

TELFORD AND WREKIN BOROUGH LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS REVIEW

FINAL REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2023

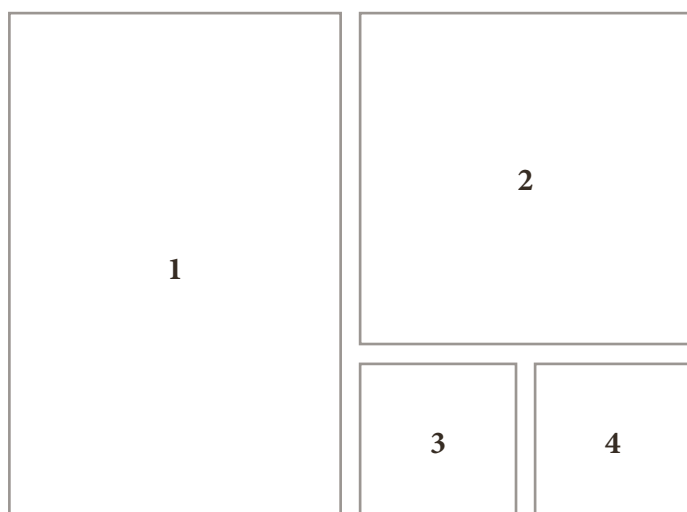
Document Title Telford and Wrekin Borough Landscape Designations Review

Prepared for Telford & Wrekin Borough Council

Prepared by The Environment Partnership (TEP) Ltd.

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Photos on front cover

- 1. Lillehsall Monument
- 2. The Wrekin
- 3. The Weald Moors
- 4. The Iron Bridge

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January 2023, The Environment Partnership (TEP) Ltd. was commissioned by Telford & Wrekin Borough Council to undertake a Landscape Designations Review. The purpose of this study is to examine the quality and value of landscapes across the whole Borough to identify those potentially worthy of additional protection and to provide robust evidence to underpin the Strategic Landscape designation. The Landscape Designations Assessment will be used as technical evidence to inform the Local Plan Review.

This review followed a three-stage approach combining a desk study and field survey. The three stages in the review were as follows:

- Stage 1: Developing Landscape Value Criteria –The study defined a set of five criteria against which each Landscape Character Type was judged, ensuring consistency between judgements.
- Stage 2: Establishing Broad Areas of Search – A desk-based review of each Landscape Character Type helped to identify Broad Areas of Search where there was an indication of higher landscape value when compared to other areas within the Borough.
- Stage 3: Evaluation – A field survey was undertaken to visit each of the Broad Areas of Search.

The Landscape Value Criteria were considered further and recommendations were made in relation to whether the Broad Area of Search meets the threshold of a Valued Landscape or not.

The review concluded that there was robust justification for the designation of the existing Weald Moors and Wrekin Forest Strategic Landscapes. The evaluation prepared for each of these Broad Areas of Search clearly sets out how each area meets the criteria for designation. The Severn Gorge Broad Area of Search also meets the criteria for designation but given the existing level of protection as a World Heritage Site the Strategic Landscape designation was not considered necessary. The Lilleshall Area of Search did not meet the criteria for designation as a Strategic Landscape.

Any development proposals within a Strategic Landscape, or development that might affect its landscape setting, will need to protect and enhance its special qualities.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

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Background and Purpose

- 1.1 In January 2023, The Environment Partnership (TEP) Ltd. was commissioned by Telford & Wrekin Borough Council to undertake a review of local landscape designations across the Borough to form part of the evidence base for the Telford and Wrekin Local Plan Review. This report presents the results of the review and recommendations on local landscape designations. This report has been prepared in parallel with the Telford and Wrekin Borough Landscape Character Assessment
- 1.2 The NPPF places great weight on the importance of landscape protection both at a national and local level and requires councils to protect and enhance valued landscapes.
- 1.3 A small part of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is within Telford and Wrekin Borough.
- 1.4 The Telford and Wrekin Local Plan (2018) identifies two areas of Strategic Landscape (see Figure 1):
- The Weald Moors; and
 - The Wrekin Forest.
- 1.5 The 2015 Strategic Landscapes Designations Study prepared by Fiona Fyfe Associates provides the evidence for these designations and also considered Lilleshall Village to meet the criteria of a Strategic Landscape. During the Local Plan examination the Inspector raised concerns with the justification underpinning the Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape (Paragraph 131 Report on the Examination of the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan 2011-2031) and a lack of comparative assessments across the whole Borough (Para 133).
- 1.6 The purpose of this study is to examine the quality and value of landscapes across the whole borough and provide robust evidence to underpin Strategic Landscapes, mapped and supported by clear evidence describing the unique special qualities of each.
- ### Aims and Objectives
- 1.7 The objectives of this study are to:
- Review the landscape of Telford and Wrekin Borough to identify the landscapes of the highest quality and value, which could merit local designation in line with best practice guidance;
 - Provide up to date evidence and justification for the existing Strategic

Landscapes and provide a list of any additional candidate areas for the Council's consideration; and

- Advise on any possible changes to the current policy framework that might be required to safeguard the Borough's most important landscape assets.

- 1.8 Local landscape designations (LLD) can play an important part in protecting and enhancing landscapes with special qualities. Information on LLD can be useful to inform development management and potential site allocation and landscape policies.

Link to Valued Landscapes

The European Landscape Convention

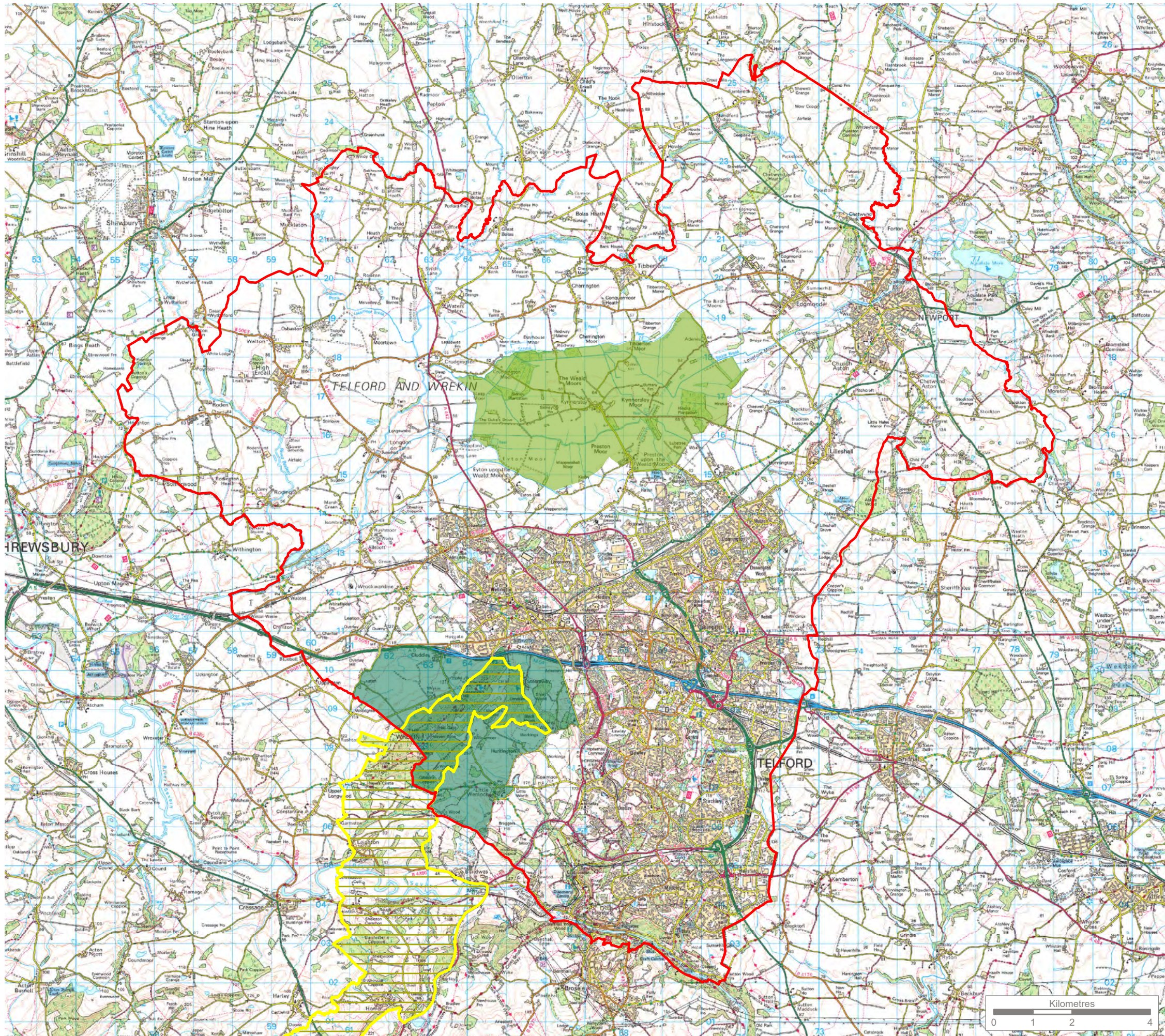
- 1.9 The UK is a member state on the Council of Europe and a signatory to the European Landscape Convention (ELC), which came into effect in the UK in 2007. One of the principal aims of the ELC is to encourage public authorities to adopt policies and measures at local, regional, national and international level for protecting, managing and planning landscapes throughout Europe.
- 1.10 The treaty introduces the concept of all landscapes having value in terms of quality of life and wellbeing. Signatories commit to '*acknowledging that the landscape is an important part of the*

quality of life for people everywhere: in urban areas and in the countryside, in degraded areas as well as in areas of high quality, in areas recognised as being of outstanding beauty as well as everyday areas.'

National Planning Policy Framework

- 1.11 Paragraph 170 of the NPPF states that '*Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: ...protecting and enhancing valued landscapes (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);'*
- 1.12 Paragraph 171 states that '*Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.'*
- 1.13 The NPPF does not offer a definition of what constitutes a 'valued landscape', nor does it make any reference to LLD.
- 1.14 While designated landscapes, including

LLD, are likely to be considered 'valued' for the purposes of para 170 of the NPPF, it is important to note that non-designated areas can also be 'valued'.

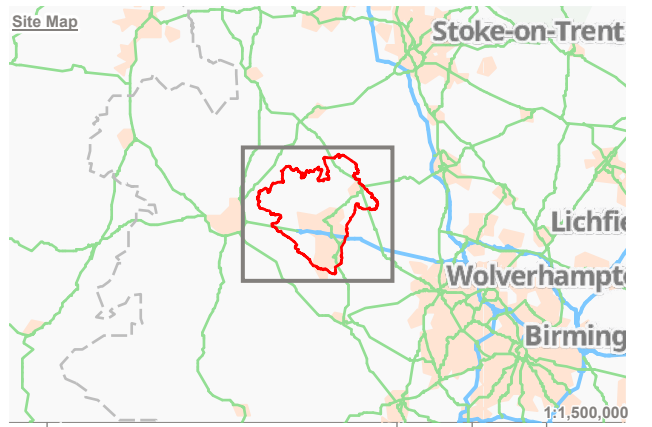


KEY

- Study area
- Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Strategic Landscapes**
- Weald Moors
- Wrekin Forest

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Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date

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Project
Telford and Wrekin Landscape Study

Title
Figure 1 Landscape Designations

Drawing Number
G9816.015

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
CW	MK	LF	1:100,000 @ A3	10/07/2023



2.0 METHOD

2.0 METHOD

2.1 There is currently no generally accepted methodology for reviewing or updating LLD Studies in England. The method for this assessment draws upon guidance contained in the following documents:

- Natural England, 2014. An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment.
- Landscape Institute and IEMA, 2013, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (GLVIA).
- The Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside of National Designations.
- NatureScot and Historic Environment Scotland. Guidance on Designating Local Landscape Areas. 2020.

2.2 The NPPF is clear that the focus of policy should be on the protecting and enhancing valued landscapes. For this study we have used the term 'valued landscape' as described in Landscape Character Assessment guidance and Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. These guidance documents are discussed below.

2.3 The current Landscape Character Assessment guidance for England defines landscape value as: *'The*

relative value or importance attached to 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.'

2.4 The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) introduce the range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscape at Box 5.1 (referred to below):

- Landscape quality (condition);
- Scenic quality;
- Rarity;
- Representativeness;
- Conservation interests;
- Recreation value;
- Perceptual aspects; and
- Associations.

2.5 The Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside of National Designations provides complementary factors for consideration, including:

- Natural heritage;
- Cultural heritage;
- Landscape condition;

- Associations;
- Distinctiveness;
- Recreational;
- Perceptual (scenic);
- Perceptual (wildness and tranquility);
and
- Functional.

Scope

- 2.6 The scope of this study includes a review of all of the landscapes within Telford and Wrekin Borough.
- 2.7 This review has been undertaken in parallel with the Telford and Wrekin Borough Landscape Character Assessment. The review uses the framework of the Landscape Character Types (LCTs) defined within the Landscape Character Assessment.
- 2.8 Landscape Character Assessment is based on broad variations in landscape character and not quality and value. There may, therefore, be differences in boundaries between the LCTs and Strategic Landscapes.
- 2.9 It should also be noted that all LCTs within Telford and Wrekin Borough are likely to include some valued qualities or features, even if they do not form part of a Strategic Landscape.
- 2.10 LCT boundaries are shown on Figure 2.

- 2.11 This assessment does not review the boundaries of the existing Strategic Landscapes, but it is noted that the existing boundaries generally follow identifiable features on the ground such as roads, field boundaries or woodland to ensure their robustness.

Method

Stage 1: Develop Criteria

- 2.12 The evaluation criteria set out in Table 1 below are drawn from Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (GLVIA3) (IEMA and the Landscape Institute), The Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 02/21: 'Assessing landscape value outside national designations' and NatureScot's 'Guidance on Designating Local Landscape Areas'.

Table 1: Evaluation Criteria

GLVIA Box 5.1 Criteria	TGN 02/21 Criteria	NatureScot	Telford and Wrekin Review Criteria
Rarity Representativeness	Distinctiveness	Local Distinctiveness and Sense of Place	Local Distinctiveness and Sense of Place
Landscape quality	Landscape condition Functional	Health and Wellbeing Important Spatial Function	Landscape Quality, Condition and Function
Scenic quality Perceptual aspects	Perceptual (scenic) Perceptual (wildness and tranquility)	Scenic	Scenic Quality and Perceptual Aspects
Conservation Interests Associations	Natural heritage Cultural heritage Associations	Cultural Natural	Natural and Cultural Qualities
Recreation value	Recreational	Recreation and Enjoyment	Recreational Value

Stage 2: Desk Based Review and Identification of 'Areas of Search'

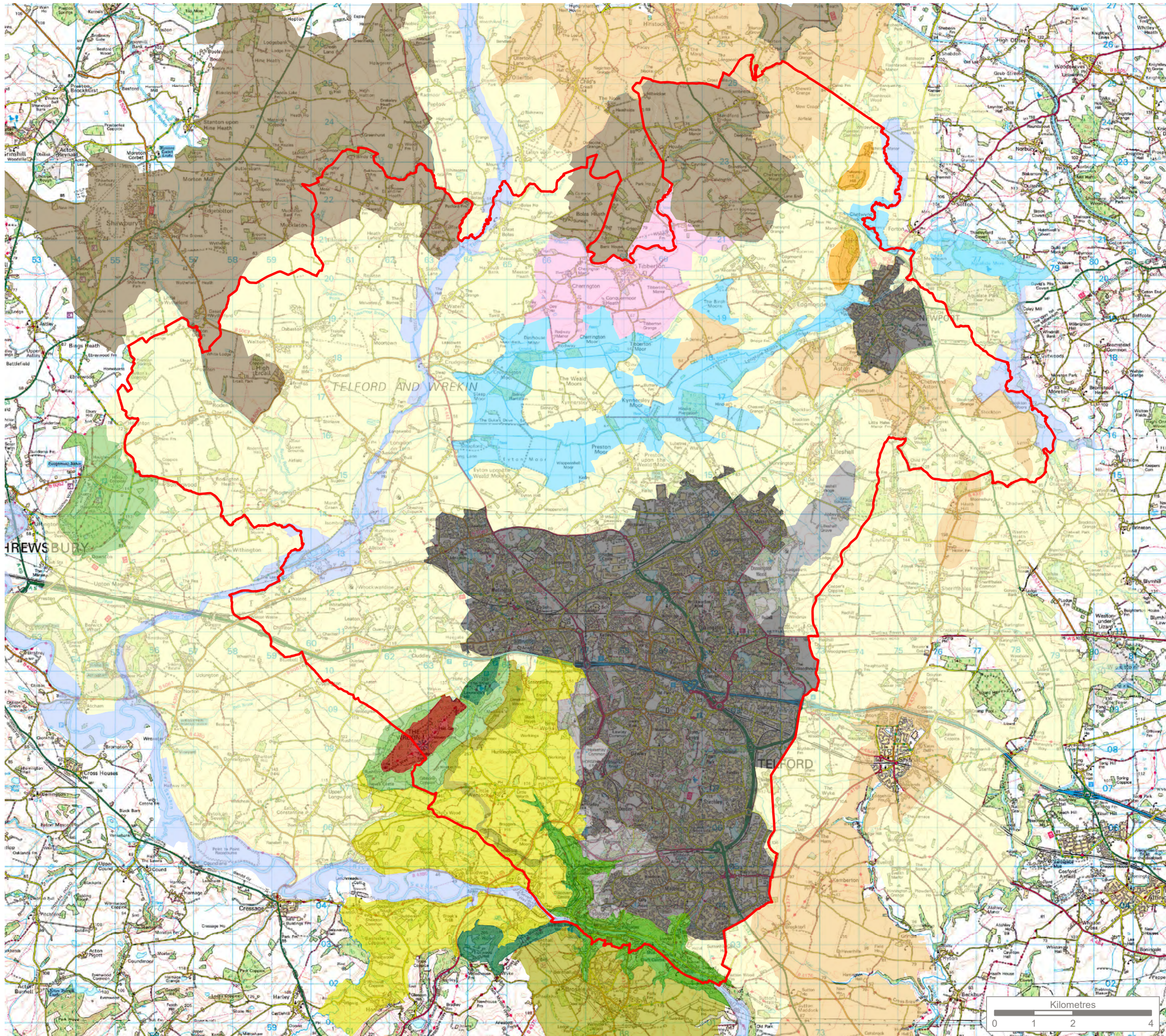
- 2.13 A comprehensive desk-based review was undertaken to review the LCTs for Telford and Wrekin Borough against the criteria and indicators (see Table 2) to identify broad areas of search which indicate the potential for high value landscape.
- 2.14 TEP's landscape professionals undertaking the linked Landscape Character Assessment also put forward suggestions for areas that 'stood out' as being particularly distinctive or of high landscape quality and value in the context of the Borough as a whole based on fieldwork observations.
- 2.15 Any LCTs currently part of a Strategic Landscape were automatically taken forward to stage 3.
- 2.16 The Shropshire Hills AONB is a national level designation and is therefore beyond the scope of this assessment. Whether the special characteristics or features of the AONB occur within the local landscape designations is likely to be an important part of their landscape value, and therefore, where similarities occur, these are noted within the assessment.
- 2.17 A list and map of the Broad Areas of Search identified at this stage is included in Section 4.0.

Table 2: Evaluation Criteria Indicators

Telford and Wrekin Review Criteria	Definition	Indicators	Evidence
Local Distinctiveness and Sense of Place	Landscape that has a strong sense of identity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape character that has a strong sense of place • Presence of distinctive features which are identified as being characteristic of a particular place • Presence of rare or unusual features, especially those that help to confer a strong sense of place or identity 	Landscape Character Assessment HLC Field Survey
Landscape Quality, Condition and Function	<p>Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and overall landscape structure.</p> <p>Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good physical condition/ intactness of individual landscape elements • Strong landscape structure (e.g. intact historic field patterns) • Absence of detracting/ incongruous features (or features are present but have little influence) • Landscapes and landscape elements that contribute to the healthy functioning of the landscape • Landscapes and landscape elements that have strong physical or functional links with an adjacent national landscape designation, or are important to the appreciation of the designated landscape and its special qualities 	Landscape Character Assessment Presence of other designations indicative of condition Field survey

Telford and Wrekin Review Criteria	Definition	Indicators	Evidence
Scenic Quality and Perceptual Aspects	<p>Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense</p> <p>Landscape with a strong perceptual value such as wildness, tranquility or dark skies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong aesthetic qualities such as scale, form, colour and texture • Visual diversity or contrasts which contributes to the appreciation of the landscape • Memorable/ distinctive views and landmarks, or landscape which contributes to distinctive views and landmarks • High levels of tranquility or perceptions of tranquility, including perceived links to nature, dark skies, presence of wildlife/ birdsong and relative peace and quiet • Presence of wild land and perceptions of relative wildness • Sense of particular remoteness, seclusion or openness • Dark night skies 	<p>Landscape Character Assessment</p> <p>CPRE Night Blight/ Dark Skies</p> <p>CPRE Tranquility</p> <p>Field Survey</p>

Telford and Wrekin Review Criteria	Definition	Indicators	Evidence
Natural and Cultural Qualities	<p>Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological, physiographic, archaeological, historical or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape</p> <p>Landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of wildlife and habitats of ecological interest that contribute to sense of place • Extent and survival of semi-natural habitat that is characteristic of the landscape type Presence of distinctive geological, geomorphological or pedological features • Landscape which contributes to the significance of heritage assets • Landscape which offers a dimension of time depth. • Presence of historic landmark structures or designed landscape elements. • Associations with well-known literature, poetry, art, TV/film and music that contribute to perceptions of the landscape. • Links to a notable historical event • Associations with a famous person or people 	<p>Landscape Character Assessment Designations</p> <p>Conservation Areas</p> <p>Shropshire Environmental Network Mapping</p>
Recreational Value	Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of open access land, common land and public rights of way where appreciation of landscape is a feature 	<p>Landscape Character Assessment</p> <p>Field Survey</p> <p>OS map data</p> <p>Leaflets and guidebooks</p>

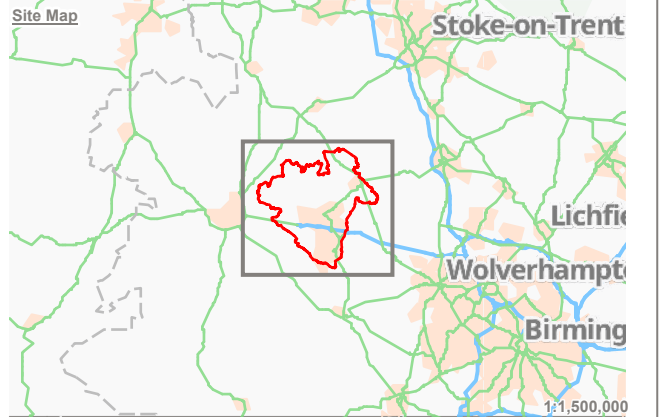


KEY

- Study area
- Landscape Character Type (LCT)**
- High Volcanic Hills and Slopes
- Principal Wooded Hills
- Wooded Hills and Farmlands
- Wooded River Gorge
- Wooded Hills and Estatelands
- Sandstone Hills
- Sandstone Estatelands
- Wooded Estatelands
- Estate Farmlands
- Principal Settled Farmlands
- Enclosed Lowland Heaths
- Lowland Moors
- Riverside Meadows
- Coalfields
- Urban

Note:
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Project
Telford and Wrekin Landscape Study

Title
Figure 2 Landscape Character Types

Drawing Number
G9816.016

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CW	MK	LF	1:100,000 @ A3	10/07/2023

Stage 3: Evaluation

- 2.18 A field survey of the Broad Areas of Search was undertaken to consider the criteria in more detail. The fieldwork considered the quality and condition of the landscapes in question, any distinctive features, as well as views to and from the areas.
- 2.19 Any candidate Strategic Landscape must be of sufficient size to make practical its protection, management and planning, must be more than an individual landscape feature or site and must be recognisable as a cohesive area in terms of landscape character.
- 2.20 The outputs of the evaluation exercise are presented in Section 4.0 of this report.

An aerial photograph of a city, likely in the United States, featuring a prominent geodesic dome structure in the center-right. The city is surrounded by greenery and hills in the background. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal color.

3.0 IDENTIFYING BROAD AREAS OF SEARCH

3.0 IDENTIFYING BROAD AREAS OF SEARCH

- 3.1 An initial desk study was undertaken to identify whether each LCT meets, partially meets or does not meet the criteria set out in Section 2.0. The purpose of this desk study is to identify broad areas of search for further consideration through field survey. To go forward as an 'area of search' a LCT does not need to fulfil all criteria and is a matter of professional judgement.

Fully meets criteria	
Partially meets criteria	
Does not meet criteria	

Table 3: Landscape Value Indicator Evaluation

LCT	Contains Strategic Landscape?	Local Distinctiveness and Sense of Place	Landscape Quality, Condition and Function	Scenic Quality and Perceptual Aspects	Natural and Cultural Qualities	Recreational Value	Area of Search?
High Volcanic Hills and Slopes	Yes	Prominent hills with notable steep slopes which form a regional landmark and create a strong sense of place.	Strong landscape structure of woodland on the flanks of The Wrekin. The landscape forms part of the Shropshire Hills AONB.	The hills are visible from much of Telford and Wrekin Borough and beyond. Panoramic views from the summit of The Wrekin are exhilarating and inspirational. One of the most open views in Shropshire Extensive woodland cover creates confined and intimate views. High levels of tranquility	Strong degree of ecological integrity as evidenced by the numerous ecological designations across the area. Wrekin Hill designated as a RIGS and a SSSI Woodland is extensive and ancient. The Wrekin is a landmark feature across the Borough and beyond.	Landscape is valued for recreational activity and is popular with visitors. Several PRoWs, including the promoted Shropshire Way long distance footpath, forms the Wrekin Trail which provides a route to the summit of The Wrekin.	Yes
Principal Wooded Hills	Yes	Prominent and wooded landscape with a strong sense of place.. Dominant landform comprising scarp and folding features in sedimentary rocks. Woodland in LCT links to the extensive woodland of The Wrekin, in the High Volcanic Hills and Slopes LCT.	Strong landscape structure of mainly ancient woodland, interspersed with some modern forestry. The landscape forms part of the Shropshire Hills AONB.	Large landscape scale due to topography but is reduced by woodland which creates small and intimate landscape Majority of views are filtered and framed by woodland. High levels of tranquility.	There are no heritage designations in the LCT. The LCT includes The Wrekin and The Ercall Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and The Ercall and Lawrence's Hill Local Nature Reserve (LNR).	Landscape is valued for recreational activity and is popular with visitors. Recreational use has increased in recent years Recreational opportunities include the Ercall Nature Reserve, Wrekin Golf Club and course and several PRoWs, including the Shropshire Way long-distance footpath.	Yes

LCT	Contains Strategic Landscape?	Local Distinctiveness and Sense of Place	Landscape Quality, Condition and Function	Scenic Quality and Perceptual Aspects	Natural and Cultural Qualities	Recreational Value	Area of Search?
Wooded River Gorge	No	<p>Small scale landscape with an intimate and enclosed character.</p> <p>Predominately located along the steeply sloping valley sides of the River Severn, which is an important feature of the landscape.</p> <p>Strong sense of character.</p>	<p>Landscape is steeply sloping, enclosed and wooded in which the woodlands are primarily of ancient origin and of significant ecological interest.</p> <p>The field boundary type is often hedgerows, which are of mixed species and in poor condition. Many of the fields are bordered directly by woodland.</p>	<p>Settlement and industrial development are apparent throughout the valley, usually clustered along the riverside, for example Ironbridge.</p> <p>Settlement and industrial development are apparent throughout the valley but is well screened by the extensive surrounding woodland.</p> <p>Views framed by woodland and the topography of the area.</p>	<p>Most of the LCT comprises the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site which is an important feature of the area that represents its contribution to the origin of the Industrial Revolution in the 18th Century.</p> <p>The extent of the World Heritage Site also forms the extent of the Ironbridge Gorge Conservation Area.</p> <p>Cluster of Listed Buildings, particularly in Coalbrookdale and Ironbridge, with few scattered along the rest of the gorge near Jackfield, Hay Brook Valley and Coalport.</p>	<p>Network of PRow across the LCT, including the Severn Valley long-distance footpath which runs adjacent to the river Severn to the south.</p> <p>Recreation opportunities associated with the Ironbridge World Heritage Site and Conservation Area.</p>	Yes
Wooded Hills and Farmlands	Yes	<p>The landscape is prominent and has a sloping topography as it forms the flanks of The Wrekin.</p> <p>The LCT is dominated by woodland and interspersed with pasture and some mixed farming land use.</p> <p>Woodlands of ancient semi-natural character.</p> <p>The large blocks of woodland all link to extensive woodland of The Wrekin.</p> <p>Strong strength of character.</p>	<p>The flanks are predominantly covered in woodlands which are often of ancient character.</p> <p>The landscape forms part of the Shropshire Hills AONB.</p>	<p>Medium scale landscape that is determined by its small untried fields and in contrast its large woodlands that create an intimate and enclosed character in large sections of the LCT.</p> <p>Views are framed by woodland but locally open within the field system due to a lack of field and hedgerow trees.</p>	<p>The woodlands and hedges across the LCT provide a good habitat network.</p> <p>There is one Scheduled Monument, Wrekin Rifle Range, and one Grade II Listed Building, Wrekin Rifle Range Target Gallery.</p>	<p>Several Public Rights of Way pass through the landscape, including the Shropshire Way long-distance footpath which provides a path to the summit of The Wrekin.</p>	Yes

LCT	Contains Strategic Landscape?	Local Distinctiveness and Sense of Place	Landscape Quality, Condition and Function	Scenic Quality and Perceptual Aspects	Natural and Cultural Qualities	Recreational Value	Area of Search?
Wooded Hills and Estatelands	Yes	Landscape is formed by a steeply sloping limestone scarp which is locally distinctive.	Field boundary hedgerows generally in poor condition. The landscape forms part of the Shropshire Hills AONB.	Strong rural character. Variation in views with some framed by woodland and some more open views.	Extensive areas of ancient woodland, some also designated as a Local Nature Reserve. No heritage designations. There are no known associations with the arts or literature.	Some Public Rights of Way, including part of the Shropshire Way.	Yes
Sandstone Hills	No	Localised variations in landform are generally unappreciable due to surrounding vegetation. Remote character.	Hedgerows are generally in poor quality or in decline. Few detracting features.	Some far-reaching views from areas of higher ground, but generally private views	No ecological designations. The Chetwynd Registered Park and Garden exerts a parkland influence on the landscape and is a historic deer park. Cultural pattern has been eroded by intensive agriculture.	Limited Public Access with no Public Rights of Way.	No
Sandstone Estatelands	Yes	The landscape lacks a strong sense of place.	Strong and intact hedgerow structure.	The large fields, flat to gently rolling topography and relative openness create a large scale landscape. Views are largely open except where there are small blocks of trees.	No ecological designations. Scattered Listed Buildings, but generally without connections to the surrounding landscape. There are no known associations with the arts or literature.	Some Public Rights of Way, generally providing connections to adjacent settlements.	Yes

LCT	Contains Strategic Landscape?	Local Distinctiveness and Sense of Place	Landscape Quality, Condition and Function	Scenic Quality and Perceptual Aspects	Natural and Cultural Qualities	Recreational Value	Area of Search?
Wooded Estatelands	Yes	<p>Characterised by large areas of woodland.</p> <p>The urban edge of Telford encroaches on the LCT in the east..</p>	<p>The landscape forms part of the Shropshire Hills AONB.</p> <p>The landscape forms part of the wooded setting to The Wrekin and Erccall hills.</p>	<p>Views are often framed by the large areas of woodland, which limit the openness of the landscape.</p> <p>In areas away from the woodland, more open and extensive views are available.</p> <p>The eastern edge of the LCT is on the urban fringes, with development encroaching on the more open countryside, a more expansive road network has a greater visual impact here on the LCT.</p>	<p>Extensive areas of ancient woodland.</p> <p>Scattered Listed Buildings, but generally without connections to the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>There are no known associations with the arts or literature.</p>	Some Public Rights of Way, generally providing connections to adjacent settlements.	Yes
Estate Farmlands	Yes	<p>Lilleshall Hill is a distinct topographical feature within this LCT.</p> <p>Parkland heritage of the landscape is still apparent.</p>	<p>A network of mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees form field boundaries.</p> <p>Landscape in variable condition, but generally moderate.</p> <p>Parts of this LCT form strategic gaps between settlements.</p>	<p>A mix of both framed and open views.</p> <p>Scenic panoramic views from the Lilleshall Monument.</p>	<p>The Grade II Listed Sutherland Monument (also known as the Lilleshall Monument) is a prominent local landmark.</p> <p>Some areas of ancient woodland.</p> <p>A Local Nature Reserve surrounds Lilleshall Monument.</p> <p>Scattered Listed Buildings, but generally without connections to the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>There are no known associations with the arts or literature.</p>	Frequent Public Rights of Way, providing connections to the countryside and adjacent settlements.	Yes

LCT	Contains Strategic Landscape?	Local Distinctiveness and Sense of Place	Landscape Quality, Condition and Function	Scenic Quality and Perceptual Aspects	Natural and Cultural Qualities	Recreational Value	Area of Search?
Principal Settled Farmlands	No	A flat, agricultural landscape with limited woodland cover.	Field boundary hedgerows generally in poor condition. Evidence of field amalgamation. Extensive areas of agricultural land with no wider function	Large, open views, but generally with average scenic quality.	No ecological designations. Scattered Listed Buildings, but generally without connections to the surrounding landscape. There are no known associations with the arts or literature.	Some Public Rights of Way, generally providing connections to adjacent settlements.	No
Enclosed Lowland Heaths	No	A rolling agricultural landscape of high intensity farming.	Evidence of field amalgamation. Extensive areas of agricultural land with no wider function	Large, open views, but generally with average scenic quality.	Some localised areas of ancient woodland. Scattered Listed Buildings, but generally without connections to the surrounding landscape. There are no known associations with the arts or literature.	Some Public Rights of Way, generally providing connections to adjacent settlements.	No
Lowland Moors	Yes	Former raised bog has created a distinctive flat landform, hydrology and drainage pattern. Strong character and distinctive sense of place.	The landscape retains its integrity. Lack of any recent development.	Relative sense of peace and tranquility with a strong and undeveloped rural character. Trees and woodland focus views inwards across the open Moors.	There are no ecological designations within the LCT. There are few heritage features with the exception of the Wall Camp in the Weald Moors: a large low-lying multivallate hillfort and Scheduled Monument. There are no known associations with the arts or literature.	Public Rights of Way likely to be valued at the community level.	Yes

LCT	Contains Strategic Landscape?	Local Distinctiveness and Sense of Place	Landscape Quality, Condition and Function	Scenic Quality and Perceptual Aspects	Natural and Cultural Qualities	Recreational Value	Area of Search?
Riverside Meadows	No	Some sense of place but generally lacks distinctiveness	The condition of boundary features is variable. Evidence of tree and hedgerow loss.	The removal of trees, hedgerows and the canalisation of the river has led to an increase in the scale of what must have originally been a small scale landscape. Some scenic and perceptual qualities along the river.	The Alscott Settling Ponds SSSI, comprises a series of water-filled lagoons of various sizes and depths, which receive water from the adjacent sugar factory. Scattered Listed Buildings, but generally without connections to the surrounding landscape. There are no known associations with the arts or literature.	Limited Public Access with relatively few Public Rights of Way when compared to other LCTs.	No
Coalfields	No	There is localised evidence of historical mining and industrial use in the form of buildings and spoil heaps. The LCT is strongly influenced by the existing settlement edge of Telford and lacks a strong sense of place	The LCT is influenced by its proximity to the urban edge of Telford. Landscape generally in moderate to poor condition and comprises large areas of reclaimed land.	Visual intrusion from the urban edge of Telford beyond the LCT detracts from any sense of remoteness or tranquillity. Scenic quality is generally poor.	There are no ecological designations within the LCT. There are no known associations with the arts or literature.	Some Public Rights of Way, generally providing connections to adjacent settlements.	No

3.2 The LCTs which indicate potential areas of higher value are:

- High Volcanic Hills and Slopes
- Principal Wooded Hills
- Wooded River Gorge
- Wooded Hills and Farmlands
- Wooded Hills and Estatelands
- Wooded Estatelands
- Sandstone Estatelands
- Estate Farmlands
- Lowland Moors

3.3 The Lowland Moors LCT broadly corresponds with the Weald Moors Strategic Landscape. All other LCTs, with the exception of Estate Farmlands and Wooded River Gorge, broadly correspond with the Wrekin Forest Strategic Landscape.

3.4 The Estate Farmlands LCT encompasses a large proportion of the Borough. TEP's landscape planners involved in the production of the Telford and Wrekin Borough Landscape Character Assessment identified the area around the Lilleshall Monument and the area around The Wrekin as distinctive areas within the Estate Farmlands LCT and it was therefore decided to progress these areas to broad areas of search.

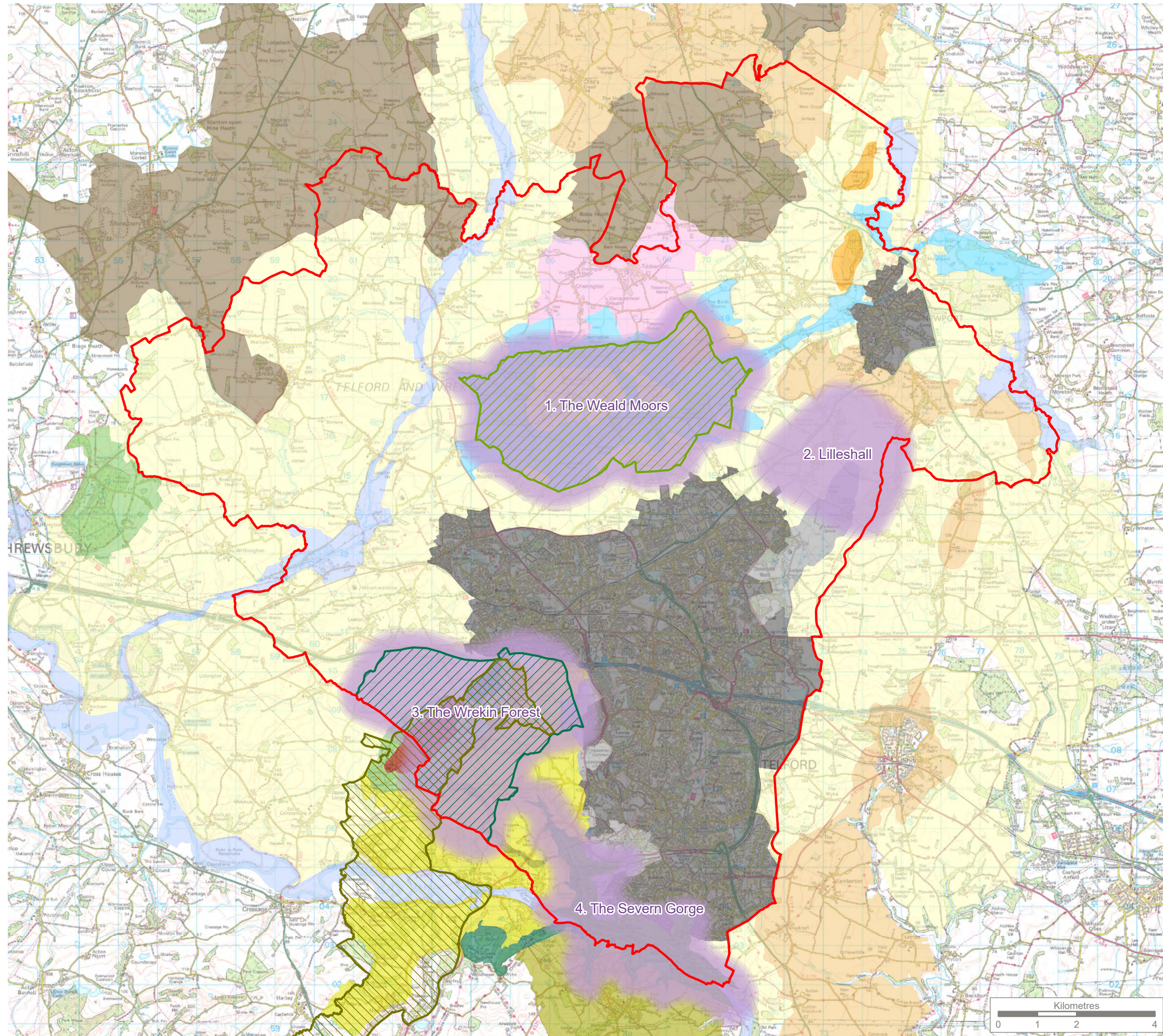
3.5 The broad areas of search are as follows:

- The Wrekin Forest (High Volcanic

Hills and Slopes LCT, Principal Wooded Hills LCT, Wooded Hills and Farmlands LCT, Wooded Hills and Estatelands LCT, Wooded Estatelands LCT, Estate Farmlands LCT)

- The Weald Moors (Lowland Moors LCT, Sandstone Estatelands LCT, Estate Farmlands LCT)
- Lilleshall (Estate Farmlands LCT)
- The Severn Gorge (Wooded River Gorge LCT)

3.6 These areas formed the basis for more detailed field survey and evaluation as presented in Section 4.0.



KEY

- Study area
- Areas of search
- Landscape Character Type (LCT)**
- High Volcanic Hills and Slopes
- Principal Wooded Hills
- Wooded Hills and Farmlands
- Wood River Gorge
- Wooded Hills and Estatelands
- Sandstone Hills
- Sandstone Estatelands
- Wooded Estatelands
- Estate Farmlands
- Principal Settled Farmlands
- Enclosed Lowland Heaths
- Lowland Moors
- Riverside Meadows
- Coalfields
- Urban
- Landscape Designations**
- Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Strategic Landscape: Weald Moors
- Strategic Landscape: Wrekin Forest

Note:
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Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date

TEP | **THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP**

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Project
Telford and Wrekin Landscape Study

Title
Figure 3.1 Areas of Search

Drawing Number
G9816.017

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
CW	MK	LF	1:100,000 @ A3	10/07/2023

4.0 EVALUATION

THE WREKIN FOREST

Extent of Area of Search

The Wrekin Forest is in the south west of the Borough, to the south of Wellington. The Area of Search broadly encompasses the existing Strategic Landscape Designation extending from the A5/M54 in the north, to the Borough boundary in the south and south west and follows a series on minor roads close to the Coalfields LCT in the east.

Landscape Character Context

The Area of Search comprises:

- High Volcanic Hills and Slopes LCT
- Principal Wooded Hills LCT
- Wooded Hills and Farmlands LCT
- Wooded Hills and Estatelands LCT
- Wooded Estatelands LCT
- Estate Farmlands LCT

Relationship to Existing Landscape Designations

The entirety of the Area of Search comprises The Wrekin Forest Strategic Landscape.

The full extent of the Shropshire Hills AONB in the borough is within the Area of Search.

Evaluation

Local Distinctiveness and Sense of Place

The Wrekin and Ercall Hills are a regional landmark and can be seen from much of Telford and Wrekin Borough and beyond. The ‘whale-backed’ ridgeline dominates the horizon and provides a backdrop to both rural and urban areas, creating a strong sense of place.

The Area of Search comprises a mosaic of landscapes including the wooded Wrekin and Ercall Hills, grassland and heath. The presence of extensive areas of woodland, creates a cohesive sense of character and a strong sense of place.

The area is one of the most geologically diverse in the UK, comprising layers of hard volcanic rocks within slightly softer sedimentary rocks creating The Wrekin and The Ercall. The Wrekin and Ercall Hills, Lawrence Hill Forest Glen – Little Wenlock and Maddock’s Hill Quarry are designated as Local Geological Sites.

The landscape has a strong and distinctive character due to the prominent landform, presence of extensive woodland and lack of settlement.

Landscape Quality, Condition and Function

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.

The Wrekin Forest landscape largely retains its structure of woodland, hedgerows and lanes. Urban fringe development beyond the northern and eastern boundaries has a localised impact on landscape quality.

There are relatively few incongruous features within the Area of Search, except for the telecommunications mast on the summit of The Wrekin.

The area is of high scenic quality, with parts of The Wrekin Forest also within the Shropshire Hills AONB. The AONB boundary is drawn tightly around the wooded hills of The Wrekin and The Ercall, although the quality of the surrounding area is very important to the setting of the AONB.

The special qualities of the Shropshire Hills AONB, include diversity and contrasts in landscape character, hills, woodlands, geology, wildlife, scenic quality and tranquility and they are evident in the Wrekin Forest landscape.

Scenic Quality and Perceptual Aspects

The landscape is of high scenic quality, with some parts designated nationally as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

From the summit of The Wrekin there are outstanding views over Shropshire and the West Midlands. The sense of openness on the summit contrasts with the enclosed, peaceful, rural feel of the wooded slopes.

The Wrekin Hill is the best known hill in Shropshire and as is a cultural icon. The hill is the subject of many paintings and poems. A popular saying refers to going 'all round The Wrekin' to imply a long indirect journey or rambling way of speaking. The long standing public interest and attachment has meant it has been, and is, the focus for major celebrations, cultural and sports events including annual Wrekin Fell races.



View from the summit of The Wrekin

Natural and Cultural Qualities

Semi-natural habitats include extensive deciduous woodland (much of it ancient woodland), wooded dingles, veteran trees, ponds and scattered pockets of grassland and heath. There are numerous Local Wildlife Sites

and Local Nature Reserves at Ercall Wood and Limekiln Wood. The mixed wooded countryside of the Wrekin Forest forms a considerable biodiversity resource. The area also forms part of an Area for Biodiversity Action.

A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designation for geological interest covers the higher land of The Wrekin and Ercall hills along with the range of woodland vegetation and heathland habitats. Chermes Dingle is also designated as a SSSI for its geological fossil exposures which show the evolution of trilobites and other fossils through time.

The landscape is rich in history, which includes prehistoric hillfort and barrows on The Wrekin, medieval lanes and villages, historic field patterns, ancient woodland, industrial archaeology including quarries, limekilns and coal mining pits and WWII remains.

Recreational Value

The Wrekin Forest is a popular area for recreation, attracting visitors from the wider region for walking, cycling and wildlife viewing. The main path up the northern side of The Wrekin is particularly popular with visitors facilities including car parking and interpretation boards at key locations such as the Forest Glen car park.



Footpath through Ercall Wood with The Wrekin glimpsed beyond trees

Landscape Pressures and Key Forces for Change

- The Forest Glen car park is small and often full, leading to significant levels of parking along the nearby roadsides and related traffic management issues.
- Urban expansion on the eastern edge of the Wrekin Forest, including the consented redevelopment of the former Ironbridge Power Station leading to increased visitor numbers and recreational pressure.
- Urban expansion on the fringes of the Wrekin Forest should be of an appropriate scale and design.
- Pressure for solar development which has the potential to change the land use and appearance of a field or fields, affecting land cover patterns and landscape character. Structures associated with solar developments can appear out

of place in landscapes that are perceived as natural and remote, especially where these are valued landscape qualities. The elevated nature of the The Wrekin makes the pressure for solar development an acute landscape and visual issue.

Recommendations

Retain the existing Wrekin Forest Strategic Landscape Designation.

THE WEALD MOORS

Extent of Area of Search

The Weald Moors is 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.

The Area of Search broadly encompasses the existing Weald Moors Strategic Landscape.

Landscape Character Context

The Area of Search comprises:

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

Relationship to Existing Landscape Designations

The entirety of the Area of Search comprises The Weald Moors Strategic Landscape.

Evaluation

Local Distinctiveness and Sense of Place

The landscape has a distinct character and sense of place due to a combination of low-lying topography, a network of vegetation lined watercourses which in turn creates wooded skylines, quiet rural lanes and absence of built

form.

Despite its proximity to Telford, the landscape retains perceptual qualities, particularly tranquility and a strong rural character.

The flat nature of the topography creates a large open feel to the landscape. Views are largely open across the LCT, with long-distance views available towards The Wrekin and Ercall Hills and the Lilleshall Monument.



View across Tibberton Moor

In some places views are filtered and shortened by woodland plantations and watercourse trees. These woodlands and watercourse trees are highly visible in the landscape due to the flat topography.

The Lowland Moors is a low-lying wetland landscape, which occupies shallow hollows in the glacial drifts deposits. Raised 'islands' are generally occupied by villages. The flat peatland topography is a defining characteristic

of this landscape.

The Weald Moors are drained by a complex network of streams and artificial drainage ditches.



The Strine Brook

Landscape Quality, Condition and Function

This is a landscape which retains its integrity, with historic features still intact and present in the landscape. The area is generally well-managed and in a good condition.

Structural elements such as woodland and field boundary hedgerows are generally intact and managed. There are some examples of field amalgamation and some incongruous features such as large modern agricultural sheds and electricity poles, but the landscape generally retains an isolated, rural character.

Scenic Quality and Perceptual Aspects

The landscape has a rural and undeveloped

character and retains a sense of remoteness. The landscape has a strong sense of relative peace and tranquility.

Straight roads and artificial drainage ditches contrast with the sinuous courses of natural streams (known locally as 'strines').

Long views across the flat, open moors, are often framed by trees and woodland. Skyscapes have a strong influence on the 'mood' of the area.

Occasional distant glimpses of The Wrekin or Lilleshall Monument provide orientation.

Natural and Cultural Qualities

Semi-natural habitats include blocks of wet woodland and riparian habitats along streams and ditches. Kynnersley Moor Woods is designated as a Local Wildlife Site. The area also forms part of an Area for Biodiversity Action (Resotation).

Duke of Sutherland estate architecture is evident in Kynnersley village, and in farms and cottages across the area, although this is not particularly rare in the Borough context.

The Wall Iron-Age fort to the north east of Kynnersely is a Scheduled Monument. There are also remnants of canals and associated

structures, some of which are Listed.

Recreational Value

The quiet lanes and restricted byways in the area are popular for recreation, particularly walking and cycling. There are relatively few Public Rights of Way.

Landscape Pressures and Key Forces for Change

- Residential development on the fringes of the Weald Moors Strategic Landscape has the potential to erode the tranquil and rural character, especially when it does not respect the existing settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and nucleated villages.
- Increased vehicular movement along the rural lanes, increasing pressure for kerbs and other highways improvements.
- Introduction of vertical features such as pylons into the flat, open landscape would erode landscape character and detract from the undeveloped skylines.
- Agricultural intensification leading to field amalgamation and loss of hedgerow boundaries and hedgerow trees.
- Introduction of non-native planting such as *Leylandii* which is uncharacteristic of the landscape.

Recommendations

Retain the existing Weald Moors Strategic Landscape Designation.

LILLESHALL

Extent of Area of Search

The Area of Search is located to the north east of Telford, between Muxton and Newport and covers the village of Lilleshall, the Lilleshall Monument, Lilleshall Abbey and surrounding agricultural land on all sides.

Landscape Character Context

The Area of Search is entirely within the Estate Farmlands LCT.

Relationship to Existing Landscape Designations

The area was proposed as a Strategic Landscape in the Telford and Wrekin Local Plan 2011 – 2031 ('Lilleshall Village') and was considered within the 2015 Telford and Wrekin Strategic Landscapes Study.

The Inspector's Report highlighted concerns in relation to the justification underpinning the proposed Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape and a lack of evidence for the grounds upon which the Lilleshall Village area was initially selected for identification as a Strategic Landscape. As a result the Lilleshall Village Strategic Landscape was not carried through into the adopted Local Plan.

Evaluation

Local Distinctiveness and Sense of Place

One of the key characteristics of the Lilleshall Area of Search is the pronounced and steep geological outcrop of volcanic rock and carboniferous limestone at Lilleshall Hill. The hill rises to approximately 132m AOD and the hill and associated monument are visible from much of the surrounding landscape. The hill is designated as a Local Geological Site.



View towards Lilleshall Hill from the A518

Lilleshall village is situated on the limestone outcrop. It is linear in form, with several phases of development. There are several Duke of Sutherland estate cottages, although these are not particularly rare in the context of the Borough as a whole.

The surrounding agricultural land is pleasant countryside with a mosaic of hedged fields

and small areas of woodland, the landscape is commonplace and typical of the wider Landscape Character Type.

The Area of Search has some local distinctiveness and sense of place, but this is derived from Lilleshall Hill and the associated Lilleshall Monument, rather than the village of Lilleshall itself and the surrounding agricultural land.

Landscape Quality, Condition and Function

Overall, this is a visually coherent landscape where field patterns are generally intact although there has been some hedgerow loss and field amalgamation in parts of the area. The landscape has a strong pattern of trees and hedgerows, particularly around Lilleshall village.

The area has a degree of ecological integrity due to its network of woodlands, trees and hedgerows.

The landscape contributes to the approach to Telford from the north east and forms a strategic gap between Telford and Newport.

Scenic Quality and Perceptual Aspects

The landscape has a rural character with some sense of tranquility away from main roads. The A518 has a localised influence on the western part of the area, and there are some very large farm buildings apparent in views looking out of



View towards The Wrekin from Lilleshall Hill

the area towards the north east.

The Area of Search is dominated by the Lilleshall Monument and geological outcrop, which forms a prominent feature on the horizon in some local views. Views towards the monument are often framed by trees or hedgerows.

There are panoramic views from Lilleshall Hill across the Moors and areas of farmland towards The Wrekin and Ercall hills. The presence of Lilleshall village detracts from any sense of wildness or isolation.

Natural and Cultural Qualities

Lilleshall Monument was erected in 1883 to commemorate George Granville, Duke of Sutherland, a local landowner. The monument is Grade II Listed along with a cluster of buildings in Lilleshall village, including the Church of St Michael and All Angels (Grade I) and scattered farmhouses throughout the Area



Lilleshall Abbey

of Search.

Lilleshall Abbey is a Scheduled Monument and includes the ruins of the Abbey, the remains of a disused 18th century canal and the earthwork dams of two fishponds. The Abbey is owned by English Heritage and is open to the public.

The Grade II Registered Park and Garden at Lilleshall Hall is on the eastern edge of the Area of Search.

There are some semi-natural habitats including the Lilleshall Hill Local Nature Reserve, which is largely wooded. The quarry along Barrack Lane is designated as a Local Wildlife Site and comprises quarries, pools and meadows.

Field boundaries comprise mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees with oak prevalent over much of the area. The mosaic of fields vary in size and shape, reflecting different phases

of historic enclosure. There is some evidence of hedgerow loss and field amalgamation in places.

Recreational Value

There are some Public Rights of Way, including a circular walk around the Lilleshall Monument which are likely to be valued at the community or local level.

Landscape Pressures and Key Forces for Change

- Urban development on the edges of Telford and Newport detracting from the semi-rural nature of the landscape and with the potential to cause coalescence of settlements
- Poorly designed/sited development on the edges of Lilleshall which could detract from the wooded skyline
- Introduction of new vertical features e.g. pylons detracting from the prominence of Lilleshall Monument on Lilleshall Hill
- Agricultural intensification leading to field amalgamation and loss of hedgerow boundaries and trees.
- Lack of management of hedgerows and hedgerow trees leading to their decline

Recommendations

Much of the interest of Lilleshall stems from Lilleshall Hill and the Lilleshall Monument, and it does not extend into the adjacent agricultural

landscape.

A 'valued landscape' is an area identified as having sufficient landscape qualities to elevate it above other more everyday landscapes and when taken as a whole, the Lilleshall Area of Search is not considered to meet the threshold of a valued landscape with reference to paragraph 174 of the NPPF.

Lilleshall Hill is not large enough to become a Strategic Landscape and as highlighted in paragraph 2.18 a Strategic Landscape '*must be more than an individual landscape feature or site*'.

The landscape contributes to the approach to Telford from the north east and forms a clear break in development between the urban edge of Telford and the market town of Newport.

Other options for its protection, for example a strategic gap policy or similar could be explored to assist in safeguarding the separation between settlements.

THE SEVERN GORGE

Extent of Area of Search

The Severn Gorge is to the south of the Borough along the Severn valley. The Area of Search encompasses the Wooded River Gorge LCT between Coalbrookdale, Ironbridge and Coalport.

Landscape Character Context

The Area of Search is within the Wooded River Gorge and Wooded Estatelands LCTs.

Relationship to Existing Landscape Designations

The Area of Search is not covered by any landscape designations.

Evaluation

Local Distinctiveness and Sense of Place

The gorge has a strong sense of place and distinct character, largely due to the dramatic topography and wooded valley sides.

The steep topography has strongly influenced the pattern of development and the resultant tiers of terraces along the wooded valley sides.

In terms of land use and land cover, the dominant picture is a mosaic of woodland, settlement and communications. There is a complex network of roads and tracks, bridges, railways and canal features, as well as the river Severn itself.



The River Severn

The gorge and valleys sides comprise a mosaic of dispersed settlement, mixed woodland and residual parcels of open land. The mosaic of land use reflects the topography and historic sources of power, minerals and lines of movement. Areas of more recent development exploits areas of flatter land, mainly in Madeley. In some areas open pasture contrasts with the more confined valley landscape found elsewhere.

This overall landscape pattern has evolved in recent centuries with woodland taking over areas of earlier mineral workings. Woodland is visually prominent along the full length of the gorge with some areas recognised for its ecological value and designated as SSSI. Much of the woodland is ancient semi-natural woodland, with the age and composition reflecting the pattern of woodland management.. Other important habitats include unimproved grasslands, heathlands and



Bedlam Furnaces

wetlands, each inextricable from the historic pattern of land use.

The wooded valleys of the Gorge provide a distinctive landscape setting within which a complex built heritage has evolved. Industry and settlement occupy the narrow valley floors and in some areas such as around Ironbridge, rises up the slopes informally, giving a more dispersed settlement pattern. Short streams incise the valley sides, providing containment to settlement, particularly at Coalbrookdale and Blists Hill.

Many of the roads, lanes and tracks across the landscape are of historic origin, linking mines to settlements and foundries.

The relationship of buildings, landscape and topography is a defining character of the Gorge.

The role of the landscape in the industrial revolution is evident. The River Severn is of cultural importance as it powered the industrial revolution with the areas of woodland providing fuel and the slopes mined with settlement and industrial processing growing organically. Many of these features are still evident in the landscape today.

Landscape Quality, Condition and Function

Woodland is mainly mixed deciduous and occupies the steep valley slopes. Some woodland is ancient in origin.

Mixed native hedgerows are generally in poor condition with opportunities for enhancement. There are several Local Wildlife Sites in the area and the remaining woodland and some pasture forms part of the current Telford and Wrekin Green Network. The semi natural environment is valuable in terms of providing visual interest, biodiversity interest and recreation opportunities.



View over Ironbridge from the Iron Bridge

Scenic Quality and Perceptual Aspects

Most views within and across the Gorge are characterised by industrial buildings set within heavily wooded slopes. Built heritage elements such as the Iron Bridge form important landmarks in views along the Gorge. Views are generally framed by woodland.

The views up and downstream from the bridges are important and help visitors understand the overall shape of the valley and the importance of the river in the history of the Gorge.

Natural and Cultural Qualities

The Severn gorge landscape has historic and cultural associations with the industrialists and entrepreneurs of the 18th century.

The valley landscape is fundamental to the perception and understanding of the cultural history of the Gorge and forms part of an arcadian setting to the monuments and historic settlements.

Some areas of woodland are ancient woodland. Other important habitats include unimproved grasslands, heathlands and wetlands. The area forms part of an Area for Biodiversity Action.

Recreational Value

The Severn Valley and Cross Britain Way long-distance footpaths run along the southern bank

of the River Severn. The Shropshire Way long-distance footpath runs through Ironbridge. The Monarch's Way and Silkin Way long-distance footpaths run to the north of the River Seven



View from the Coalbrookdale rotunda

around Coalport.

Some paths and recreational routes also have historic associations such as the Sabbath Walks, which were generally held on a Sunday, a day of rest for the workers. Routes included the recreational route of the Darby family who were long associated with the Ironworks to the rotunda above Coalbrookdale,,

Landscape Pressures and Key Forces for Change

- Development proposals which cause unnecessary additional intrusion into the woodland valley sides.
- Development proposals which would be incongruent with the existing settlement pattern.
- The consented redevelopment of

the former Ironbridge Power Station leading to increased visitor numbers and recreational pressure.

Recommendations

Whilst the Severn Gorge meets the criteria to become a Strategic Landscape it is already offered a high level of protection through its designation as a World Heritage Site.

World Heritage Sites are sites, places, monuments or buildings of 'Outstanding Universal Value' to the international community, including its current and future generations. The protection of a World Heritage Site is the responsibility of national governments. No additional designation is considered necessary as the gorge landscape is an integral part of the World Heritage Site designation.

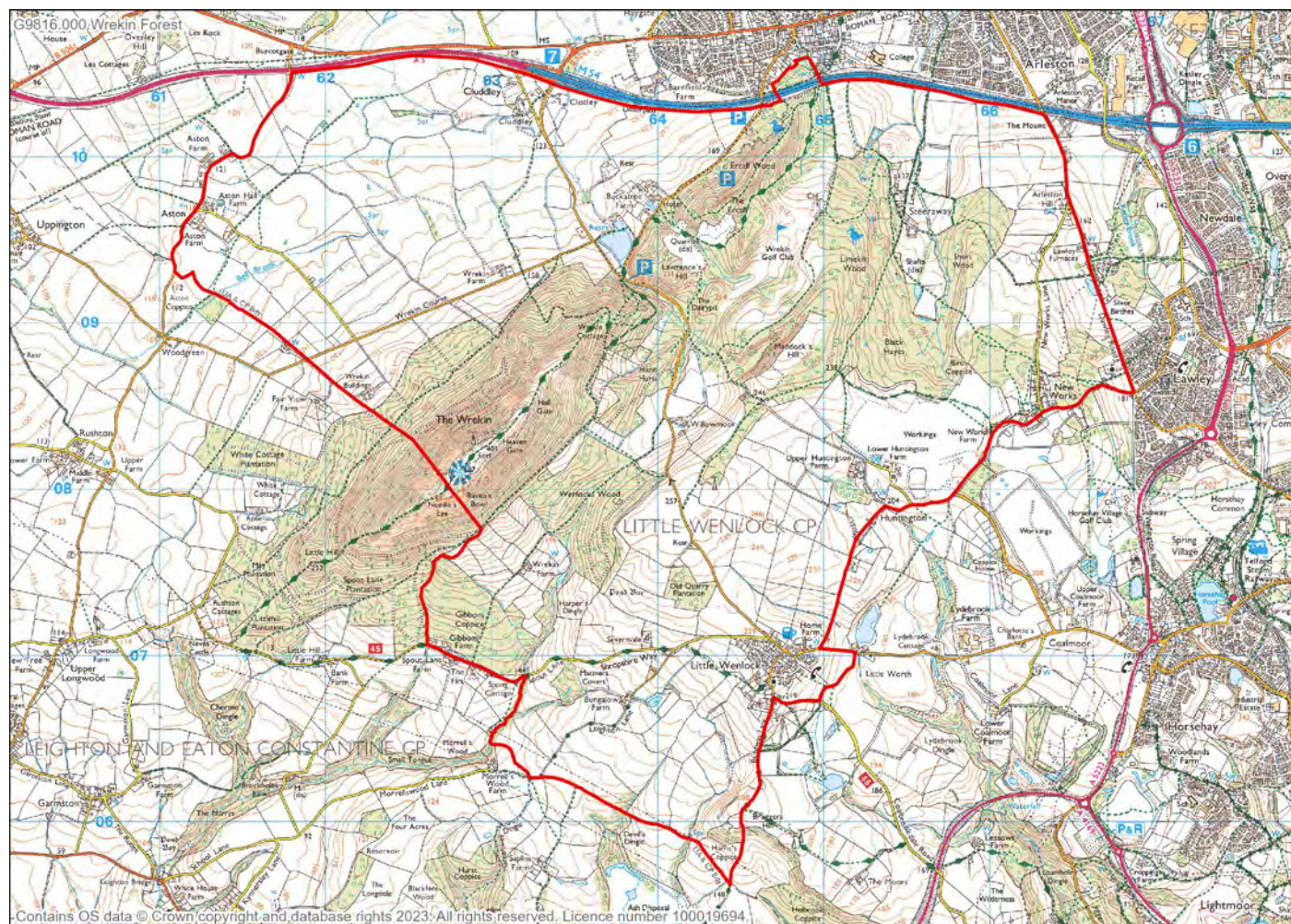


5.0 STATEMENTS OF IMPORTANCE

5.0 STATEMENTS OF IMPORTANCE

- 5.1 It was confirmed by Telford & Wrekin Council that the designation of the Severn Gorge was not considered necessary in addition to the existing protection offered by the World Heritage Site designation.
- 5.2 Statements of Importance are provided for the Wrekin Forest and the Weald Moors which highlight the reason for designation, special qualities and management objectives.

THE WREKIN FOREST



The Wrekin Forest Strategic Landscape Boundaries

Location and Boundaries

The Wrekin Forest is in the south west of the Borough, to the south of Wellington. The Strategic Landscape encompasses The Wrekin and Ercall Hills and surrounding woodland, agricultural land and scattered villages.

The northern boundary of the Strategic Landscape broadly follows the A5 and M54, the eastern boundary follows roads and minor lanes, the southern boundary follows field boundaries and minor roads beyond the Borough boundary and the western boundary follows rural lanes.

Statement of Importance

The Wrekin and Ercall Hills are distinct landforms with wooded scarp slopes interspersed with agriculture. The open and panoramic views from the summit of The Wrekin, contrast with the intimate environment and enclosed views within the wooded slopes. Strong natural value is indicated by numerous ecological designations. Areas of woodland provide strong ecological and visual appeal as well as opportunity for public recreation at Ercall Wood. Strong historic continuity provides a rich and varied environment. The scenic quality of the landscape is recognised with much of the area also in the Shropshire Hills AONB.

Special Qualities

- Outstanding scenic quality.
- The distinctive skyline of The Wrekin is a strong part of local and regional identity.
- The area has a long history of recreational use and remains extremely popular area for outdoor recreation by local people and visitors.
- 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 areas of ancient woodland, designated for its nature conservation value.
- A rich historic farmed and wooded landscape, containing cultural features spanning millennia.
- A network of historic rural lanes, tracks and footpaths.
- A strongly-rural feel, with a sense of peace and tranquility away from roads and settlements, and exhilaration on summits.

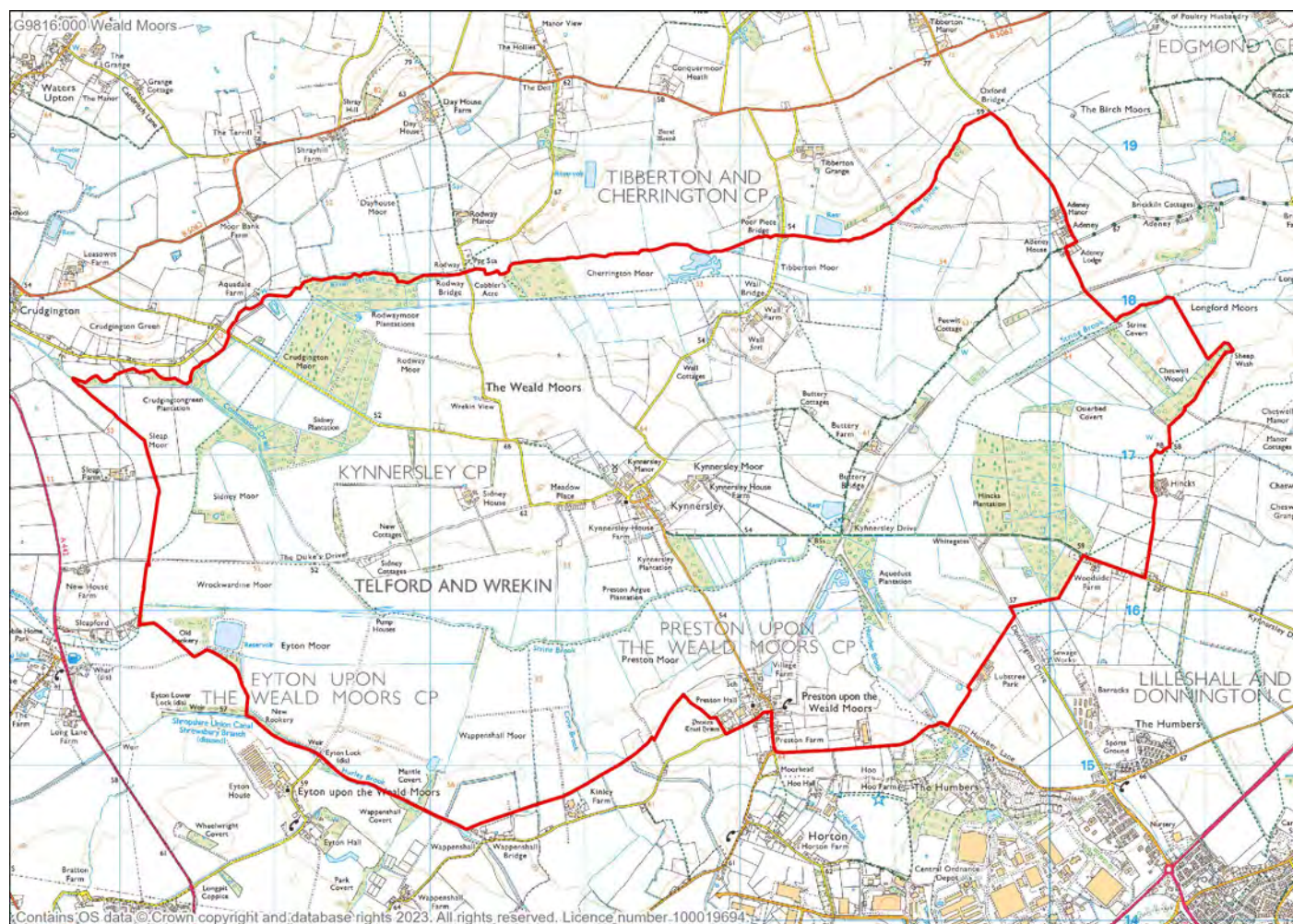
Management Objectives

- 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.

THE WEALD MOORS



The Weald Moors Strategic Landscape Boundaries

Location and Boundaries

The Weald Moors is located to the north 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.

The northern boundary of the Strategic Landscape follows the River Strine, the eastern boundary follows a rural lane to Adeney, the southern boundary follows minor lanes, field boundaries and the disused Shropshire Union Canal and the western boundary follows the Hurley Brook.

Statement of Importance

Despite its proximity to Telford, The Weald Moors Strategic Landscape retains a sense of tranquility and has a strong rural character. The landscape is characterised by a combination of low-lying topography, wooded skylines, network of tree-lined streams and ditches and quiet rural lanes with little built form. Trees and woodland focus views inwards across the open Moors, which creates a sense of physical and visual isolation and detachment. These long views across the Moors are dominated by big skies above low, treed horizons. Historically, the area was a wet peat bog 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.

Special Qualities

- Flat, low-lying topography 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.
- An intricate network of sinuous streams lined with willow trees, and straight drainage ditches.
- Long open views across the Moors.
- A sense of peace and tranquility, with very little visible development.
- 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

Management Objectives

- Resist large scale residential development or large structures within the Strategic Landscape which would compromise the pattern of nucleated small villages and scattered dwellings.
- 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 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.
- 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.
- 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 and strategic drainage infrastructure, 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.
- 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.

A tall, tapered stone monument, possibly a lighthouse or a tower, is the central focus of the image. It has a square base and tapers to a point at the top. The monument is set against a dark teal background. The text "6.0 SUMMARY" is overlaid on the right side of the image.

6.0 SUMMARY

6.0 SUMMARY

- 6.1 The brief required TEP to examine the quality and value of landscapes across the whole Borough to identify those potentially worthy of additional protection and to provide robust evidence to underpin the Strategic Landscape designation.
- 6.2 Based on the assessment criteria, the study identified four broad Areas of Search. Three of these areas are considered to meet the threshold of a valued landscape in NPPF terms. These are the Wrekin Forest, the Weald Moors and the Severn Valley.
- 6.3 There is evidence and justification for the designation of the existing Wrekin Forest and Weald Moors Strategic Landscapes. The boundaries of the areas are generally clear on the ground and these are discrete and distinct landscapes. The fact that landscapes have been previously designated is also an indicator that they are valued.
- 6.4 The Severn Valley also meets the criteria for designation as a Strategic Landscape, but given that the whole area is within the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site additional protection was not deemed necessary as the gorge landscape is an integral part of the designation..
- 6.5 Lilleshall Hill is a locally notable landscape feature with some long and attractive views across the surrounding countryside but in comparison to other local landscape designations in the Borough, the special qualities are not as strong or of strategic scale.
- 6.6 It should be noted that within all of the areas considered there will be some areas of higher and lower value. When using this report to judge landscape value for an individual site, the qualities and characteristics of the site itself should be assessed against the quality criteria in this report to inform the judgement.
- 6.7 It is recommended that the existing Strategic Landscape policy should be taken forward in the Local Plan Review to protect the character and value of these landscapes. A more general landscape policy will also ensure that the key characteristics of all landscapes across the Borough are protected.

APPENDICES



APPENDIX A - DATA SOURCES

The following documents were used to inform the Landscape Designations Study:

- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment. Natural England, 2014.
- Assessing landscape value outside national designations. Technical Guidance Note 02/21. Landscape Institute, May 2021.
- European Landscape Convention (ETS No. 176). Council of Europe, 2000.
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition. Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013.
- Guidance on Designating Local Landscape Areas. NatureScot and Historic Environment Scotland, 2020.
- Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site Supplementary Planning Document Consultation version. Telford & Wrekin Council, January 2023.
- Severn Gorge Conservation Area Management Plan. Donald Insall Associates, 2016.
- Shropshire Council Natural Environment Guidance Note 11 – Environmental Network, September 2013.
- Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan 2019 – 24. Shropshire Hills AONB, July 2019.
- Telford and Wrekin Strategic Landscapes Study. Fiona Fyfe Associates with Countryside and Douglas Harman Landscape Planning, December 2015.
- The Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site Management Plan. Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site, February 2017.
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, July 2021

APPENDIX B - GLOSSARY

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) – A statutory national landscape designation.

Conservation Area – An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Designated Landscape – Areas of landscape identified as being of importance at international, national or local levels, either defined by statute or identified in development plans or other documents.

European Landscape Convention (ELC) – An international treaty dedicated to the protection, management and planning of all landscapes in Europe.

Elements – Individual parts which make up the landscape, such as trees, hedge and buildings.

Features – Particularly prominent or eye catching elements, like tree clumps, church towers, or wooded skylines.

Geographical Information System (GIS) – A system that captures, stores, analyses, manages and presents data linked to a location. It links spatial information to a digital database.

GLVIA3 – Guidelines for Landscape and

Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (2013) produced by the Landscape Institute (LI) and IEMA.

Gorge – A narrow valley with rocky, steep walls that was created by the weathering and erosion of a river.

Key Characteristics – Those combinations of elements which are particularly important to the current character of the landscape and help to give an area its particularly distinctive sense of place.

Land Cover – The surface cover of the land, usually expressed in terms of vegetation cover or lack of it. Related to but not the same as land use.

Land Use – What land is used for, based on broad categories of functional land cover such as urban and industrial use and the different types of agriculture and forestry.

Landform – Combinations of slope and elevation, the producer shape and form of the land.

Landscape – an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.

Landscape Character – Landscape is about the relationship between people and the

land, a combination of distinctive and valued natural and cultural elements, which extend to seascapes and the built environment.

Landscape Character Assessment – A tool for identifying the features that give a locality its ‘sense of place’ and pinpointing what makes it different from its neighbouring areas. In the context of the European Landscape Convention it is an essential tool for identifying and understanding what makes landscapes important.

Landscape Character Type (LCT) – These are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogeneous 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 Value – The nature and degree of importance that society attaches to the current landscape character.

Listed Building – A building, object or structure that has been judged to be of national importance in terms of architectural or historic interest.

Local Development Framework (LDF) – The Local Development Framework is a non-statutory term used to describe a folder

of documents, which includes all the local planning authority’s Local Development Documents. An LDF is comprised of Development Plan Documents (which form part of the statutory development plan) and Supplementary Planning Documents.

Local Landscape Designation (LLD) – non-statutory designations which aim to protect areas with locally appreciated scenic value or other landscape attributes.

Local Nature Reserve (LNR) – A protected area of land designated by a local authority because of its special natural interest and/or educational value.

Local Wildlife Site (LWS) – Wildlife-rich sites selected for their local nature conservation value.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – The document which sets out the Government’s economic, environmental and social planning policies for England.

Perception – Combines the sensory (that we receive through our senses) with the cognitive (our knowledge and understanding gained from sources and experiences).

PRoW – Public Right of Way. A right by which the public can pass along linear routes over land at all times.

Registered Park and Garden (RPG) – Nationally important gardens, grounds and other planned designed landscapes given legal protection by being placed on a list, or ‘register’.

Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Committee.

Scheduled Monument (SM) – Nationally important sites and monuments given legal protection by being placed on a list, or ‘schedule’.

Sense of Place – The unique experience that arises as a result of being in or walking through a particular locality, generally as a response to the specific characteristics and quality of the area.

Strategic Landscape – Areas of high landscape quality or visual amenity. A Borough level policy that protects the appearance and intrinsic landscape quality of these areas.

Tranquility – A sense of calm and quietude associated with peace, considered to be a significant asset of landscape.

Valued Landscape – an area identified as having sufficient landscape qualities to elevate it above other more everyday landscapes.

World Heritage Site (WHS) – A natural or cultural site that demonstrates influence or significance in a global context, has Outstanding Universal Value, and is inscribed on the World Heritage List by the United

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