LANDSCAPE REVIEW
of the
RUTLAND WATER AREA

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1 INTRODUCTION

Background

1.1 County and Local Plans and policies have long sought to protect the nature conservation interests of Rutland Water and retain the unspoilt and tranquil nature of the area, whilst accommodating recreation and tourism needs. The reservoir was constructed during the early to mid-1970s to meet part of the region’s increasing demands for water. The wider potential of the vast water resource covering some 3100 acres was soon being realised and it fast became a major focus in the region for sailing and fishing and of international importance for nature conservation, as well as for casual recreational pursuits such as picnicking, walking, cycling and sight-seeing.

1.2 Rutland County Council is reviewing and updating its Local Plan in order to extend the Local Plan period from 2026 to 2036. The current Local Plan comprises three Development Plan Documents (DPDs), including the Core Strategy DPD and the Site Allocations and Policies DPD, which will be combined into a single Local Plan.

1.3 The Core Strategy DPD (adopted July 2011) provides special protection for Rutland Water under Policy CS24. Within the defined Rutland Water Area (RWA) around the reservoir and its immediate environs, strategic policy allows for carefully managed limited development of certain specified uses carefully designed and located to ensure that it respects the nature conservation features of this internationally important site and does not have an adverse impact on the landscape and wildlife interests and the general tranquil and undisturbed environment of Rutland Water. Small scale recreation, sport and tourist uses are permitted within five defined Recreation Areas (RAs) around the shores of the reservoir within the RWA where this is directly related to the use and enjoyment of Rutland Water or for operational uses (by Anglian Water) and appropriate in scale, form and design to its location.

1.4 The Core Strategy states that further detailed policies and any boundary modifications to the defined RAs and the RWA will be considered as part of the Site Allocations and Policies DPD. Policy SP26 within the Site Allocations and Policies (SAP) DPD (adopted October 2014) replaces eight separate policies in the Rutland Local Plan 2001 relating to development in the RWA, limiting appropriate new development to small scale recreation, sport and tourist uses within the five defined RAs.

1.5 The Core Strategy highlights that camping and caravanning activities are seen as potentially damaging to the character and setting of Rutland Water and are not permitted within the RWA or two of the RAs (Barnsdale and Whitwell). However, it is unclear on what evidence this is based or why these activities are considered acceptable in some but not all of the RAs.

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1 The third DPD within the current Rutland Local Plan is the Minerals Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD, adopted in October 2010.
1.6 The existing policy approach has been largely successful in protecting the nature conservation interests of the reservoir and retaining the unspoilt and tranquil nature of the area, while accommodating recreation and tourism needs. It is assumed that this approach will continue largely unchanged.

1.7 The current boundaries of the RWA and the five RAs are defined in the SAP DPD (Inset Map 43) and follow the boundaries shown in the Rutland Local Plan 2001. Figure 1 reproduces the SAP DPD Policies Map, Rutland Water Inset Map 43 showing the boundary to the RWA and the five RAs A – E. It also shows key biodiversity and geodiversity conservation designations of international, national and local importance and national historic environment designations within the Rutland Water area covered by policies in the SAP DPD.

1.8 Appendix 1 provides a detailed outline of the planning background, describing the historical protection afforded to Rutland Water and its surroundings, and the plans and policies that have permitted small scale recreation, sport and tourist uses within defined locations around the shores of the reservoir since the 1970s.

**Purpose and Scope of the Study**

1.9 The purpose of the study is to support the review of the Local Plan by providing robust up-to-date evidence to underpin the identification of the RWA and its boundaries, and the RAs inset within it, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)².

1.10 In accordance with NPPF paragraph 170, planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes (and sites of biological or geological value and soils) in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan. NPPF does not define ‘valued landscapes’ and thus in evaluating whether a landscape is valued, an element of judgement is required. The study provides the evidence and reasoned justification to support the identification of the Rutland Water Area in the Local Plan as a ‘valued landscape’.

1.11 The boundaries of the five RAs are reviewed and appropriate modifications suggested in landscape terms to meet SAP DPD Policy SP26. The review identifies and describes existing land uses and the specific circumstances of each RA, and considers what types of recreation, sport and tourist uses, including consideration of caravan and camping sites would be appropriate in each RA.

1.12 The study considers the potential for further locations around the shores of Rutland Water to be designated as Recreation Areas where Policy SP26 would be appropriate.

Format of the Report

1.13 Following this introduction, Section 2 describes the study methodology. Section 3 provides the findings of a desk study review highlighting the landscape characteristics, features and special qualities of the Rutland Water area. Local landscape value criteria of the RWA and proposed boundary modifications are described in Section 4. Finally, Section 5 describes proposed boundary modifications to the RAs. Appendices and Figures are found towards the back of the report.
2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Whilst there are generally accepted methodologies for undertaking landscape character assessment, landscape and visual impact assessment, and landscape sensitivity and capacity, and such guidance is periodically updated to reflect experience in undertaking such studies, there is no recognised methodology for identifying ‘valued landscapes’. However, recognised guidance on related assessment techniques can be particularly important as the basis for determining an appropriate method for establishing what it is that is valued within a landscape and what makes a particular landscape special. Once this is evaluated the boundaries of a valued landscape can be established.

2.2 Guidance from the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Assessment and Management defines ‘landscape value’ as ‘the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. A landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons’\(^3\). Existing evidence can be used to indicate landscape value, enhanced by defining the criteria and factors that are considered to confer value on a landscape or on its components.

2.3 Guidance from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and Historic Scotland (now Historic Environment Scotland) advises that local landscape designations play an important role in protecting and enhancing those landscapes which are recognised as being of particular value and merit special attention\(^4\). A local landscape designation may comprise a combination of landscape character types (indeed, because of the importance of visual diversity and contrast as elements of scenic quality, locally designated landscapes are often in places where different landscape character types meet); be based on an assessment of landscape importance; and have precisely drawn boundaries defined by a range of criteria, including landscape character, visual envelopes and topographic features, recognising that special qualities rarely have sudden boundaries so that a pragmatic approach is required (taking into consideration any clear, permanent feature that delimits the area, such as field boundaries and roads. The visual experience in the landscape may also help to define a suitable boundary).

2.4 The 2006 SNH and Historic Scotland guidance (and 2017 draft SNH and Historic Environment Scotland guidance – see reference 4) advises that a systematic process is required to identify landscapes considered to be of particular value in the local context that involves:


\(^4\) SNH & Historic Scotland, *Guidance on Local Landscape Designations*, Published 2006 (this guidance is currently being updated following consultation on a draft by SNH and Historic Environment Scotland (formerly Historic Scotland) entitled ‘Draft Guidance on Local Landscape Areas’ 2017).
• Landscape description
• Identification of landscape character
• Identification of the qualities of the landscape

2.5 In accordance with recognised guidance on related assessment techniques, this study adopts the following method for identifying the RWA and its boundaries and the RAs inset within it:

- Desk study review of background documents, in particular previous Structure Plans and Local Plans, national and local landscape character assessments, historic landscape character assessment, and historic environment records;
- Desk study review and overlay mapping using Ordnance Survey (OS) 1:25,000 scale raster base map / tiles and Geographic Information System (GIS) datasets of international, national and local natural, cultural heritage / historic and landscape designations;
- Desk study review of Google Earth satellite imagery;
- Establishing appropriate criteria for identifying the landscape characteristics, features and special qualities of the Rutland Water Area;
- Identifying preliminary RWA and RA boundary modifications, drawn to follow recognisable features wherever possible;
- Fieldwork to confirm landscape characteristics, features and special qualities of the RWA, and to confirm any recommended RWA and RA boundary modifications;
- Final description of the RWA including any recommended boundary modifications;
- Final description of any recommended boundary modifications to each of the five RAs and any further location(s) considered appropriate for designation as RA(s) in accordance with Policy SP26.

2.6 The 2003 Rutland Landscape Character Assessment is used as the basis for the review, providing valuable background to evaluate the landscape and visual characteristics and features of importance within the RWA and its setting. Nature conservation and cultural heritage / historic interests are considered where these are important in landscape character and visual terms.

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3 LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS, FEATURES AND SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE RUTLAND WATER AREA

3.1 This section provides the findings of a desk study review highlighting those characteristics, features and qualities of the Rutland Water area considered in various documents to be important and worthy of special protection (these are highlighted in **bold text** below). Consideration of these has informed the selection of appropriate criteria to help define the boundaries of the RWA and to describe its key characteristics, important landscape features and special qualities considered to be of local landscape value. This is described in the following Section 4.

3.2 The section begins by highlighting the findings from a review of planning documents, followed by the findings from a review of landscape character assessments.

PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Rutland Structure Plan and the Empingham District Plan, 1978-79

3.3 The Structure Plan sought to protect, maintain and improve the landscape and prevent development which would be seriously detrimental to the visual quality of the environment. It also sought to **protect sites of scientific and ecological interest** and **enhance opportunities for nature conservation** at Rutland Water nature reserve.

3.4 Strategic policies were confirmed and safeguards strengthened by local policies to conserve this **attractive part of Rutland**, including the **protection of internationally, nationally and locally designated nature conservation and historic sites** and other **sites of known ecological, geological, archaeological and historic importance**. In all areas, but particularly those of **high landscape value**, the District Council’s local policies sought to **preserve and enhance the natural environment**.

3.5 It was recognised that, in contrast to other parts of the Plan area, the area close to Rutland Water is **relatively well contained and the landscape** has been modified by the incursion of the water and associated development such that the area is better able to withstand and assimilate a limited amount of further new recreational development.

3.6 Rutland Water was recognised as a **significant nationally, regionally and locally important open area as a major focus for active (sporting) pursuits** in particular sailing, fishing and cycling, **and for more passive (recreational and tourist) pursuits in particular picnicking, walking, sight-seeing, bird / wildlife watching**.
3.7 Since the construction of Rutland Water was first conceived the position of Hambleton and the peninsula upon which it is situated was recognised as deserving special attention. It was recognised that the attractive nature of Hambleton village and the peninsula could constitute a major attraction to the visitor and encourage pressure for recreation orientated development which might detract from the appearance and character of the area, disturb residents and pose problems of access and congestion along the steep, narrow, twisting approach.

Rutland Water Local Plan, 1989

3.8 The development of Rutland Water had produced a dramatic new landscape. By the mid-1980s the success of the carefully detailed and extensive planting and landscaping scheme carried out to assimilate the reservoir, its various structures and car parks into the surrounding landscape was evident. The valleys of the River Gwash and its northern tributary that form the two arms of the reservoir, and the ridge of high land of the Hambleton peninsula in-between gives Rutland Water is distinctive shape. Particularly fine views are afforded of the water and its unique setting from the elevated perimeter roads to the north and south and from other areas of high ground to the north and west. Beyond the immediate confines of Rutland Water the Plan area is characterised by a dispersed pattern of nine villages within a well wooded, predominantly agricultural landscape. At its western end Rutland Water widens into the flat fertile Vale of Catmose which is overlooked by the ridges (and valleys) of High Leicestershire. To the north the landform rises to Burley-on-the-Hill Registered Park and Garden with Burley House on the crest of rising landform to the north which dominates the Vale and much of the landscape of the area. Mature roadside avenues of trees of the designed Exton Park Registered Park and Garden are a distinctive landscape feature contrasting with more informal woods and spinneys. From the northern shallow ridge an arable plateau shelves gently to the east, the only relief being provided by the tributary valleys of the North Brook that drains south to the Gwash. In the south the landscape formed by the river valleys of the Gwash and Chater is more undulating, although arable farming still predominates.

3.9 The Rutland Water Local Plan recognised the very special character of Rutland Water and the surrounding villages and countryside, and the extent to which, and the likely effects of, additional recreation and tourist facilities as important issues that needed to be resolved. In general terms the Rutland Water Local Plan envisaged that Rutland Water and its immediate environs would continue to be seen as an area of unspoiled charm whose unique landscape and nature conservation qualities are preserved and enhanced.

3.10 The Rutland Local Plan recognised ‘nature conservation and landscape’ as a main issue relating to recreation, sports and tourism facilities in the area around Rutland Water. The plan area was regarded as potentially sensitive to the impact of new development, recognising the majority of the Local plan area as comprising
landscape of high quality that should be protected, with certain parts near to Rutland water regarded as outstanding.

3.11 Impact upon sensitive views was regarded as a particular concern, recognising that much of the shoreline and immediate countryside around Rutland Water was exposed to views across the water from elevated land. Development proposals in these locations would need very careful consideration to ensure that the high quality of the landscape and the setting of Rutland Water were safeguarded.

3.12 Hambleton Peninsula’s unique central location and its elevated land form meant that it was exposed to views from most directions despite the existence of some good tree cover. The local plan recognised that any further development on the peninsula could detract from the very special contribution this area makes to the local landscape.

3.13 The 1989 Rutland Water Local Plan included proposals and policies for each of the five Areas of Opportunity (as the RAs were then referred to). Particular sensitivities of two of these areas are mentioned as follows:

- **Barnsdale Area A**: the undulating nature of the land and extensive woodland including Ancient Woodland give this area its special character. Scope for new development is further limited by the fact that the southern-most car park/picnic area and associated facilities are located within the Rutland Water SSSI and also falls within the SPA and Ramsar designations.
- **Sykes Lane Area C**: the southern shoreline is exposed to long distance views across the water, the northern area is well screened.

**Other Related Policies in the Rutland Local Plan 1989**

3.14 The Rutland Local Plan 1989 contained policies on golfing and camping & caravanning that were to be read in conjunction with the policies relating to the Waterside Area and the Areas of Opportunity. With regard to golf, the local planning authority was of the opinion that changes of use from agriculture to golf course, although potentially large in scale, would not detract from the landscape quality of the area and since golf is not an intensive use of land it would thus be compatible with the nature conservation interests of the area. However, new buildings associated with this land use could pose significant problems, particularly within the Waterside Area, and thus to protect the special qualities of this area the siting should be carefully chosen and the design and landscaping should be of the highest standard.

3.15 The Rutland Local Plan 1989 considered that the plan area comprises a wide variety of what is in the main attractive countryside. Large parts are characterised by an ‘intimate’, varied and interesting landscape with considerable tree and hedgerow cover, a varied field pattern, mixed farming and an often undulating land form – essentially what is usually considered to represent typical ‘English countryside’.
Other parts are characterised by **large blocks of woodland which act as a backcloth to relatively large mixed arable and pasture fields bounded by varying hedgerow and tree cover. Undulating topography adds a further attractive dimension** to the landscape. Other areas are relatively exposed and lacking variety, with limited tree and hedgerow cover and relatively large, flat arable fields, for example at RAF North Luffenham and the gently sloping arable fields north of the A606 between Barnsdale and Empingham. The present landscape of the Plan area has been formed by man’s interaction with his environment, and contains the **archaeological evidence** of human activity in all periods of the past. There are **scheduled monuments** and other known **areas of archaeological interest**.

**Leicestershire Structure Plan 1994 and the Rutland Local Plan, 2001**

3.16 The Structure Plan had classified **much of Rutland as countryside of special landscape quality and value comprising Areas of Particularly Attractive Countryside (APAC)**. The Rutland Local Plan 2001 defined the boundaries of the APAC within Rutland, which included the whole of the Rutland Water Area, with policies for the protection of land within and adjoining the APAC.

3.17 The Local Plan recognised the additional special control required for the Rutland Water Area over and above wider land use implications of recreation, sport and tourism related development across Rutland. The district council considered that in general the recreation, sport and tourism related pursuits undertaken around Rutland Water accord with the **tranquil character and its sensitive countryside location**. The **importance of the area for nature conservation** was recognised, and that its unique character is determined by the interrelationship of the vast expanse of water with its undulating and, in part, wooded surroundings.

**Rutland Local Plan Core Strategy Development Plan Document, 2011**

3.18 As referred to in Section 2 above, the Core Strategy DPD Strategic Objective 11: Natural and cultural environment states:

- ‘To safeguard and enhance the natural resources, landscape and countryside, cultural heritage and the diversity of wildlife and habitats, including green infrastructure and **special protection for Rutland Water** to improve our quality of life and make a full contribution to global sustainability’.

**Policy CS24 Rutland Water** states:

‘Development in the defined Rutland Water Area will be carefully designed and located to ensure that it respects the **nature conservation features of this internationally important site** and does not have an adverse impact on the landscape and wildlife interests and the general tranquil and undisturbed environment of Rutland Water.’
New development will be limited to small scale recreation, sport and tourist uses within the five defined Recreation Areas around the shores of Rutland Water where this is directly related to the use and enjoyment of Rutland Water and appropriate in scale, form and design to its location.

Outside the five defined recreation areas, new development will be restricted to small scale development for recreation, sport and tourism facilities only where essential for nature conservation or fishing or essential for operational requirements of existing facilities and subject to it being appropriate in terms of location, scale, design and impact on the landscape.

Caravan and camping sites will not be acceptable outside the defined recreation areas and only within the defined recreation areas where appropriate to the area in terms of its scale, location and impact on the surrounding area.

3.19 The Core Strategy explains that the whole of the Rutland Water Area including the defined Recreation Areas (RA) falls within the countryside and will be subject to policies relating to development in the countryside. Any development will therefore need to respect the character of this sensitive countryside location. The Core Strategy DPD continues the previous approach in the Rutland Local Plan 2001 to focus new development within the five RAs which the local planning authority considers has been largely successful in balancing Rutland Water’s important operational and recreational role with the need to protect its nature conservation interests and generally tranquil and undisturbed character.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS

3.20 In England there is a hierarchy of landscape character assessment, from the broad-scale national character assessments through regional / county scale assessments to those at the district and local scale. At each level in the hierarchy more detail is added, in principle, with the broader national scale providing a context for assessment at the regional / county scale, which together are used as the basis for district and local scale assessments.

3.21 At the national scale, Natural England has relatively recently updated the National Character Area (NCA) profiles covering the entire country. Rutland Water lies at the extreme south-eastern end of NCA 74 Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds. Empingham immediately to the east lies within NCA 75 Kesteven Uplands whilst rising land immediately to the south and west lies within NCA 93 High Leicestershire.

3.22 In 2003 Rutland County Council commissioned and adopted the Rutland Landscape Character Assessment (RLCA) covering the entire County. It was prepared in the context of the 1995 strategic study ‘Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy’ (published in 2001) undertaken by Leicestershire County Council. For the first time the locally detailed RLCA identified Rutland Water Basin as a separate landscape character type (LCT), with rising land in the Rutland Plateau LCT.

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8 David Tyldesley and Associates, Rutland Landscape Character Assessment, May 2003.
immediately to the north and east, and rising land in the High Rutland LCT immediately to the south and west of the Vale of Catmose LCT.

3.23 Recognition of the location of Rutland Water close to the boundaries of several landscape character types is important to an appreciation of its landscape setting, which in turn can help to define the boundaries of the RWA. Figure 2 shows the location of the national and local LCT boundaries close to Rutland Water.

3.24 Key landscape characteristics recorded within these national and local-scale landscape character assessments are summarised below:

**NCA 74 Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds, 2014**

3.25 Rutland Water is a significant and highly distinctive feature in the rural, open, mixed farmland landscape of the Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds National Character Area which is essentially a range of undulating hills broken by vales and dominated by Jurassic scarp and dip slopes. It is a remote and rolling rural landscape with open, empty plateau contrasting with the more intimate sheltered valleys and lower slopes.

3.26 Rutland Water is a major inland reservoir as a source of urban water supply to the region; a SSSI and wetland of international importance designated an SPA and Ramsar\(^9\) site supporting internationally important populations of golden plover. Over winter the habitat supports a percentage of the north-western European populations of gladwall and shoveler and regularly supports at least 20,000 waterfowl.

3.27 The Vale of Catmose and Rutland Water is a distinct area separating the adjoining National Character Areas of High Leicestershire (to the south and west) and the Kesteven Uplands (to the north and east). Rutland Water is a focal point in many views. Woodland cover is generally sparse except for some wooded scarps adjacent to Rutland Water. Urban influences (overhead power lines, communication masts, busy roads, etc.) do not weaken rural character. Settlement pattern is sparse, comprising small, regularly spaced villages which are generally clustered around a church. Farmsteads are dotted across the landscape.

3.28 The establishment of Rutland Water reservoir has created a major wetland of international importance for water birds that combines open water with a complex of wetland and lakeside habitats including lagoons, islands, mudflats, reedswamp, marsh, old meadows, pastures, scrub and mature woodland.

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\(^9\) Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention. The Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) - called the “Ramsar Convention” - is an intergovernmental treaty that embodies the commitments of its member countries to maintain the ecological character of their Wetlands of International Importance and to plan for the “wise use”, or sustainable use, of all of the wetlands in their territories.
3.29 Benefits to society derived from the attributes and processes (both natural and cultural features) are known collectively as ‘ecosystem services’. NCA 74 identifies the following ecosystem services associated with the Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds:

- Provisioning and Regulating Services: water supply;
- Cultural Services: sense of place/inspiration – provided by the undulating hills that afford far-reaching views. Rutland Water provides numerous bird hides and offers nature trails from two visitor centres with experts providing both formal and informal educational services. The nature reserve is the location of the successful osprey re-introduction project and provides volunteering opportunities including osprey surveillance, management and species recording;
- Cultural Services: sense of history - associated with the local rural settlement pattern and building vernacular, and imposing Halls and other mansion houses set within designed parks and gardens;
- Cultural Services: tranquillity – a sense of tranquillity is associated with the open hills and undeveloped valleys and areas of woodland and pasture and the remoter ridge tops devoid of human-scale features. There is a sparse settlement pattern with small, isolated villages, providing one of the strongest senses of tranquillity in the eastern Midlands;
- Cultural Services: recreation – Rutland Water not only offers visitors extensive opportunities for access but also specialist natural history and environmental education and excellent facilities for a range of water-based recreational pursuits. It is also home to the British Birdfair.
- Cultural Services: biodiversity – Rutland Water (as above) plus the wetlands are one of the most important areas for over wintering wildfowl. The habitat regularly supports over 23,000 individuals including: lapwing, coot, goldeneye, tufted duck, pochard, teal, wigeon, cormorant, great crested grebe, little grebe, shoveler and gadwall.

3.30 NCA 74 provides a ‘Statement of Environmental Opportunity’ for the Rutland Water Area that states:

“Conserve and manage Rutland Water reservoir and nature reserve for its internationally designated habitats and for the variety of recreational and education assets it provides”.

Rutland Landscape Character Assessment, 2003

3.31 Dramatic landscape setting of the flat fertile Vale of Catmose and open flooded valley basin of Rutland Water rising gently to the edges, shoulders, ridges and slopes of the surrounding hills of High Rutland and the Rutland Plateau, the skylines of which are frequently wooded.
3.32 The presence of Hambleton peninsula protruding into the artificial reservoir, together with topography and surrounding vegetation cover significantly soften views of the huge mass of water which is unobtrusive from many of the surrounding roads and public rights of way.

3.33 Established pre-reservoir trees and woodland, subsequent planned landscaping around the reservoir car parks and perimeter roads, and within the nature reserve at the western end, combine to provide a detailed vegetative mosaic around the shores. Elsewhere medium sized irregular pastureland contrasts with larger geometric arable fields and low cut hedges that sweep down to the shores.

3.34 Topography and vegetation cover significantly soften views of surrounding villages from where the water is not always visible, despite being elevated above the water level that always remains below the 85m AOD contour. Church spires protruding above the village roof and tree tops are important features in the landscape at Egleton, Edith Weston, Upper Hambleton and Empingham.

3.35 Imposing individual buildings at Burley-on-the-Hill, Exton, Barnsdale Hall and Lodge (both are now hotels), Hambleton Hall (also an hotel) and other large mansion houses on the Hambleton peninsula are dominant features sitting within high quality designed landscapes.
4 LOCAL LANDSCAPE VALUE CRITERIA OF THE RUTLAND WATER AREA AND PROPOSED BOUNDARY MODIFICATIONS

Rutland Water Area Local Landscape Value Criteria

4.1 In order to inform a review of the current boundary to the Rutland Water Area (RWA) an evaluation has been undertaken following desk study and fieldwork of what landscape characteristics and qualities, individually and in combination, make the RWA special in terms of its landscape and scenery. Recognised guidance as described above has been followed and professional judgement used to establish relevant criteria to suit the local circumstances at Rutland Water.

4.2 Views on what is important in a particular local landscape will vary and reflect personal responses as well as more objective assessment. Some landscapes are recognised to be of national importance but people will also value their local landscapes as the places where they live and work. All these views should be respected and should be used to inform the planning and management of local landscapes.

4.3 At the public examination of the 2001 Rutland Local Plan the RWA designation was not objected to. There appears to have been little debate about the merits of the RWA designation and the boundary set out in that plan. However, it is recognised that consultation is an important part of establishing what it is that is valued in the local landscape and what makes the landscape special. The County Council will undertake consultation with key stakeholders on this draft report whilst wider views will be considered as part of the Local Plan process.

4.4 The adopted criteria include aspects of landscape character, encompassing both a natural and historic dimension, and a number of interrelated landscape qualities. Unlike landscape character assessment, generally accepted methodologies have not been developed for describing these qualities. While linked to the type, range and composition of the physical components of the landscape, these qualities are a function of our own personal response to landscape.

4.5 Table 1 indicates the criteria against which the landscape characteristics, important features and special qualities of the designated RWA have been identified, taking into account proposed boundary modifications (as described below). Following the table a series of photographs illustrate some of the key characteristics and special qualities.
## Table 1: Landscape Characteristics, Important Features and Special Qualities of the Rutland Water Area

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<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Landscape Characteristics, Important Features and Special Qualities of the Rutland Water Area</th>
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| Typicality             | Distinctive landscape features or combination of features that recur throughout the area and which contribute to a strong ‘sense of place’ | • A distinctively horizontal-shaped landscape with the extensive waterbody and surrounding open fields and wooded scarpss gently rising to perimeter roads and avenues of trees on elongated shallow ridge tops  
• Expansive waterbody and ‘big skies’ with a relatively narrow belt of landscape in-between  
• A strongly rural character where settlement pattern is sparse, comprising occasional farmsteads dotted across the landscape and small regularly spaced villages which are generally clustered around a church  
• Medium-sized regular and irregular pastureand contrasts with larger geometric arable fields and low cut hedges that gently sweep down to the shores of the reservoir  
• Previously located within a locally designated Area of Particularly Attractive Countryside (APAC) |
| Rarity or uniqueness   | Distinctive landscape features or combination of features which are rare or unique within the area and which contribute to a strong ‘sense of place’ | • Dramatic, unique setting of the distinctive shallow ‘bowl-shaped’ reservoir, with the northern and southern arms separated by the ridge of high land of the Hambleton peninsula rising to 125m AOD, well assimilated into the surrounding landscape  
• The small woodland-topped Lax Hill is a distinctive feature rising to 110m AOD above the reservoir and nature reserve  
• Rutland Water is a significant and highly distinctive feature in the remote, rural, open, rolling, mixed farmland Wolds landscape  
• Rutland Water is a major wetland that combines open water with a complex mosaic of wetland and lakeside habitats including lagoons, islands, mudflats, reed-swamp, marsh, old meadows, pastures, scrub and mature woodland |
| Scenic quality         | Landscapes with strong visual, sensory and perceptual impacts and experiential appeal. May contain viewpoints and landmarks and a pleasing combination of features, | • Contrast of the waterbody and the flat fertile Vale of Catmose with the surrounding higher ridges of High Rutland to the south and west and the Rutland Plateau to the north and east  
• Topography and vegetation cover significantly soften views of surrounding villages from where the water is not always visible, despite being elevated above the water level that always remains below the 85m AOD contour. Church spires protruding above the village roof and tree tops are important features in the landscape  
• Imposing Halls and other large Houses within designed landscapes on rising landform overlooking |
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| visual contrasts or dramatic elements | the flat Vale of Catmose and Rutland Water, including Barnsdale Hall, Burley House and Hambleton Hall  | • Contrasts of designed landscapes and roadside avenues of trees, with more informal woods and spinneys  
• Rutland Water is a focal point in many views  
• Particularly fine views of the water and its unique setting from elevated perimeter roads to the north and south, and from higher surrounding ridges  
• Distinctive layered visual experience combining Rutland Water and its immediate environs in the foreground and middle distance, with more distant views of long shallow ridges important to the setting of the reservoir |
| Enjoyment                    | Landscapes of importance as local greenspace and/or for countryside recreation                       | • Significant nationally, regionally and locally important open area as a major focus for active (sporting) pursuits in particular sailing, fishing and cycling  
• Significant nationally, regionally and locally important open area as a major focus for more passive (recreational and tourist) pursuits in particular picnicking, walking, sight-seeing, bird / wildlife watching  
• Extensive opportunities for visitor access within, through and around the area, including sections of several national footpaths including the Hereward Way, Viking Way and Macmillan Way, National Cycle Network Route No. 63, local public rights of way including the Rutland Round, with extensive permissive footpaths, bridleways and off road cycle tracks  
• Other sport and recreation facilities include Rutland Golf Club and camping and caravan sites generally well-assimilated into the landscape |
| Cultural quality             | Landscapes rich in archaeology, built heritage, literary, artistic and other cultural associations and local history. May include historic gardens and designed landscapes | • Barnhill Moated Site and Moated Enclosure with Fishponds are nationally important Scheduled Monuments, with other locally important heritage and archaeological assets  
• Important influence of Registered Historic Parks and Gardens of special historic interest at Burley-on-the-Hill (Grade II) and Exton Park (Grade II)  
• Numerous listed buildings including imposing Halls and other mansion houses set within designed parks and gardens, in particular Barnsdale Hall (Grade II), Burley House (Grade I), Hambleton Hall (Grade II) and churches in particular the former Church of St. Matthew (Normanton Church, Grade II), Church of St. Mary, Edith Weston (Grade I), Church of St. Peter, Empingham (Grade I), Church |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Landscape Characteristics, Important Features and Special Qualities of the Rutland Water Area</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Naturalness</td>
<td>Landscapes with extensive semi-natural habitat, a lack of human presence and perceived qualities of ‘wildness’</td>
<td>• Internationally, nationally and locally important for nature conservation, in particular Rutland Water is a European Special Protection Area (SPA) and internationally recognised as a globally important wetland Ramsar Site, Rutland Water Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Burley &amp; Rushpit Woods SSSI, Armley Wood Ancient &amp; Semi-natural Woodland and Local Wildlife Site (LWS), Barnsdale Wood Ancient &amp; Semi-natural Woodland, and Hambleton Wood Ancient &amp; Semi-natural Woodland and LWS • Internationally famous Rutland Water Nature Reserve, managed by the Leicestershire &amp; Rutland Wildlife Trust in partnership with Anglian Water, covers the entire western side of the reservoir with an extensive complex of semi-natural habitats away from the more active pursuits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tranquillity</td>
<td>Landscapes of importance as tranquil areas, relatively peaceful and undisturbed by man-made noise</td>
<td>• Rutland Water Nature Reserve on the western side of the reservoir provides important opportunity for quiet bird watching and other nature conservation pursuits • Tranquil wooded walks areas for peaceful contemplation around the reservoir away from the busy visitor centres • A sense of tranquillity is associated with isolated parts of the villages • A sense of tranquillity is associated with surrounding open fields, wooded scarps and the remoter ridge tops with few human-scale features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Landscapes that provide an educational experience associated with the location and landscape and/or nature</td>
<td>• Variety of training and specialist natural history and environmental education, with numerous bird hides and nature trails from two centres • Lyndon Nature Reserve is the location of the successful osprey re-introduction project and provides volunteering opportunities including osprey surveillance, management and species recording</td>
</tr>
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<td>conservation and/or cultural/historic features</td>
<td>• Volunteer training centre</td>
<td>• Home to the British Birdfair – the first and largest wildlife event of its kind in the world – now in its 30\textsuperscript{th} year with over 30,000 visitors annually contributing to the local economy and raising £m’s for conservation projects</td>
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PHOTOGRAPHS OF KEY CHARACTERISTICS AND SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE RWA

A distinctively horizontal-shaped landscape with the extensive waterbody and surrounding open fields and wooded scarps gently rising to perimeter roads and avenues of trees on elongated shallow ridge tops. Expansive waterbody and ‘big skies’ with a relatively narrow belt of landscape in-between. Roadside avenues of trees contrast with more informal woods and spinneys.

A strongly rural character where settlement pattern is sparse, comprising occasional farmsteads dotted across the landscape and small regularly spaced villages which are generally clustered around a church. Sense of history associated with the local rural settlement pattern and building vernacular.
Medium-sized regular and irregular pastureland contrasts with larger geometric arable fields and low cut hedges that gently sweep down to the shores of the reservoir.

Dramatic, unique setting of the distinctive shallow ‘bowl-shaped’ reservoir, with the northern and southern arms separated by the ridge of high land of the Hambleton peninsula rising to 125m AOD, well assimilated into the surrounding landscape.

The small woodland-topped Lax Hill is a distinctive feature rising to 110m AOD above the reservoir and nature reserve.
Rutland Water is a major wetland that combines open water with a complex mosaic of wetland and lakeside habitats including lagoons, islands, mudflats, reed-swamp, marsh, old meadows, pastures, scrub and mature woodland.

Contrast of the waterbody and the flat fertile Vale of Catmose with the surrounding higher ridges of High Rutland to the south and west and the Rutland Plateau to the north and east. There are particularly fine views of the water and its unique setting from higher surrounding ridges.
Topography and vegetation cover significantly soften views of surrounding villages from where the water is not always visible, despite being elevated above the water level that always remains below the 85m AOD contour. Church spires protruding above the village roof and tree tops are important features in the landscape.

Imposing Burley House (Grade I Listed Building) within the Burley-on-the-Hill Registered Historic Park and Garden on rising landform overlooking the flat Vale of Catmose and Rutland Water.

Distinctive layered visual experience combining Rutland Water and its immediate environs in the foreground and middle distance, with more distant views of long shallow ridges important to the setting of the reservoir.
Significant nationally, regionally and locally important open area as a major focus for recreation, tourist and sporting pursuits.

Extensive opportunities for visitor access and enjoyment of the countryside.
Unique appreciation of historical time-depth with juxtaposition of Rutland Water and remnants of the flooded Gwash valley e.g. the former Church of St. Matthew (Normanton Church) now appears to stand in the water.

Internationally, nationally and locally important for nature conservation. Internationally famous Rutland Water Nature Reserve, managed by the Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust in partnership with Anglian Water, covers the entire western side of the reservoir with an extensive complex of semi-natural habitats away from the more active pursuits. The Nature Reserve provides a sense of tranquillity and also opportunities for training and volunteering.
**Proposed Boundary Modifications to the Rutland Water Area**

4.6 **Figure 3** shows the proposed modifications to the boundary of the designated RWA, informed by the evaluation of what landscape characteristics, important features and special qualities, individually and in combination, make the Rutland Water Area (extended as proposed) a valued landscape.

4.7 The boundary has been re-drawn to follow recognisable features such as roads, settlement edges (Planned Limits of Development) woodland or hedgerow field boundaries wherever possible.

4.8 In the Burley area, the proposed northern boundary follows topography and field boundaries parallel with Burley Road (rather than following the road itself as the current RWA boundary does) and has been extended to include Burley Wood and Burley House. These are features of importance to the setting of Rutland Water; the Grade I Listed House is located on the crest of rising landform overlooking the reservoir where the flat Rutland Water Basin and the Vale of Catmose meet the Rutland Plateau landscape character types.

4.9 The northern boundary then follows a similar alignment as the current RWA boundary eastwards towards Empingham, but drawn to follow hedge lines and tree belts along the minor ridgeline above (to the north of) Whitwell.

4.10 The eastern boundary follows Exton Road to include a row of houses where the road falls towards Empingham. It then follows the Planned Limits of Development around Empingham, running close to St. Peter’s Church which is an important feature in the landscape, its spire protruding above the village roof and tree tops. For consistency the proposed RWA boundary around Empingham mirror’s the boundary at Manton by following the Planned Limits of Development closest to the shoreline (i.e. the villages lie beyond the RWA boundary) since these two villages are not significantly important to the setting of Rutland Water being predominantly hidden by topography and vegetation cover.

4.11 The proposed southern boundary, at its eastern end, is extended slightly further southwards to follow the tree belts along the minor ridgeline to the north of Normanton Lodge Farm, and field boundaries on gently sloping arable land towards Edith Weston. This juxtaposition of the Rutland Water Basin and the Rutland Plateau landscape character types in this location is important to the setting of the reservoir in views from the north and west.

4.12 At Edith Weston the proposed RWA boundary wraps around the village to the south, including it within the RWA (rather than following the Planned Limits of Development closest to the shoreline as the current RWA boundary does). This is because the village is important to the setting of the reservoir in views from the north and west as it slopes right down almost to the water’s edge. Although vegetation cover softens views of the village it is seen clustered around St. Mary’s Church, its spire protruding above the roof and tree tops. In this way, and for
consistency, Edith Weston will lie within the RWA boundary in the same way that the villages of Egleton, Whitwell and Hambleton do, but the village boundaries (the Planned Limits of Development) are entirely excluded from the RWA designation.

4.13 The southern boundary follows the current RWA boundary along Manton Road, along the minor ridgeline between Edith Weston and Manton at the juxtaposition of the Rutland Water Basin and High Rutland landscape character types.

4.14 The proposed western boundary of the RWA has been extended to include the gently rising farmland of High Rutland above Egleton and the flat landscape of the Vale of Catmose. This ridgeline to the west is important to the setting of Rutland Water, providing the background in layered views across Rutland Water and its environs, for example in views from the Hambleton peninsula and the Barnsdale and Normanton Recreation Areas. The proposed RWA boundary follows woodland edges, field boundaries and the A6003 to the east of Oakham.
5 PROPOSED BOUNDARY MODIFICATIONS TO THE RECREATION AREAS

5.1 A review has been undertaken of the boundaries of the five Recreation Areas A - E as defined in the Rutland Local Plan Site Allocations and Policies DPD, 2014, Inset Map 43 (reproduced at Figure 1). Modifications are proposed in landscape terms with respect to the existing land uses and specific circumstances of each area, and to meet Policy SP26. Nature conservation and heritage interests are taken into consideration where they make an important contribution to the individual character of an area.

5.2 Recreation Area boundaries are drawn to follow recognisable features on the ground, such as hedgerow/tree/fence field boundaries and roads. Current boundaries between water and foreshore have not been amended. Boundary modifications are made taking into account the nature and scale of new recreation, sport and tourism related development, including consideration of caravan and camping facilities, within each area as envisaged in the Rutland water Local Plan 1989 and the Rutland Local Plan 2001, and in terms of the:

- Current ‘footprint’ of built development and land directly associated with existing facilities;
- Suitability for new development in terms of physical characteristics e.g. topography;
- Suitability for new development in terms of other potential landscape and visual impact and impact on landscape features;
- Suitability for new development in terms of potential impact on features of nature conservation and historic interest;
- Potential for mitigation measures.

5.3 Consideration has also been given to the potential for further locations around the shores of Rutland Water to be designated as Recreation Areas where Policy SP26 would be appropriate.

Proposed Boundary Modifications to Recreation Areas A - E

5.4 The proposed boundary modifications are shown in Figures 4 -11 and described below:

Recreation Area A: Barnsdale
Consideration should be given to identifying separately each of the three different parts to Area A in recognition of their distinctive nature, characteristics and circumstances (see further discussion in this regard with respect to Recreation Area E Gibbet Lane below):
Recreation Area A(i): Barnsdale Lodge Hotel (see Figures 4 & 5)
This part lies to the north of the A606, centred around Barnsdale Lodge Hotel and some distance away from the car park/picnic area and the reservoir itself.

- Extend current boundary to include the whole area west of Barnsdale Avenue occupied by the Rutland Retreats self-catering holiday lodges. Area is well screened. New boundary would be well defined by hedgerow and dense roadside tree belt;
- Extend current boundary east of Barnsdale Avenue to include the main facilities associated with Barnsdale Lodge Hotel i.e. car park to the north of the Hotel, croquet lawn and Helicopter landing area to the east of the Hotel. Area is relatively well screened. New boundary would be well defined by post and rail fencing;
- Consideration could also be given to including the Chicken Shack and Meadow Walk further to the east of the Hotel, although the eastern boundary to these facilities associated with the Hotel is open and less well-defined.

Recreation Area A(ii): Barnsdale Hall Hotel and Country Club
This part lies to the west of the car park/picnic area, centred on the imposing Barnsdale Hall and the numerous facilities associated with the Country Club including self-catering holiday lodges. The western and southern boundaries of the Recreation Area are particularly sensitive as it slopes down to the water’s edge and almost abuts the SSSI/SPA/Ramsar designations. It provides an important landscape setting to the Hall and Rutland Water in close and more distant views in all directions.

- No modifications to the boundary of this part of Recreation Area A Barnsdale are proposed. It is considered that the sloping topography is likely to be unsuitable for development which could have adverse landscape, nature conservation and historic impact.

Recreation Area A(iii): Barnsdale Wood Car Park/Picnic Area
This is the smallest and most tranquil of the Anglian Water car park/picnic areas around Rutland Water. Facilities are limited to a small WC, children’s play area and the Crafty Fox café. A previous Drought Garden appears unused.

- No modifications to the boundary of this part of Recreation Area A Barnsdale are proposed. This entire area is highly sensitive in landscape and nature conservation terms as the SSSI, SPA and Ramsar designations extend beyond the water and shoreline to cover the whole area. Barnsdale Wood is also Ancient Woodland.

Recreation Area B: Whitwell Visitor Centre (see Figures 6 & 7)
This is the main water sports area with facilities including sailing boats, rowing boats, canoes, kayaks, wind surfing hire and tuition, aqua park and ‘swim for health’ sessions. Boat trips around the reservoir are available on the Rutland Belle. Other
facilities include cycle hire, The Rock Blok climbing centre with climbing wall, traverse wall and high ropes course, an outdoor gym, WC, Crafty Fox Café, Harbour Café Bar and Restaurant. The high level of activity means that local planning policy has been for the modest expansion of existing facilities closely related to the use of Rutland Water, rather than new development for the wider enjoyment of the reservoir such as camping and caravanning.

Northern parts of the area are well screened but the southern shore is sensitive being open down to the water’s edge in views from the south. The Recreation Area is also sensitive due to nature conservation designations that abut the southern shoreline.

- Consideration should be given to the removal of a small grass field on the north-western edge of the Recreation Area. The current boundary cuts through the field where there is no recognisable feature. It is considered that the sloping topography is likely to be unsuitable for development which could have adverse landscape and visual impact as new development would potentially be visible in views from the north and west, especially on the highest ground along the northern edge. The northernmost part of Recreation Area B is undeveloped and well screened, and allows for the modest expansion of existing facilities envisaged in planning policy.

Recreation Area C: Sykes Lane Visitor Centre (see Figures 8 & 9)

This Recreation Area is generally regarded as being underused with potential for new recreation, sports and tourist facilities related to the use and enjoyment of Rutland Water. Existing facilities mostly lie around the northern car park which is well screened, including a tourist information centre, WC, Land’s End Kid’s Play Park, Crazy Golf, Funky Fox Café, Bugtopia and The Zoo. Facilities within the more open southern area closer to the shoreline include an informal sports area, children’s sand pit. The Great Tower sculpture is located on the southern shore where there is also a beach area for swimming and an Aqua Park in the summer.

- The more open area south of the car park is highly sensitive in landscape and nature conservation terms as the SSSI, SPA and Ramsar designations extend beyond the water and shoreline to cover this part of Recreation Area C.
- Extend the northern boundary to include the wooded area already fenced off and utilised as a dog walking (off-lead) facility.
- The eastern boundary is sensitive in historic terms to any development that would adversely impact on the Scheduled Monument west of Empingham (known as Moated site with fishponds and enclosures). However, consideration should be given to extend the eastern boundary to include the small grass field currently used as an overflow car park. A footpath fenced off from the access road leads from this field to the car park/picnic area. The field is well screened on three sides and would allow for new development related to the use and enjoyment of the reservoir as envisaged in planning policy. Mitigation such as new planting along the southern edge of this field could potentially allow its
use as a camping and caravan site (new development elsewhere to the west of the Recreation Area is likely to be highly visible in views from the A606).

**Recreation Area D: Normanton** (see Figures 10 & 11)
This is the main fishing area with facilities including fishing boat hire, fishing lodge and tackle shop. The Waterside Café, Crazy Fox Café, WC and cycle hire are located close to the main car park/picnic area. The area continues northwards along the shore-side cycle path to the Normanton Church Museum and to Normanton Park Hotel to which there is access from the reservoir side. Recreation Area D also extends to the east of Normanton Park Road to include land within and adjoining Bracknell House.

Previous Local Plan policy for Area D permitted further modest development, including changes of use, for recreation sports and tourist facilities related to the use and enjoyment of Rutland Water. As with Area C, the policy for Area D has had a more positive emphasis than those in respect of Areas A and B in that the introduction of facilities and uses related to the ‘enjoyment’ as well as the use of Rutland Water would be allowed subject to considerations of scale and appearance. Land adjoining Bracknell House has benefited from planning permission for a touring caravan and camping site which is relatively well screened and considered suitable for such development.

- Extend the shoreline boundary of the Recreation Area D to include the Normanton Church Museum which is a popular tourist attraction and Wedding venue.
- Consideration should be given to the removal of a grass field on the western side of Normanton Park Road as this is associated with Normanton Park with no public access to/from other parts of the Recreation Area. It is considered that this area was probably previously included within the Recreation Area to allow the change of use of exiting farm buildings to recreation sports and tourist facilities related to the use and enjoyment of Rutland Water, which may not now be appropriate. The grassland within the Recreation Area associated with the farm is however well screened from the reservoir; the local planning authority may wish to consider whether it is suitable for modest development for recreation sports and tourist facilities related to the use and enjoyment of Rutland Water.
- Similarly, consideration should be given to the removal of Bracknell House which is a private residence with no public access to/from other parts of the Recreation Area. As with Normanton Farm it is considered that this area was probably previously included within the Recreation Area to allow the change of use of exiting farm buildings to recreation sports and tourist facilities related to the use and enjoyment of Rutland Water, which may not now be appropriate. Grassland within the Recreation Area associated with Bracknell House is well screened from the reservoir; the local planning authority may wish to consider whether it is suitable for modest development for recreation sports and tourist facilities related to the use and enjoyment of Rutland Water.
Recreation Area E: Gibbet Lane

A relatively small Recreation Area occupied by the Rutland Sailing Club. Area E is not one of the recognised Anglian Water car park/picnic sites which are at Barnsdale Wood (Area A(iii) as referred to above), the two visitor centres at Whitwell and Sykes Lane, and Normanton. In this respect Recreation Area E Gibbet Lane is similar to areas A(i) and A(ii) above where there are no general car parking/picnic facilities at Barnsdale Lodge Hotel and Barnsdale Hall Hotel and Country Club, respectively.

A triangular grass field within the south of the area provides a camping and caravan site for Sailing Club members. Planning policy recognises that further small scale development of recreation, sport and tourist facilities related to the activities of the sailing club in appropriate locations at the Gibbet Lane Recreation Area would be appropriate, including a small caravanning and camping site.

- No modifications to the boundary of Recreation Area E Gibbet Lane are proposed. The current caravanning and camping site is well screened whereas surrounding land is more open into which there would potentially be views from higher ground along the Manton/Edith Weston road to the south.

Consideration of the Potential for Further Locations around the Shores of Rutland Water to be designated as Recreation Areas

5.5 Consideration has been given to whether visitor centres at Lyndon Nature Reserve and the Egleton Bird Watching Centre should be included within the Recreation Area (RA) designation. No other locations around the shores of Rutland Water are considered to have the potential to be designated as RAs.

5.6 The locations around Rutland Water designated as Recreation Areas were initially referred to as ‘Areas of Opportunity’ in the Rutland Water Local Plan, 1989. They were identified as offering some potential for further limited development, incorporating existing car park/picnic areas and associated recreation, sports and tourism facilities at Barnsdale, Whitwell, Sykes Lane and Normanton/Gibbet Lane. They represent four of the seven locations originally identified in the Local Plan Consultative Draft, 1988, as specific locations in the vicinity of Rutland Water considered to exhibit some potential for certain types of development without having a damaging effect upon nature conservation, providing that careful consideration was given to siting, design and nature of the use proposed. This could best be achieved by development well related to existing facilities, through the use of existing substantial buildings, in or adjacent to wooded areas, and where the land form could help conceal development.

5.7 The protection of significant sensitive nature conservation interests has consistently been identified as quite separate to recreation, sports and tourism development associated with existing car park/picnic sites. The Local Plan Consultative Draft, 1988, identified the western side of Rutland Water, between the water and Egleton and
along the south shore to Lyndon (as well as south of the road leading to Hambleton peninsula and at Burley Reach) as Nature Reserve, with separate policy protection to the wider ‘Recreation Policy Area’. This approach continued in the Rutland Water Local Plan, 1989, and the Rutland Water Recreation, Tourism and Environmental Issues Local Plan, 1991.

5.8 The Rutland Water Local Plan, 2001, however, did not separately identify for specific protection the areas of nature reserve previously identified on the western side of the reservoir. Instead all Ecological Sites shown on the proposals map(s) within the Local Plan area were protected under specific policy.

5.9 New development within the Rutland Water Area surrounding the reservoir, and including the areas of nature reserve to the west, outside of the Recreation Areas, was further restricted by policy in general to new development associated with fishing, nature conservation or the modest extension of existing sport and tourist facilities, strictly required for operational purposes.

5.10 The Rutland Local Plan Core Strategy Development Plan Document, 2011, and Rutland Local Plan Site Allocations and Policies DPD, 2014, continue this approach of providing protection to ecological sites / biodiversity sites of importance generally in the Local Plan area with added protection within the Rutland Water Area.

5.11 Although the Lyndon Nature Reserve and the Egleton Bird Watching Centre do provide car parking facilities and a visitor centre, their use is specifically for those with nature conservation interests, not sport or wider tourism uses. Sensitive development has occurred over the years and these two areas are now relatively extensive. There are seven hides dotted along the Lyndon shoreline and more than thirty at the Egleton nature area which has recently been extended with more lagoons, now totalling eight in number.

5.12 The nature, characteristics and circumstances of the Lyndon Nature Reserve and the Egleton Bird Watching Centre are distinctive and quite different to the five Recreation Areas around Rutland Water. The significant nature conservation interests provided at the Lyndon and Egleton reserves are well protected from harmful development by separate policies within the Local Plan. Bringing them under the umbrella of designated Recreation Areas under Policy SP26 in the Rutland Local Plan Site Allocations and Policies DPD, 2014, is not necessary to enable further sensitive development. It would be inconsistent with planning policy since 1989 which has focussed new recreation, sport and tourist development within the five Recreation Areas and which has been largely successful in balancing Rutland Water’s important operational and recreational role with the need to protect its nature conservation interests and generally tranquil and undisturbed character.
APPENDIX 1:
Outline of previous plans and policies for the control of development within the Rutland Water Area.

Towards the end of the 1970s Rutland District Council recognised that the construction of Rutland Water during the early to mid-1970s to meet part of the nation’s increasing demands for water was bringing significant dramatic and rapid change to the rural character of central Rutland. The potential of the vast water resource covering some 3100 acres was already being realised as it was fast becoming a major focus in the region for sailing and fishing and of international importance for nature conservation, as well as for casual recreational pursuits such as picnicking, walking, cycling and sight-seeing.

Barnsdale car park and picnic site on the north shore of Rutland Water, the Nature Reserve at the western end, and day sailing facilities at Whitwell on the north shore and at the Rutland Sailing Club on the south shore were all recently opened to the public, adding to facilities and car parking at Normanton provided by the Anglian Water Authority. It was recognised that as more facilities became available, as the landscape matures and as public knowledge of the attractions became more widespread then it was likely that even more people would be encouraged to visit Rutland Water and its surroundings, including those from outside the region.

Several special problems and important planning issues were recognised by the District Council that needed to be resolved concerning the recreational use of Rutland Water and the surrounding villages and countryside by both local residents and visitors, in particular the:

- inadequacy of facilities such as car parks, picnic areas and overnight accommodation;
- likely effects of the provision of new facilities on the character of the villages and the open countryside;
- inadequacy of signposting from major roads and the need for traffic management measures, for example to deter indiscriminate parking.

Rutland Structure Plan and the Empingham District Plan, 1978-79

The Empingham District Plan was prepared in the context of a broad theme of ‘positive conservation’ expressed in the Rutland Structure Plan prepared by Leicestershire County Council, aimed at safeguarding the landscape and natural resources. The Structure Plan sought to protect, maintain and improve the landscape and prevent development which would be seriously detrimental to the visual quality of the environment. It also sought to protect sites of scientific and ecological interest and enhance opportunities for nature conservation at Rutland Water nature reserve.

The Empingham District Plan covered the area immediately surrounding Rutland Water to include the parishes of Burley, Edith Weston, Egleton, Empingham, Exton, Gunthorpe,
Hambleton, Horn, Lyndon, Manton, Normanton and Whitwell. A number of policies and proposals were put forward by the district Council to control and direct the various pressures for development and change around Rutland Water.

The considerable impact of Rutland Water and its special problems and pressures, due largely to its considerable recreation potential as not only a regional but also a national resource, were recognised soon after its construction. Priority was given by the District Council to protecting the area from harmful development, for example by designating Conservation Areas in villages in the vicinity of Rutland Water at Edith Weston, Hambleton and Empingham. Conservation Areas were later designated in Whitwell and Egleton.

Strategic policies were confirmed and safeguards strengthened by local policies to conserve this attractive part of Rutland, including the protection of designated nature conservation and historic sites and other sites of known ecological, geological, archaeological and historic importance. In all areas, but particularly those of high landscape value, the District Council’s local policies sought to preserve and enhance the natural environment.

The Structure Plan advocated that the Empingham District Plan should identify possible sites for recreational purposes. In order to control and direct the various pressures for development and change around Rutland Water, the suggestion was put forward by the District Council in a Preliminary Discussion Document to the Empingham District Plan of providing limited further development of recreation, sport and tourist facilities for visitors to Rutland Water provided that such development complements existing facilities and clearly relates to the use and enjoyment of Rutland Water. The area within which this policy was to apply was referred to as the ‘Rutland Water Recreation Policy Area’ and illustrated by cross-hatching across almost all of the Empingham District Plan area around Rutland Water but with the notable exclusion of the nature reserve and other land around Egleton to the west of the reservoir, and the Hambleton peninsula. Within the recreation policy area there would be a presumption against the construction of new buildings and where most new recreational facilities would be of a scale and type that could be accommodated by the conversion of existing buildings.

Locations were to be chosen where recreation development would be in keeping with its surroundings or where it would be contained by the existing land form. It was recognised that, in contrast to other parts of the Plan area, the area close to Rutland Water is relatively well contained and the landscape has been modified by the incursion of the water and associated development such that the area is better able to withstand and assimilate a limited amount of further new recreational development. Golf courses, leisure centres, zoos and other schemes which would attract considerable additional traffic were examples of uses that would not be appropriate. Facilities related to activities such as sightseeing, fishing or nature study would be appropriate. Some provision for caravans and for camping was also expected by the Structure Plan, but sites should be unobtrusive with good access to the road system and where the overall effect on the character of the area is acceptable.

10 ‘The local planning issues affecting Rutland Water, the surrounding villages and countryside’, Rutland District Council, August 1978.
To recognise the need to protect certain parts of the area from unsuitable development whilst at the same time contain most new recreational development close to Rutland Water, a small ‘Inner Zone’ was proposed outside of which recreational uses likely to attract significant amounts of traffic would not be permitted. The inner zone was described as extending in a crescent from Burley-on-the-Hill around the eastern part of the reservoir as far as the sailing club, and encompassing Whitwell, Empingham and Edith Weston. Protection by specific policy was to be given to the Nature Reserve at the western end of Rutland Water. The inner zone was shown on a map but this is no longer attached to the preliminary discussion document and is unfortunately missing.

Rather than increase capacity at Normanton car park which was by far the most popular, the Empingham District Plan proposed a positive balanced approach by increasing the attractiveness of one or more of the three northern car parks and picnic areas through the provision of additional facilities at Barnsdale, Whitwell and Sykes Lane, thereby reducing pressure upon the Normanton car park.

Consideration was given to the location of potential caravan or camping sites, excluding static caravans which were considered less acceptable by virtue of their visibility in winter and their usual size. Such sites should be:

- located within the ‘inner zone’ of the recreation policy area;
- where the environmental capacity of the site and its surroundings is not exceeded;
- visually unobtrusive;
- where high quality agricultural land is avoided;
- where access to the recreational road network is good, and
- where adequate services are or can be made available.

Since the construction of Rutland Water was first conceived the position of Hambleton and the peninsula upon which it is situated was recognised as deserving special attention. It was recognised that the attractive nature of the village and the peninsula could constitute a major attraction to the visitor and encourage pressure for recreation orientated development which might detract from the appearance and character of the area, disturb residents and pose problems of access and congestion along the steep, narrow, twisting approach. Hambleton was excluded from the ‘inner zone’ as recognition of its particular sensitivities and pressures (although it is noted that a planning application was submitted at that time for the change of use of Hambleton Hall and stable block to a hotel and conference centre where such an intensive use might be considered acceptable only within the inner zone of the recreation policy area).

**Rutland Water Local Plan, 1989**

A local plan was prepared by Rutland District Council ‘covering recreation, tourism and environmental issues relating to Rutland Water and its environs’ in 1989. Until then, the policy guidelines contained in the District Council’s 1978 preliminary discussion document to the Empingham District Plan on issues affecting Rutland Water, supplemented by strategic policies within the Rutland Structure Plan, as referred to above, were found to be sufficient
as a basis for controlling and directing the various pressures for development and change in the area surrounding Rutland Water. However, several major planning applications and numerous enquiries for recreational development and visitor accommodation, together with problems and pressures brought about by an increasing number of visitors to the area, highlighted the need for a more positive and concise planning policy framework.

The Rutland Water Local Plan recognised the very special character of Rutland Water and the surrounding villages and countryside, and the extent to which, and the likely effects of, additional recreation and tourist facilities as important issues that needed to be resolved.

In general terms the Rutland Water Local Plan envisaged that Rutland Water and its immediate environs would continue to be seen as an area of unspoiled charm whose unique landscape and nature conservation qualities are preserved and enhanced, while at the same time catering for a modest expansion of recreation or other facilities enabling local residents and visitors to continue to enjoy both active and passive pursuits.

Local Plan policy complied with Structure Plan policy in allowing limited further development of recreation, sports and tourism facilities in the area around Rutland Water that complements existing facilities, relates to the use and enjoyment of Rutland Water and equates with the overall conservation theme of the Structure Plan. The ‘area around Rutland Water’ was defined in the Rutland Structure Plan Key Diagram and although this is unfortunately unavailable to view it is assumed that it covered a similar area to the ‘Inner Zone’ put forward in the Empingham District Plan referred to above.

The Rutland Local Plan recognised ‘nature conservation and landscape’ as a main issue relating to recreation, sports and tourism facilities in the area around Rutland Water. The plan area was regarded as potentially sensitive to the impact of new development, recognising the majority of the Local plan area as comprising landscape of high quality that should be protected, with certain parts near to Rutland water regarded as outstanding.

Impact upon sensitive views was regarded as a particular concern, recognising that much of the shoreline and immediate countryside around Rutland Water was exposed to views across the water from elevated land. Development proposals in these locations would need very careful consideration to ensure that the high quality of the landscape and the setting of Rutland Water were safeguarded.

Hambleton Peninsula’s unique central location and its elevated land form meant that it was exposed to views from most directions despite the existence of some good tree cover. The local plan recognised that any further development on the peninsula could detract from the very special contribution this area makes to the local landscape.

The Rutland Local Plan recognised that careful consideration was required to the potential impact of any development proposals on the significant nature conservation interests of the plan area and its wider wildlife and historical importance.

Insofar as landscape and nature conservation interests were concerned, the Local Plan identified specific locations in the vicinity of Rutland Water that were considered to exhibit
some potential for certain types of development without having a damaging effect upon
nature conservation, providing that careful consideration was given to siting, design and
nature of the use proposed. This could best be achieved by development well related to
existing facilities, through the use of existing substantial buildings, in or adjacent to wooded
areas, and where the land form could help conceal development. A Consultative Draft of the
Rutland Local Plan, 1988, identified seven locations where these four criteria could be met:
at Burley-on-the-Hill, Normanton Lodge Farm and Cottages, Barnsdale Car Park/Picnic
Area/Hotel, Whitwell Peninsula Car Park/Picnic Area, Sykes Lane Car Park/Picnic Area,
Normanton and the Sailing Club, Exton Hall and Park. Development abutting the edge of
other villages in the local plan area was also considered potentially acceptable providing the
nature of the use, its location, scale and design would not detract from the visual amenity or
the character of the village.

Following the ‘principle of concentration’ as a desirable aim, rather than a dispersed pattern
of development around Rutland Water, the 1989 Local Plan identified an area referred to as
the ‘Waterside Area’ where, because of its landscape and nature conservation qualities,
little or no new recreation, sports and tourist development would be permitted other than
the change of use of farm buildings to recreation specifically related to the use and
enjoyment of Rutland Water. Exceptionally, small-scale development of an essential nature
related specifically to nature conservation or fishing may be permitted. The development of
golf courses were permitted in the Waterside Area only where they satisfied criteria on
scale, design, location, access and safeguarding nature conservation and landscape
interests, and residential amenity. It is noted that the Waterside Area was originally shown
cross-hatched on a Proposals Map in the Local Plan Consultative Draft, 1988, with no
explanation of its boundaries which in some areas did not follow recognisable features on
the ground. The Waterside Area was shown in the Rutland Water Local Plan, 1989, as a
shaded area which appears to follow the cross-hatched area in the Consultative Draft,
suggesting a better defined boundary, although this wasn’t explained in the Local Plan
either.

The Waterside Area extended beyond that covered by the District Council’s ‘Area around
Rutland Water’ and the ‘Inner Zone’ put forward in the Rutland Structure Plan and the
Empingham District Plan (referred to above) by including Hambleton peninsula and the area
surrounding Egleton to the A6003 west of the reservoir. It also extended some distance
north of the A606 northern perimeter road to include the lower slopes of Burley Wood and
farmland to the north of Whitwell, eastwards between the dam wall and Empingham, and
south of the water following a line approximately along the southern perimeter road
(Lyndon Road/Manton Road) between Manton and EdithWestern. Thus environmentally
sensitive areas around Rutland Water were protected which previously were not covered by
strategic or local planning policies.

The Rutland Water Local Plan, 1989, provided a consistent approach in planning policies for
the area around the reservoir. Within the Waterside Area four ‘Areas of Opportunity’ were
identified as offering some potential for further limited development, incorporating existing
car park/picnic areas and associated recreation, sports and tourism facilities at Barnsdale,
Whitwell, Sykes Lane and Normanton/Gibbet Lane (including the Rutland Sailing Club).
These were marked as areas A, B, C and D respectively on the Proposals Map and their
boundaries identified on accompanying inset plans. They represent four of the seven locations originally identified in the Local Plan Consultative Draft, 1988, as referred to above, with slight amendments to the boundaries of the four areas shown in the Consultative Draft; the remaining three areas at Burley-on-the-Hill, Exton and Normanton Lodge Farm referred to above were described as ‘Areas with Development potential’ E, F and G respectively as offering the opportunity, together with several other small scale locations within the local plan area, for certain types of recreation and tourism development on a more dispersed basis less related to the use and enjoyment of Rutland Water.

There were policies in the Local Plan for each Area of Opportunity that reflected the varying nature and scale of uses that could be satisfactorily accommodated in each area, recognising that the precise location chosen for any new use or extension would require careful consideration. The Local Plan recognised that there were issues specifically related to those facilities for the ‘use’ of Rutland Water, and that there may be different issues with regard to other complimentary facilities related to the further ‘enjoyment’ of the area for visitors. It was considered that facilities related to the ‘enjoyment’ of Rutland Water, such as restaurants, overnight accommodation and small-scale retail uses, for example, would not generally be suitable for every location. Above all, development proposals should acknowledge the “quiet and tranquil” character of some areas and not conflict with those activities currently undertaken.

Rutland Local Plan proposals and policies for each of the five Areas of Opportunity are as follows:

**Barnsdale (Area A)**
Area A comprises three distinct locations: the car park/picnic area and its associated facilities; the Barnsdale Country Club complex; and the Barnsdale Lodge Hotel/restaurant and caravan site to the north of the A606. The undulating nature of the land and extensive woodland including Ancient Woodland give this area its special character. Scope for new development is further limited by the fact that the southern-most car park/picnic area and associated facilities are located within the Rutland Water SSSI and also falls within the SPA and Ramsar designations.

Local Plan policy for Area A restricted further development to only that which is directly related to the use of existing or proposed facilities with the benefit of planning permission, or where it is related specifically to the use of Rutland Water. The local plan policy did not envisage additional development in this area relating to the enjoyment of (rather than the use of) Rutland Water. New development, including changes of use, must be of a scale and appearance in keeping with the facility and area, and be compatible with nature conservation interests in this area. Generally new development would not be permitted in exposed locations particularly on or adjacent to the shoreline, or within the Ancient Woodlands. Exceptionally, small-scale development to further encourage visitor interest in nature conservation may be acceptable.

**Whitwell Peninsula (Area B)**
Includes the car park/picnic areas and associated facilities, sailing, cycling and pleasure boat facilities (the Rutland Belle) and a small area of adjacent land to the west. As the main
centre for water sports activities at Rutland Water this area contains the largest concentration of facilities.

Local Plan policy for Area B restricted new development to the extension of existing recreation, sports and tourist facilities or changes of use only where the scale and design is in keeping with the facility of the area. As with Area A, the local plan policy did not envisage additional development in this area relating to the enjoyment of (rather than the use of) Rutland Water. Generally new development, including changes of use, would not be permitted in exposed locations on or adjacent to the south facing shoreline. Exceptionally, small-scale development to further encourage visitor interest in nature conservation may be acceptable.

**Sykes Lane (Area C)**
Generally confined to the car park/picnic area with a small wooded area adjacent to the entrance to Sykes Lane off the A606 included in Area C (this small area was deleted from the 1991 Local Plan – see below). Sykes Lane was at that time the least developed and least popular of all the car parks around Rutland Water. Although the southern shoreline is exposed to long distance views across the water, the northern area is well screened. The local plan regarded this location as being considerably underused but with considerable potential for new recreation, sports and tourist facilities.

Local Plan policy for Area C permitted further development, including changes of use, of recreation, sports and tourist facilities where it relates to the use and enjoyment of Rutland Water and is compatible with the scale and appearance of the existing car park and picnic area. The policy for Area C has a more positive emphasis than those in respect of Areas A and B in that it would allow the introduction of facilities and uses related to the ‘enjoyment’ as well as the use of Rutland Water. Generally new development including changes of use would not be permitted in exposed locations particularly on or adjacent to the shoreline. Exceptionally, small-scale development to further encourage visitor interest in nature conservation may be acceptable.

**Normanton/Gibbet Lane (Area D)**
Comprises two distinct locations: the car park/picnic area at Normanton (Edith Weston) including part of Normanton Park and Normanton Park Hotel on the north-western side of the reservoir perimeter road, and also including Bracknell House and adjoining land (including a site with planning permission for a touring caravan and camping site) on the south-eastern side of the perimeter road; and the other part centred on the Rutland Sailing Club off Gibbet Lane which includes a caravan site specifically for the use of Sailing Club members.

As with Area A (and unlike Areas B and C) Area D includes land located away from the water side beyond Anglian Water’s ‘limits of deviation’. The local plan considered that these areas had the potential for recreational or tourist related development similar to that realised with Normanton Park Hotel. It was recognised the existing focus for sport and recreation at the area off Gibbet Lane could expand further.
Local Plan policy for Area D permitted further development, including changes of use, for recreation sports and tourist facilities related to the use and enjoyment of Rutland Water that is of a scale and appearance in keeping with the facility of the area. Development at Gibbet Lane was limited to that directly related to the water-based activities of the Sailing Club. As with Area C, the policy for Area D has a more positive emphasis than those in respect of Areas A and B in that it would allow the introduction of facilities and uses related to the ‘enjoyment’ as well as the use of Rutland Water. Generally new development including changes of use would not be permitted in exposed locations on or adjacent to the shoreline, or within the woodland abutting the shoreline. Exceptionally, small-scale development to further encourage visitor interest in nature conservation may be acceptable.

**Other Related Policies in the Rutland Local Plan 1989**

The Rutland Local Plan 1989 contained policies on golfing and camping & caravanning that were to be read in conjunction with the policies relating to the Waterside Area and the Areas of Opportunity. With regard to golf, the local planning authority was of the opinion that changes of use from agriculture to golf course, although potentially large in scale, would not detract from the landscape quality of the area and since golf is not an intensive use of land it would thus be compatible with the nature conservation interests of the area. However, new buildings associated with this land use could pose significant problems, particularly within the Waterside Area, and thus to protect the special qualities of this area the siting should be carefully chosen and the design and landscaping should be of the highest standard.

There were two locations with planning permission for the development of caravan and camping sites within Areas of Opportunity; one at Barnsdale (Area A) on land to the north of the A606, and another on land adjacent to Bracknell House, Normanton (Area D). There was also the temporary site for the Sailing Club at Gibbet Lane, Edith Weston (also within Area D). The development of further caravan and camping sites within the Waterside Area including the Areas of Opportunity was not permitted. However, extension to existing or proposed sites with planning permission would be considered in accordance with policies appropriate to the Areas of Opportunity in which they are sited. From the above it can be seen that there were more restrictive policies for Area A: Barnsdale and Area B: Whitwell allowing only limited new facilities related specifically to existing facilities and to the ‘use’ of Rutland Water, not new development associated with the wider ‘enjoyment’ of the reservoir. There was a more positive policy and emphasis to allow new facilities and uses related to the wider ‘enjoyment’ of Rutland Water, presumably including camping and caravan sites (subject to satisfying criteria on scale, design, location, access, and safeguarding residential amenity, nature conservation and landscape interests) in Area C: Whitwell and Area D: Normanton/Gibbet Lane. Whilst self-catering holiday lodges have been built on the site at Barnsdale in Area A, the land adjacent to Bracknell House and Normanton, part of Area D, is not currently used as a camping or caravan site.

The 1991 Local Plan was almost identical to the Rutland Water Local Plan, 1989, but with some limited alterations. Most notably, the Waterside Area shown on the Proposals Map extended further northwards at Burley-on-the-Hill to include the whole of the Burley and Rushpit Woods SSSI. The Areas of Opportunity A, B, C and D were renamed ‘Recreational Areas’, and the ‘Areas with Development Potential’ E, F and G were also re-named ‘Recreational Areas’.

Policy controlling development within Area A: Barnsdale was slightly re-worded and consolidated.

The small wooded area adjacent to the entrance to Sykes Lane off the A606 which was included in Area C within the 1989 Local Plan was removed from the 1991 plan.

Finally, with regard to Area D: Normanton/Gibbet Lane, the 1991 Local Plan added that “certain uses allied to fishing could possibly be accommodated within and outside the Normanton part of the area”.


The Structure Plan had classified much of Rutland as countryside of special landscape quality and value comprising Areas of Particularly Attractive Countryside (APAC). The Rutland Local Plan 2001 defined the boundaries of the APAC within Rutland, which included the whole of the Rutland Water Area, with policies for the protection of land within and adjoining the APAC.

The Local Plan recognised the additional special control required for the Rutland Water Area over and above wider land use implications of recreation, sport and tourism related development across Rutland. The district council considered that in general the recreation, sport and tourism related pursuits undertaken around Rutland Water accord with the tranquil character and its sensitive countryside location. The importance of the area for nature conservation was recognised, and that its unique character is determined by the interrelationship of the vast expanse of water with its undulating and, in part, wooded surroundings.

The boundary to the Rutland Water Area, defined as the reservoir and its immediate surroundings, was shown on an Inset Map. The boundary appears to relate to the boundary of the ‘Waterside Area’ shown on the Proposals Map within the Rutland Water Local Plan 1989 without the northern extension at Burley-on-the-Hill in the Rutland Local Plan 1991 that included the whole of the Burley and Rushpit Woods SSSI. It is unclear why the Rutland
Water Area in the 2001 Local Plan follows the reduced area previously referred to as the Waterside Area. Furthermore, the northern boundary has been ‘smooth-off’ in the area north of Barnsdale and at Normanton, with no apparent explanation. Also, the southern Rutland Water Area boundary now more closely follows the line of the perimeter road between Manton and Edith Weston.

The Rutland Local Plan included two policies on development within the Rutland Water Area:

**Rutland Water Area**

**Policy LE14** - Planning permission will only be granted for small-scale recreation, sport and tourist facilities within the Rutland Water Area outside of the ‘Recreation Areas’ as shown on the Proposals Map subject to policies EN26 and EN28 and where:

i) they are essential for and specifically related to nature conservation or fishing; or
ii) necessary for the operational requirements of existing or planned facilities with the benefit of an extant planning permission; or
iii) they would ensure the retention and restoration of buildings of environmental value; and
iv) they would not be detrimental to environmental, amenity, nature conservation and highway interests; and
v) they would not be detrimental to visual amenity and the appearance of the landscape.

**Rutland Water Area**

**Policy LE15** - Planning permission will not be granted for caravan and camping sites within the Rutland Water Area outside the Recreation Areas as shown on the Proposals Map.

The local plan recognises the potential for further sport and recreation development in the Rutland Water Area in accordance with the Leicestershire Structure Plan Policy for Rutland Water. The four Recreation Areas identified in the Rutland Water Recreation, Tourism and Environmental Issues Local Plan 1991 became five with the Normanton/Gibbet Lane area now divided into two areas. Some slight boundary changes were made to some of the Recreation Areas to those shown in the 1991 plan, mainly to the boundaries of Barnsdale Area A recognising the substantial development of facilities associated with Barnsdale Hall. It was recognised that the nature and scale of uses that could be satisfactorily accommodated will vary from one Area to another, and the precise location chosen for any new use, or extension of an existing use, would require careful consideration. Policy LE16 provided general policy guidance for development within the five Recreation Areas:

**Recreation Areas**

**Policy LE16** - Planning permission will be granted for recreation, sport and tourism related development in the Recreation Areas within the Rutland Water Area, shown as ‘A’ to ‘E’ on the Proposals Map, where:

i) the proposal would be in keeping with its surroundings in terms of its location, scale, form and design and would not detract from the appearance of the shoreline and setting of Rutland Water;
ii) the proposal would not be incompatible with other uses of land and leisure activities and would not lead to congestion within the area;
iii) the proposal would not be detrimental to the special nature conservation interests of Rutland Water;
iv) new construction should be modest in scale and existing buildings utilised wherever possible and appropriate, particularly those of architectural or historic interest or of environmental value;
v) it would not result in an unacceptable increase in the amount of car travel;
vi) the proposal would not be detrimental to amenity and highway considerations;
vii) the proposal is related to the use and enjoyment of Rutland Water.

The local plan also included individual policies for each of the five Recreation Areas A to E, recognising the particular nature and specific issues relating to each of them as first discussed in the Rutland Water Local Plan 1989:

**Barnsdale (Area A)**

**Policy LE17** - Planning permission will only be granted for small scale recreation, sport and tourist facilities in appropriate locations within the Barnsdale Recreation Area as shown on the Proposals Map provided that:

i) they are essential for and directly related to existing or proposed facilities with the benefit of an extant planning permission, or
ii) they are required to further visitor interest in nature conservation.

Planning permission for additional caravanning and camping will not be granted within the Barnsdale Recreation Area.

This policy recognised the sensitive nature of the Barnsdale Recreation Area and that the existing and proposed facilities within the three different parts of Area A (as previously referred to) combine to limit the scope for further development within Area A.

**Whitwell (Area B)**

**Policy LE18** - Planning permission will be granted at Whitwell Recreation Area as shown on the Proposals Map for recreation, sport and tourist facilities in appropriate locations provided that:

i) they comprise an extension of existing facilities; or,
ii) they comprise development associated with existing facilities; or
iii) they are required to further visitor interest in nature conservation.

Planning permission will not be granted for caravan and camping sites within the Whitwell Recreation Area.

This policy recognised the pressure from the concentration of and increased use of facilities at the Whitwell Recreation Area, particularly water based activities. Modest expansion of existing facilities and ancillary related developments, rather than the introduction of new ones, was considered more appropriate.

**Sykes Lane (Area C)**

**Policy LE19** - Planning permission will be granted at the Sykes Lane Recreation Area as shown on the Proposals Map for recreation, sport and tourist facilities including hostel type overnight accommodation and a small caravanning and camping facility in an appropriate location.
This policy recognised that the Sykes Lane Recreation Area exhibits considerably more potential for development than either the Barnsdale or Whitwell areas. It is the least used of the Anglian Water car parks/picnic sites around Rutland Water and although the shoreline is exposed to long distance views across Rutland Water, the northern part of the car park is well screened, partly due to the extensive planting.

**Normanton (Area D)**

**Policy LE20** - Planning permission will be granted in appropriate locations at the Normanton Recreation Area, as shown on the Proposals Map, for recreation, sport and tourist facilities provided that:

i) they comprise an extension of existing facilities; or
ii) they comprise development associated with existing facilities; or
iii) they are required to further visitor interest in nature conservation.

This policy recognised the concentration and increased use of facilities at the Normanton Recreation Area, similar to the situation at Whitwell. Modest expansion of existing facilities and ancillary related developments, such as hostel type accommodation for fishermen, was considered appropriate.

This policy does not refer to caravanning and camping facilities. Since the remainder of this policy is the same as that for Whitwell Area B, for similar reasons, it could be assumed that planning permission would not be granted for such development within the Normanton Recreation Area as well. However, previous local plans had referred to land adjacent to Bracknell House with planning permission for caravanning and camping. This may have lapsed but there does appear to be two areas adjacent to Bracknell House that may be suitable for caravanning and camping use (subject to consideration of all issues), being well screened by surrounding mature tree belts.

**Gibbet Lane (Area E)**

**Policy LE21** - Planning permission will be granted for further small scale development of recreation, sport and tourist facilities in appropriate locations at the Gibbet Lane Recreation Area as shown on the Proposals Map, comprising:

i) a small caravanning and camping site, or
ii) development related to the activities of the sailing club.

This policy recognises that the Gibbet Lane Recreation Area is centred on the Rutland Sailing Club with facilities specifically intended for this use. This includes land on the opposite side of the road which has a history of usage as a caravan and camping site, primarily by visitors to the sailing club. As such it is a focus for sport and recreation and some potential exists to enhance the present facilities.

**Rutland Local Plan Core Strategy Development Plan Document, 2011**

The current Local Plan for Rutland sets out planning policies for the period to 2026. The Core Strategy DPD is one of three documents that make up the current Rutland Local Plan.
(together with the Site Allocations and Policies DPD and the Minerals Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD). The Rutland Local Plan is currently being reviewed to extend the period to 2036 and to combine the three documents into a single Local Plan.

The Core Strategy DPD sets out the vision, objectives, spatial strategy and planning policies for Rutland. Adopted in July 2011, the Core Strategy includes **Strategic Objective 11: Natural and cultural environment** which states:

- ‘To safeguard and enhance the natural resources, landscape and countryside, cultural heritage and the diversity of wildlife and habitats, including green infrastructure and special protection for Rutland Water to improve our quality of life and make a full contribution to global sustainability’.

**Policy CS24 Rutland Water** states:

*Development in the defined Rutland Water Area will be carefully designed and located to ensure that it respects the nature conservation features of this internationally important site and does not have an adverse impact on the landscape and wildlife interests and the general tranquil and undisturbed environment of Rutland Water.*

*New development will be limited to small scale recreation, sport and tourist uses within the five defined Recreation Areas around the shores of Rutland Water where this is directly related to the use and enjoyment of Rutland Water and appropriate in scale, form and design to its location.*

*Outside the five defined recreation areas, new development will be restricted to small scale development for recreation, sport and tourism facilities only where essential for nature conservation or fishing or essential for operational requirements of existing facilities and subject to it being appropriate in terms of location, scale, design and impact on the landscape.*

*Caravan and camping sites will not be acceptable outside the defined recreation areas and only within the defined recreation areas where appropriate to the area in terms of its scale, location and impact on the surrounding area’.*

Rutland Water policy area is shown on the Key Diagram in the Core Strategy. The boundary appears to be the same as that shown within the Rutland Local Plan 2001 referred to above.

The Core Strategy explains that the whole of the Rutland Water Area including the defined Recreation Area (it is assumed this refers to the five ‘Recreation Areas’ around the shores of Rutland Water mentioned in Policy CS24 being Barnsdale, Whitwell, Sykes Lane, Normanton and Gibbet Lane) falls within the countryside and will be subject to policies relating to development in the countryside (in accordance with Policies CS4 and CS21). Any development will therefore need to respect the character of this sensitive countryside location. However, within the defined Rutland Water Area comprising the reservoir and its immediate surroundings, small scale new recreation, sport and tourist facilities developments are limited to those essential for nature conservation or fishing or essential for operational requirements of existing facilities and subject to requirements in terms of location, scale, design and landscape impact. Within the five defined Recreation Areas A to E around the shores of the reservoir small scale new recreation, sport and tourist facilities are
to be permitted reflecting the needs and specific circumstances of each area. This continues the previous approach in the Rutland Local Plan 2001 to focus new development within these five areas which the local planning authority considers has been largely successful in balancing Rutland Water’s important operational and recreational role with the need to protect its nature conservation interests and generally tranquil and undisturbed character.

The Core Strategy explains that camping and caravanning activities were seen in the Rutland Local Plan to be potentially damaging to the character and setting of Rutland Water and are not permitted in the wider Rutland Water Area or in the defined Barnsdale or Whitwell Recreation Areas. This is slightly confusing since firstly, a large site and a smaller Camping and Caravan Club pitch currently exist within the defined Rutland Water Area at Lyndon Top, and secondly it suggests that camping and caravanning activities are permitted in the other three Recreation Areas namely Sykes Lane, Normanton and Gibbet Lane even though these are all located within the Rutland Water Area. It is assumed that this refers to previous local plan policy whereby extension to the existing camping and caravan site for the Sailing Club at Gibbet Lane, Edith Weston (previously within Area D now Area E) or proposed sites with planning permission at Barnsdale (Area A) on land to the north of the A606 and on land adjacent to Bracknell House, Normanton (Area D), would be considered in accordance with policies appropriate to the Recreation Areas in which they are sited. The proposed site referred to at Barnsdale has now been developed for self-catering holiday lodges and the remaining parts of this area were considered in the local plan to be sensitive in terms of their undulating nature, extensive Ancient woodland and/or location within the SSSI, SPA and Ramsar designations associated with the water and shoreline. The sensitive nature of Whitwell Recreation Area B would appear to be limited in the local plan to its exposed south-facing shoreline, with modest expansion of existing facilities and ancillary related developments, and not the introduction of new ones such as camping and caravanning activities, considered more appropriate due to pressure from the concentration of and increased use of facilities in this Area.

It is assumed that the more positive policy and emphasis within the local plan to allow new facilities and uses related to the wider ‘enjoyment’ of Rutland Water at Areas C and D (now including E) included camping and caravan sites (subject to satisfying criteria on scale, design, location, access, and safeguarding residential amenity, nature conservation and landscape interests), hence why such development was considered appropriate in these recreation areas (but not within Areas A and B where a more restrictive policy approach has been taken).

The Core Strategy suggests that further detailed policies for the area and any boundary modifications to the defined recreation areas and the Rutland Water policy area will be determined through a masterplan to be prepared as part of the Site Allocations and Policies DPD.

**Rutland Local Plan Site Allocations and Policies DPD, 2014**

There is a single new policy in the Site Allocations and Policies DPD intended to replace the eight separate policies in the 2001 Rutland Local Plan relating to development in the Rutland Water Area (detailed above):
Policy SP26 – Rutland Water Recreation Areas

‘New development will be limited to small scale recreation, sport and tourist uses within the five defined Recreation Areas.

In all cases it will need to be demonstrated that the development within the designated Recreation Areas would:

a) be in keeping with its surroundings in terms of its location, scale, form and design and would not detract from the appearance of the shoreline and setting of Rutland Water;
b) not be incompatible with other uses of land and leisure activities;
c) not be detrimental to the special nature conservation interests of Rutland Water (including the conservation objectives for the RAMSAR site, Special Protection Area and Site of Special Scientific Interest and the requirements of the Habitats Regulations);
d) not be detrimental to local amenity including the impact of an unacceptable increase in the amount of car travel, parking and congestion in the Rutland Water Area, and;
e) not be detrimental to highway considerations.

New construction should be modest in scale and existing buildings utilised wherever possible and appropriate, particularly those of architectural or historic interest or of environmental value’.

The Site Allocations and Policies DPD explains that the boundaries of the Rutland Water Area and the Recreation Areas were considered as part of a boundary review (June 2012). No further changes to the boundaries are proposed in the DPD as shown on the Policies Map.

Rutland Water Area Boundary Review (June 2012)

The Council responded to a small number of responses following consultation on the Rutland Local Plan Site Allocations & Policies DPD Issues and Options report with regard to suggested amendments to the Rutland Water Area boundary and Recreation Area boundaries.

Requests to include the villages of Manton and Edith Weston together with surrounding land to the south and west within the RWA boundary were not accepted by the Council because of the undue restriction this would have on development within the existing or proposed planned limits of development for both villages.

Areas proposed for inclusion within an extended Recreation Area designation around Barnsdale Hall were also rejected by the Council because of the potential impact of development on nature conservation interests and the landscape setting of the Hall which is of particularly high value. The Council considered that existing boundaries to the Recreation Area A provide for some further development opportunities to the east of Barnsdale Hall around the car park and around Barnsdale Lodge to the north of the A606.
FIGURE 1
SITE ALLOCATIONS & POLICIES DPD, RUTLAND WATER INSET MAP 43

Key to Policies Map and Inset Maps

- County Boundary
- Adjoining District Council Area
- Military Bases and Prisons
  - Military Bases and Prisons
  - Coastal Defence (Blakeney Point)
  - Coastal Defence (North Foreland)
  - Coastal Defence (South Foreland)
- The Historic Environment
  - Scheduled Monument
  - Registered Park and Garden
- Rutland Water
  - Rutland Water Area
  - Rutland Water (1023)
- Reservoir Water Resources
  - Reservoir Water Resources
  - Reservoir Water Resources
- Biodiversity and Geodiversity Conservation
  - Sites of National Importance for Nature Conservation
  - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
  - Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation
  - Regulated Improper Geophysical Site (RIGS)
  - Local Wildlife Site
  - Centuries Local Wildlife Site

Site Allocations & Policies Development Plan Document
Adopted October 2014

Rutland County Council

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This map should be read in conjunction with any nearest market plan that may have been prepared for the area.
FIGURE 4
PLAN OF PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO RECREATION AREA A
FIGURE 7
AERIAL VIEW OF PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO RECREATION AREA B

No recognisable field boundary

Well screened - potentially suitable for small scale development

Unsuitable for development due to topography and potential landscape and visual impact
FIGURE 9
AERIAL VIEW OF PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO RECREATION AREA C

- Well screened fenced dog-walking area through trees
- Grassed overflow car park - well screened but mitigation required at southern end
- Fenced footpath between visitor centre and overflow car park
FIGURE 11
AERIAL VIEW OF PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO RECREATION AREA D

- Normanton Church Museum is a popular visitor attraction and wedding venue - consider including within the Recreation Area?
- Normanton Farm - in private ownership with no public access - consider removing from the Recreation Area?
- Grassland at Normanton Farm is well screened - potentially suitable for small scale development.
- Grassland (previous planning permission for camping and touring caravans) is well screened - potentially suitable for small scale development.
- Bracknell House is in private ownership with no public access - consider removing from the Recreation Area?