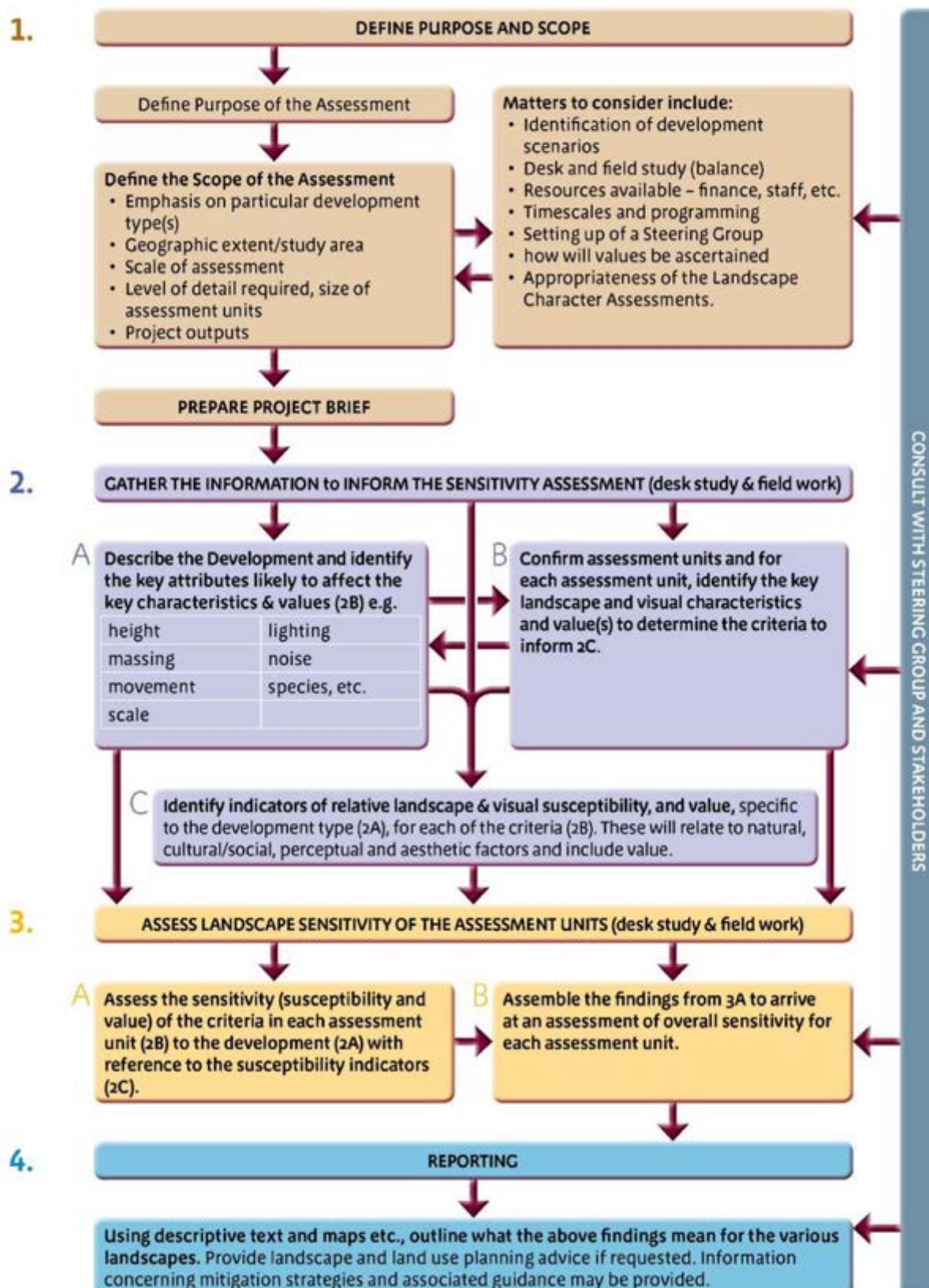


Figure 3.2: The process of LSA¹⁴

3.2 LSA Step 1: Define purpose and scope of the project

Emphasis on particular development type(s)

- 3.2.1 This assessment considers landscape sensitivity to renewable energy technologies (wind turbines, land-based solar PV installations and biomass plants).
- 3.2.2 The assessment assumes the development types broadly follow the key attributes of the renewable energy technologies described in **Chapter 6**.

Geographic extent of study area

- 3.2.3 The geographic extent of the study area is the administrative boundary of Swindon Borough Council.

Scale of assessment

- 3.2.4 A detailed scale of assessment is required to determine the sensitivity of the LCAs to renewable energy technologies.

Level of detail required and size of assessment units

- 3.2.5 The assessment units are the eight LCAs derived from the Swindon Borough Landscape Character Assessment (prepared by Lepus in 2025)

Project outputs

- 3.2.6 Project outputs of the LSA are presented in this report and include the following:
- LSA methodology (**Chapter 3**);
 - Baseline review of natural, cultural and social aspects of the borough (**Chapter 4**);
 - LSA assessments including maps and photos of each LCA (**Chapters 8 to 15**); and
 - Conclusion (**Chapter 16**)

¹⁴ Natural England (2019) 'An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management' Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/817928/landscape-sensitivity-assessment-2019.pdf [Accessed: 16/01/25]

3.3 LSA Step 2: Gather information to inform the LSA (desk study and field study)

3.3.1 Judgements regarding landscape sensitivity are informed by the susceptibility of landscape character and the visual resource, to the prescribed changes, combined with value. Step 2 requires three sub tasks, 2A, 2B and 2C.

Step 2A. Describe the development type(s) and scenarios

3.3.2 The interaction between landscape and visual susceptibility and the attributes of the renewable energy technologies determine the degree to which a LCA can accommodate change.

3.3.3 The assessment assumes the development types broadly follow the key attributes of the renewable energy technologies described in detail in **Chapter 6**.

Step 2B: Confirm assessment units and establish and review the landscape and visual baseline, and identify associated value(s)

3.3.4 This stage begins with an information gathering exercise to prepare a baseline review of natural, cultural and social aspects of the borough. This review is presented in **Chapter 4** and relies largely on information from the following sources:

- National Character Areas (NCAs) in Swindon Borough: Upper Thames Clay Vales¹⁵, Midvale Ridge¹⁶ and Berkshire and Marlborough Downs¹⁷;
- Swindon Borough Landscape Character Assessment (prepared by Lepus in 2025)

3.3.5 Spatial GIS data used to inform this LSA are listed in **Table 3.2**.

¹⁵ Natural England (2014) NCA Profile: 108 Upper Thames Clay Vales (NE570). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5865554770395136> [Accessed: 16/01/25].

¹⁶ Natural England (2013) NCA Profile: 109 Midvale Ridge (NE417). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5431100> [Accessed: 16/01/25].

¹⁷ Natural England (2015) NCA Profile: 116 Berkshire and Marlborough Downs (NE482). Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4822422297509888> [Accessed: 16/01/25].

Table 3.2: GIS data used in this LSA

Dataset	Source
Ancient woodland	
Built-up areas	
Country Parks	
Flood zones	
Geology	
Historic environment and heritage assets (listed buildings, scheduled monuments and Registered Parks and Gardens (RPGs))	
Local Wildlife Sites	
National Character Areas	
Nature conservation designations (Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs))	
Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 Scale Colour Raster	
Priority habitat inventory	
Terrain	
Watercourses and surface water	
Woodland	

Assessment criteria

- 3.3.6 The impact of the renewable energy technologies on landscape character and visual qualities of the LCAs are evaluated by referring to assessment criteria which have been identified and listed in **Table 3.3**. The assessment criteria include key landscape elements and features (see **Figure 3.3**) that are likely to be affected by the development proposals.

Landscape value

- 3.3.7 Landscape value (as defined in **Table 3.1**) informs the LSA. The value of landscapes can be assessed qualitatively with reference to:
- Biodiversity and geodiversity designations (SSSI, LNR, LWS)
 - Historic environment designations (listed buildings, scheduled monuments, RPGs and conservation areas)
 - Valued attributes such as topography, perceptual qualities, cultural and historic features and associations, biodiversity.
 - Valuation of ecosystem services
 - Local community values
 - Character and sense of place
 - Recreational value
 - Intrinsic value

Table 3.3: *Landscape, visual and value assessment criteria proforma*

Criteria	Description	Score
Landscape susceptibility		
Scale and enclosure		
Landform		
Landcover (including biodiversity)		
Man-made influences		
Scenic quality and character		
Remoteness and tranquillity		
Visual susceptibility		
Skylines and settings		
Movement		
Visibility, key views, vistas and typical receptors		
Views to and from important landscape and cultural heritage features		
Value		
Landscape value		
Visual value		

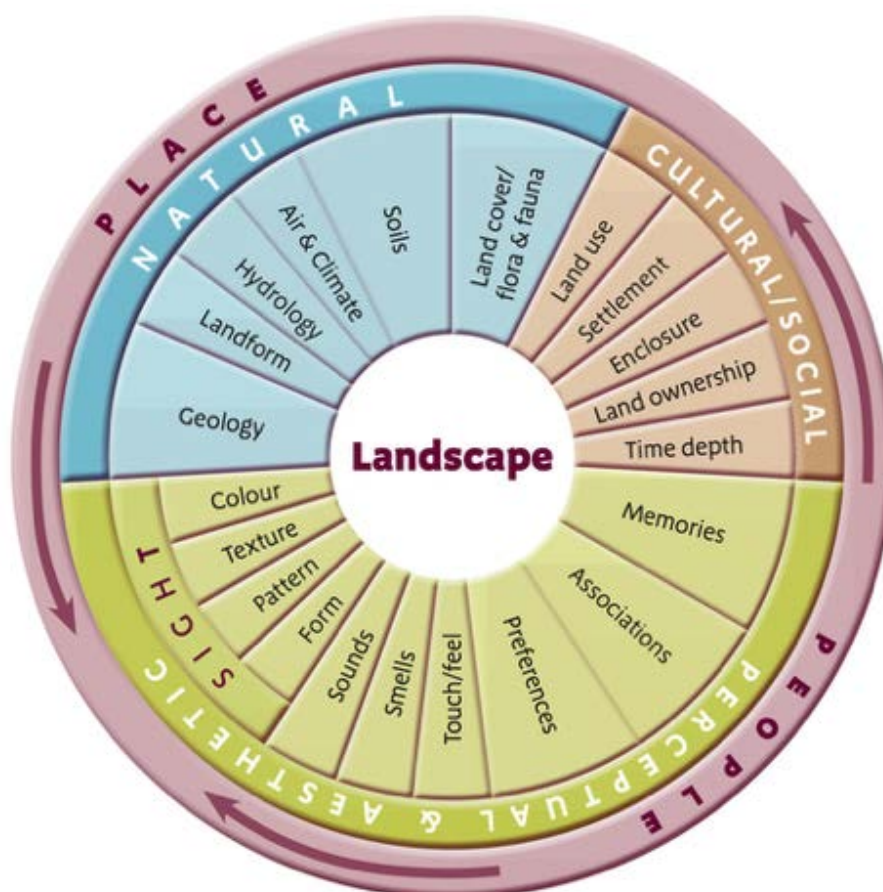


Figure 3.3: What is Landscape?¹⁸

Step 2C: Identify indicators of susceptibility to be used when assessing landscape and visual sensitivity to the development type(s)

3.3.8 Indicators of susceptibility have been identified for each of the assessment criteria, these are presented in **Table 3.5**. The sensitivity of the landscape to the key attributes of the development scenarios are assessed with reference to the indicators of susceptibility at Step 3.

3.4 LSA Step 3: Assess landscape sensitivity of the LCAs (desk study and field study)

Step 3A: Susceptibility of the assessment criteria

3.4.1 Step 3A involves assessing the landscape and visual susceptibility of the assessment criteria and landscape and visual value for each LCA against the key attributes of the renewable energy technologies, with reference to the indicators of susceptibility identified in **Table 3.5**.

¹⁸ Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscape-character-assessments-identify-and-describe-landscape-types> [Accessed: 16/01/25]

Step 3B: Overall sensitivity

- 3.4.2 Finally, informed by the susceptibility of the landscape and visual baseline to change and the values of the landscape and visual characteristics, the overall landscape sensitivity of each LCA is systematically assessed and described using professional judgement. The overall landscape sensitivity for each LCA is assessed using the five-point scale outlined in **Table 3.4**.

Table 3.4: Levels of sensitivity definitions¹⁹

High	
High/Medium	
Medium	
Medium/Low	
Low	

¹⁹ Natural England (2019) 'An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management' Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/817928/landscape-sensitivity-assessment-2019.pdf [Accessed: 16/01/25]

Table 3.5: Indicators of susceptibility

Criteria		Indicators of higher susceptibility	Indicators of lower susceptibility
Landscape			
Scale and enclosure	Landscapes with a small scale, complex and intricate landscape pattern arising from landcover elements including settlement, field pattern or vegetation cover are more likely to be susceptible to change arising from larger scale development than landscapes with a simple landcover pattern. Landscapes enclosed by buildings, trees and woodlands can offer more opportunity to accommodate development without affecting landscape character. This criterion considers the scale and integrity of field boundaries such as hedgerows, stone walls or fences. Intact field boundaries can help screen development but can also be susceptible to loss or degradation from development. Historic hedgerows are particularly susceptible to loss.	• Intimate and small-scale landscapes • Small scale field systems • Human scale elements • Field boundaries characterised by a large proportion of well managed low hedgerows, fences and/or walls.	• Vast or large-scale fields • A large proportion of unmanaged/high hedgerows/field boundaries
Landform	Open, highly prominent and distinctive or intricate and complex landforms with sharp changes in level are more likely to be susceptible to change arising from development than flat and indistinct landforms. This criterion also considers whether potential development would interrupt the relationship between distinctive landform features such as escarpments, or prominent hills or open plains. In some locations development would affect skyline character.	• Irregular or complex landform • Narrow valleys and ridges • Distinctive landform features	• Simple, featureless landscape • Convex landform • Plateau • Flat and uniform landform
Landcover (including biodiversity)	Landscapes with a strong and positive rural character in good condition and with features worthy of conservation, will be more susceptible to change because of the potential impact on their legibility and upon features and combinations of elements which may be difficult to replace. This applies to landscapes with semi-natural habitats and valued natural features such as woodland and hedgerows with good connectivity.	• Natural/semi-natural landcover • Ancient woodland • Complex, irregular or intimate landscape • Open hillsides • Field pattern/mosaic • Valleys • Water • Field and hedgerow trees	• Simple, regular or uniform landscape • Developed land, derelict or waste ground • Forestry • Lowland farmland • Large scale arable fields (low grade)
Man-made influences	This criterion considers whether potential development would integrate with the general settlement form/pattern and how it may affect the character of the existing settlement edge and its functioning relationship with the surrounding countryside.	• Absence of modern development • Infrequent/no residential built form • Dispersed settlement/sparsely settled/unpopulated areas	• Major infrastructure (transport/communications/utility infrastructure/wind turbines) • Modern day industrial development • Large/concentrated urban/modern settlements

Criteria		Indicators of higher susceptibility	Indicators of lower susceptibility
Scenic quality and character			
Remoteness/ tranquillity			

Visual

	presence of distinctive or historic landscape features such as hilltop monuments, church spires/towers or historic villages also increases susceptibility.	• Presence of distinctive / sensitive landscape features such as historic landmarks	• Existing built development
	Visual detractors and the movement of visual elements in the landscape may affect perceptions of tranquillity. Moving elements include road traffic, plant machinery, agricultural vehicles, plumes from chimneys and other outdoor activities.	• Rare	• Constant or frequent access • Busy
	The likelihood of a development being visible depends on the scale of the development, the landform in which the development is sited and the screening opportunities afforded by the land cover, particularly buildings, trees and woodlands. Landscapes which are visually contained with limited inward and outward views are likely to be less susceptible than open landscapes with extensive inward and outward views. The greater the number of sensitive visual receptors in an area, the more susceptible the area will be to change from development. The most susceptible receptors are residents, communities, people engaged in outdoor recreation where the landscape is part of the experience, visitors to landscape whose interest is focused on natural	• Landscapes which are open or exposed with far reaching views • Extensive intervisibility and little screening or filtering of views • Sparse woodland/tree cover • Field systems bounded by fences/managed hedgerows/stone walls/no field boundaries • Forms an important part of a view from sensitive viewpoints	• Landscapes which are confined, contained or enclosed with few inward or outward views • Sparsely populated or inaccessible • Neighbouring landscapes of lower sensitivity • Contributes little to wider landscape • Large scale simple back drops • The presence of woodland blocks and belts • Fields bounded with intact hedgerows/overgrown hedgerows/hedgerows with trees

Criteria		Indicators of higher susceptibility	Indicators of lower susceptibility
	and built heritage assets and users of scenic routes. Each location brings with it certain expectations. Transport users (particularly of high-speed roads) are usually considered less susceptible receptors, unless the road is considered to be a scenic route or important gateway.	(such as views from scenic routes, well known landmarks, or promoted viewpoints) • Densely populated • Views from scenic routes, well-known landmarks, or views from visitor viewpoints • Views into or out, especially from high ground • Neighbouring landscapes of higher sensitivity, especially internationally and nationally designated landscapes • Contributes to wider landscape • Distinctive or complex backdrops • Landscapes important to the settings/approaches/gateways to designated landscapes • Strong association with adjacent LCAs	• Weak association with adjacent LCAs
Views to and from important landscape and cultural heritage features	Landscapes of attractive scenery, character, quality, integrity, strong sense of place and local distinctiveness will typically be more susceptible to development than less scenic areas. This includes landscapes that are designated for their natural beauty, but also areas of undesignated landscape, including areas that are scenic and have strong character.	• Strong association with landscape • Intervisibility between sites	• Weak association with landscape • Little intervisibility between sites

Criteria		Indicators of higher value	Indicators of lower value
Landscape value			
Strength of landscape character/quality and condition	Landscapes with a strong and positive character in good condition and with features worthy of conservation, will be more susceptible to change because of the potential impact on their legibility and upon features and combinations of elements which may be difficult to replace.	• Related published documentation (tourist information), art and literature • Historic Environment: RPG, visually prominent scheduled monuments such as hillforts	
Rarity	Landscapes which are commonplace are less likely to be valued than landscapes which are unique or rare as these are often irreplaceable.		

Geological, topographical and Geomorphological value	This considers the shape and scale of the land and the extent that there may be distinctive and valued geological, topographical or hydrological features. Such features may be distinctive in their own right or may have influenced the creation of areas of distinctive and valued landscape character.	and castles which are also visitor attractions. • Biodiversity and geodiversity designations (SSSI, LNR, LWS) • Local community values	
Historic landscape value	The extent to which a landscape displays historic continuity and time depth – reflected in the presence of nationally or internationally designated historic landscape components and their settings. May also be a reflection of artistic or literary references. Also whether a landscape is important to the setting and identity of designated landscapes and heritage assets.		
Natural value	Landscapes with a strong and positive character in good condition and with features worthy of conservation, will be more susceptible to change because of the potential impact on their legibility and upon features and combinations of elements which may be difficult to replace. This applies to landscapes with semi-natural habitats and valued natural features such as woodland and hedgerows with good connectivity.		
Recreational value	The extent to which the experience of the landscape makes an important contribution to the recreational use and enjoyment of an area. Indicators include the presence of such features as nature reserves, country parks, allotments, outdoor sports facilities, public rights of way, green infrastructure corridors, scenic routes and promoted viewpoints. Also includes recognised scenic or promoted tourist routes.		
Scenic and other aesthetic and perceptual and experiential qualities	Defined by the presence of distinctive, dramatic or striking patterns of landform or land cover, or by strong aesthetic response to qualities such as rural character (traditional land uses with few human influences), perceived naturalness, sense of remoteness or tranquillity and dark skies.		
Visual value			
	Highly valued views of national or international importance which are important in relation to the special qualities of a designated landscape, the cultural associations of which are widely recognised in art, literature or other media. Views of very high scenic quality including those which are known historically for their picturesque and landscape beauty and are widely held in high regard.	• Criteria will include iconic views, views related to designated landscape related features, regionally/locally valued views, and views valued by the local community.	

Views related to designated landscapes and landscape related features	Views from tourist routes, national trails, and other recognised visitor destinations or attractions. Views which are important in relation to the special qualities of a designated landscape or which are identified in specific studies of views. Views to, from and within the setting of designated landscapes, historic and cultural sites and views recorded as important in relation to heritage assets (as recorded in the relevant citations accompanying the designation and taking account of Historic England's guidance on the setting of heritage assets).		
Regionally/ locally valued views	Views which are identified in the local plan and/or of regional or particular local importance including views from regionally and locally promoted trails. Views which appear on an Ordnance Survey, tourist map or within guide books.		
Views valued by the community	Views from locations where there is provision of facilities for their enjoyment, such as parking and interpretation. Views which are locally well known, well-frequented and/or promoted as a beauty spot/visitor destination and may have significant cultural associations.		

4 The landscape of Swindon Borough

4.1 Natural factors

Landform and geology

4.1.1 The topography varies greatly across the borough, ranging from the low-lying upper Thames clay vale in the north to the escarpment of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape in the south. The highest point in the borough is at Liddington Hill at 277m AOD (see **Figure 4.1**).

4.1.2 The bedrock geology (at 1:625,000 scale) of the borough mostly comprises West Walton formation, Ampthill clay formation and Kimmeridge clay formation (undifferentiated)²⁰. Corallian group (limestone, sandstone, siltstone and mudstone), is situated within the centre of the borough, with Kellaways formation and Oxford Clay formation (undifferentiated – mudstone, siltstone and sandstone) to the north. The south of the borough comprises of Gault formation and Upper Greensand formation (undifferentiated – mudstone, sandstone and limestone) and grey chalk.

Hydrology

4.1.3 Numerous watercourses flow through the borough of Swindon (see **Figure 4.1**). The River Thames flows in an easterly direction across the northern boundary of the borough, to the south of Kempsford and Lechlade-on-Thames. The River Thames is joined by tributaries including the River Cole, the Share Ditch and Bydemill Brook. The River Ray flows in a north westerly direction within the western area and flows west to meet the River Cherwell at Islip, Oxfordshire. The River Cole flows in a northern direction along the north-eastern boundary of the borough. Water bodies in the borough include Coate Water (28ha) located 5km to the south-east of central Swindon.

²⁰ BGS (2024) GeoIndex (onshore). Available at: <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/geoindex-onshore/> [Accessed 25/09/24]

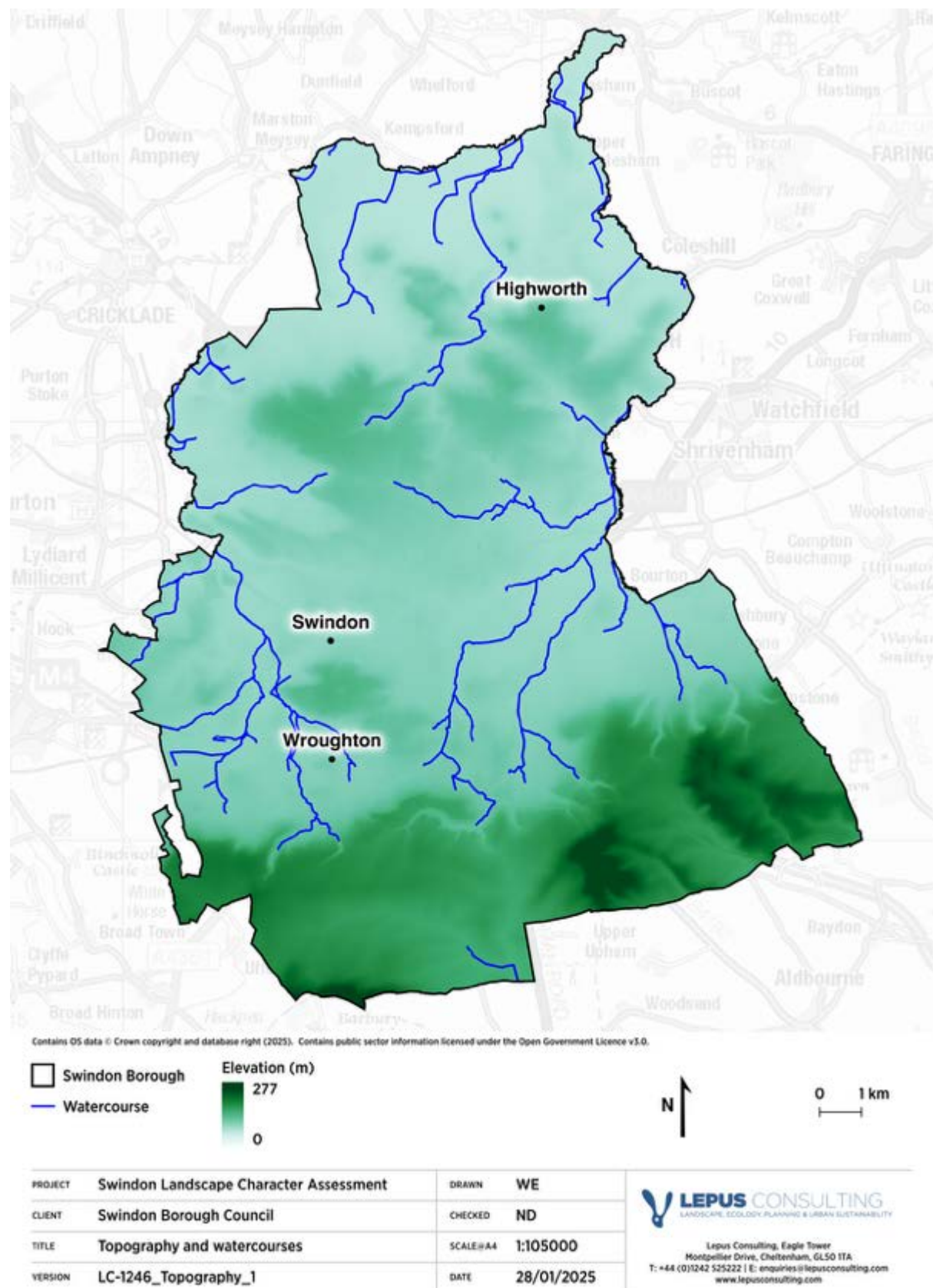


Figure 4.1: Topography and watercourses

Land cover and biodiversity

4.1.4 No European sites are located within the borough (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas or Ramsar sites). There are nine Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in the borough of Swindon, shown on the map in **Figure 4.2** and listed below:

- Bincknoll Dip Woods SSSI
- Burderop Wood SSSI
- Clout's Wood SSSI
- Coate Water SSSI
- Great Quarry, Swindon SSSI
- Haydon Meadow SSSI
- Okus Quarry SSSI
- Old Town Railway Cutting, Swindon SSSI
- The Coombes, Hinton Parva SSSI

4.1.5 There are seven Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) in the borough (see **Figure 4.2**). These are:

- Barbury Castle LNR
- Coate Water LNR
- Quarry Wildlife Garden LNR
- Radnor Street Cemetery LNR
- Rushey Platt Canalside Park LNR
- Seven Fields LNR
- Stanton Park LNR

4.1.6 Priority habitats in the borough (Natural England's Priority Habitat Inventory²¹) are listed in **Table 4.1** and presented on the map in **Figure 4.2**.

Table 4.1: Priority habitats in Swindon (Natural England's Priority Habitat Inventory)

Priority habitat	Area (ha) within Swindon	Percentage of Swindon (23,009ha)
Lowland calcareous grassland		
Deciduous woodland		
Good quality semi-improved grassland		
Lowland meadows		
Lowland fens		
Traditional orchards		
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh		
Purple moor grass and rush pastures		

²¹ Natural England (2024) Priority Habitats Inventory (England). Available at: <https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/Defra::priority-habitats-inventory-england/about> [Accessed 28/01/25]

- 4.1.7 Woodland covers 1,633ha (National Forest Inventory (NFI), 2022), which is 7.1% of the borough. The NFI²² covers any forest or woodland in Great Britain of at least 0.5ha in area, with a minimum width of 20m, and that has at least 20% tree canopy cover. NFI data classifies woodland into types. Woodland types in Swindon are listed in **Table 4.2**. There are 181ha of ancient woodland in the borough and the largest areas are found at Burderop Wood, Great Wood and Clouts Wood.

Table 4.2: National Forest Inventory (2022) woodland types in Swindon

Woodland type	Area (ha) within Swindon	Percentage of Swindon (23,009ha)
Broadleaved		
Young trees		
Assumed woodland		
Conifer		
Mixed mainly conifer		
Ground prep		
Mixed mainly broadleaved		
Felled		
Coppice		

²² Forest Research (2024) National Forest Inventory. Available at: <https://www.forestryresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/national-forest-inventory/> [Accessed 28/01/25]

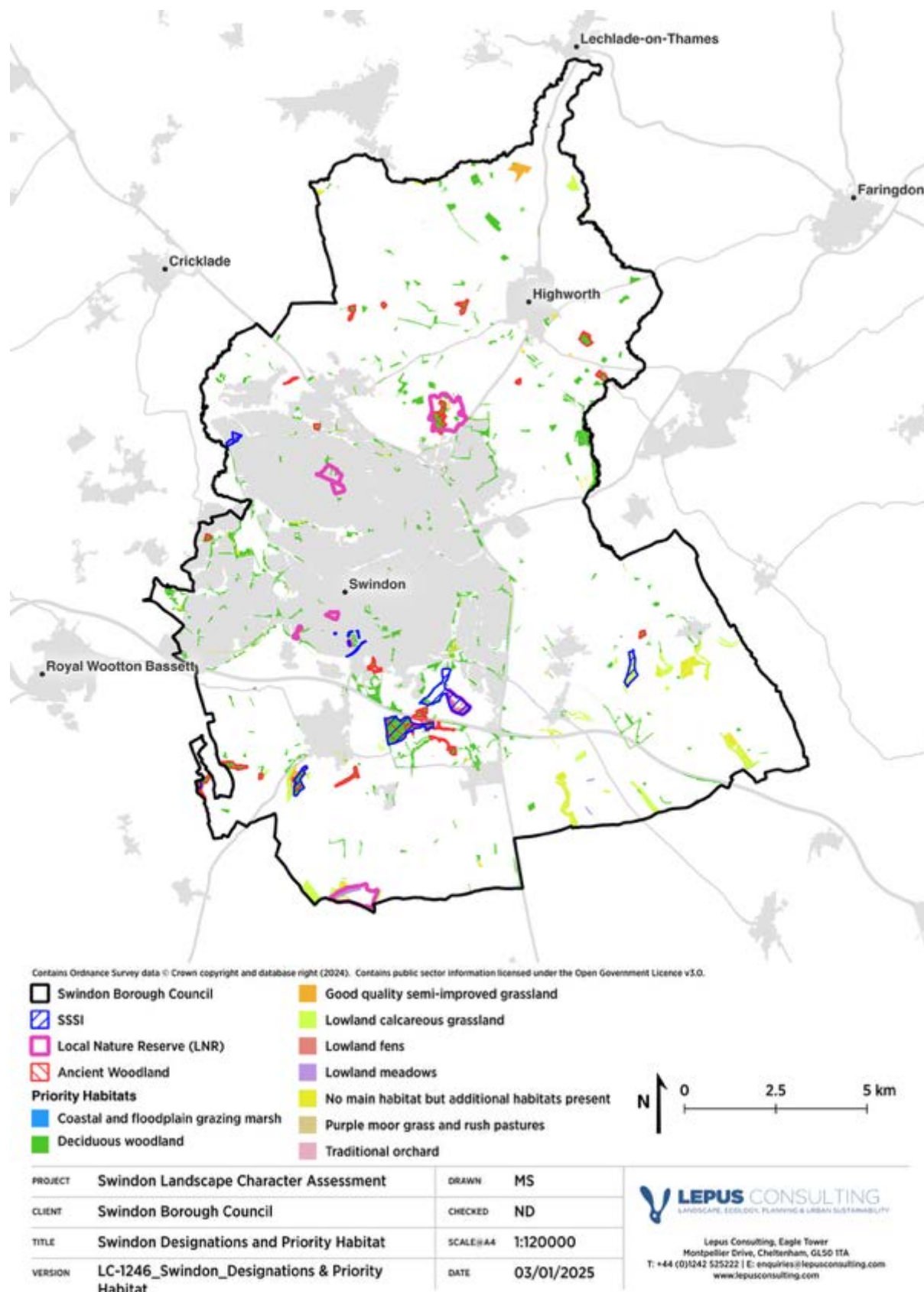


Figure 4.2: Nature conservation designations and priority habitats in Swindon

4.2 Cultural and social factors

Land use, settlement and infrastructure

- 4.2.1 The borough includes the town of Swindon, the market town of Highworth, the large village of Wroughton, and a number of smaller villages and hamlets. Outside the urban areas, the landscape is predominantly agricultural comprising extensive areas of arable and pasture. The borough is traversed by key transport routes, including the M4 motorway, the A419, the A420, and the Great Western Main Line.
- 4.2.2 Five Country Parks are located within the borough: Barbury Castle, Coate Water, Lydiard Park, Mouldon Hill and Stanton Park (see **Figure 4.3**). Country Parks are typically located near urban areas and provide green spaces for the enjoyment of the nature and the outdoors. The Coombes at Hinton Parva is land designated by the National Trust, also designated as an SSSI, located within the south-east of the borough²³.

Historic environment and heritage assets

- 4.2.3 The borough contains a rich historic environment with heritage assets including 27 conservation areas²⁴, 53 scheduled monuments and numerous listed buildings (14 Grade I, 29 Grade II* and 621 Grade II). There are three Registered Parks and Gardens (Registered Parks and Gardens) within the borough including Lydiard Park (Grade II), Queen's Park, Swindon (Grade II) and Town Gardens, Swindon (Grade II) (see **Figure 4.3**). The Ridgeway National Trail, Britain's oldest road, runs through the borough within the North Wessex Downs²⁵.

²³ National Trust Open Data. National Trust land datasets. Available at: <https://open-data-national-trust.hub.arcgis.com> [Accessed: 02/01/25].

²⁴ Swindon Borough Council. Conservation areas. Available at: https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20059/land_and_premises/373/conservation_areas [Accessed: 30/12/24].

²⁵ National Trails. The Ridgeway. Available at: https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en_GB/trails/the-ridgeway/ [Accessed: 02/01/25].

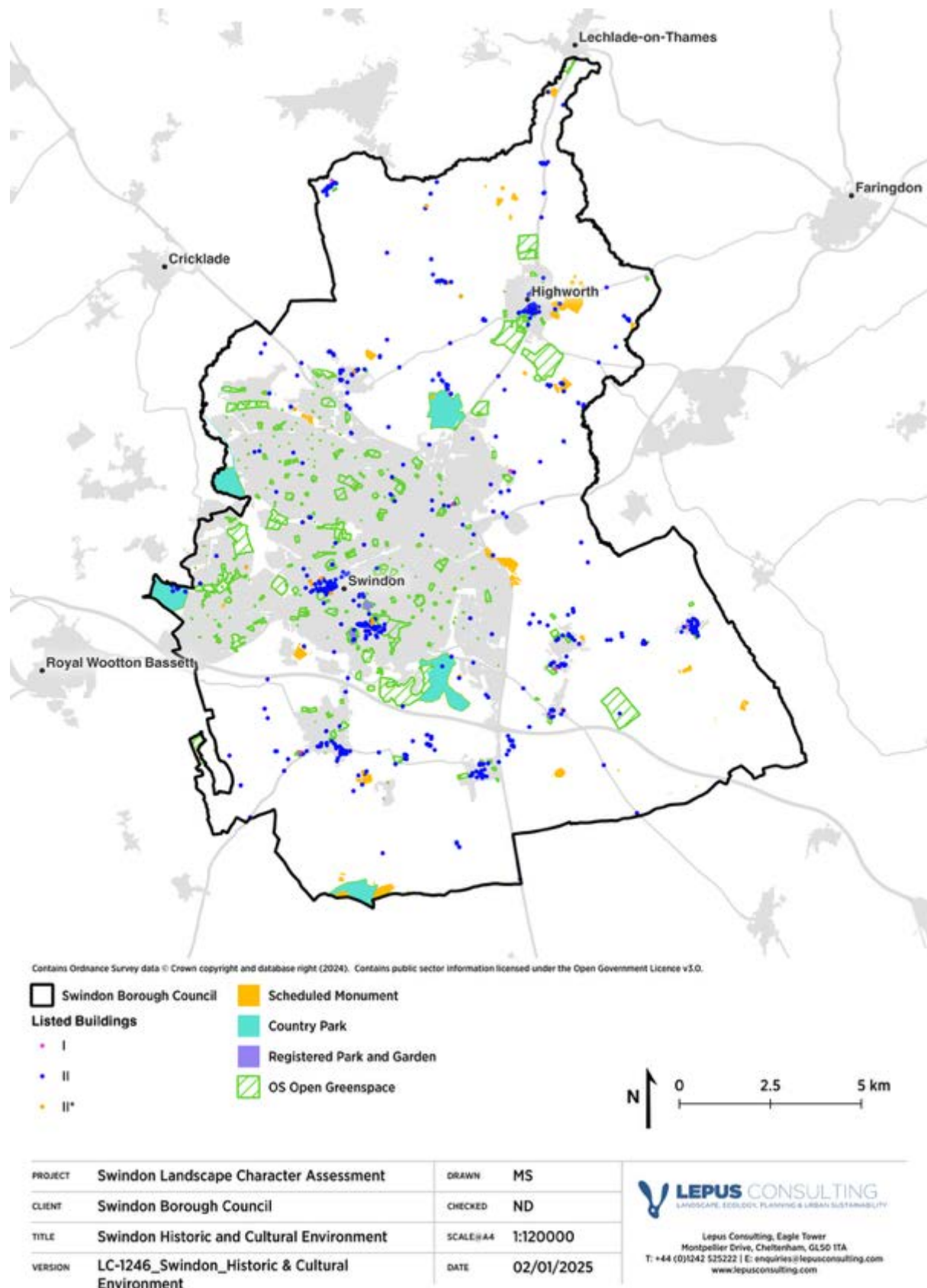


Figure 4.3: Historic environment and recreation assets in Swindon

5 North Wessex Downs National Landscape

5.1 Description

- 5.1.1 The North Wessex Downs National Landscape (formerly AONB) is an expansive chalk downland landscape spanning the counties of Berkshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire. The North Wessex Downs was designated as an AONB in 1972 under the National Parks and Access to Countryside Act 1949. The North Wessex Downs covers approximately a quarter of the borough of Swindon (6,414 hectares) (see **Figure 5.1**). The North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2019-2024²⁶ describes the landscape as:

“a visibly ancient landscape of great beauty, diversity and size. It embraces the high, open arable sweeps of the chalk downs and dramatic scarp slopes with their prehistoric monuments and beech knolls, the moulded dip slopes, sheltered chalk river valleys, intimate and secluded wooded areas and low-lying heaths with a rich mosaic of woodland, pasture, heath and commons”.

5.2 Special landscape qualities

- 5.2.1 Special landscape qualities of the North Wessex Downs, identified in the AONB Management Plan 2019-2024²⁷ are listed in **Table 5.1**

Table 5.1: Special landscape qualities of the North Wessex Downs (AONB Management Plan 2019-2024)

Special landscape qualities of the North Wessex Downs (AONB Management Plan 2019-2024)	
	• Open Downland extending from Roundway Down near Devizes to Lardon Chase overlooking the Thames at Streatley is dissected by dry valleys and long steep scarps, with limited tree cover and a sense of remoteness and tranquillity. • Downland with Woodland on the dip slope descending to Kennet Valley and south across the Hampshire Downs, offering softer contours, woodland cover and a mix of field patterns. • Centred on Savernake Forest and West Woods, the Wooded Plateau consists of extensive tracts of semi-natural ancient woodland, wood pasture with majestic veteran trees, and 18th and 19th century Beech plantations, as well as more recent coniferous plantations. • At the northernmost tip of Salisbury Plain, the open rolling landform of the High Chalk Plain creates a bleak, spacious landscape under arable production and devoid of settlement, with long views and a strong sense of remoteness and isolation. • The distinctive northern Downs Plain and Scarp plunges down from the chalk plain to the Vale of White Horse, creating a dramatic recognisable horizon. • The Vales of Pewsey and sections of the Thames Valley floor adjoining the Chilterns AONB offer productive loamy and alluvial soils where springs issue from the chalk and compact settlements contrast with scattered farmsteads. • The River Valleys of the Kennet, Lambourn, Pang and Bourne form very distinct linear landscapes, characterised by a rich mix of grazed pastures, water meadows, wetland and woodland. Steeply rising slopes create an intimate and enclosed character. • The Lowland Mosaic, curving around Newbury and the lower Kennet Valley has a varied geology of clays, silts and sands giving rise to a diverse mix of soils and, in turn, a mosaic of ancient semi-natural woodlands, plantations, remnant heathland and more open farmland areas where sunken lanes heighten the sense of seclusion.

²⁶ North Wessex Downs National Landscape (2019) North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2019-2024. Available at: <https://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/our-work/management-plan/> [Accessed 28/01/25]

²⁷ North Wessex Downs National Landscape (2019) North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan 2019-2024. Available at: <https://www.northwessexdowns.org.uk/our-work/management-plan/> [Accessed 28/01/25]

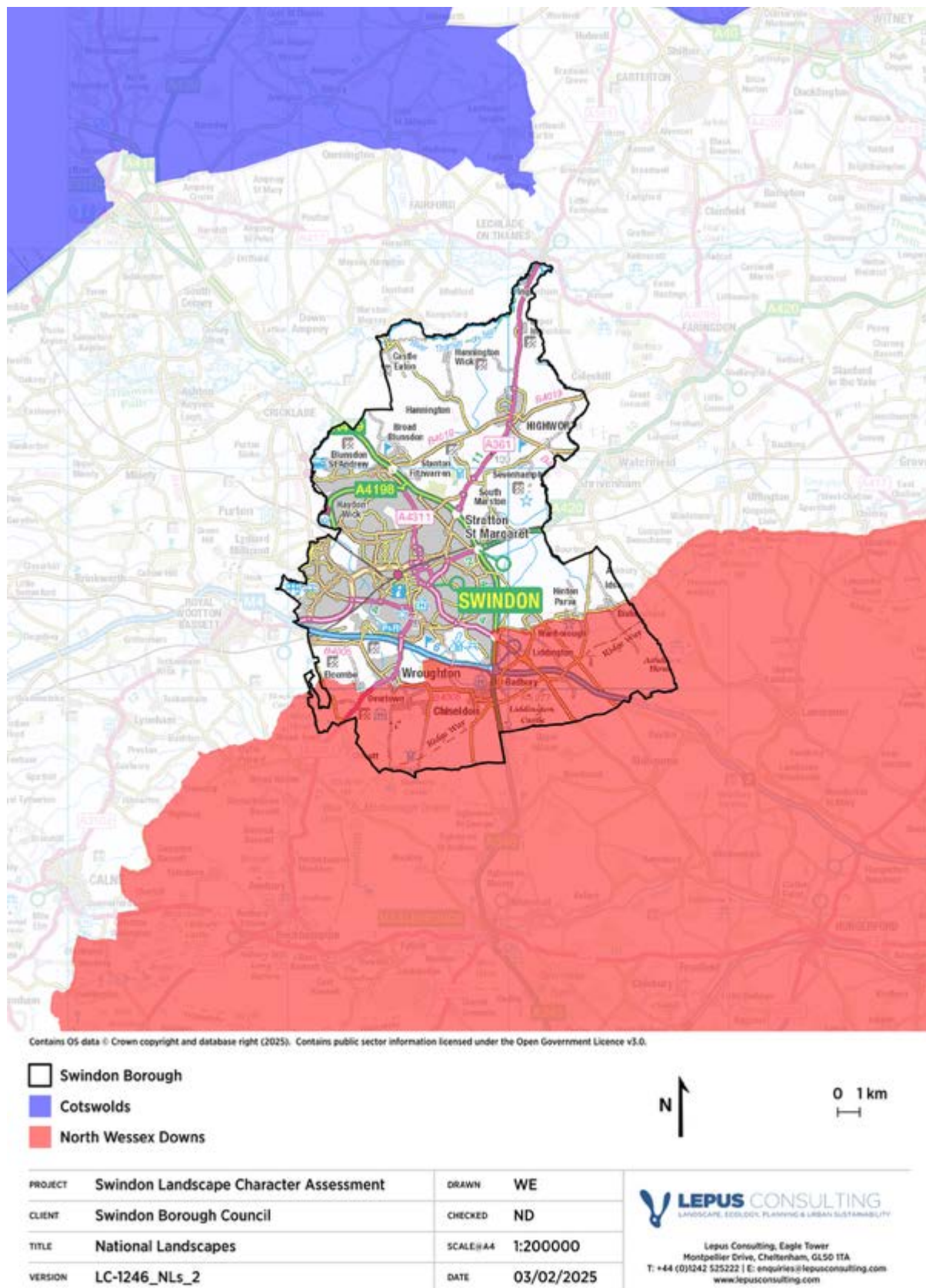


Figure 5.1: National Landscapes within and surrounding Swindon Borough

6 Renewable Energy Technologies

6.1 Wind turbines

6.1.1 Key characteristics of wind turbines are described below:

- Most modern turbines are three-bladed
- Cylindrical tower
- Nacelle located at the top of the tower (housing the generator, gearbox, and other mechanical components)
- Usually a single colour, white or light grey
- Impacts also result from infrastructure serving the development, such as access tracks and borrow pits, anemometers, control buildings, and substations
- Larger, slow moving blades are potentially less distracting than shorter, faster moving blades
- Moving blades can cause shadow flicker and noise
- Wind turbines of between 100 – 150m can be visible at distances of up to 40 or 50km in some conditions; whilst single turbines of up to 50m are only visible at smaller distances.²⁸

Type and scale of wind turbines

6.1.2 The assessment considers different heights of wind turbines (to blade tip):

- 15-50m
- 50-100m
- 100m+

6.1.3 Turbines of below 15 metres in height to be micro wind energy development and are not considered in this study.

6.2 Solar PV

6.2.1 Key characteristics of land-based solar PV installations are described below:

- Arrays of solar panels approximately 3m in height
- Panels angled to maximise sunlight exposure
- Surrounded by security fencing and CCTV cameras
- Include other electrical infrastructure including inverters
- Arrays at 3m tall may be visible above hedgerows
- Panels appear blue or grey in colour depending on weather conditions
- More visible in open landscapes or elevated terrain

Type and scale of solar PV

6.2.2 The assessment considers different sizes of solar PV developments:

- Small array (0-5ha)
- Medium array (5-10ha)

²⁸ Scottish Natural Heritage (2014) Siting and Designing Wind Farms in the Landscape. Available at: <https://digital.nls.uk/pubs/e-monographs/2020/216528025.23.pdf> [Accessed 17/04/25]

- Large array (10ha+)

6.3 Biomass plants

6.3.1 Key characteristics of biomass plants are described below:

- Biomass plants have a predominantly industrial and functional appearance with large metal buildings, stacks, and machinery
- Tall chimneys or stacks are prominent and visible from long distances, especially in open or elevated landscapes
- Exterior materials with muted colours such as white, grey or silver
- Including fuel storage domes, silos, conveyors, cooling towers and water tanks
- Movement from conveyor belts and flumes may be visible
- Perimeter fencing, signage and access points often visually prominent

Type and scale of biomass plants

6.3.2 The assessment considers different sizes of biomass plants, described below in **Table 6.1**.

Table 6.1: Type and scale of biomass plants

Biomass plant size class	Site area	Building height	Stack height
Small-scale			
Medium-scale			
Large-scale			

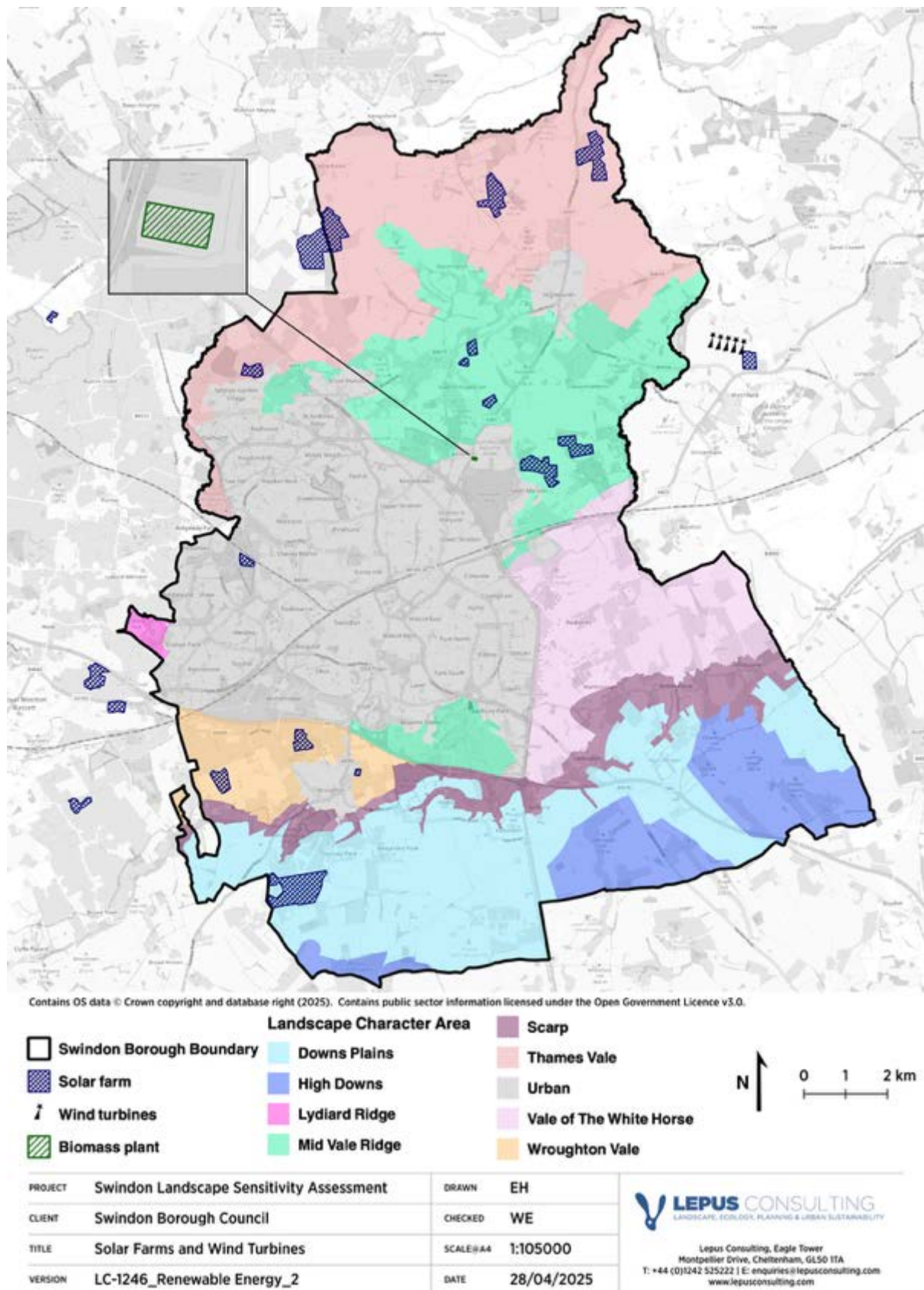


Figure 6.1: Existing wind turbines and solar farms in Swindon

7 Landscape Character Areas

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 The assessment units are the eight Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) derived from the Swindon Borough Landscape Character Assessment (prepared by Lepus in 2025). This LSA evaluates the sensitivity of each LCA to wind turbines, land-based solar PV installations and biomass plants. A description of each LCA is provided below and boundaries are presented on the map in **Figure 7.1**.

7.2 Down Plains LCA

- 7.2.1 The Downs Plains LCA constitutes an important stepping stone between the High Downs and the low-lying Vales. The LCA is characterised by an open landscape with large field patterns and isolated, scattered forms of development. There are historic settlements including Chiseldon village. There is a greater concentration of planting, focused on hedgerows, in contrast to the clumps of trees prevalent in the High Downs. The proximity and high visibility of this area from the High Downs ensures that any development could potentially be highly intrusive and should be considered accordingly. The Downs Plains LCA lies within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.

7.3 High Downs LCA

- 7.3.1 The High Downs LCA comprises an elevated plateau of rolling chalk downland, characterised by an open and exposed landscape with a perception of remoteness from urbanised settlements. The height, minimal tree planting and large field patterns give this landscape far reaching views over its surroundings. The distinctive landform, simple arable land cover, absence of settlement and large skies create a landscape with a sense of remoteness and exposure. Human settlements within this area are limited to small, isolated farms and dwellings, scattered in a dispersed pattern. This LCA coincides with the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.

7.4 Lydiard Ridge LCA

- 7.4.1 The Lydiard Ridge LCA lies on the western extremity of the Borough occupied by Lydiard House, a listed building and its surrounding grounds, and is identified as being of historic value. It is situated on land marginally higher than its surroundings in a mature parkland setting. The house and grounds were constructed to complement each other, forming a dominant influence on the landscape. The grounds are open to the public, as one of the borough's country parks.

7.5 Mid Vale Ridge LCA

- 7.5.1 The Mid Vale Ridge LCA encompasses a low-lying, irregular outcrop of limestone. This LCA is characterised by three distinct areas, two to the north-east and one to the south of Swindon. The southern Mid Vale Ridge area comprises the area of land to the south of Swindon that encompasses Coate Water and the open land to the west of Coate Water and is bounded by the M4 motorway, the eastern edge of Coate Water and Swindon's settlement boundary. The other Midvale Ridge Area contains the hilltop settlements of Blunsdon, Hannington and Highworth, which run along the Corallian Ridge. Included within the Corallian Ridge are the small valley settlements of Stanton Fitzwarren, Sevenhampton and South Marston. This Midvale Ridge area enjoys views over the surrounding lower clay vales, particularly northwards over the Thames Vale.

7.6 Scarp LCA

- 7.6.1 The Scarp slope marks a dramatic step down into the clay vales. The steepness of the slope, accompanied by a generous quantity of planting, forms a highly visible backdrop to the Vale of White Horse and Wroughton Vales. Existing settlements along the spring line are traditional small villages that are well integrated into their surrounding landscape. Public vantage points offer far reaching views over the clay vales towards the Cotswolds. The Scarp LCA lies partially within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.

7.7 Thames Vale LCA

- 7.7.1 The Thames Vale LCA comprises the alluvial plain adjoining the River Thames in the north of the borough. Hydrology plays an important role in forming this landscape, with frequent ditches and Willow trees present across the floodplain. In conjunction with the existing hedgerows, there are occasional blocks of tree planting, punctuating the landscape. Although development has taken place within this area, it is dominated by a series of small settlements with scattered, isolated groupings making up the remainder.

7.8 Vale of White Horse LCA

- 7.8.1 The Vale of White Horse LCA extends eastwards from Swindon towards Shrivenham and beyond. Settlements are generally small, giving the perception of a remote landscape distant from human activity. The relatively level terrain with minor undulations allow far reaching views across the area. This area is increasingly influenced by new development on Swindon's eastern edge. The south-western corner of the LCA, comprising the land to the south of Pack Hill, lies within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.

7.9 Wroughton Vale LCA

- 7.9.1 Wroughton Vale is bounded by Burderop Wood to the east, the M4 to the north and the scarp slope to the south. Outside the village of Wroughton, the landscape is predominantly agricultural with scattered farms and settlements. Farms tend to cluster around smaller field patterns, indicative of traditional dairy farming. The northern part of Wroughton Vale is influenced by its proximity to Swindon, which creates a contrast to the otherwise rural setting.

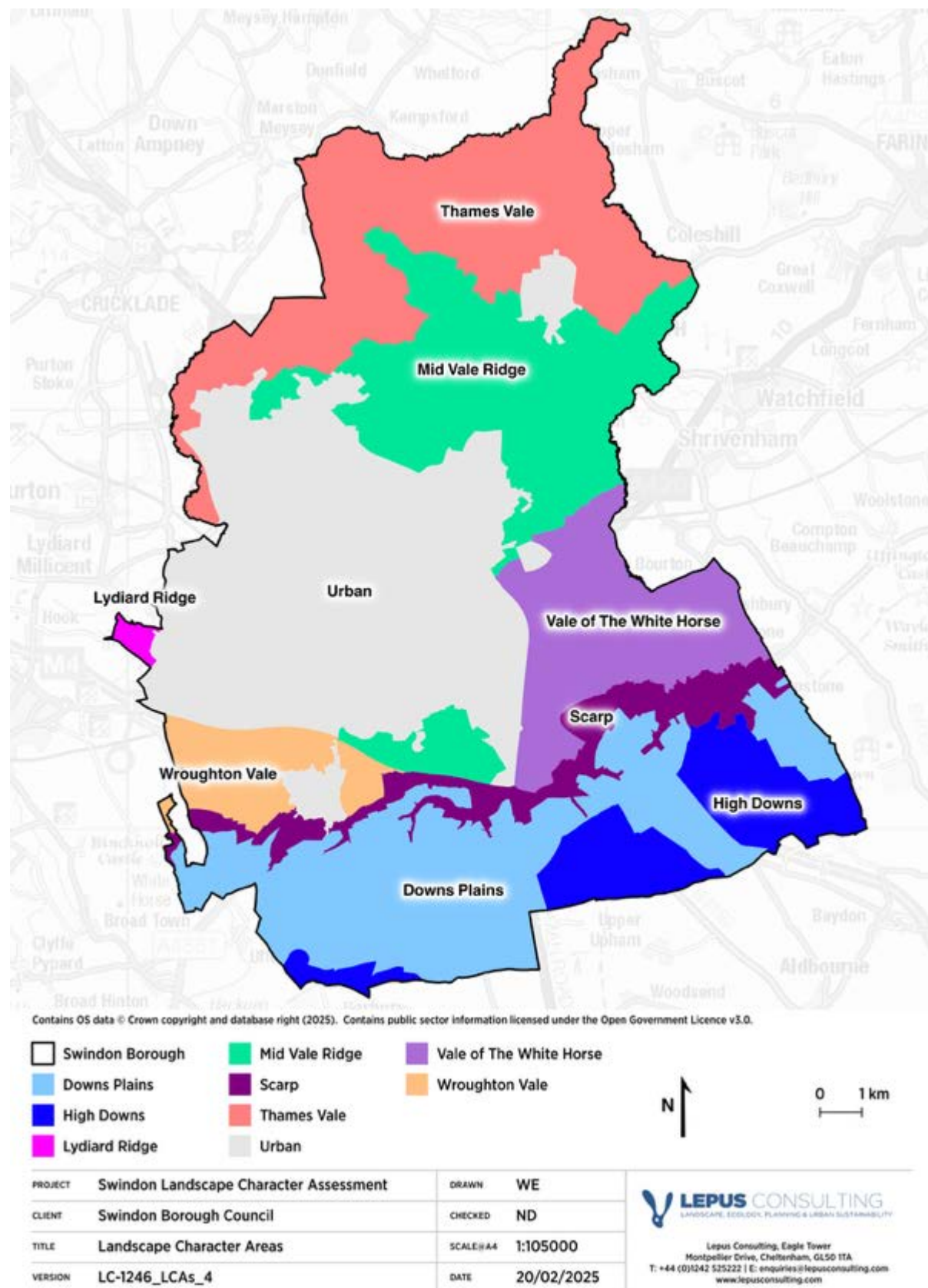


Figure 7.1: LCAs in Swindon Borough

8 Downs Plains LCA



View east towards rolling chalk downland from the Ridgeway National Trail



View south-east from the Ridgeway National Trail



View south towards the High Downs from Hackpen



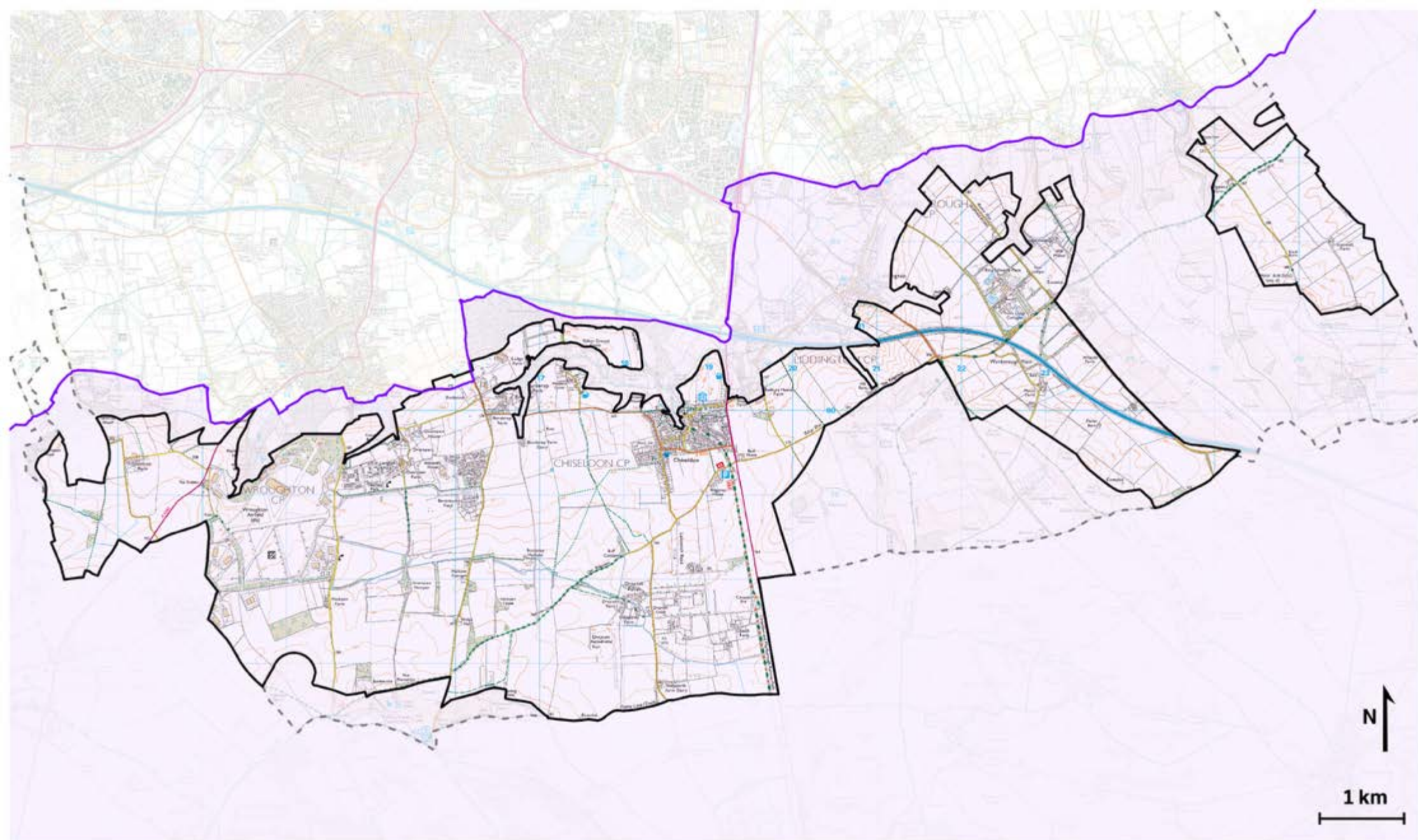
View south-east from Hackpen



View north-east from Nell Hill, the Ridgeway Farm



Bishopstone Lynchets (scheduled monument)



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 Downs Plains LCA	PROJECT	Swindon Landscape Character Assessment	DRAWN	WE
 Swindon Borough	CLIENT	Swindon Borough Council	CHECKED	ND
 North Wessex Downs NL	TITLE	Downs Plains LCA	SCALE@A4	1:57000
	VERSION	LC-1246_Downs_Plains_LCA_2	DATE	09/04/2025


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Table 8.1: Downs Plains

Criteria	Description	Score
Landscape susceptibility		
Scale and enclosure		H
Landform		H
Landcover (including biodiversity)		M
Man-made influences		H
Scenic quality and character		H
Remoteness and tranquillity		H
Visual susceptibility		
Skylines and settings		H
Movement		H/M
Visibility, key views, vistas and typical receptors		H
Views to and from important landscape and cultural heritage features		H
Value		
Landscape value		H
Visual value		H

Solar PV: Summary					
Existing solar PV in this LCA					
Guidance on siting and mitigation potential					
Summary of overall landscape sensitivity to solar PV					
Solar PV: Overall landscape sensitivity (landscape, visual and value)					
Level of sensitivity					
Small array (0-5ha)					H
Medium array (5-10ha)					H
Large array (10ha +)					H
Wind turbines: Summary					
Existing wind turbines in this LCA	There are no wind turbines within this LCA.				
Guidance on siting and mitigation potential	The lack of enclosure provided by field boundaries and general absence of woodland outside the valleys make this a particularly open landscape where any form of tall development would be visually prominent.				
Summary of overall landscape sensitivity to wind turbines	The overall landscape sensitivity to wind turbines is high. The Downs Plains is an elevated, open landscape within the North Wessex Downs. The installation of wind turbines would likely be highly visible from important cultural heritage features including Iron Age hillforts at Barbury Castle and Liddington Castle and the Ridgeway National Trail. Sensitivity is heightened due to the sparse woodland and hedgerow cover.				
Wind turbines: Overall landscape sensitivity (landscape, visual and value)					
Level of sensitivity	L	M/L	M	H/M	H
Turbine height (15-50m)					H
Turbine height (50-100m)					H
Turbine height (100m+)					H
Biomass: Summary					
Existing biomass plants in this LCA	There are no biomass plants within this LCA.				
Guidance on siting and mitigation potential	The lack of enclosure provided by field boundaries and general absence of woodland outside the valleys make this a particularly open landscape where any form of tall development would be visually prominent.				
Summary of overall landscape sensitivity to biomass plants	The overall landscape sensitivity to biomass plants is high. The Downs Plains is an elevated, open landscape within the North Wessex Downs. The installation of biomass plants would likely be highly visible from important cultural heritage features including Iron Age hillforts at Barbury Castle and Liddington Castle and the Ridgeway National Trail. Sensitivity is heightened due to the sparse woodland and hedgerow cover.				
Biomass: Overall landscape sensitivity (landscape, visual and value)					

Small-scale					H
Medium-scale					H
Large-scale					H

9 High Downs LCA



View north from Barbury Castle Country Park



View towards Barbury Castle Hillfort (scheduled monument)



View towards Downs Plains from lane near the Ridgeway



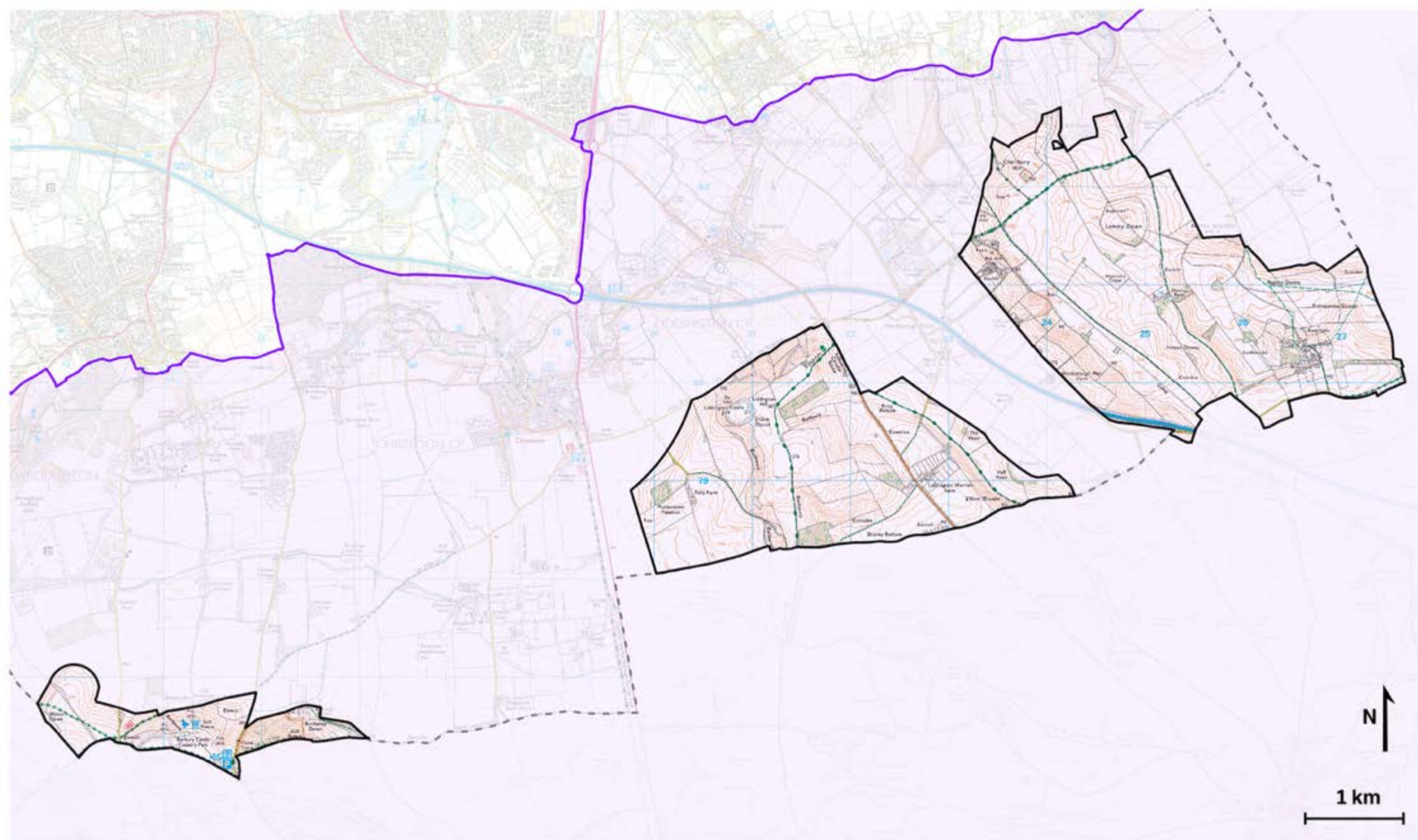
View west from lane near the Ridgeway



Views south from the Ridgeway National Trail



Starfish Decoy Bunker near the summit of Liddington Hill, off the Ridgeway National Trail



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High Downs LCA	PROJECT Swindon Landscape Character Assessment	DRAWN WE	LEPUS CONSULTING LANDSCAPE, ECOLOGY, PLANNING & URBAN SUSTAINABILITY Lepus Consulting, Eagle Tower Montpellier Drive, Cheltenham, GL50 1TA T: +44 (0)1242 525222 E: enquiries@lepusconsulting.com www.lepusconsulting.com
Swindon Borough	CLIENT Swindon Borough Council	CHECKED ND	
North Wessex Downs NL	TITLE High Downs LCA	SCALE@A4 1:49000	
	VERSION LC-1246_High_Downs_LCA_2	DATE 09/04/2025	

Table 9.1: High Downs

Criteria	Description	Score
Landscape susceptibility		
Scale and enclosure		H
Landform		H
Landcover (including biodiversity)		H
Man-made influences		H
Scenic quality and character		H
Remoteness and tranquillity		H
Visual susceptibility		
Skylines and settings		H
Movement		H/M
Visibility, key views, vistas and typical receptors		H
Views to and from important landscape and cultural heritage features		H
Value		
Landscape value		H
Visual value		H

Solar PV: Summary					
Existing solar PV in this LCA					
Guidance on siting and mitigation potential					
Summary of overall landscape sensitivity to solar PV					
Solar PV: Overall landscape sensitivity (landscape, visual and value)					
Level of sensitivity					
Small array (0-5ha)					H
Medium array (5-10ha)					H
Large array (10ha +)					H
Wind turbines: Summary					
Existing wind turbines in this LCA					
Guidance on siting and mitigation potential					
Summary of overall landscape sensitivity to wind turbines					
Wind turbines: Overall landscape sensitivity (landscape, visual and value)					
Level of sensitivity					
Turbine height (15-50m)					H
Turbine height (50-100m)					H
Turbine height (100m+)					H
Biomass: Summary					
Existing biomass plants in this LCA	There are no biomass plants within this LCA.				
Guidance on siting and mitigation potential	The lack of enclosure provided by field boundaries and general absence of woodland outside the valleys make this a particularly open landscape where any form of tall development would be visually prominent.				
Summary of overall landscape sensitivity to biomass plants	The overall landscape sensitivity to biomass plants is high. The High Downs is an elevated, open landscape within the North Wessex Downs. The installation of biomass plants would likely be highly visible from important cultural heritage features including Iron Age hillforts at Barbury Castle and Liddington Castle and the Ridgeway National Trail. Sensitivity is heightened due to the sparse woodland and hedgerow cover.				
Biomass: Overall landscape sensitivity (landscape, visual and value)					

Small-scale					H
Medium-scale					H
Large-scale					H

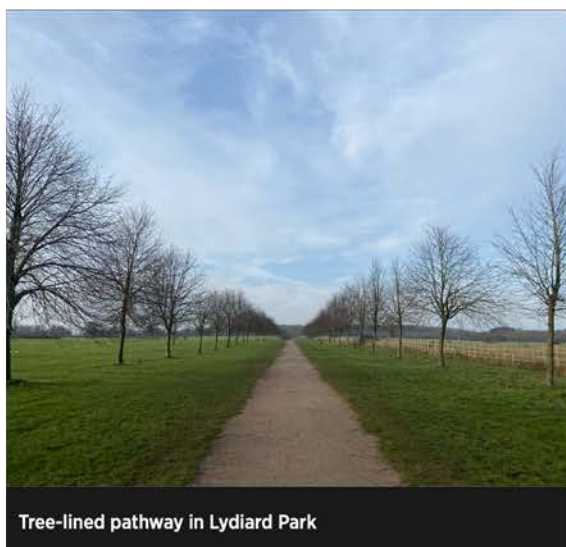
10 Lydiard Ridge LCA



Parkland in Lydiard Park



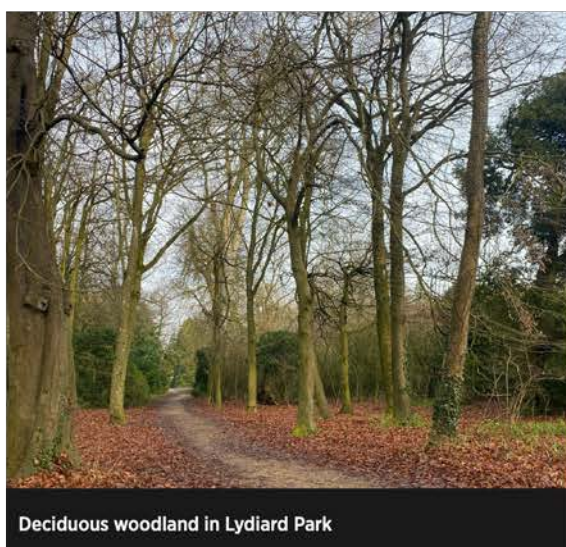
Lydiard Park House (Grade I listed building)



Tree-lined pathway in Lydiard Park



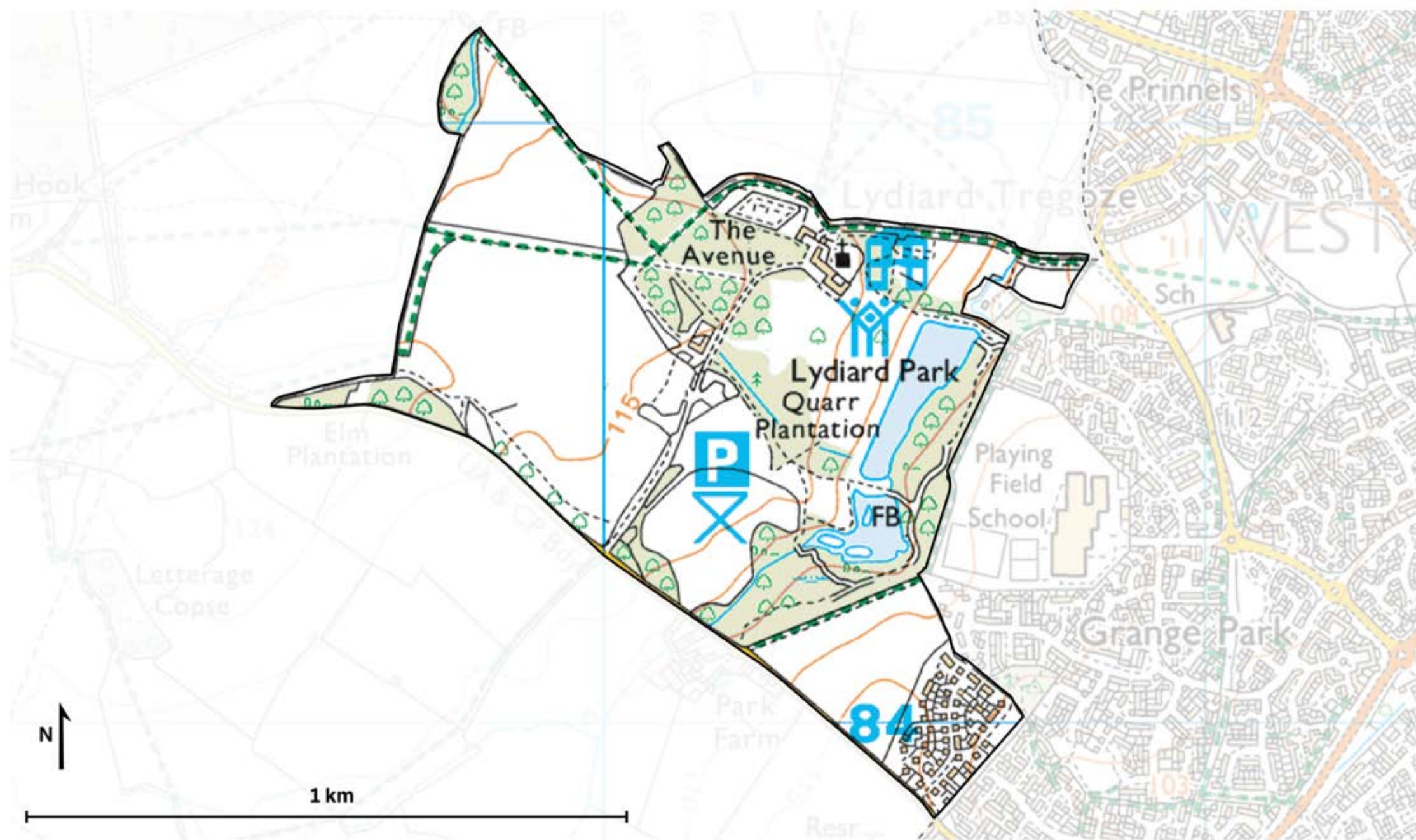
Parkland south of Lydiard Park House



Deciduous woodland in Lydiard Park



View north towards Swindon in Lydiard Park



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- Lydiard Ridge LCA
- Swindon Borough

PROJECT	Swindon Landscape Character Assessment	DRAWN	WE
CLIENT	Swindon Borough Council	CHECKED	ND
TITLE	Lydiard Ridge LCA	SCALE@A4	1:8000
VERSION	LC-1246_Lydiard_Ridge_LCA_2	DATE	09/04/2025

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www.lepusconsulting.com

Table 10.1: Lydiard Park

Criteria	Description	Score
Landscape susceptibility		
Scale and enclosure		H/M
Landform		M
Landcover (including biodiversity)		H/M
Man-made influences		M
Scenic quality and character		H/M
Remoteness and tranquillity		M
Visual susceptibility		
Skylines and settings		M/L
Movement		M
Visibility, key views, vistas and typical receptors		M
Views to and from important landscape and cultural heritage features		H
Value		
Landscape value		H
Visual value		H

Solar PV: Summary		
Existing solar PV in this LCA	There are no solar developments within this LCA.	

²⁹ Friends of Lydiard Park. Painting of Hook Street, Lydiard Tregoze by Nelson Woolford, 1968. Available at: <https://www.thelydiardarchives.org.uk/item/painting-of-hook-street-lydiard-tregoze-by-nelson-woolford-1968> [Date accessed: 20/02/25]

	Given the majority of the LCA comprises a Country Park and RPG, solar
Summary of overall landscape sensitivity to solar PV	opportunities for open-air recreation. The size and extent of solar farms

Solar PV: Overall landscape sensitivity (landscape, visual and value)

Level of sensitivity					
Small array (0-5ha)					H
Medium array (5-10ha)					H
Large array (10ha +)					H

Wind turbines: Summary

Existing wind turbines in this LCA	
Guidance on siting and mitigation potential	
Summary of overall landscape sensitivity to wind turbines	

Wind turbines: Overall landscape sensitivity (landscape, visual and value)

Level of sensitivity					
Turbine height (15-50m)					H
Turbine height (50-100m)					H
Turbine height (100m+)					H

Biomass: Summary

Existing biomass plants in this LCA	There are no biomass plants within this LCA.
Guidance on siting and mitigation potential	Given the majority of the LCA comprises a Country Park and RPG, biomass development is unlikely to be appropriate within Lydiard Ridge. Any development should be located outside of these designations.
Summary of overall landscape sensitivity to biomass plants	Although well-enclosed, the presence of a Country Park and Registered Park and Garden renders Lydiard Ridge largely inappropriate for biomass development. The presence of a biomass plant is likely to largely detract from the strong time-depth underpinning the area and diminish opportunities for open-air recreation. Depending upon height, there is potential for biomass structures to be visible above the tree line and dominate the intimate landscape of the Country Park.

Biomass: Overall landscape sensitivity (landscape, visual and value)

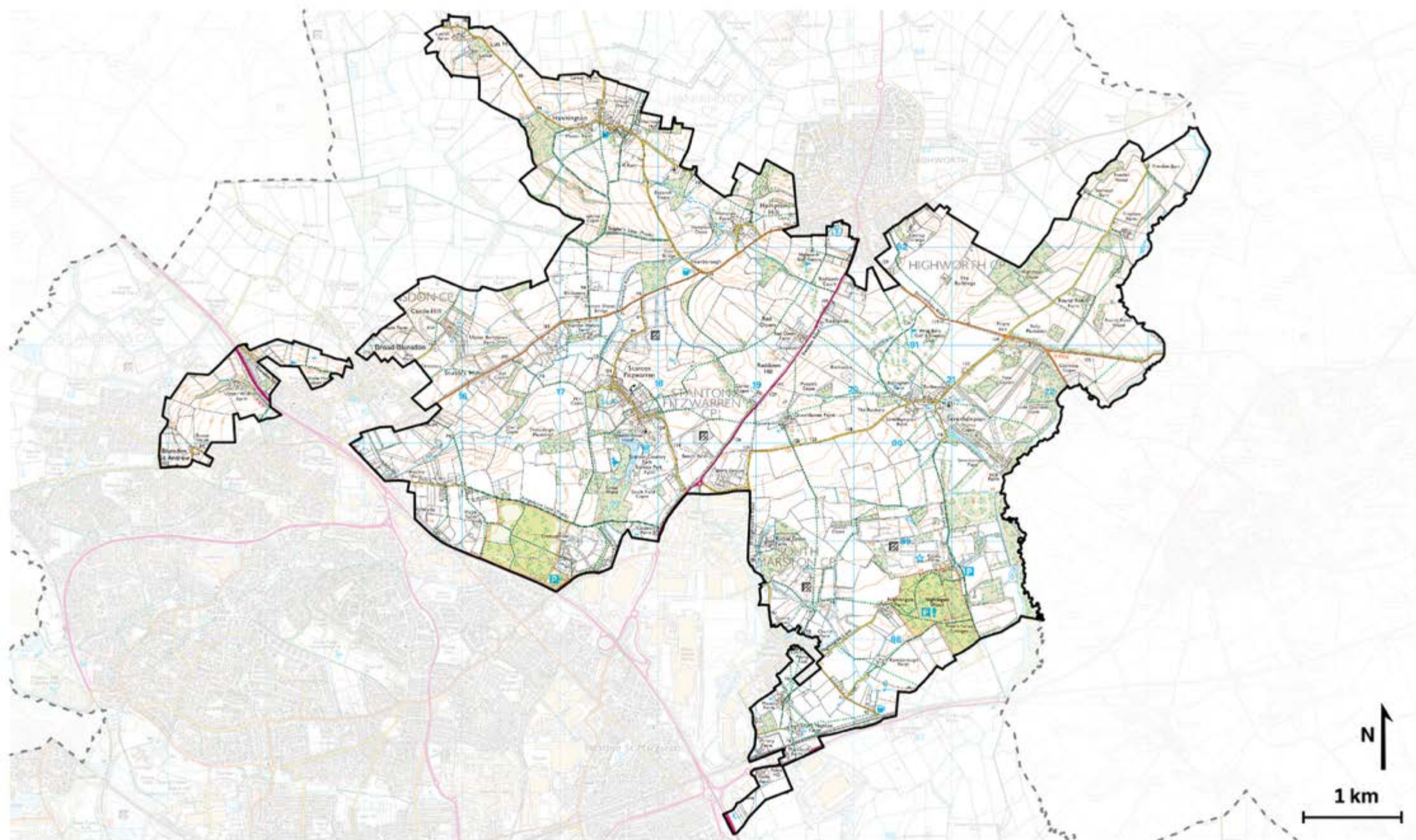
Level of sensitivity	L	M/L	M	H/M	H
-----------------------------	---	-----	---	-----	---

Small-scale
Medium-scale
Large-scale

H
H
H

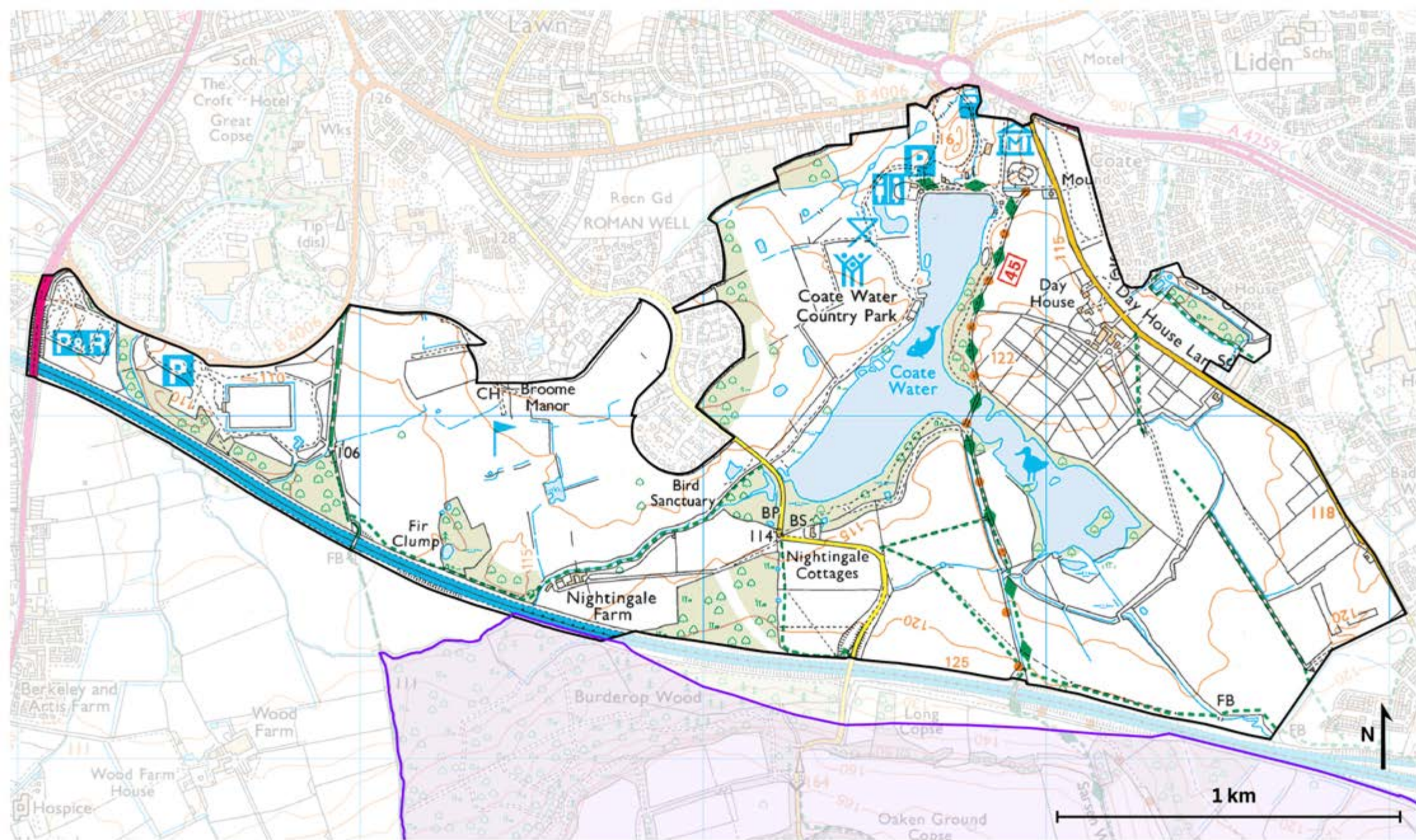
11 Mid Vale Ridge LCA





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Mid Vale Ridge LCA	PROJECT Swindon Landscape Character Assessment	DRAWN WE	LEPUS CONSULTING LANDSCAPE, ECOLOGY, PLANNING & URBAN SUSTAINABILITY Lepus Consulting, Eagle Tower Montpellier Drive, Cheltenham, GL50 1TA T: +44 (0)1242 525222 E: enquiries@lepusconsulting.com www.lepusconsulting.com
Swindon Borough	CLIENT Swindon Borough Council	CHECKED ND	
	TITLE Mid Vale Ridge LCA (North)	SCALE@A4 1:49000	
	VERSION LC-1246_Mid_Vale_Ridge_LCA_North_2	DATE 09/04/2025	



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- North Wessex Downs NL
- Mid Vale Ridge LCA

PROJECT	Swindon Landscape Character Assessment	DRAWN	WE
CLIENT	Swindon Borough Council	CHECKED	ND
TITLE	Mid Vale Ridge LCA (South)	SCALE@A4	1:14000
VERSION	LC-1246_Mid_Vale_Ridge_LCA_South_2	DATE	09/04/2025

Table 11.1: Mid Vale Ridge

Criteria	Description	Score
Landscape susceptibility		
Scale and enclosure		M
Landform		M
Landcover (including biodiversity)		M
Man-made influences		M/L
Scenic quality and character		M
Remoteness and tranquillity		M/L
Visual susceptibility		
Skylines and settings		M
Movement		M/L
Visibility, key views, vistas and typical receptors		M/L
Views to and from important landscape and cultural heritage features		M
Value		
Landscape value		M

	Wrag Barn golf courses also provide large areas of open space. Multiple heritage features lie within the area, including the disused Highworth railway line, several mill sites and a stone circle in Coate. There are also several small settlements comprising Conservation Areas.	
Visual value	Areas of high visual value include panoramic views from Castle Hillfort Scheduled Monument, as well as views over the clay vales from the areas surrounding Hannington and Lushill. However, within the majority of the low-lying vales, long-distance views are generally limited or partially filtered where they do occur.	M

Solar PV: Summary

Existing solar PV in this LCA	
Guidance on siting and mitigation potential	
Summary of overall landscape sensitivity to solar PV	Parks and other open spaces are likely to remain intact where these are

Solar PV: Overall landscape sensitivity (landscape, visual and value)

Level of sensitivity					
Small array (0-5ha)		M/L			
Medium array (5-10ha)		M/L			
Large array (10ha +)			M		

Wind turbines: Summary

Existing wind turbines in this LCA	
Guidance on siting and mitigation potential	
Summary of overall landscape sensitivity to wind turbines	

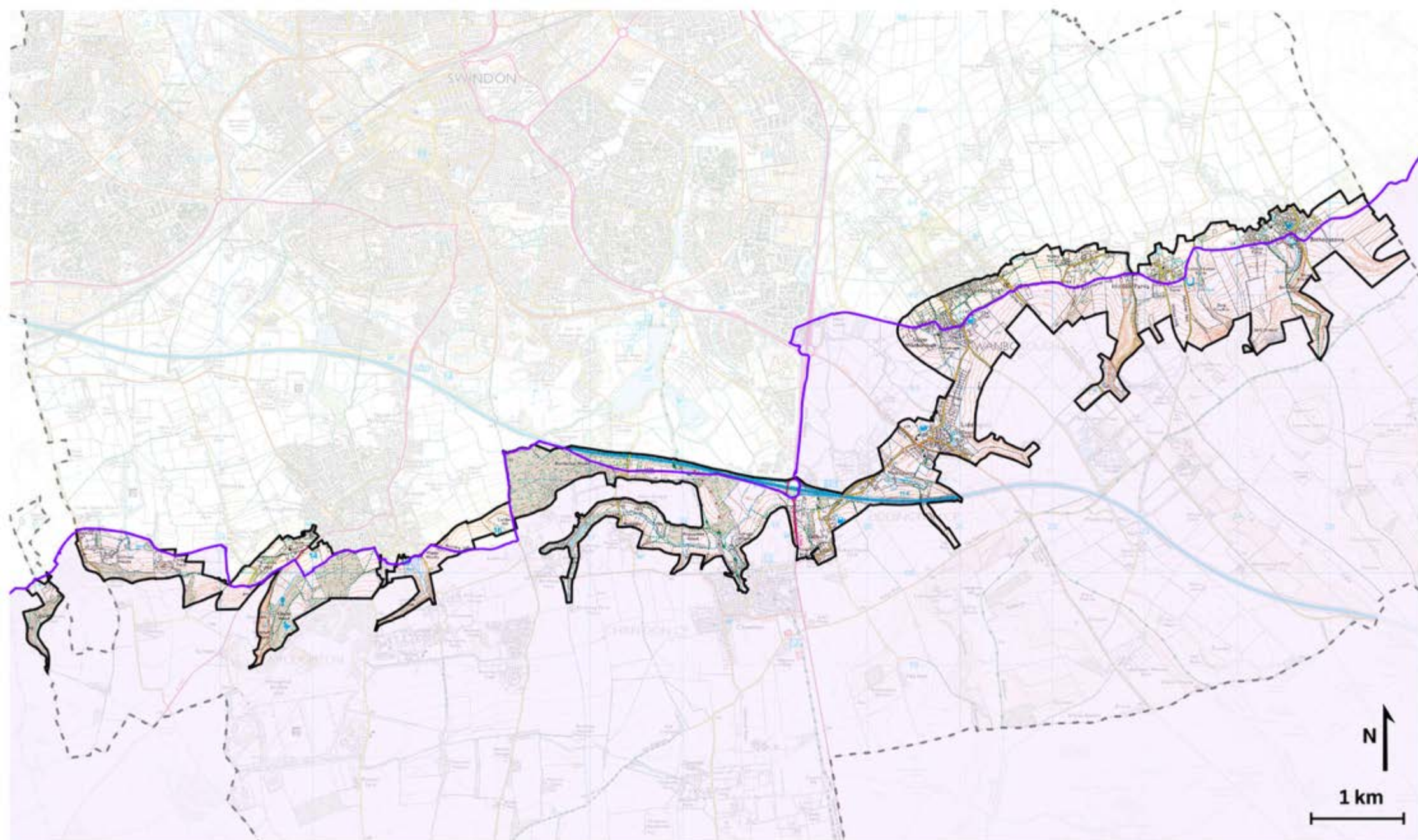
Wind turbines: Overall landscape sensitivity (landscape, visual and value)

Level of sensitivity					
Turbine height (15-50m)		M/L			
Turbine height (50-100m)			M		

Turbine height (100m+)		H/M			
Biomass: Summary					
Existing biomass plants in this LCA					
Guidance on siting and mitigation potential					
Summary of overall landscape sensitivity to biomass plants					
Biomass: Overall landscape sensitivity (landscape, visual and value)					
Level of sensitivity					
Small-scale		M/L			
Medium-scale					
Large-scale			M		

12 Scarp LCA





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Scarp LCA	CLIENT Swindon Borough Council	CHECKED ND	
Swindon Borough	TITLE Scarp LCA	SCALE@A4 1:52000	
	VERSION LC-1246_Scarp_LCA_2	DATE 09/04/2025	

Table 12.1: Scarp

Criteria	Description	Score
Landscape susceptibility		
Scale and enclosure		M
Landform		H
Landcover (including biodiversity)		H/M
Man-made influences		M
Scenic quality and character		M
Remoteness and tranquillity		M
Visual susceptibility		
Skylines and settings		H
Movement		M
Visibility, key views, vistas and typical receptors		H
Views to and from important landscape and cultural heritage features		H
Value		
Landscape value		H
Visual value		H

	views towards this designation. Burderop Wood has been depicted in the art of Kate Tyron, whilst the spires of listed church buildings are visible on the skyline when looking towards the scarp.	
--	---	--

Solar PV: Summary

Existing solar PV in this LCA

Guidance on siting and mitigation potential

Summary of overall landscape sensitivity to solar PV

Solar PV: Overall landscape sensitivity (landscape, visual and value)

Level of sensitivity

Small array (0-5ha)

Medium array (5-10ha)

Large array (10ha +)

H

H

H

Wind turbines: Summary

Existing wind turbines in this LCA

Guidance on siting and mitigation potential

Summary of overall landscape sensitivity to wind turbines

Wind turbines: Overall landscape sensitivity (landscape, visual and value)

Level of sensitivity)

Turbine height (15-50m)

Turbine height (50-100m)

Turbine height (100m+)

H

H

H

Biomass: Summary

Existing biomass plants in this LCA

There are no biomass plants within this LCA.

Guidance on siting and mitigation potential	The dramatically rising escarpment is a characteristic of the landscape, and the creation of new screening measures would generally not be sufficient to mitigate the development of biomass plants, where this landscape is highly visible from the surrounding areas.				
Summary of overall landscape sensitivity to biomass plants	The complex landforms, angular slopes and high visibility of the escarpment renders the landscape highly sensitive to biomass development. Numerous biodiversity designations including SSSIs lie within the landscape as well as their connecting habitats. Views to and from the escarpment dominate the skyline of Swindon and the surrounding area. These include a large number of heritage designations where biomass development is likely to disrupt their setting by dominating the landscape and skyline.				
Biomass: Overall landscape sensitivity (landscape, visual and value)					
Level of sensitivity	L	M/L	M	H/M	H
Small-scale					H
Medium-scale					H
Large-scale					H

13 Thames Vale LCA



View east within Moulton Park Country Park



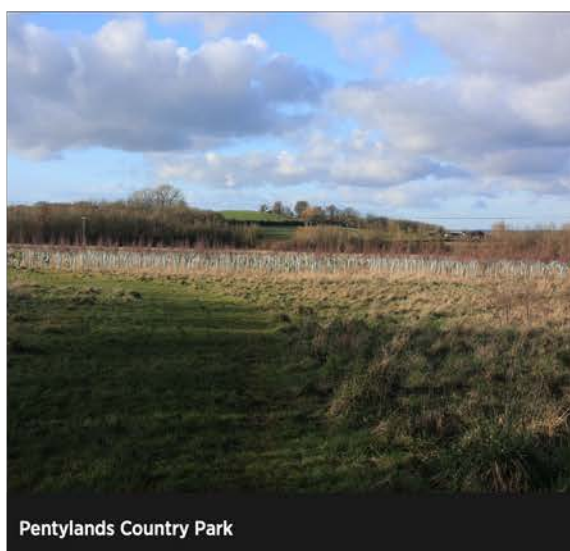
View east from Moulton Park Country Park



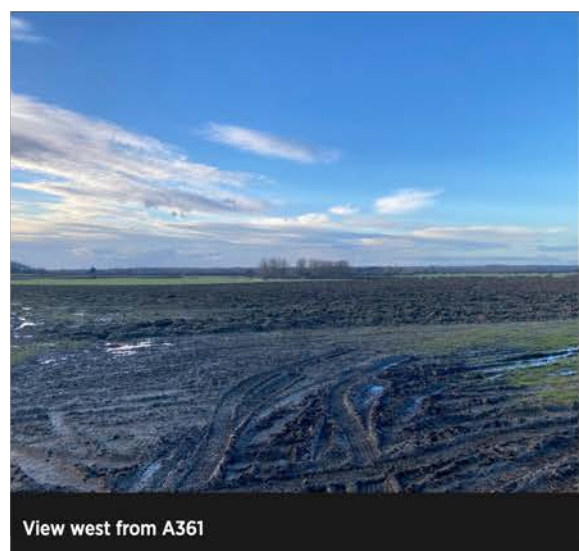
View north-east near Castle Eaton



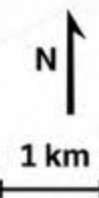
View north-west near Castle Eaton



Pentylands Country Park



View west from A361



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- Thames Vale LCA
- Swindon Borough

PROJECT	Swindon Landscape Character Assessment	DRAWN	WE
CLIENT	Swindon Borough Council	CHECKED	ND
TITLE	Thames Vale LCA	SCALE@A4	1:75000
VERSION	LC-1246_Thames_Vale_LCA_2	DATE	09/04/2025



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Table 13.1: Thames Vale

Criteria	Description	Score
Landscape susceptibility		
Scale and enclosure		M/L
Landform		M/L
Landcover (including biodiversity)		M/L
Man-made influences		M
Scenic quality and character		H/M
Remoteness and tranquillity		H/M
Visual susceptibility		
Skylines and settings		M
Movement		H/M
Visibility, key views, vistas and typical receptors		M
Views to and from important landscape and cultural heritage features		M
Value		
Landscape value		M/L

	scheduled monuments comprising the Highworth Circles, and medieval settlement remains.	
Visual value	Views from Mouldon Hill Country Park are mostly enclosed, although some areas of higher ground provide extensive views across Swindon and the vales. Views within Pentylands Country Park are also defined by boundary trees and the Highworth urban area. The Thames Path also provides short-distance views across low-lying ground, defined by hydrological features. The majority of views within the Thames Vale are short-reaching, although areas of higher ground are known for more extensive views across the vale.	M/L

Solar PV: Summary

Existing solar PV in this LCA	
Guidance on siting and mitigation potential	
Summary of overall landscape sensitivity to solar PV	Thames Path National Trail are likely to remain intact where views from these

Solar PV: Overall landscape sensitivity (landscape, visual and value)

Level of sensitivity					
Small array (0-5ha)		M/L			
Medium array (5-10ha)		M/L			
Large array (10ha +)			M		

Wind turbines: Summary

Existing wind turbines in this LCA	
Guidance on siting and mitigation potential	
Summary of overall landscape sensitivity to wind turbines	

Wind turbines: Overall landscape sensitivity (landscape, visual and value)

Level of sensitivity					
Turbine height (15-50m)		M/L			
Turbine height (50-100m)			M		
Turbine height (100m+)				H/M	

Biomass: Summary

Existing biomass plants in this LCA	There are no biomass plants within this LCA.				
Guidance on siting and mitigation potential	There is potential to for biomass development to be appropriate within low-lying areas which are well-screened, of a small-scale and located away from any valued viewpoints. Areas of flatter, larger-scale field patterns, such as those extending off existing industrial or solar developments, are likely to be most suitable.				
Summary of overall landscape sensitivity to biomass plants	The large-scale fields allow, in some areas, potential for biomass development of a small-scale where these are well-screened and enclosed from surrounding viewpoints. Recreational opportunities within the Mouldon Hill Country Park and the Thames Path National Trail are likely to remain intact where views from these receptors are mostly enclosed. Noise disturbance from biomass plants may detract from the tranquility of the vale.				
Biomass: Overall landscape sensitivity (landscape, visual and value)					
Level of sensitivity		M/L	M	H/M	H
Small-scale		M/L			
Medium-scale			M		
Large-scale				H/M	

14 Vale of White Horse LCA



View north-east from Horpit



View towards the Scarp from Horpit



View east from The Forty, Bishopstone



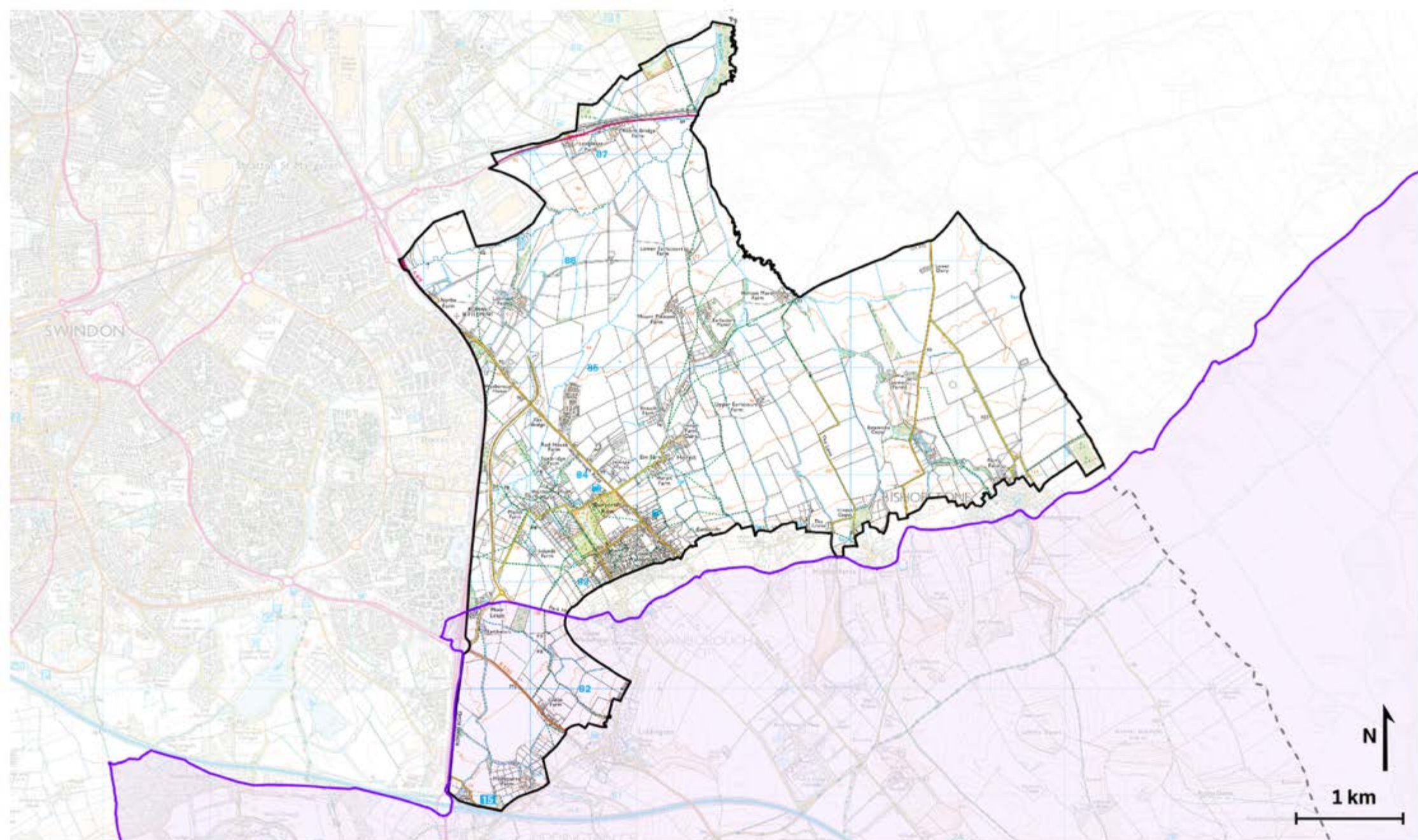
View west from Pack Hill



View towards Wanborough from Pack Hill



View towards the North Wessex Downs from Pack Hill



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- North Wessex Downs NL
- Vale of White Horse LCA
- Swindon Borough

PROJECT	Swindon Landscape Character Assessment	DRAWN	WE
CLIENT	Swindon Borough Council	CHECKED	ND
TITLE	Vale of White Horse LCA	SCALE@A4	1:45000
VERSION	LC-1246_VoWH_LCA_2	DATE	09/04/2025

Table 14.1: Vale of White Horse

Criteria	Description	Score
Landscape susceptibility		
Scale and enclosure		M/L
Landform		M/L
Landcover (including biodiversity)		L
Man-made influences		M
Scenic quality and character		H/M
Remoteness and tranquillity		H/M
Visual susceptibility		
Skylines and settings		M
Movement		H/M
Visibility, key views, vistas and typical receptors		M/L
Views to and from important landscape and cultural heritage features		M
Value		
Landscape value		H/M
Visual value		H/M

Williams³⁰. There is potential for views into the vale from the spire of Grade I Listed Building 'Parish Church of St Andrew' in Wanborough.

Solar PV: Summary

Existing solar PV in this LCA

Guidance on siting and mitigation potential

Summary of overall landscape sensitivity to solar PV

Solar PV: Overall landscape sensitivity (landscape, visual and value)

Level of sensitivity

Small array (0-5ha)

M

Medium array (5-10ha)

M

Large array (10ha +)

H/M

Wind turbines: Summary

Existing wind turbines in this LCA

Guidance on siting and mitigation potential

Summary of overall landscape sensitivity to wind turbines

Wind turbines: Overall landscape sensitivity (landscape, visual and value)

Level of sensitivity

Turbine height (15-50m)

M

Turbine height (50-100m)

H/M

³⁰ Sackett (2018) *Villages of the White Horse, 1913*. Available at: <https://wshc.org.uk/villages-of-the-white-horse/> [Accessed: 20/02/25]

Turbine height (100m+)		H/M			
Biomass: Summary					
Existing biomass plants in this LCA					
Guidance on siting and mitigation potential					
Summary of overall landscape sensitivity to biomass plants					
Biomass: Overall landscape sensitivity (landscape, visual and value)					
Level of sensitivity					
Small-scale			M		
Medium-scale				H/M	
Large-scale				H/M	

15 Wroughton Vale LCA



Solar farm north of Wroughton



Footpath within woodland north of Wroughton



Newly planted trees near Wroughton



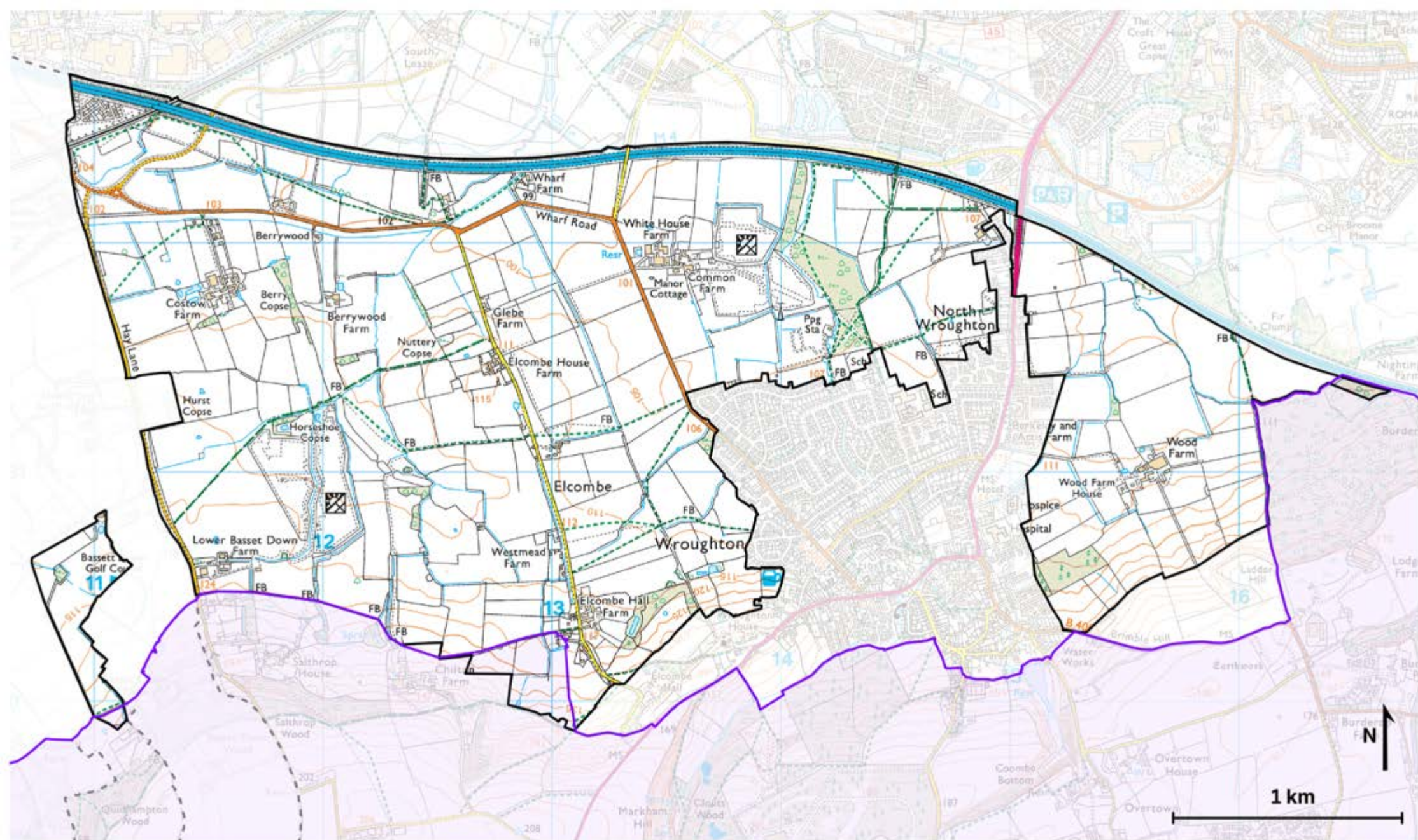
View east from Wroughton



View from Elcombe towards St John the Baptist & St Helen Church



View towards Swindon from Elcombe



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- North Wessex Downs NL
- Wroughton Vale LCA
- Swindon Borough

PROJECT	Swindon Landscape Character Assessment	DRAWN	WE
CLIENT	Swindon Borough Council	CHECKED	ND
TITLE	Wroughton Vale LCA	SCALE@A4	1:21000
VERSION	LC-1246_Wroughton_Vale_LCA_2	DATE	09/04/2025

Table 15.1: Wroughton Vale

Criteria	Description	Score
Landscape susceptibility		
Scale and enclosure		M/L
Landform		M/L
Landcover (including biodiversity)		L
Man-made influences		M/L
Scenic quality and character		M
Remoteness and tranquillity		M/L
Visual susceptibility		
Skylines and settings		M/L
Movement		M/L
Visibility, key views, vistas and typical receptors		M
Views to and from important landscape and cultural heritage features		H/M
Value		
Landscape value		M/L
Visual value		H/M

Solar PV: Summary

	There are three solar farms within this LCA, comprising one small-array;
Guidance on siting and mitigation potential	
Summary of overall landscape sensitivity to solar PV	development. New solar development, if located appropriately, is

Solar PV: Overall landscape sensitivity (landscape, visual and value)

Level of sensitivity					
Small array (0-5ha)		M/L			
Medium array (5-10ha)		M/L			
Large array (10ha +)			M		

Wind turbines: Overall LSA

Existing wind turbines in this LCA	
Guidance on siting and mitigation potential	
Summary of overall landscape sensitivity to wind turbines	There may be potential for wind turbines to integrate into the

Wind turbines: Overall landscape sensitivity (landscape, visual and value)

Level of sensitivity					
Turbine height (15-50m)		M/L			
Turbine height (50-100m)			M		
Turbine height (100m+)				H/M	

Biomass: Summary

Existing biomass plants in this LCA	
Guidance on siting and mitigation potential	

Summary of overall landscape sensitivity to biomass plants					
Biomass: Overall landscape sensitivity (landscape, visual and value)					
Level of sensitivity					
Small-scale		M/L			
Medium-scale					
Large-scale				H/M	

16 Conclusion

16.1 About this report

- 16.1.1 This report comprises a LSA of renewable energy technologies (wind, solar and biomass) to support the development of the SBC New Local Plan³¹.

16.2 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

- 16.2.1 LSA is the process of assessing the resilience, or robustness of landscape character and the visual resource (and valued characteristics) to defined change or changes arising from development proposals. It can help decision makers to understand likely changes and the nature of change should the development scenarios be taken forward.
- 16.2.2 The methodology for this study has been derived principally from: Natural England (2019) *'An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management'*³²

16.3 Downs Plains LCA

- 16.3.1 The Downs Plains LCA is highly sensitive to renewable energy development, whereby the LCA is located within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. At present, one singular large solar PV development is located within the west of the Downs Plains LCA. Renewable energy development is likely to be highly visible across open landscape including from the adjacent High Downs LCA. The sense of remoteness within the Downs Plains LCA is underpinned by sparse vegetation cover and isolated, scattered forms of development, including historic settlements. Renewable energy technologies are likely to be highly intrusive to these sensitive landscape features and screening measures are unlikely to be appropriate to suffice mitigation.

16.4 High Downs LCA

- 16.4.1 The High Downs LCA is highly sensitive to renewable energy development. Currently, no renewable energy developments are present within this LCA. The High Downs LCA is located wholly within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, whereby the LCA comprises an open and exposed landscape upon an elevated plateau of rolling chalk downland. Far-reaching views and a strong sense of remoteness, as well as the absence of development render the landscape highly sensitive to change from renewable energy developments. Sensitivity is heightened due to the abundance of cultural heritage features from which renewable energy developments are likely to be visible. The open character and limited vegetative screening hinder potential for effective mitigation, as well as being inappropriate to valued landscapes within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.

³¹ Swindon Borough Council. Swindon Local Plan 2026 and New Local Plan – New Local Plan. Available at: https://www.swindon.gov.uk/info/20113/local_plan_and_planning_policy/635/swindon_local_plan_2026_and_new_local_plan/2 [Accessed: 30/12/24].

³² Natural England (2019) 'An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management' Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/817928/landscape-sensitivity-assessment-2019.pdf [Accessed: 19/03/25]

16.5 Lydiard Ridge LCA

- 16.5.1 The Lydiard Ridge LCA is highly sensitive to renewable energy development. At present, no renewable developments are present within this LCA. Lydiard Ridge LCA largely comprises an RPG, whereby the grounds are open to the public as one of the borough's country parks. Renewable energy development is likely to be highly inappropriate given the historical and recreational significance of the LCA, including the presence of two Grade I Listed Buildings. The area is highly sensitive where Lydiard Park lies upon a raised plateau comprising of an intimate landscape of mature parkland. Although the LCA is well-screened by vegetation, opportunities for mitigation are highly limited whereby the entirety of the Lydiard Ridge LCA lies within, or within the setting of, cultural heritage and landscape designations.

16.6 Mid Vale Ridge LCA

- 16.6.1 The Mid Vale Ridge LCA is of medium sensitivity to renewable energy developments. Four solar PV developments are currently located within the LCA; three of large-array and one of medium-array. These developments are situated within well-enclosed areas comprising of large fields with limited inward views. There is some potential for further, small to medium scale renewable energy developments where these are appropriately sited, particularly where these may extend off existing solar developments. Renewable energy development is less likely to be appropriate in valued landscape areas such as within the Coate Water and Stanton Country Parks, as well as areas within view of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape.

16.7 Scarp LCA

- 16.7.1 The Scarp LCA is of high sensitivity to renewable energy development. At present, there are no renewable energy developments within this LCA. The Scarp LCA is predominantly located within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, comprising a dramatically sloping escarpment which offers far-reaching views over the clay vales. Views towards the escarpment are highly visible amongst the vales towards the south of Swindon, where renewable energy developments have potential to dominate the skyline. Mitigation opportunities are limited whereby renewable energy technologies are likely to be highly intrusive to these sensitive landscape features.

16.8 Thames Vale LCA

- 16.8.1 The Thames Vale LCA is of medium sensitivity to renewable energy developments. Four large-array solar PV developments are currently located within this LCA. These developments are situated within well-enclosed areas comprising of large fields with limited inward views. There is some potential for further, small to medium scale renewable energy developments where these are appropriately sited, particularly where these may extend off existing solar developments. The Thames Vale LCA comprises an alluvial floodplain adjoining the River Thames, whereby renewable energy developments would be required to be sited away from areas which may disrupt hydrological activity, as well as avoiding the interruption of views from the Thames Path National Trail.

16.9 Vale of White Horse LCA

- 16.9.1 The Vale of White Horse LCA is of medium to high sensitivity to renewable energy developments. At present, there are no renewable energy developments within this LCA. The LCA retains a strong perception of remoteness whereby a small area within the south lies the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. Views from the National Landscape look directly outward onto the Vale of White Horse which is currently under pressure from settlement expansion in the east. The perception of remoteness within the Vale of White Horse LCA becomes stronger further away from the Swindon urban area where it is characterised by small, scattered, historic settlements. Whilst there is some potential for screening for small renewable energy developments within localised areas of enclosure, possibilities for renewable energy development are largely limited by the scenic qualities of the vale.

16.10 Wroughton Vale LCA

- 16.10.1 The Wroughton Vale LCA is of medium sensitivity to renewable energy developments. There are three solar farms within this LCA at present; one small-array and two large-array. These developments are situated within well-enclosed areas comprising of large fields with limited inward views. Although the vale lies within the setting of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, urban influences are more dominant where the area is under pressure from settlement expansion and bounded by the M4 to the north. There is some potential for further, small to medium scale renewable energy developments where these are appropriately sited, particularly where these may extend off existing solar developments. However, views must be carefully considered from the North Wessex Downs National Landscape which look directly outward onto Wroughton Vale.

Habitats Regulations Assessments

Sustainability Appraisals

Strategic Environmental Assessments

Landscape Character Assessments

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments

Green Belt Reviews

Expert Witness

Ecological Impact Assessments

Habitat and Ecology Surveys



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