

# **RUTLAND LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT**

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## References

- 1 Leicestershire County Council, 1976, *County Landscape Appraisal*
- 2 Leicestershire County Council, 1995 published 2001, *Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy*
- 3 Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002, *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland*
- 4 Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and the Landscape Institute, 2002, *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, Spons
- 5 Countryside Agency and English Nature, 1997, *The Character of England: Landscape Wildlife and Natural Features* and Countryside Agency, 1999, *Countryside Character Volume 4: East Midlands*
- 6 Department of Environment, 1997 *Planning Policy Guidance 7 The Countryside - Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development*

## **1. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 David Tyldesley and Associates have been commissioned by the Rutland County Council to prepare a Landscape Character Assessment for the County of Rutland. The work was commissioned in February 2003 and completed in early June 2003, with all field work having been undertaken in March 2003.
- 1.2 The environmental quality of the County of Rutland, particularly of the landscape, is very high. It is widely appreciated by residents and visitors. It makes a substantial contribution to the quality of life in the County.
- 1.3 The County Council recognises that the landscape is dynamic. It is the result of the interaction of natural influences, such as geology, soils, climate and vegetation growth, and the actions of people over thousands of years. The landscape will continue to change. This assessment of landscape character identifies what is important and distinctive about the Rutland landscape, so that in managing future change we can conserve and enhance, and where necessary restore, that distinctiveness and the characteristics that make Rutland special and gives the County its sense of place.
- 1.4 This report explains what landscape character is and how it is assessed. It describes the five main landscape character types in Rutland, which we call High Rutland, The Welland Valley, The Vale of Catmose, Rutland Water Basin and the Rutland Plateau, see Figure 1.
- 1.5 This report is intended to help the Council and all others involved in development and land use change in the countryside. It will be used to inform the preparation of countryside design guidance and policies and proposals in the development plan.

## 2. INTRODUCTION TO LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

- 2.1 Landscape Character Assessment is a process used to help plan and manage landscape change. It has evolved over the last 30 years or so. This is not the first Landscape Character Assessment for Rutland. The first was carried out in 1976 by the Leicestershire County Council (ref 1). This was refined and updated in 1995, again by the Leicestershire County Council, in conjunction with the Rutland County Council (although the 1995 assessment was not published until 2001) (ref 2). The Landscape character assessment described in this report does not supersede that of 1995, but builds on it and develops it in a way that looks at Rutland in more detail and addresses the specific requirements of this project. Most notably it is at a more detailed scale - 1/25,000.
- 2.2 At the outset it may be useful to explain some of the terms used in landscape character assessment. The definitions are consistent with terminology in good practice publications by the Countryside Agency (ref (3 at pages 8 - 9) and Landscape Institute (ref 4 at pages 12 - 13 and 119 - 121). It helps to explain that landscape character assessment is not entirely subjective but based on a blend of objective assessment and subjective judgement of professional landscape planners. All of these various expressions are used in this report.
- 2.3 Landscape **Elements** - these are the individual components which make up the landscape including, for example in Rutland, hills, valleys, rivers, woods, trees, hedges, ponds, stone walls, buildings and roads. They are visible, physical components which generally are capable of being measured and quantified and they can easily be described in an objective way.
- 2.4 Landscape **Features** - these are particularly prominent or eye-catching elements such as a tree clump on a hill top, a church spire, conspicuous buildings such as Burley on the Hill or telecommunication masts and ridges that form the skyline.
- 2.5 Landscape **Characteristics** - these are components of the landscape, or combinations of them, that make a particular contribution to the character of an area. They will therefore include combinations of the physical elements and features but will also include aspects of landscape experience which are not of a physical nature. Thus, landscape characteristics may be **visible and physical** elements as already described above, or they may be **visible and spatial but not physical** characteristics such as scale, pattern, colour and texture. There may also be **non-visible characteristics** of the landscape which, although they cannot be seen, can influence our experience of a landscape and include sound, smell, temperature and our prior knowledge of the history or artistic or cultural associations with the landscape. The non-physical characteristics of the landscape are more difficult to describe objectively. They can rarely be measured or quantified but their contribution to landscape character is just as important as the physical elements.
- 2.6 Landscape **Character** - this is the distinct and recognisable pattern of elements, features and characteristics that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape. It reflects particular combinations of, for example, geology, landform (the shape of the land), soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement. It creates the distinctiveness, identity and the sense of place which makes one landscape different from another. The recognition and understanding of landscape character is fundamental to contemporary landscape planning and landscape management which seek to manage change in the landscape in ways that will generally conserve, enhance and, where necessary, restore its

character as an important contribution to sustainable development and quality of life.

- 2.7 **Landscape Classification** - this is the process of identifying the character of different landscapes in any particular area and sorting them into distinctive **landscape character types**. The landscape character types can be mapped and described in a systematic way at various scales, ranging from national to local, a process referred to as landscape characterisation.
- 2.8 **Landscape Characterisation** - this is the process of identifying areas of similar character, classifying, mapping and describing them. It is a fundamental part of landscape character assessment. England=s national landscape characterisation is expressed in the Countryside Agency=s Character of England Map (ref 5)
- 2.9 **Landscape Character Assessment** - this is the whole process of landscape classification, characterisation, understanding the history and evolution of the landscape, identifying pressures and trends for change in the landscape and often producing guidelines to advise on the management of landscape change. This process is widely endorsed and encouraged by the Government in national planning guidance (re 6) and by the Countryside Agency (ref 4).
- 2.10 **Landscape Evaluation** - this is a different and separate process from landscape character assessment. It is the valuation of different areas or landscapes, normally against a set of pre-defined criteria. The evaluation process may, or may not, classify or characterise the landscape in the way described above, but it always relies on judgements being made as to the relative worth or value of landscapes for different interests or groups or to underpin designations. Landscape evaluation may lead to designations such as, in the case of Rutland, Areas of Particularly Attractive Countryside, and elsewhere, National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 2.11 **Landscape Capacity** - this is the capability of a landscape to accommodate a particular kind of change, for example, increased woodland cover or new built development. It is usually expressed in relative, rather than absolute, terms. For some changes there may be identifiable thresholds or limits of acceptable change beyond which the character of a landscape would be changed in negative or positive ways. For most changes, however, capacity is a relative measure expressing how increasing levels of change increasingly affect landscape character.
- 2.12 **Landscape Impact Assessment** - the process of assessing the effects of one or more proposed changes to the landscape, as a resource in its own right, how its character may be changed, beneficially or adversely, by changes to its elements, features or characteristics. Usually the effects (impacts) are judged as a relative degree of change and expressed in terms such as substantial, moderate or slight adverse or beneficial impacts etc. In this context beneficial impacts would strengthen, enhance, restore or otherwise improve the distinctiveness of landscape character. Adverse impacts would diminish or eliminate distinctiveness, remove characteristic elements and / or add uncharacteristic elements and thereby damage landscape character.
- 2.13 **Visual amenity** - the benefit or advantages gained from a view in terms of what is seen and may be enjoyed by an observer.
- 2.14 **Visual Impact Assessment** - the process of assessing the effect of one or more proposed changes to views that are experienced by people and how the changes may affect the (visual) amenity of the view, beneficially or adversely. For example, a view

may be impeded, narrowed or shut off (visual obstruction), views of unsightly features may be hidden (screened) or partly hidden (filtered), new features may be introduced (visual enhancement or intrusion), or features may be removed (visual reduction). Usually the relative degree of change is judged and expressed in terms such as substantial, moderate or slight beneficial or adverse effects on visual amenity.

- 2.15 The **sensitivity of the landscape** depends on a range of factors including its character, its capacity to accommodate a proposed change, its condition and integrity, trends or pressures for change in landscape character and whether it has been identified as a landscape of particular importance in policy terms (eg Areas of Particularly Attractive Countryside). The most sensitive landscapes are those with limited capacity to accommodate the proposed change, landscapes with a particularly typical or distinctive character which has historical continuity and integrity, rare landscape types, designated landscapes and landscapes that have been specifically designed or planned for visual amenity eg designed landscapes or parklands forming the setting of a country house.

### 3. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES IN RUTLAND

- 3.1 The 1995 Landscape Character Assessment identified four landscape character types in Rutland. These four types were High Leicestershire, Vale of Catmose, Cottesmore Plateau and Welland Valley. They remain valid at the broad, strategic level of Leicestershire and Rutland combined. The High Leicestershire, Welland Valley and Plateau types remain unchanged in this study of Rutland, although two of them are renamed for reasons explained below. Their boundaries have been refined and mapped at a more detailed level (though the changes between landscape character types are sometimes sharp and sometimes transitional) and they have been sub-divided to provide a more detailed assessment of their character to help to inform the guidance. Their boundaries are generally consistent with those in the 1995 Landscape Character Assessment (ref 2).
- 3.2 This more detailed assessment, of the County of Rutland only, also allowed a more subtle appreciation of the variations within and between the landscape types in Rutland. Most notably, at the Rutland scale, Rutland Water and its setting is a much more important and distinctive landscape. It is considered that, at County level, the basin of Rutland Water is a landscape character type in itself, rather than a sub-division of the Vale of Catmose. Whilst the area to the west of the reservoir (south of Oakham) lies in the Vale of Catmose, the area of the reservoir is located in the Gwash Valley, running west to east across the plateau of higher land. The river cut out the basin-like valley area now comprising the reservoir and its immediate surroundings. A fifth landscape character type has therefore been generated in this study - Rutland Water Basin.
- 3.3 As this is a Rutland only assessment, the name of the High Leicestershire landscape character type is inappropriate and is renamed High Rutland.
- 3.4 Further, a more detailed examination of the areas previously classified as the Cottesmore Plateau indicate that the plateau landscapes are much more extensive than the area around Cottesmore. In the context of this Rutland study, the whole of the eastern part of the County is an extensive plateau (with subtle variations and cut by some valleys) and it would be more appropriate to rename the area as The Rutland Plateau and to classify sub-areas of the type to reflect the subtle variations within it, as may be expected, one such sub-area is the Cottesmore Plateau.
- 3.5 Consequently, despite the remaining validity of the 1995 Landscape Character Assessment generally at the strategic scale, this study re-classifies the Rutland landscapes as follows (see Figure 1 and detailed plans 1 - 10) for the spatial extent of the areas:
- A. High Rutland - in the west and central parts of the County, here sub-divided into:
    - i. Leighfield Forest
    - ii. Ridges and Valleys
    - iii. Eyebrook Valley
    - iv. Chater Valley
  - B. Vale of Catmose -a single unit to the north and south of Oakham and including the town of Oakham.
  - C. Rutland Water Basin - a single unit of a distinctive landscape type based on the

reservoir and its immediate surroundings.

- D. Rutland Plateau in the north and east of the County, here sub-divided into the:
  - i. Cottesmore Plateau
  - ii. Clay Woodlands
  - iii. Gwash Valley
  - iv. Ketton Plateau
  
- E. Welland Valley - along much of the southern boundary of the County because the River Welland forms the boundary with Northamptonshire, here subdivided into
  - i. Middle Valley West (Caldecott - Seaton)
  - ii Middle Valley East (Barrowden - Tinwell).

3.6 These landscape Character Types and Sub-Areas are summarised in Table 1 and described in sections 5 - 9 below.

<b>Table 1 Landscape Classification</b>		
<b>Landscape Character Type Leicestershire and Rutland Study</b>	<b>Landscape Character Type this Study</b>	<b>Landscape Character Sub Area</b>
High Leicestershire	A. High Rutland	Ai. Leighfield Forest
		Aii. Ridges and Valleys
		Aiii. Eyebrook Valley
		Aiv. Chater Valley
Vale of Catmose	B. Vale of Catmose	B. Vale of Catmose
	C. Rutland Water Basin	C. Rutland Water Basin
Cottesmore Plateau	D. Rutland Plateau	Di. Cottesmore Plateau
		Dii. Clay Woodlands
		Diii. Gwash Valley
		Div. Ketton Plateau
Welland Valley	E. Welland Valley	E.1 Middle Valley West (Caldecott - Seaton)
		Eii. Middle Valley East (Barrowden - Tinwell)



## 4. THE LANDSCAPE OF HIGH RUTLAND

### (Area A, Figure 1 and Maps 1- 4, 7 and 8, Photograph Sheet 1)

- 4.1 In Rutland, the High Leicestershire landscape character type generally comprises the eastern part of a large hilly plateau, located mainly in Leicestershire and extending from Leicester and the Soar Valley in the east, across south-east Leicestershire, over the Rutland border and eastward towards Oakham and Ketton. It is related to the English Nature Natural Area called "Trent Valley and Rises" and to the "High Leicestershire" and "Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds" regional character areas of the Countryside Agency. The geology is of ironstone and clays often overlain with boulder clay or, in the valleys, alluvium. High Rutland forms part of the watershed between the Soar - Trent - Humber and the Welland catchments. It is dissected by radiating rivers and streams which have formed steep sided valleys separated by ridges. This gives the whole area the distinctive steeply rolling landform familiar to travellers who are either continually ascending and descending the steep slopes or travelling along the ridges enjoying panoramic views across the surrounding countryside.
- 4.2 The highest parts of the landscape character type in Rutland reach over 190 metres AOD. Much of High Rutland is deeply rural and locally feels relatively remote. A distinctive feature is the network of narrow gated roads connecting isolated hamlets and farms. The only major roads within the area are the A47 running east to west and the A6003 running north to south, neither of which is seriously visually intrusive in the landscape but they do create a busier, noisier ambience in the main road corridors.
- 4.3 Land use is a mixture of arable on the flatter and more gently sloping ridge areas and grassland mainly on the steeper slopes and in the valley bottoms. Ridge and furrow is fairly well distributed throughout the area and reflects the intensity of arable cultivation here in the early Middle Ages. Field ponds are also characteristic. The field pattern is mainly one of regularly shaped fields bounded by thorn hedges with mainly ash, and in a few places oak, as hedgerow trees. These enclosure hedges contrast with the older mixed species hedges that form the more sinuous parish boundaries.
- 4.4 Throughout the area, but especially in Leighfield Forest, some hedgerows are substantial and many still perform an important function in this pastoral landscape, providing containment, shelter and shade for stock. Whilst a number of hedges have been neglected, relatively few have been removed and there is evidence of the increasing practice of traditional hedgerow management by laying, protection of hedgerow trees and fencing of new field and hedgerow trees to protect them from grazing animals. A number of hedgerow trees are over-mature, including some left isolated in the fields when associated hedgerows were removed, these need careful maintenance and surgery to extend their lives and replacement to ensure continuity of hedgerow tree cover. Some ponds are being cleaned, restored and nurtured demonstrating that all these important contributions to landscape character can still be practicable today.
- 4.5 Whilst horse-keeping helps to maintain the pastoral character, a number of the fields are over-grazed. The use of inappropriate fencing and the accumulation of stables, barns and other, usually temporary and unsightly, buildings, vehicles, lighting and clutter detracts from the generally unspoilt rural character and is particularly intrusive in views of, to and from the villages.

4.6 Woodland is a significant feature throughout the area reflecting the old Leighfield Forest. The woodlands tend to be broadleaved, mainly ash and oak, but there are also mixed conifer and broadleaved plantations associated with 19th century sporting estates and a number of mature poplar plantations. In general the woodlands tend to be even aged. Parkland is an important component of the landscape in some parts. Other concentrations of sites of ecological value are provided by small streams, ponds, disused railway lines and Eyebrook Reservoir.

4.7 Whilst the Leighfield Forest and Chater Valley sub-areas have remained pastoral and well wooded, elsewhere there has been extensive conversion or reversion to arable with attendant loss of pasture, woodland, field boundaries, hedgerow trees and small pockets of semi-natural vegetation. However, in parts new woodland planting is quite extensive; the Woodland Trust has new plantations between Oakham and Braunston-in-Rutland. Some parkland landscapes are in good condition, others urgently need restoration and reinstatement of good management practice.

**Leighfield Forest (Sub-area Ai, Figure 1 and Maps 1- 3, Photograph Sheet 1)**

4.8 This sub area is in the far west of the County. It has a particularly dramatic topography with very steep slopes and generally narrower ridges than in the rest of High Rutland. Some ridges are so narrow that travelling over them is like crossing a hump-backed bridge. The ridges are high giving very panoramic, long-distance views out, some extending right across Rutland to the Rutland Plateau.

4.9 It is a deeply rural, pastoral, wooded landscape with a strong sense of place and history. The valleys are generally narrow, enclosed, steep-sided and intimate in character, the ridges are high, long, narrow and steep with pronounced shoulders or other distinct profiles. Pasture is almost everywhere that is not woodland. The fields are generally improved or semi-improved pasture grazed mainly by cattle and sheep, but also by horses particularly near the villages.

4.10 There is a distinct feeling of antiquity with many noticeable historical features including extensive ridge and furrow, medieval ponds and earthworks, ancient tracks, ancient mixed species hedgerows, large veteran trees, Saxon and medieval settlements and settlement patterns, medieval lost villages, and many very old buildings including houses, outbuildings and doocots. Farms are notably mainly in the villages and the general lack of buildings out in the open countryside adds to its very rural, rather isolated nature.

4.11 The landscape is perceived as the most densely wooded in Rutland. Although the woods are not as large as in the Eye Brook Valley or on the Clay Woodlands on the Rutland Plateau, they are much more frequent and tree cover is dense. There are thousands of trees in the hedgerows and copses, small woods and shelter belts and along the roadsides where they plunge into cuttings or narrow valleys the sides of which are too steep to mow.

4.12 Leighfield Forest is popular with walkers and is crossed by the Leighfield / Macmillan Way and the Leicestershire Round with many other rights of way giving good access on foot to the remoter areas, despite the absence of metalled roads in many parts which are accessible otherwise only by gated tracks. The long, narrow, sheltered, often

intimate single track roads penetrate deep into the countryside. The area has many small ponds and strips of wetland habitats along the streams but most of the ecological interest of the area is in the woodlands, pastures and hedgerows.

- 4.13 The only settlement is Belton-in-Rutland.

**Recommended Landscape Objectives High Rutland - Leighfield Forest**

To sustain and reinforce the small-scale, deeply rural, remote, still, calm, quiet, green, pastoral, well-wooded landscape, its dramatic topography of intimate, enclosed valleys and high, steep-sided ridges, its deep sense of antiquity and historical continuity, its many historic landscape features and its attraction as an area for quiet walking along well maintained rights of way, including the gated roads and tracks characteristic of the area.

**Ridges and Valleys (Sub-area Aii, Figure 1 and Maps 1- 4, 7 and 8)**

- 4.14 This extensive part of west, south and central Rutland has typical generic landscape elements, features and characteristics of High Rutland but differs from Leighfield Forest by lacking the sense of rural isolation and having a much more open, regular, geometric field pattern (exacerbated by some boundary removal) with fewer, low-cut or gappy hedges, fewer hedgerow trees and less enclosure. The ridges and valleys are evident but not as pronounced as to the west. There are fewer woodlands and those that occur tend to be enclosure or post-enclosure, straight-edged plantations. In parts there are a number of small plantations and some of the valley streams have linear strips of woodland or narrow, linear wetland habitats.
- 4.15 Mixed or arable farming prevails with a variety of crops and intensively managed, improved grasslands grazed by cattle and sheep. There are more farm steadings in the countryside and more and larger farm buildings.
- 4.16 Although the sub-area does exhibit a number of historic features, with ridge and furrow and old lanes linking medieval villages still characteristic, this part of High Rutland has a less obvious feeling of antiquity and continuity. It is busier and noisier with the main roads passing through it, settlements are more frequent and larger (including Uppingham) and settlement pattern much denser, especially between North and South Luffenham and Uppingham. Roads, railways and disused railways form important linear features sometimes seeming to run against the grain of the ridges and valleys which run generally east - west.
- 4.17 The northern-most part of the sub-area, around Whissendine, differs from the rest of the sub-area in that it is more obviously a transition from the characteristic High Leicestershire / High Rutland landscapes to the west and the Vale of Catmose to the east. Notably, the ridges and valleys tend to run generally north - south rather than east west and the ridges are more rounded and lower, and the valleys shallower, than in the rest of the sub-area.
- 4.18 It differs from the Eyebrook Valley because it does not generally exhibit the same large scale valley structure and character, being more like a series of ridges and smaller valleys, some of which have no noticeable watercourse at all. Another distinguishing feature is the density of settlement pattern and larger size of the villages.
- 4.19 The settlements are Ayston, Bisbrooke, Braunston-in-Rutland, Brooke, Glaston, Lyndon, Morcott, North Luffenham, Pilton, Preston, Ridlington, South Luffenham, Uppingham, Whissendine and Wing.

**Recommended Landscape Objectives High Rutland - Ridges and Valleys**

To sustain and restore the rural, mixed-agricultural, busy, colourful, diverse landscape with regular patterns, straight lines, frequent movement, many large and small historic, stone-built conservation villages that fit well with the landform, to protect the landscape setting and conserve and enhance the edges of villages, to increase the woodland cover and other semi-natural habitats whilst protecting historic features and panoramic views from the ridges.

**Eyebrook Valley (Sub-area Aiii, Figure 1 and Maps 3 and 4, Photograph Sheet 1)**

- 4.20 This sub-area is, in places, similar to Leighfield Forest but differs in its larger scale, fewer hedgerow trees but very large, single, Parish woods at Wardley Wood and Stoke Dry Wood. Historic features are still evident in ridge and furrow, the lost medieval village of Snelston and the impressive motte and bailey at Castle Hill. However, around Eyebrook Reservoir the slopes are more gradual and the drowned-valley landscape is more open and utilitarian with larger, predominantly arable fields set out in more obvious geometric patterns and lower cut hedges with few hedgerow trees, around the modern landscape of the reservoir. The water birds on and around the reservoir and along the Eye Brook are an important feature of the valley. The reservoir is a popular destination for fishing, bird watching and other informal recreation.
- 4.21 The A6003 north of Caldecott runs along the ridge separating the Eyebrook Valley from the Welland Valley and provides good views of both.
- 4.22 The only settlements are Stoke Dry and Wardley.

**Recommended Landscape Objectives High Rutland - Eye Brook Valley**

To sustain and restore the broad, generally open, rural, agricultural, diverse valley landscape dominated by the river, reservoir and large woodlands and the regular field pattern. To improve the landscape fit of Stoke Dry in the setting of the reservoir, to protect historic features and their settings and the wetland wildlife, and increase woodland and other semi-natural habitats.

**The Chater Valley (Sub area Aiv, Figure 1 and Maps 3 and 7)**

- 4.23 Part of this narrow valley in the Ridges and Valleys sub-area is classified separately because, although small in area, it is distinctly different to the landscape around. It is a narrow, intimate, sheltered valley with a particularly high level of tree cover in woodlands, roadside and railway-side tree belts, hedgerow trees and copses. It has more sinuous lines and irregular patterns in a less colourful predominantly green landscape.
- 4.24 In places it is dominated by the railway and its structures of embankments, cuttings and bridges as it runs the length of this section of the valley which is also crossed by the A6121. The railway creates sudden bursts of noise as a train rattles by but otherwise this valley is very like those in Leighfield Forest, quiet, calm and rural. Despite being

overlooked by villages such as Pilton, Lyndon and North Luffenham and from the narrow lanes along the shoulders of the upper valley slopes the valley feels secluded, away from the noise and movement of the A47. Like Leighfield Forest it also has many trees and historical features such as earthworks.

4.25 There are no villages in the Chater Valley sub area.

**Recommended Landscape Objectives High Rutland - Chater Valley**

To sustain and reinforce the small-scale, enclosed, intimate, rural, quiet, calm, well-wooded and pastoral valley with its semi-natural habitats, notable lack of villages and very few buildings. To protect its historic features and carefully control any road, railway, water services or other infrastructure improvements in the valley, including any further modifications to the river and its riparian features and habitats.

**Settlement Form and Pattern in High Rutland**

4.26 In addition to Uppingham and the 17 villages in High Rutland there are a number of farmsteads and occasional other buildings in the landscape. In Leighfield Forest villages are generally widely distributed and the settlement pattern is less dense than any other part of Rutland. Most of the High Rutland villages are located in a belt of denser settlement from Uppingham to North Luffenham and from Rutland Water south to the string of villages on or close to the A47. Braunston-in-Rutland and Brooke are unusual in that they are located close to the river in the bottom of the Gwash valley. Almost all other settlements in High Rutland are located:

- a on or close to ridge tops eg Ayston, Bisbrooke, Glaston, Ridlington, Wardley and Wing (see figure 2(a)); or
- b on high mounds / hills and spilling down the upper slopes eg Belton-in-Rutland, Morcott, North Luffenham and Preston (see figure 2(b)); or
- c on a shoulder or crest of land high up the valley slope, but below the ridge top eg Lyndon, Pilton and Stoke Dry (see figure 2(c)).

**Figure 2 Typical Locations of Villages High Rutland**

4.27 The villages vary in form, most are compact and fit well into the landform although a few have had modern extensions in the form of one or more ribbons along the frontage of approach roads. The villages are generally:

- a linear - along a single main street with little development in depth, and either with bends (figure 3) eg Lyndon, Pilton and Wardley, or quite straight (figure 4) eg Ayston, Brooke, Stoke Dry, Whissendine and Preston although the latter village has been modified by some frontage development along the realigned A6003 which by-passes the narrow main street;

**Figure 3 Linear village with bends**

**Figure 4 Straight linear village**

- b quadrangular - developed around a square of four roads, sometimes of approximately equal length (figure 5) eg Glaston, sometimes elongated into a long rectangle (figure 6) eg Braunston-in-Rutland, Morcott, Ridlington which reflects the Saxon / Medieval historic layout of the main street and back lane with linking tracks or lanes; or

**Figure 5  
Quadrangular with 4 nearly equal roads**

**Figure 6  
Quadrangular elongated rectangle**

- c complex nucleated - clustered around a more complex historic road pattern

which may be two rectangles or triangles (figure 7) eg Bisbrooke and Wing; or

**Figure 7 Complex village core two rectangles or triangles**

d complex extended - where the old village layout is still evident in a historic core but the form of the village has changed more markedly as a result of 19th and 20th century developments eg Belton-in-Rutland, North and South Luffenham and Whissendine which although still quite linear, has been substantially extended by modern developments.

4.28 All of the villages are very distinctive in their character, most are rural, quiet, historic villages that still exhibit a strong agricultural / estate village character eg Ayston, Braunston-in-Rutland, Bisbrooke, Brooke, Lyndon, Pilton and Stoke Dry but some experience the intrusion of traffic noise, where the village lies astride, or even close to, the main roads eg Glaston, Morcott, Preston and Wardley. Others have a rather busier ambience with a mix of farming and other rural businesses or a more obvious dependence of residents travelling to work in the nearby towns eg Belton-in-Rutland, Ridlington, North and South Luffenham, Whissendine and Wing.

4.29 Most villages are intimate and tightly enclosed, perhaps looking inwards to the street, a village green, open field or church (see figure 8) eg Ayston, Glaston, Lyndon, Morcott, Pilton Preston, Ridlington, South Luffenham (historic core), Wardley and Wing. Others are more open in character and / or outward looking from elevated positions eg Bisbrooke, Brooke, North Luffenham and Stoke Dry.

**Figure 8 Orientation of Village Buildings**

**Inwards**

**Outwards**

- 4.30 The villages tend to fall into three types in relation to their building materials:
- a in the west some are characterised by a dominance of buildings of coursed rubble ironstone sometimes with dressed / angled limestone quoins and usually with roofs of Collyweston or blue slate or thatch and few other materials eg Ayston, Bisbrooke, Brooke, Preston, Ridlington and Wardley;
  - b in the east some are characterised by limestone, some with ironstone, brick and render and roofs of slate with some thatch and tile eg Glaston, Lyndon and Morcott;
  - c other villages have a greater variety of materials but are nevertheless very harmonious despite a sometimes eclectic mix eg Belton-in-Rutland, Braunston-in-Rutland, North and South Luffenham and Whissendine.
- 4.31 Generally, farm buildings are located in the villages but those that are in the fields tend to be either relatively modern buildings in good condition (though some are no longer used and could decline), or buildings of some 30 + years old that are in highly variable condition, some in a state of collapse.
- 4.32 Radio telecommunication masts are located on several of the higher ridges and are conspicuous over large areas.



## 5. THE LANDSCAPE OF THE VALE OF CATMOSE

### (Area B, Figure 1 and Maps 1 - 3, Photograph Sheet 2)

- 5.1 The Vale of Catmose lies mainly within the County of Rutland, with a small part of its northern area extending into Leicestershire where it abuts the Leicestershire Wolds and Wreake Valley landscape character areas. The Vale stretches down from the north west boundary of the county to the western shores of Rutland Water, south of Oakham. It comprises a broad, generally flat-bottomed valley basin surrounded by the higher land of High Rutland (to the west), the Wolds (to the north) and the Rutland Plateau (to the east). This contrast is at its most dramatic where Burley House overlooks the Vale and Rutland Water Basin from its commanding position on the edge of the Cottesmore Plateau. The Vale of Catmose lies in the Countryside Agency's "Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds" regional character area and English Nature's "Trent Valley and Rises" Natural Area. Its geology is principally ironstone and limestone overlain in part by glacial tills.
- 5.2 A key characteristic of much of the Vale is that of an open valley basin created by the edges, shoulders, ridges and slopes of the surrounding hills and plateaux, the skylines of which are frequently wooded. The Vale is typically distinguished by its lower lying land, absence of the dramatic series of ridges and dips of High Rutland and the characteristic enclosure of a vale contrasting sharply with the more exposed plateau to the east. The classic 'vale' landscape of meadows and fields gently rises in altitude towards the north from the outskirts of Oakham. In its northern extremity, the distinction in relief and character between the Vale and the Cottesmore Plateau is more subtle. Land within the Vale typically ranges from about 80m AOD in the lower areas to about 120m AOD on the tops of the rolling hills.
- 5.3 The Vale comprises a mix of arable land, which is located mainly on the slopes, and pasture, which is located mainly on the valley bottom. The Vale contributes significantly to the pastoral landscapes of west Rutland. There is relatively little tree cover and fields are generally quite regular in shape and relatively larger in size than in the High Rutland hills. Fields are bounded by low-cut, often gappy, hawthorn hedges with occasional ash trees forming noticeable features where they have survived in the open, arable fields.
- 5.4 Throughout the Vale there is evidence of field boundary loss, particularly where arable farming is prevalent. Elsewhere, hedgerow maintenance has declined or has been limited to cutting by mechanical flails, so hedgerows have become generally very low and gappy, often supplemented with post and rail fencing. The hedgerow trees are, in places, less frequent or over-mature. These characteristics are particularly noticeable along the Oakham Road, just north of the town and around Ashwell where there is also evidence of non-agricultural use of the land for horse grazing and stabling. However, this is not a uniform characteristic as there are pockets of land in the northern extremities of the Vale, where there is evidence of a better maintained agricultural landscape with more substantial, stock-proof hedges, although even here field sizes are still relatively large, showing some evidence of intensification of agriculture over recent decades.
- 5.5 There are a number of linear features in the Vale including the disused Oakham - Melton Mowbray canal, the Leicester - Melton - Oakham railway line and the A606 Melton -

Oakham Road. The Vale also contains a number of electricity transmission lines. The canal retains water in places and, along with its riparian vegetation, is a locally significant feature in both landscape and ecological terms. The railway line also has some ecologically interesting, linear features within its shallow cuttings and along its low embankments which appear to have been relatively unaffected by the intensive arable farming alongside. The railway, in places, foreshortens or restricts views across the Vale and locally creates a more enclosed landscape where it intersects with field boundaries. The road and railway introduce some noise and movement into an otherwise quiet, calm, rural landscape; but it is the jet aeroplanes flying overhead from RAF Cottesmore that are more disturbing to the character of the Vale.

- 5.6 The low-lying, flat or gently undulating land form of the Vale means that views across it are limited and settlements are not generally visually prominent from within the Vale, although they can be from the surrounding higher land. Roads across the Vale tend to be straight and narrow.
- 5.7 Other elements of landscape character include a series of small streams running generally west-east across the Vale and a significant network of small field ponds, particularly around Langham, although neither are visually pronounced. The Vale is crossed by a series of minor roads, tracks and other rights of way radiating from most of the villages and there is a sporadic distribution of fox coverts and farmsteads outside the villages.

#### **Recommended Landscape Objectives for the Vale of Catmose**

To conserve, enhance and, where necessary, restore the generally quiet, calm, rural, pastoral or mixed-agricultural vale character, with its compact stone and tile villages, regular field pattern across a broad, generally flat-bottomed valley basin surrounded by higher land and wooded skylines. To increase woodland cover throughout the Vale especially with small - medium sized, linear woodlands and belts of native broadleaved species which would strengthen the form and line of the landscape and link existing woodlands and other semi-natural habitats. To safeguard the landscape setting of Oakham.

#### **Settlement Form and Pattern in the Vale of Catmose**

- 5.8 The historic, market town of Oakham is the largest settlement in the County and lies towards the southern end of the Vale. It nestles in the narrowest part of the Vale between the slopes of Leighfield Forest on High Rutland to the west and the promontory of high land at Burley-on-the-Hill to the east projecting from the Rutland Plateau. The way that Oakham nestles in the gap between the surrounding hills is important to the setting of the town and gives it a strong relationship with the Vale landscape. The town takes a relatively compact form with well defined boundaries to the west, south and east, which to the east and west are influenced by the confining hills, providing a particularly strong relationship between the town and its landscape setting.
- 5.9 To the north the edge between the Vale and the town is less abrupt, and being characterised by industrial and rail related development, it consequently displays 'urban fringe' characteristics. To the south east of Oakham is Rutland Water reservoir - the flooded valley of the upper river Gwash.

- 5.10 Apart from Oakham, the settlements comprise small to moderately sized villages - Ashwell, Barleythorpe, Egleton, Langham and Teigh. Ashwell Prison lies between Langham and Burley and there are a number of farm farmsteads and occasional other buildings in the landscape. Except for Oakham, Barleythorpe and Langham, which are close together along the A606, the villages are well distributed and widely spaced across the Vale. They are of generally complex but nevertheless, compact form around a nucleus of historic lanes and are located on the banks of the small streams crossing the Vale. Only Langham has experienced significant 20th C expansion beyond its medieval layout but this is still clearly distinguishable in the series of narrow, parallel lanes. Ashwell, Egleton and Teigh in particular have retained much of their agricultural character with working farms within or close to their small historic cores. Barleythorpe is affected by the main A606 road which tends to divide the western part of the village, which contains Barleythorpe Hall and parkland, from the eastern part of the village, which contains the Barleythorpe Stud.
- 5.11 The building materials are varied, including ironstone, limestone, red brick and white render with roofs of Collyweston and blue slate, tiles and occasionally thatch.

## **6. THE LANDSCAPE OF RUTLAND WATER BASIN**

### **(Area C, Figure 1 and Maps 2, 3, 6 and 7, Photograph Sheet 2)**

- 6.1 This landscape character type is unique and dominated by Rutland Water. The middle valley of the River Gwash and its northern tributary, flowing from Oakham, were dammed and flooded to create a major new water storage reservoir, now owned and managed by Anglian Water. The flooded valley now has the character of a basin, with the flat expanse of water surrounded by generally low, gently sloping hills to skylines formed by the Rutland Plateau to the north and the High Rutland hills to the south. The Rutland Water Basin lies in the Countryside Agency's "Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds" regional character area and English Nature's "Trent Valley and Rises" Natural Area. Its geology is principally ironstone overlain by glacial till and alluvium.
- 6.2 For the most part, the reservoir is curiously unobtrusive from many of the surrounding roads essentially as a result of the undulating topography and high level of tree cover around its shores. The openness of this huge mass of water is also significantly softened by the presence of the Hambleton peninsular, a long finger of steeply rising land which protrudes deep into the reservoir from the western end. This important landscape feature helps the reservoir to retain a relatively intimate scale despite it being one of the largest man-made water bodies in Great Britain. The flowing landform, surrounding woodlands and the Hambleton peninsula reduce the visual impact of the water and the rawness of such a large artificial landscape feature. Only at the eastern end does the true scale of the reservoir, together with its dam and other infrastructure, become more apparent. The feeling of a large scale landscape is accentuated at the east of the reservoir by the contrast with the lower, enclosed valley below the dam and the exposed windswept conditions of the open water and dam top.
- 6.3 The landform immediately adjacent to the water varies, but most of the basin has a distinct profile, especially along its southern and northern shores, where the land dips sharply down to the water from a shoulder of high ground, effectively obscuring many views of the water below. Alternatively, along its western shores, the landform is characterised by a very gradual down-slope towards the waters edge, particularly around the village of Egleton. Consequently, for significant parts of the Vale of Catmose west of the reservoir the water is totally obscured by the built and vegetational cover, with vistas towards the Hambleton peninsular containing no visible water.
- 6.4 Established, pre-reservoir trees and woodland and subsequent planned landscaping, particularly around the recreational and interpretation centres at Whitwell and Edith Weston combine to provide a surprisingly detailed mosaic of pasture and woodland on the shores. Elsewhere, arable land sweeps down to the shores in large, geometric fields with low cut hedges. The shorelines of Rutland Water vary according to the water level but may include water lapping close to the field edges or noticeable patches or strips of mud between the fields and the water.
- 6.5 The water surface varies considerably in accordance with prevailing weather conditions. It is a flat, bright, reflective, light blue, almost glass-like surface with waterfowl dotted about and boats slowly moving on bright sunny days. In windy and cloudy conditions, storms can create substantial wave energy and the surface breaks up into a rough, dark, grey sea. Through most of the year the waterfowl and boating movements are important

elements in the landscape and the large bird populations and other wetland species have contributed to the national and international importance of the reservoir for wildlife, recognised by the notification of Rutland Water as a Site of Special Scientific Interest by English Nature, and Government designation as a Ramsar site and Special Protection Area for birds of international importance.

- 6.6 Generally, Rutland Water is a large-scale, open, exposed, busy, varied, colourful, modern landscape that is still maturing and evolving from a landscape and ecological point of view. Thus, the rawness of the large scale engineering works and the relatively artificial appearance of the vast water body are slowly changing.

#### **Recommended Landscape Objectives Rutland Water Basin**

To encourage the continued maturity and evolution of the modern reservoir landscape, to enhance its visual amenity and biodiversity and recreational potential and to conserve the best elements of a large-scale, sweeping, open, busy, varied, colourful and modern landscape. To accommodate any new water-related developments into the landform and woodland cover and to avoid inappropriately located or conspicuous developments that would detract from landscape character. To encourage the further establishment and improved management of woodlands, wetlands and other semi-natural habitats.

#### **Settlement Form and Pattern in Rutland Water Basin**

- 6.7 All four of the villages that lie within the basin are located around the 90 - 100m AOD contours, well above the reservoir level that always remains below the 85m AOD contour. Thus, Edith Weston, Upper Hambleton, Manton and Whitwell have an elevated waterside location, albeit the water is not always visible from the villages. Empingham lies beyond the eastern end of the basin, below the level of the dam, in the Rutland Plateau landscape type. All these settlements retain a high quality historic core and all have seen some later development, some of which has not been sympathetic to the traditional village character, although Upper Hambleton and Whitwell have been less affected in this way. The settlements have seen significant development pressure for residential, business, sport and recreational interests generated by the presence and proximity of the reservoir. The MoD barracks at Edith Weston on the Rutland Plateau have a particularly uncharacteristic and utilitarian appearance visible from the Basin.

## 7. THE LANDSCAPE OF THE RUTLAND PLATEAU

(Area D, Figure 1 and Maps 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10, Photograph Sheet 3)

- 7.1 The Rutland Plateau is the area of generally higher land which occupies the north east part of the County, extending from the Welland Valley in the south, and abutting the High Rutland, Rutland Water Basin and Vale of Catmose landscapes to the west. The plateau extends into Lincolnshire and Leicestershire at the northern County boundary. The Plateau dips gently from its highest point (149m AOD) on the ridge above and to the east of the Vale of Catmose, eastward to the lower lying areas around the villages of Ryhall and Essendine, close to the Lincolnshire border, where spot heights close to Ryhall are only 17m AOD.
- 7.2 Whilst the higher parts are generally characteristic of a relatively high, open plateau, the area is cut by significant river valleys, notably those of the River Gwash and the North Brook, above Empingham. The heavier clay soils overlying the limestone in the north-east have led to the retention of large woodlands. The Gwash Valley separates the higher land above Ketton from the main Rutland Plateau to its north. These differences form the basis of the four sub-areas of the plateau.
- 7.3 The plateau includes "The Kesteven Uplands" and part of the "Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds" regional landscape character types in the Countryside Agency's Map of England; and the western part of the "Leicestershire and Rutland Limestone" Natural Area of English Nature. The geology is predominantly Jurassic Limestone with parts overlain by a drift of glacial till and clays. The limestone has been worked for many years as a building stone, in cement manufacture and for general limestone uses. Consequently, several parts have been disturbed by old workings and are in differing stages of restoration eg east of Exton and Greetham villages.
- 7.4 The limestone geology strongly influences the landscape character, through its distinctive landforms (the plateau, scarp and dip slopes, shallow but quite narrow and steep-sided stream valleys), characteristic building materials, typical limestone ecology of semi-natural, species-rich calcareous grasslands and verges and the frequent occurrence of limestone dust on fields, verges and roads. At the Grange Top Quarry at Ketton, the Castle Cement Works represent a large scale modern quarry with a new extension recently permitted, older workings under restoration and an on-site cement manufacturing plant which is locally conspicuous.
- 7.5 More recently, the area has been important in military terms providing a flat and sparsely populated landscape suited to the establishment of airfields and associated barracks. At North Luffenham the military installations, including the barracks at Edith Weston and their associated high security fencing and military clutter are locally intrusive.
- 7.6 In the north of the Plateau is the more intrusive Cottesmore Air base, currently in full military use. The Cottesmore buildings and infrastructure, including those beyond its extensive enclosed area, dominate the surrounding arable agricultural landscape. The significant military housing estate is laid out in a uniform, utilitarian design and bears little resemblance to the character of surrounding historic settlements. The visual impacts of the military installations are experienced together with the noise of high speed, low flying, military aircraft.

- 7.7 The plateau landscape is dissected north to south-east by the A1 trunk road, which through Rutland, follows the line of the original Roman 'Ermine Street'. This intrusion on the character of the area varies in significance and intensity along the road, with some localities markedly affected by the road infrastructure itself and the noise and movement of traffic.
- 7.8 Whilst there are significant variations in the local character of the plateau landscape character type, it is generally distinguishable by its predominantly arable farming land use. Within the broad, geometric network of large, regular fields, enclosed by thorn hedges, is a well-treed and wooded landscape, interspersed with pasture, particularly close to the plateau settlements and within the river valleys of the Gwash and North Brook. The tree cover frequently restricts and encloses vistas out from, and into, the plateau.
- 7.9 Over many parts of the Rutland Plateau the intensification of arable farming has led to the loss or decline of drystone walls and hedgerows emphasising the open, windswept, exposed nature of the elevated plateau. Similarly, the loss of landscape features and the generally level or slightly rolling or dipping landform has resulted in a number of farmsteads becoming more exposed and prominent within the arable landscape, often appearing to be 'perched' on the landscape rather than integrated with it.
- 7.10 Inextricably linked with the plateau's tree cover and occasionally the road network, is the important influence of the parkland and sporting management of the Burley, Exton, Tickencote, and Clipsham estates. These important designed landscapes are particularly concentrated on the plateau north of Rutland Water in a belt extending north-east from the imposing Burley Estate, through Exton and on to Clipsham. Another distinctive feature is the single-sided, broad road verges of the network of lanes resulting from Enclosures Act provisions for specified highway widths. These give the traveller a feeling of openness even on lanes bounded by hedgerows and offer significant ecological interest where unaffected by the adjacent arable farming.
- The Cottesmore Plateau (Sub-Area Di, Figure 1 and Maps 1, 2, 5 and 6)**
- 7.11 The distinctive northern-most sub-area of the Rutland Plateau extends from the northern edge of the Rutland Water Basin, northwards, beyond the county boundary. The Cottesmore Plateau has the most typical plateau-like characteristics of the four sub-areas of the Rutland Plateau. It is predominantly of a level relief but, with the exception of land around Cottesmore air base, it rarely has the characteristic of being flat. Rather it has long, shallow, gradual undulations. Arable farming, with large geometric field patterns is the predominant land use, but this is interspersed with significant amounts of pasture and many trees, both in larger woods and in the distinctive network of hawthorn hedges. This extensive tree cover, typically of Ash within the hedgerows, and Beech, Lime and Sycamore within the plantations is most apparent in the southern section of the Cottesmore Plateau, and is particularly dominant as a landscape feature around the estate and parklands of Burley-on-the-Hill and Exton House.
- 7.12 The influence of the parks at Burley and Exton on tree cover is very significant locally, comprising large planned woodlands and visually stunning avenues and parkland boundaries. Barnsdale Avenue and the landscaped vistas to and from Burley-on-the-Hill are nationally important designed landscapes recognised through inclusion by English Heritage in the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest. The parkland

ambience in the central part of this sub-area is emphasised by the rich heritage of the estate buildings. The landscape is consequently a rich tapestry of tree cover and farmland, a planned but mature landscape where longer vistas are interrupted by the patchwork of tree belts and woods rather than by the topography.

- 7.13 Elsewhere on the Cottesmore Plateau the landscape is of a simpler, more open nature, where large, open, arable fields and low cut thorn hedges allow a clearer reading of the landform. This is particularly characteristic of the northern area around Cottesmore airfield and along the sub area's southern boundary around Whitwell and Empingham Throughout the Cottesmore Plateau the condition of its characteristic field boundary hedges and hedgerow trees varies markedly, with evidence of hedgerow removal especially in the south and over-mature trees.
- 7.14 The soils of the northern and eastern parts of the sub area display clues to the underlying limestone geology, with evidence of limestone fragments within the surface of the otherwise reddish soil. Evidence of a heritage of drystone wall field boundaries is also evident in this area, although these have been poorly maintained and are not prominent in the landscape, being superseded with hedgerows or more recently post and wire fencing. Towards the northern and southern parts of the plateau, isolated farmsteads, often consisting of a complex of large modern agricultural buildings around a small core of traditional farm house and barns, stand prominently on the plateau, served by long linear tracks, devoid of effective landscaping to soften their effect.
- 7.15 Locally, the impact of the minerals extraction industry has interrupted the natural relief of the land. Whilst the land immediately east of Exton Village has generally been assimilated into the gentle undulation of this part of the plateau, it remains a recent landscape, devoid of mature landscape features such as hedgerows and larger trees suggesting a relatively recent, restored landscape.
- 7.16 The eastern fringe of the Cottesmore Plateau is defined by the valley and limestone scarp of the North Brook, signalling the transition to the Clay Woodlands sub-area. To the north of this transition, the A1 trunk road corridor dominates the landscape character with its physical infrastructure and the perception of constant movement and noise in the landscape. As the A1 veers away south eastward the transition is defined by a small area of the more intimate North Brook valley.
- 7.17 The north-south flowing stream of the North Brook lies within its tightly enclosed valley, a distinct incision marking the edge of the gentle dip of the Cottesmore Plateau. Views out of the valley are restricted by relief and the dominant woodlands and spinneys, particularly across its eastern ridge. The road and extensive public rights of way network rises and falls more steeply than elsewhere in the Cottesmore Plateau, allowing the traveller to suddenly encounter hidden development such as Horn Mill. Indeed, it is only off the metalled road network that some of the historical heritage of the plateau becomes accessible, for example, around the remains of the medieval village of Horn, and its hidden, dammed valley at Fort Henry where there is a more tranquil and enclosed ambience infrequently experienced elsewhere on the open Plateau.
- 7.18 By contrast, the northern part of the Cottesmore Plateau is dominated by the airfield and military complex. The hangars, control towers and mast network are prominent across the flatter landform, particularly from the west, where tree cover is less abundant and less effective in softening views of the barracks than from the south and from



Cottesmore village. Austere security fencing defines the perimeter of the airfield. The visible and physical influence of the airfield extends beyond its perimeter because runway approach lights extend eastward towards the A1, appearing as alien structures in the arable fields.

- 7.19 The main settlements on the Cottesmore Plateau are Burley, Cottesmore, Empingham, Exton, Greetham, Market Overton, and Thistleton.

**Recommended Landscape Objectives Rutland Plateau - Cottesmore Plateau**

To conserve and manage the parks, avenues and other designed landscapes and the historic mosaic of agriculture, parkland and woodland wherever it occurs and, elsewhere, the more open, elevated, mixed arable and pastoral agricultural plateau landscapes, restoring and reinstating distinctive features such as hedgerows, hedgerow trees, copses, spinneys, dry stone walls and woodlands especially where they would filter views of the airfields, military barracks and mineral and related industrial operations. To conserve and enhance and where possible extend the semi-natural habitats of species-rich, calcareous grasslands and typical limestone woodlands and to conserve historic landscape features.

**The Clay Woodlands (Sub-area Dii, Figure 1 and Maps 5, 6, 9 and 10, Photograph Sheet 3)**

- 7.20 The Clay Woodlands is an extensive area of gently undulating, predominantly arable countryside in the County east of the North Brook. The key characteristics of this landscape sub-area are the medium to large scale mixed broadleaved and coniferous woodlands within large farming estates such as Holywell, Clipsham, Empingham and Tickencote. These woodlands, predominantly ash and sycamore with oak and blackthorn, are conspicuous features in most views within or into this area. Close to, they enclose views whilst providing an extensive backdrop in most distant views across well maintained farmland.
- 7.21 Mature tree-lined roads are also a feature in the north, for example on the approach to Stocken Park and Clipsham Park. Together with the woodlands, these help to screen the prison at Stocken.
- 7.22 Woodlands are less extensive around the Gwash Valley, where trees are in small copses and where close trimmed hedges alongside large arable fields give a more open feeling to the landscape. This is particularly so in the extreme eastern corner of the County, between Ryhall and Essendine, where the railway line and its tall gantries, high voltage power cables and pylons, and modern housing are intrusive.
- 7.23 The central area of the clay woodlands is a transitional area between the settled estate woodlands to the north and west, and the more open, modern unsettled claylands to the east and south. Numerous outlying farms lie within the central area, such as Grange Farm, Ryhall Heath Farm, Walk Farm, Frith Farm and Taylors Farm. These lie on or close to quiet roads and tracks some of which which are former drove roads used by farmers to move stock to market.
- 7.24 Remnant dry stone walls made of local limestone are characteristic features in some parts of the clay woodlands, probably originating from one of the many small quarries around Clipsham.

- 7.25 The settlements in the Clay Woodlands sub-area are Clipsham, Essendine, Pickworth and Stretton.

**Recommended Landscape Objectives Rutland Plateau - Clay Woodlands:**

To conserve and enhance the large-scale, gently undulating, agricultural landscapes with substantial woodlands and avenues, to enhance the sustainable management of existing woodlands and to create new woodlands in the less wooded parts around the Gwash Valley, especially where they would create skyline features. To improve the edges of the settlements and integrate large structures and modern buildings into the landscape where necessary. To protect historic features such as earthworks and restore characteristic drystone walls.

**The Gwash Valley (Sub-area Diii, Figure 1 and Maps 6 and 9 Photograph Sheet 3)**

- 7.26 The Gwash Valley is a small but distinct landscape sub-area which dissects the Cottesmore and Ketton plateaux from the eastern end of Rutland Water. The section of the valley west of the A1, between Rutland Water and Tickencote, is narrow, sinuous and generally well treed. Although, in parts, close to the busy A1 and A606 Empingham Road, the valley is not conspicuous. It is best appreciated on foot, along the numerous rights of way, including footpaths, bridleways and a section of the Hereward Way national trail.
- 7.27 The section of the valley east of the A1, between Great Casterton and Ryhall is also narrow, sinuous and well treed. However, this section is more noticeable in views down from Ryhall Road along its northern boundary and the minor road running along its southern edge, from Toll Bar to Belmesthorpe via Little Casterton and Ryhall. Here the valley vegetation contrasts sharply with the open arable fields alongside.
- 7.28 This sub-area of the Rutland Plateau contains the settlements of Belmesthorpe, Great Casterton, Little Casterton, Ryhall, Tickencote and Tolethorpe.

**Recommended Landscape Objectives Rutland Plateau - Gwash Valley**

To emphasise and reinforce the river corridor with appropriate planting where presently sparse. To conserve the small-scale, quiet, enclosed, sinuous, rural river valley with its narrow, well-defined valley bottom and gentle arable slopes. To conserve and enhance and where possible extend the semi-natural habitats of species-rich, calcareous grasslands and verges, wetlands and woodlands and to conserve historic landscape features.

**The Ketton Plateau (Sub-area Div, Figure 1 and Maps 6 and 7)**

- 7.29 The Ketton Plateau sub-area occupies the southern-most quadrant of the Rutland Plateau, lying south and south-east of Rutland Water. It displays many of the characteristics of the Cottesmore Plateau, and is distinguished more because of its physical separation from the former (by the incision of the Gwash Valley and the basin of Rutland Water), than its distinctly separate character. However, notably absent are the large designed landscapes of the Cottesmore Plateau. Although gently undulating, the Ketton Plateau also dips gently west to east, with more pronounced dips at its eastern and southern boundaries where it borders the Welland and Chater Valleys.
- 7.30 The plateau is dominated by two significant intrusions into the otherwise agricultural landscape, which like the Cottesmore Plateau is a patchwork of arable and pasture farmland, overlain with less widespread, but nevertheless important woodland cover.

These intrusions are the disused North Luffenham military airfield and the cement works and quarry at Ketton.

- 7.31 As with Cottesmore, the former airfield, which occupies the western extremity of the plateau, has a significant impact on the character of the area by way of its location on the highest part of the plateau, absence of agricultural features and the intrusion of its boundary fencing and military buildings. However, the absence of views into it from the slightly lower lying ground around, means that the dominance of this base is less than that of the larger Cottesmore base to the north. The impact is also softened by the absence of flying operations. The greater impact of the base is the visual intrusion of its barracks on the eastern fringe of Edith Weston, which itself falls within the Rutland Water Basin.
- 7.32 Despite the impact of the scale and contrast of the mineral and industrial operations at the Castle Cement Works on the immediate locality of Ketton (the village of which lies primarily in the Welland Valley,) it has a lower impact on the wider character of the plateau as a whole. This is due in part to the relatively few roads over the plateau. However, it is visible from a number of long distance viewpoints and from the Hereward and Macmillan Ways where the quarry becomes more obvious. Noise and dust from the works emphasise the impact of the industrialised complex on the Plateau and the Welland Valley, although existing woodland and tree belts across its western and northern boundaries reduce the effects on the upper plateau.
- 7.33 The southern boundary of the Ketton Plateau, with the Welland and Chater Valleys, displays an agricultural landscape with less well managed landscape features. Hedgerows are particularly gappy or absent. There are signs of farm diversification with significant Christmas tree plantations to the east of North Luffenham which contrast with the otherwise predominantly broadleaved, mature tree cover.
- 7.34 No settlements beyond the air base complex lie on the Ketton plateau, although there is a network of isolated farmsteads.

#### **Recommended Landscape Objectives Rutland Plateau - Ketton Plateau**

To conserve and manage the parks, avenues and other designed landscapes and the historic mosaic of agriculture, parkland and woodland wherever it occurs and, elsewhere, the more open, elevated, mixed arable and pastoral agricultural plateau landscapes, restoring and reinstating distinctive features such as hedgerows, hedgerow trees, copses, spinneys, dry stone walls and woodlands especially where they would filter views of the airfields, military barracks and mineral and related industrial operations. To conserve and enhance and where possible extend the semi-natural habitats of species-rich, calcareous grasslands and typical limestone woodlands and to conserve historic landscape features.

#### **Settlement Form and Pattern on the Rutland Plateau**

- 7.35 The settlements of the Rutland Plateau are concentrated in two main areas. Firstly, the

dense and regular pattern of villages across the Cottesmore Plateau and northern part of the Clay Woodlands, including Burley, Exton, Cottesmore, Greetham and Stretton, and the smaller settlements of Thistleton and Clipsham. Secondly, the string of settlements along the Gwash Valley which include Empingham, Great Casterton and Ryhall and, between them, the smaller settlements of Tickencote, Ingthorpe, Little Casterton and Belmesthorpe. The village of Essendine on the eastern fringe of the plateau is less well related to these other settlements along the Gwash, and is dominated by the industrial works which lie between its very small historic core and the railway which services the works.

- 7.36 The settlements of Whitwell and Empingham span the transition areas between the Plateau and the Rutland Water Basin, and the Plateau and the Gwash Valley respectively. Apart from isolated farms and the military and minerals industry complexes, settlement is generally absent from the Ketton Plateau sub-area.
- 7.37 The form and built character of the plateau settlements varies but they all exhibit some common characteristics, including the limestone building materials, which add to the distinctiveness of the Plateau landscape. Unsurprisingly, the villages on the Cottesmore Plateau are more elevated and exposed than those associated with the Gwash Valley.
- 7.38 Cottesmore, Greetham, Empingham and Thistleton display a distinct linear form, with development facing the main road, and with secondary roads joining the main streets at right angles. This linear form has been diluted where mainly twentieth century expansion has been carried out with little regard to historic settlement pattern. This is particularly prominent at the east and western ends of Cottesmore village where non-vernacular materials and housing design have resulted in a suburban character detracting from the main green-edged street along which harmonious historic buildings create a sense of place and focus for the village. This problem is less pronounced in the neighbouring settlement of Greetham, where later development has emphasised the dominant form, but where building design has also been less appropriate.
- 7.39 Exton has a complex street pattern around its historic core, dominated by the village green, fronted on all sides by historic buildings giving an intimate character with a harmonious mix of wall and roof materials. However, less sympathetic late twentieth century extension to the south east significantly interrupts its relationship with the surrounding landscape, strongly influenced by the tree cover of the estate.
- 7.40 The main settlements of the Gwash Valley, Great Casterton and Ryhall have been significantly influenced by 19th and 20th century expansion which has affected their historic cores. Ryhall in particular now exhibits a more suburban character, abruptly delineated to its eastern edge by the A6121. Great Casterton's historic form was of 17th and 18th century linear development along Ermine Street, at its crossing of the Gwash. This character, whilst still evident along the main road itself has been diminished by twentieth century expansion to its north.
- 7.41 The little hamlet of Tolethorpe lies towards the centre of this section of the valley, close to the village of Little Casterton. Belmesthorpe lies at the eastern end of the valley, where the river turns westwards and then southwards to join the River Welland south of Stamford. The small, quiet village of Pickworth has a Manor Farm, Church and estate

cottages. Numerous small roads, tracks and footpaths / bridleways radiate from it in all directions, including The Drift, an old drove road, to the east. The village of Tickencote and its estate, including Tickencote Hall Park and Tickencote Lodge Farm, lie within the Gwash Valley west of the A1. Mill Farm, Shacklewell Lodge and Cottage, and Wild's Lodge also lie within or close to this section of the Gwash Valley.

- 7.42 Where unaffected by ubiquitous, utilitarian twentieth century housing or industrial developments, the settlements of the Rutland Plateau display a strong degree of coherence and harmony of building materials. This emphasises their sense of place. Villages are generally a mix of limestone with some ironstone walls, although red brick and white render are also contributors to the mix of colour and texture. Collyweston slate, or later replacement or substitute materials prevail in the roofscape, although blue slate, red pantile (or substitutes) and thatch all play a significant role in village character.

## 8. THE LANDSCAPE OF THE WELLAND VALLEY

### (Area E, Figure 1 and Maps 4, 7, 8 and 10, Photograph Sheet 1)

- 8.1 The Welland Valley landscape character type extends from near Husbands Bosworth in Leicestershire along the southern boundaries of the Counties of both Leicestershire and Rutland eastward to Stamford. By the time the slowly descending waters reach the west boundary of Rutland the valley has already reduced in width so the very extensive, flat-bottomed valley in Leicestershire forms the upper valley, whilst the Rutland sections form much of the middle valley. Beyond Stamford the Welland flows through its lower valley across the flat expanse of the Fens to the Wash. Untypically for a river valley, therefore, as it descends through Rutland, the Welland valley is narrowing rather than widening. The river also forms the County boundary with Northamptonshire so this part of the Welland Valley landscape character type lies partly in Rutland and partly in Northamptonshire.
- 8.2 The Welland Valley is partly in the Countryside Agency's "Northamptonshire Vales" regional landscape character type, partly in "High Leicestershire" and, in Northamptonshire, in the "Rockingham Forest" area. English Nature has classed the valley partly in the "West Anglian Plain" and again, in Northamptonshire, in the "Rockingham Forest" Natural Area. The geology is principally ironstone and clay, overlain by a drift of alluvium. Generally, the Welland Valley is a relatively busy, agricultural, modern landscape with many settlements and distinctive valley profiles. The river is not prominent but it has a series of exaggerated meanders. The sinuous landform, which contains the river, has caused large loops to be created in the line of the river (eg east of Barrowden and east of Tixover). It has also caused many smaller meanders both in the straighter lengths of river and even within the larger scale, looping meanders themselves.
- The Middle Valley West (Caldecott - Seaton) (Area Ei, Figure 1 and Maps 4 and 8)**
- 8.3 From Caldecott to Seaton the valley averages about two kilometres in width with the river running approximately down the centre. However, there is a pronounced northward extension created by a small almost insignificant stream running off the High Leicestershire ridge by Gypsy Hollow Lane, south of Uppingham. In this side valley the village of Lyddington has taken advantage of the sheltered location nestling between the Uppingham Road ridge to the west and Prestley Hill to the east. This western part of the Valley in Rutland is typical of much of the Valley to the west, having a flat bottom, created by the alluvial plain. Here, the river would have flooded more widely before levees and other engineering structures, such as railway embankments and roads, contained the floodplain to a narrower margin along the river edge. The slopes are very regular, of even gradient and slightly concave form running up from the valley floor to distinct shoulders at the edge of the High Rutland hills, on the Rutland side, and a prominent, even, very straight and linear ridge that forms a distinctive skyline on the Northamptonshire side.
- 8.4 This part of the Valley is predominantly pasture with extensive ridge and furrow in fields grazed by sheep and cattle. The field boundaries are almost entirely hawthorn, well trimmed and neatly maintained although containing few hedgerow trees. There are no significant woodlands and only occasional groups of trees in a field corner or by the river. Together with the width of the valley it creates a relatively open, large scale, sweeping, pastoral, valley landscape with few buildings on the valley floor.

- 8.5 Although the river itself is, for the most part, inconspicuous, there are other more noticeable linear features the most obvious of which is the stunning Welland Viaduct which sweeps the railway across the Valley, between Harringworth and Seaton, on a spectacular series of seemingly endless and innumerable arches. Another, now dismantled railway runs along the whole length of this part of the valley. The roads are also more noticeable in this generally open landscape and they tend to form very straight lines for long distances interrupted by sharp, angular bends.
- 8.6 The settlements are Caldecott, Lyddington and Thorpe-by-the-Water.

**Recommended Landscape Objectives Middle Welland Valley West**

To conserve, enhance and, where necessary restore, the flat, open valley floodplain landscape and valley slopes, to protect and enhance both natural and historic man-made river features, including the bridges, viaduct and wetland habitats and to protect the form and landscape setting of the villages whilst ensuring that they do not encroach onto or along the valley floor.

**The Middle Valley East (Seaton - Tinwell) (Sub-area Eii, Figure 1 and Maps 7, 8 and 10)**

- 8.7 Eastward from the Welland Viaduct the valley changes. It becomes narrower, with steeper, less regular and locally slightly higher slopes. There is significantly more woodland and trees generally, but particularly so on the Northamptonshire side where the valley forms the edge of Rockingham Forest and the skyline is almost continuously wooded from Laxton to Collyweston (both Northants). There are more roadside trees, occasional avenues, willows by the river and copses adding to the more enclosed, smaller scale landscape of this part of the valley. Here, arable land prevails, some field boundaries have been removed and other hedges have not been so well maintained, although some are now being layed, gapped-up and restored.
- 8.8 The river is still not prominent even in this smaller scale valley landscape but views are seen from the various bridges such as the fine, six-arched stone Collyweston Bridge and the Turtle Bridge below Morcott. The Jurassic Way crosses the river at the Turtle Bridge, runs along the valley to Barrowden and then recrosses to Northamptonshire at Wakerley, rejoining the Rutland side below Duddington.
- 8.9 Settlements are Barrowden, Tixover, Ketton and Tinwell.

**Recommended Landscape Objectives Middle Welland Valley East**

To conserve and enhance the more enclosed, wooded, sheltered valley landscape, to protect and enhance both natural and historic man-made river features, including the bridges and wetland habitats and to protect the form and landscape setting of the riverside villages so they do not become more intrusive in the valley.

**Settlement Form and Pattern in the Welland Valley**

- 8.10 Settlements are more widely spaced in the western part of the Middle Valley. The villages of Caldecott, Lyddington and Seaton are well back from the river on the foot of the slopes above the historic floodplain. Thorpe-by-the-Water is very close to, but still

elevated above, the river on a distinct mound which gives the settlement a rather commanding position in the middle valley.

- 8.11 In the Middle Valley East, there are few farmsteads or other buildings in the valley, outside the villages, Tixover Grange being a noticeable exception with a substantial group of buildings quite close to the river. The density of settlement is higher in this part of the Valley. By contrast with the Middle Valley West, in this part all the settlements except Ketton lie very close to or even on the banks of the river, including Barrowden, Duddington (Northants), Tinwell and Tixover, but all stand above the floodplain on mounds, or running along the edge of elevated banks. At Geeston the village of Ketton has spilled into the valley from the lower slopes.
- 8.12 Caldecott is a busy, rather noisy village with heavy traffic passing through on the A6003. It is a complex, but quite compact, shape with extensions around the historic core where there is a more enclosed inward-looking character. It has modern infill and extensions creating a varied mix of styles and materials ranging from traditional ironstone cottages to modern brick houses. Lyddington, by contrast, is a relatively quiet, rural, enclosed, sheltered village with a distinctive, rather linear shape, village green, many important historic features and a prevalence of stone and slate in buildings of vernacular style.
- 8.13 Ketton and Barrowden have particularly large and complex historic cores, contrasting with the simple, linear form of Tixover and (apart from the ribbon to the north) of Tinwell. Despite the modern extensions most of the villages have retained a typical Rutland historic character with a predominance of limestone and slate.

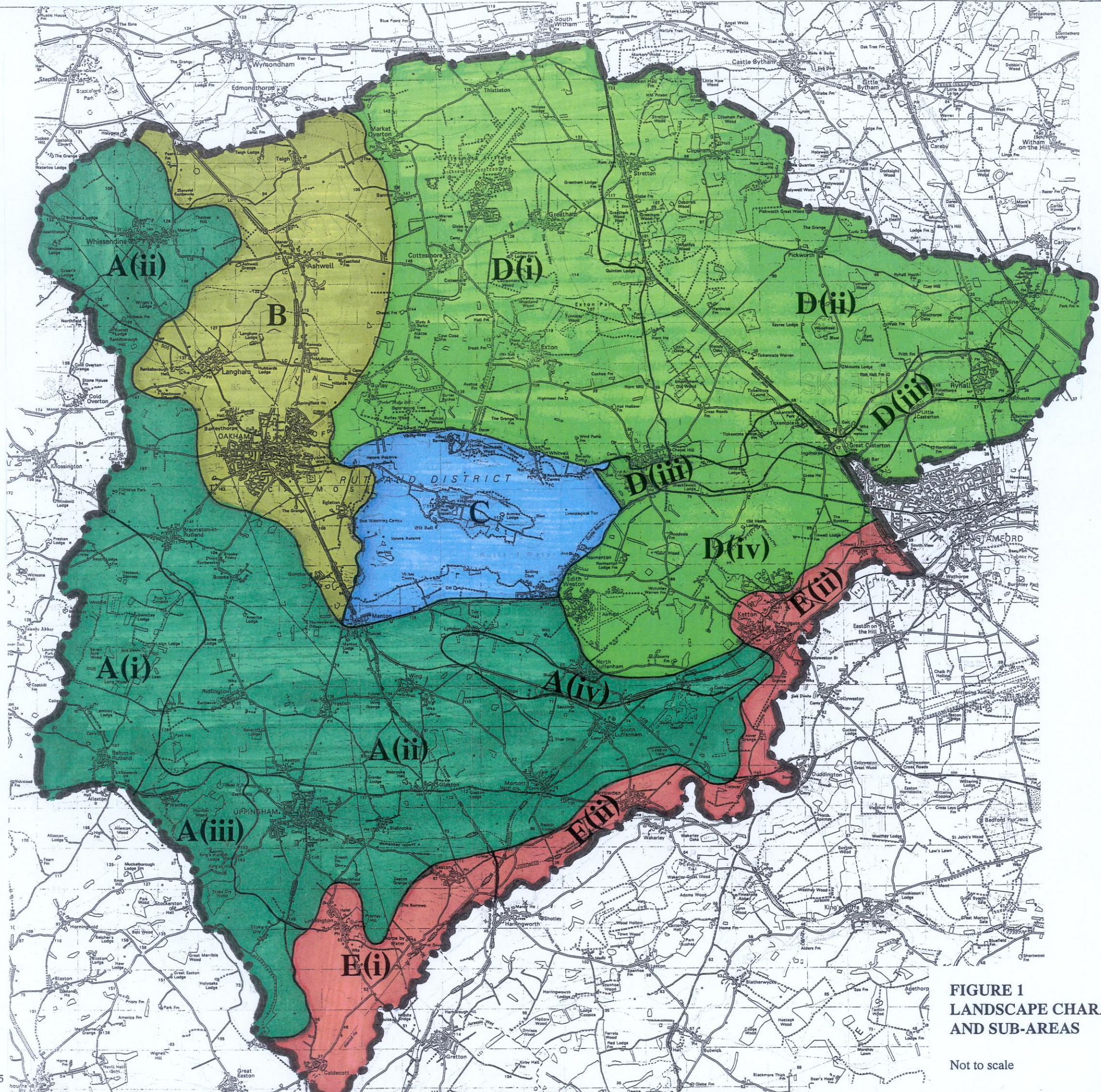


**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES:**

- A HIGH RUTLAND
- B VALE OF CATMOSE
- C RUTLAND WATER BASIN
- D RUTLAND PLATEAU
- E WELLAND VALLEY

**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER SUB-AREAS:**

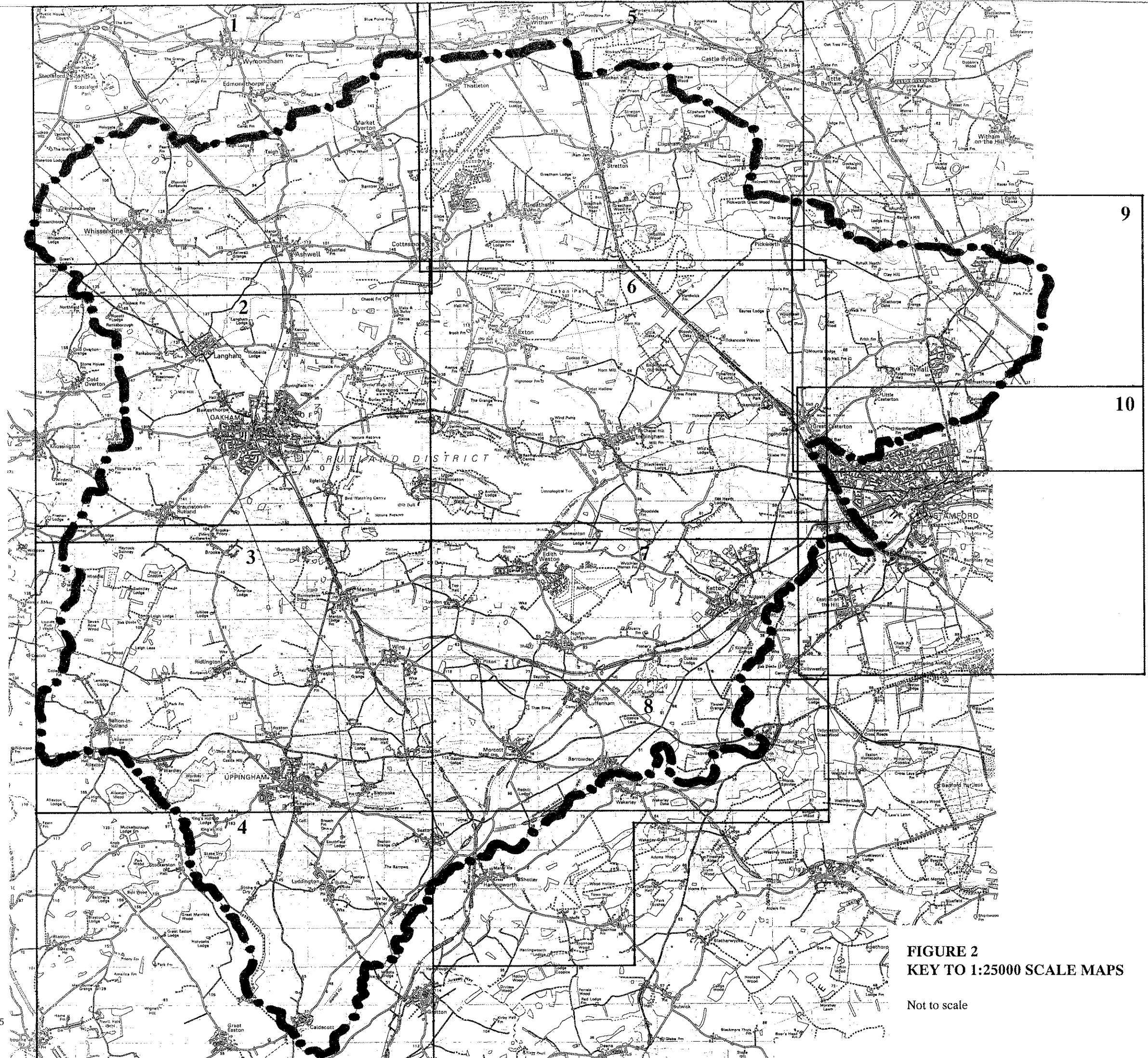
- A(i) LEIGHFIELD FOREST
- A(ii) RIDGES AND VALLEYS
- A(iii) EYEBROOK VALLEY
- A(iv) CHATER VALLEY
  
- D(ii) COTTESMORE PLATEAU
- D(ii) CLAY WOODLANDS
- D(iii) GWASH VALLEY
- D(iv) KETTON PLATEAU
  
- E(i) MIDDLE VALLEY WEST
- E(ii) MIDDLE VALLEY EAST



**FIGURE 1**  
**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES**  
**AND SUB-AREAS**

Not to scale

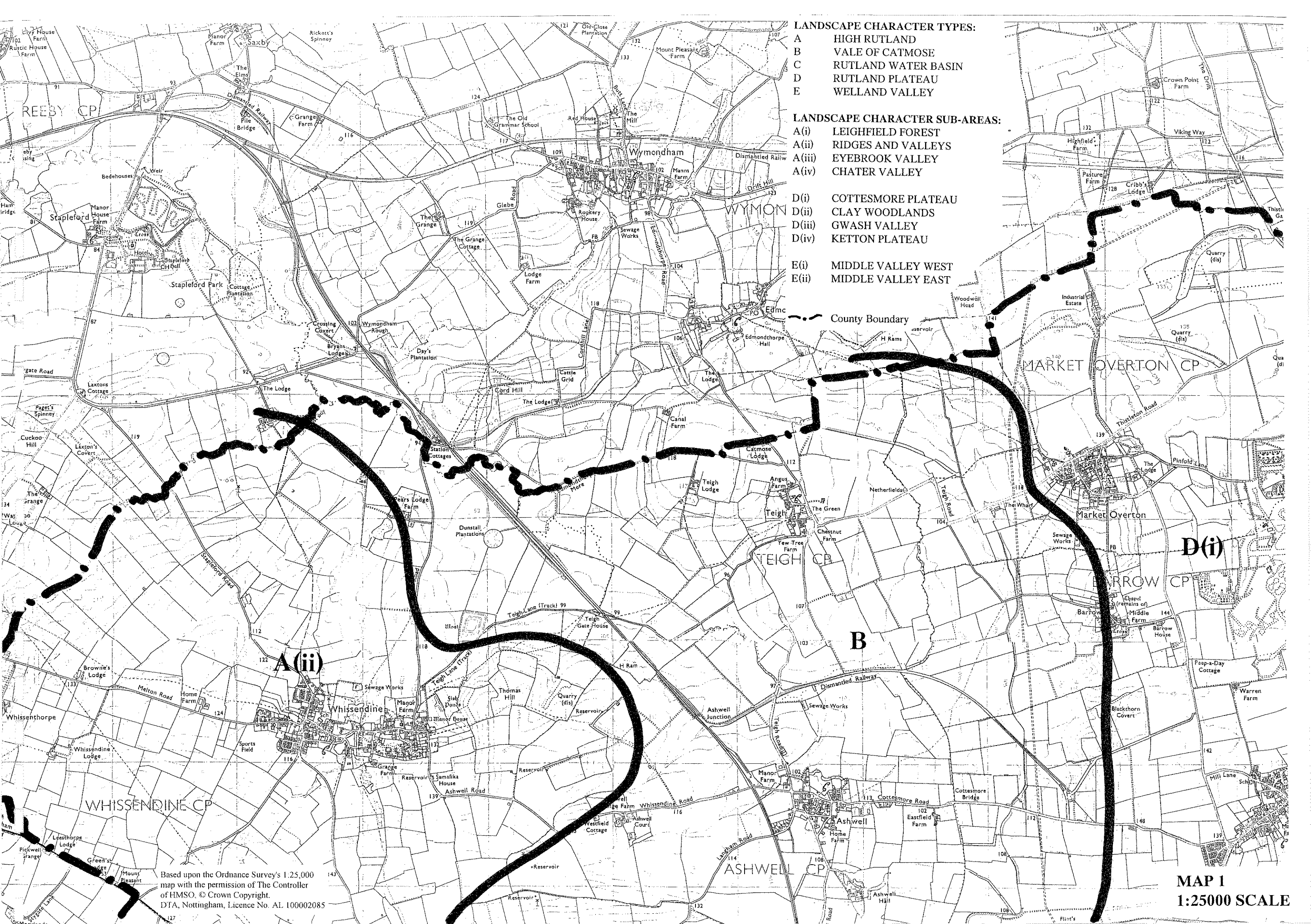
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**FIGURE 2**  
**KEY TO 1:25000 SCALE MAPS**

Not to scale



**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES:**

- A HIGH RUTLAND
- B VALE OF CATMOSE
- C RUTLAND WATER BASIN
- D RUTLAND PLATEAU
- E WELLAND VALLEY

**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER SUB-AREAS:**

- A(i) LEIGHFIELD FOREST
- A(ii) RIDGES AND VALLEYS
- A(iii) EYEBROOK VALLEY
- A(iv) CHATER VALLEY
- D(i) COTTESMORE PLATEAU
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- D(iii) GWASH VALLEY
- D(iv) KETTON PLATEAU
- E(i) MIDDLE VALLEY WEST
- E(ii) MIDDLE VALLEY EAST

County Boundary

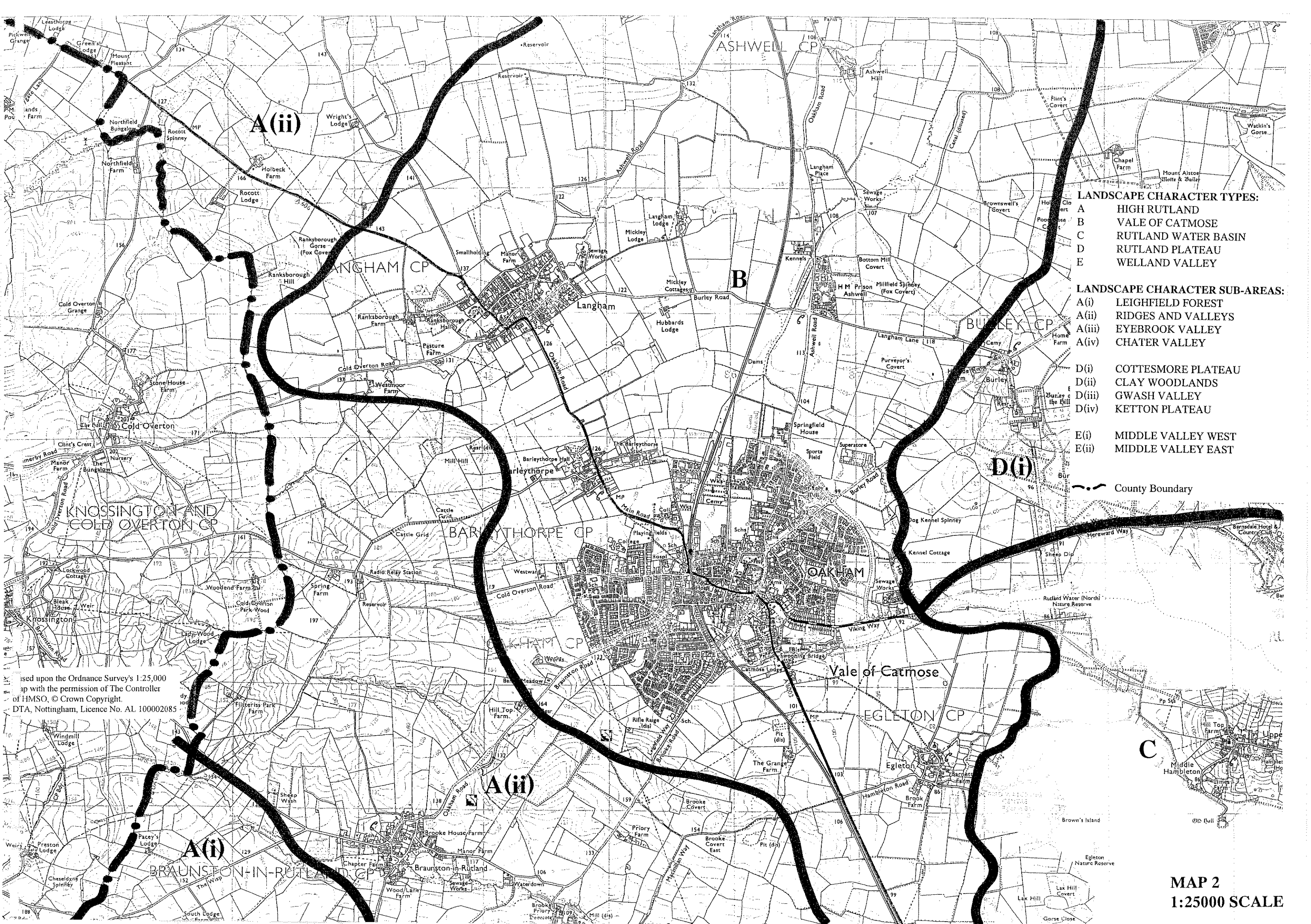
**A(ii)**

**B**

**D(i)**

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**MAP 1**  
**1:25000 SCALE**



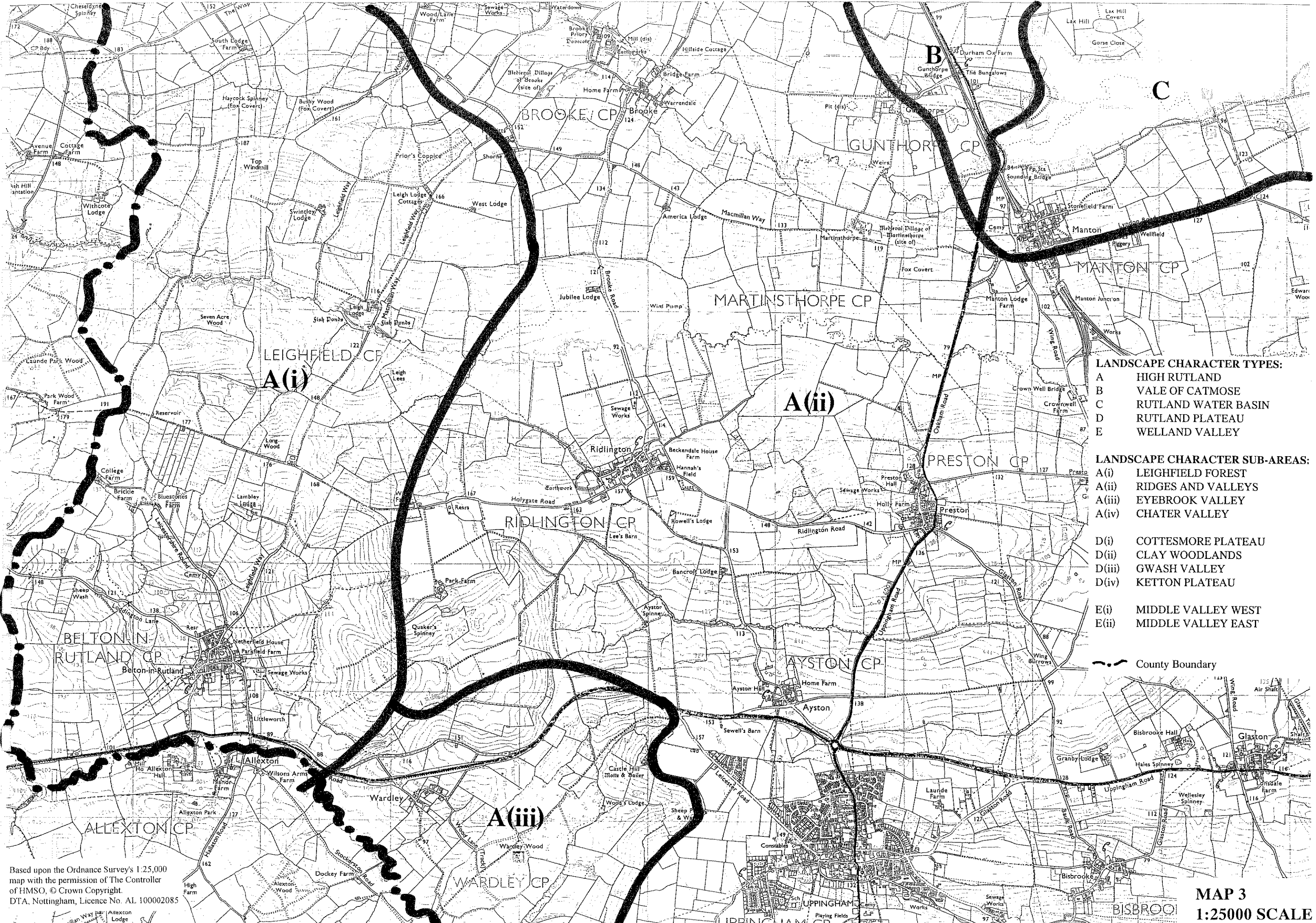
- LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES:**
- A HIGH RUTLAND
  - B VALE OF CATMOSE
  - C RUTLAND WATER BASIN
  - D RUTLAND PLATEAU
  - E WELLAND VALLEY

- LANDSCAPE CHARACTER SUB-AREAS:**
- A(i) LEIGHFIELD FOREST
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--- County Boundary

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**MAP 2**  
**1:25000 SCALE**



**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES:**

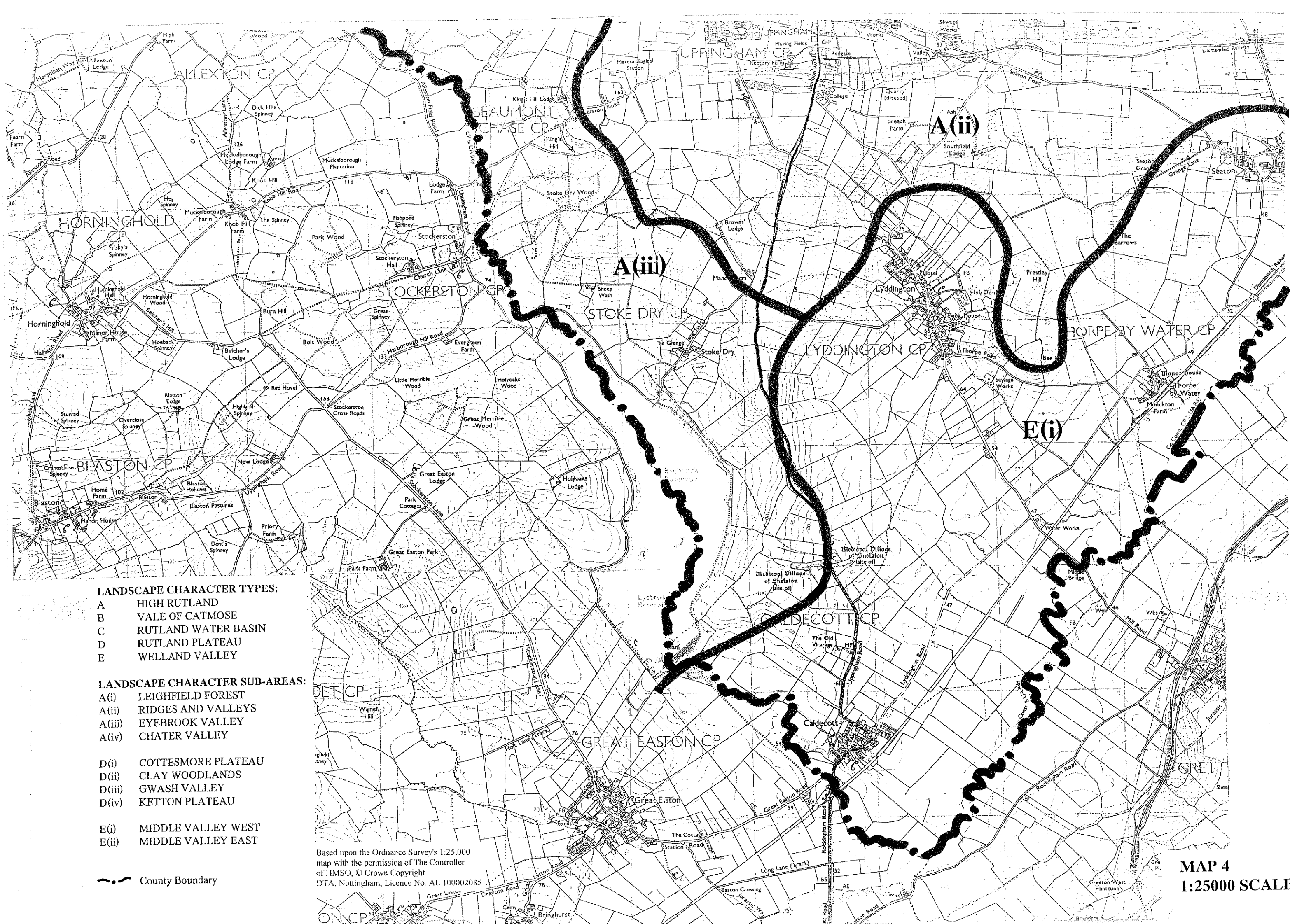
- A HIGH RUTLAND
- B VALE OF CATMOSE
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- D RUTLAND PLATEAU
- E WELLAND VALLEY

**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER SUB-AREAS:**

- A(i) LEIGHFIELD FOREST
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**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES:**

- A HIGH RUTLAND
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- D RUTLAND PLATEAU
- E WELLAND VALLEY

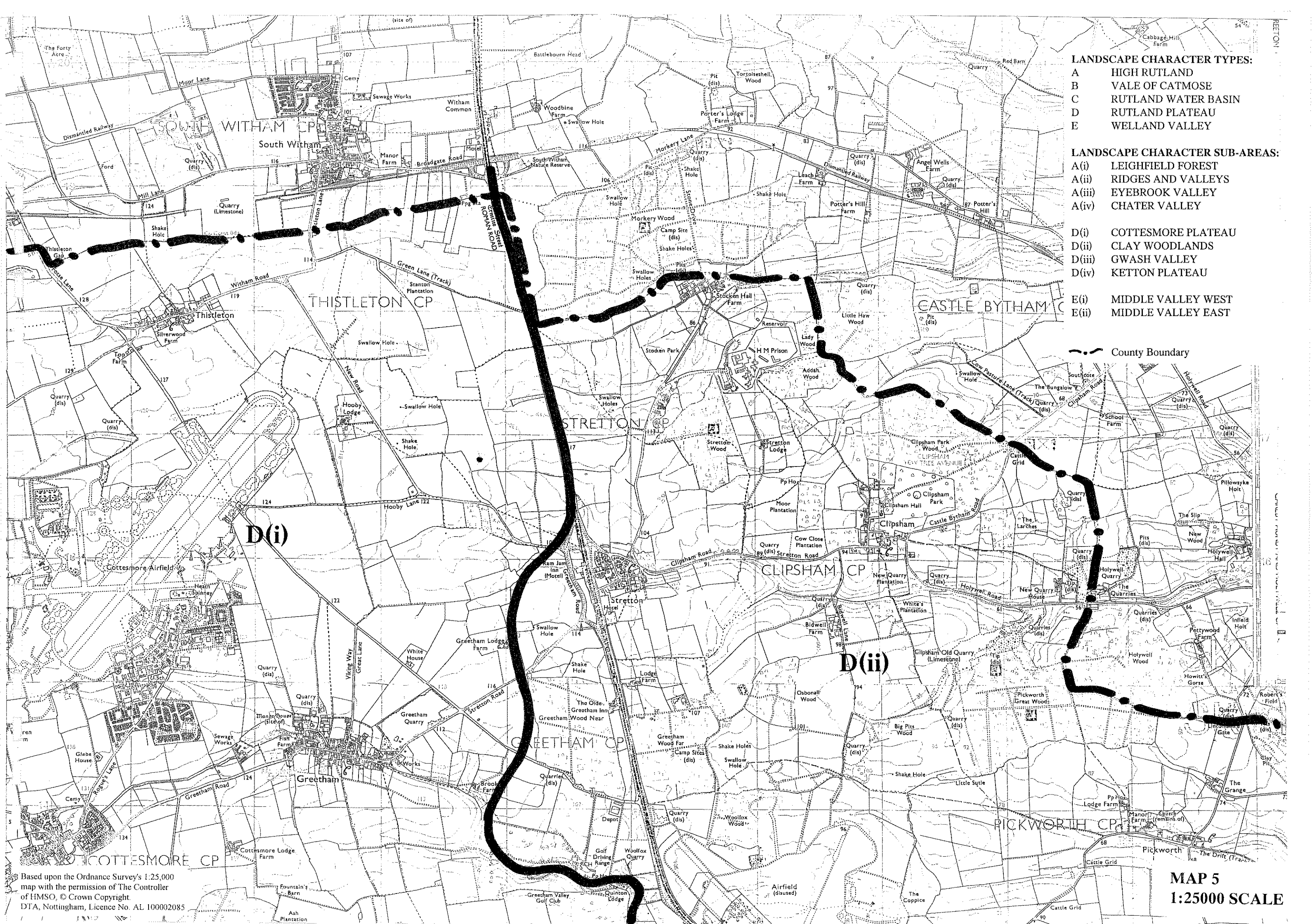
**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER SUB-AREAS:**

- A(i) LEIGHFIELD FOREST
- A(ii) RIDGES AND VALLEYS
- A(iii) EYEBROOK VALLEY
- A(iv) CHATER VALLEY
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- E(i) MIDDLE VALLEY WEST
- E(ii) MIDDLE VALLEY EAST

County Boundary

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**MAP 4**  
**1:25000 SCALE**



- LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES:**
- A HIGH RUTLAND
  - B VALE OF CATMOSE
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  - D RUTLAND PLATEAU
  - E WELLAND VALLEY

- LANDSCAPE CHARACTER SUB-AREAS:**
- A(i) LEIGHFIELD FOREST
  - A(ii) RIDGES AND VALLEYS
  - A(iii) EYEBROOK VALLEY
  - A(iv) CHATER VALLEY
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  - D(iii) GWASH VALLEY
  - D(iv) KETTON PLATEAU
  - E(i) MIDDLE VALLEY WEST
  - E(ii) MIDDLE VALLEY EAST

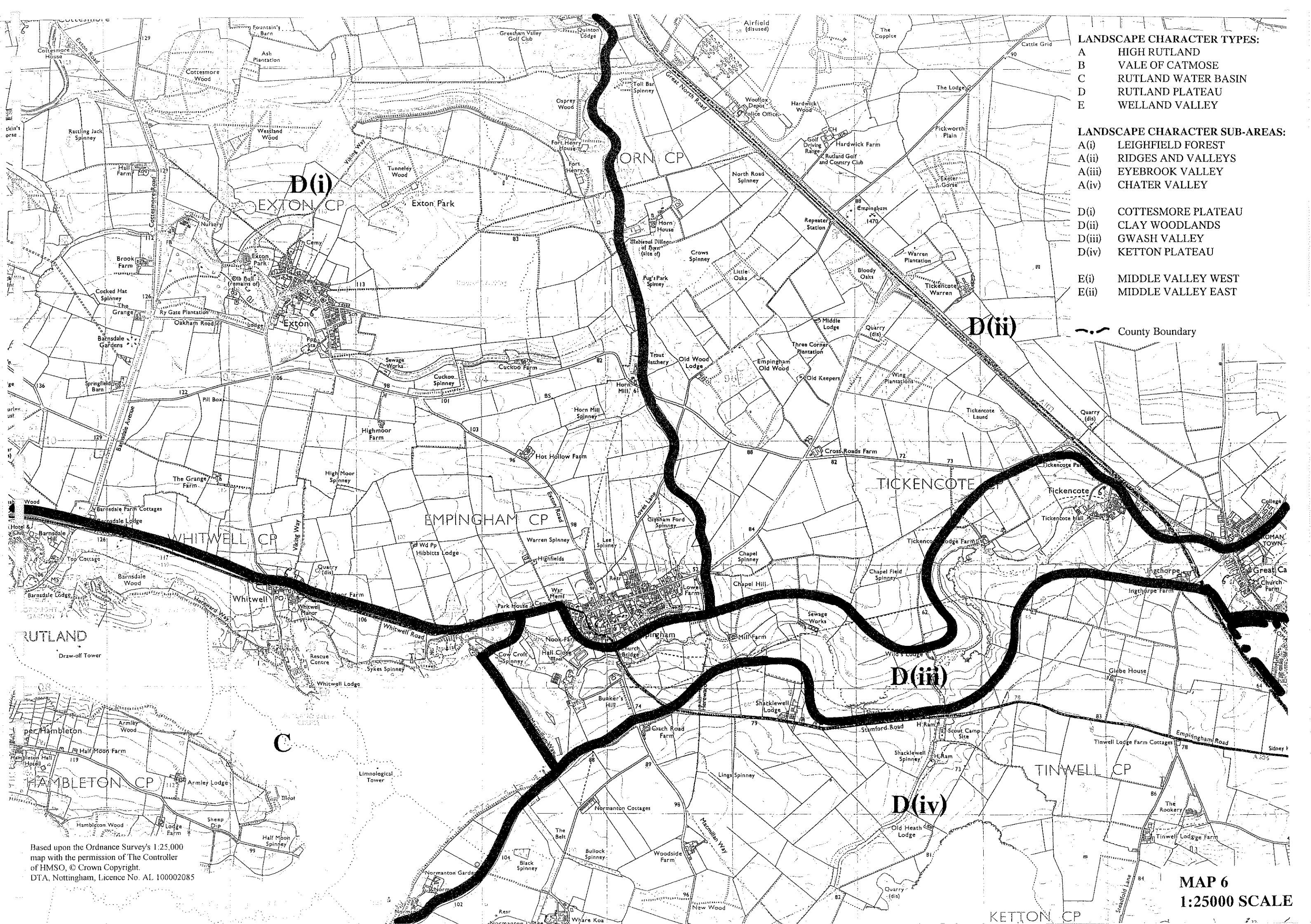
County Boundary

**D(i)**

**D(ii)**

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**MAP 5**  
**1:25000 SCALE**



- LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES:**
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  - E WELLAND VALLEY

- LANDSCAPE CHARACTER SUB-AREAS:**
- A(i) LEIGHFIELD FOREST
  - A(ii) RIDGES AND VALLEYS
  - A(iii) EYEBROOK VALLEY
  - A(iv) CHATER VALLEY

- D(i) COTTESMORE PLATEAU
- D(ii) CLAY WOODLANDS
- D(iii) GWASH VALLEY
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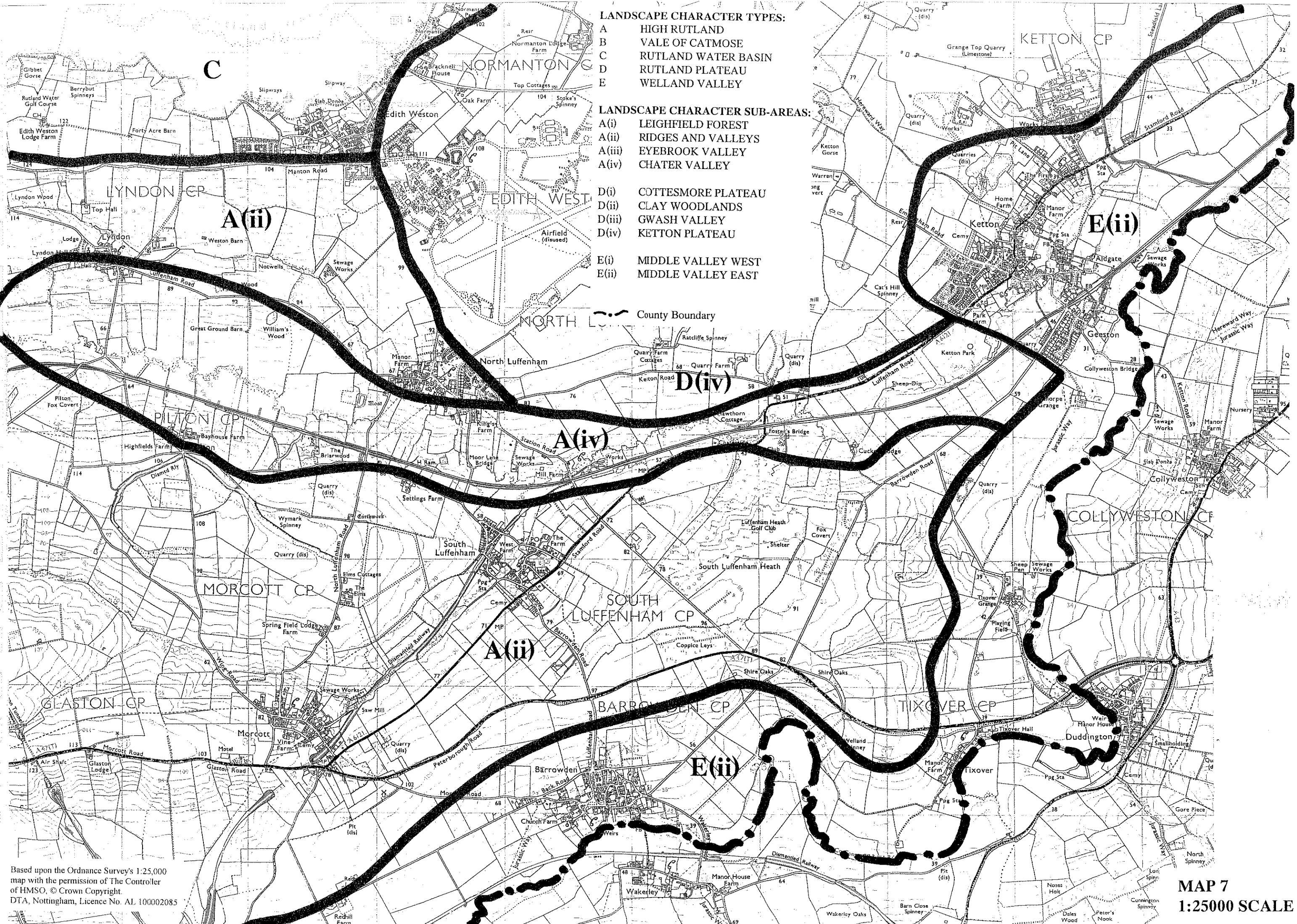
- E(i) MIDDLE VALLEY WEST
- E(ii) MIDDLE VALLEY EAST

--- County Boundary

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**MAP 6**  
**1:25000 SCALE**



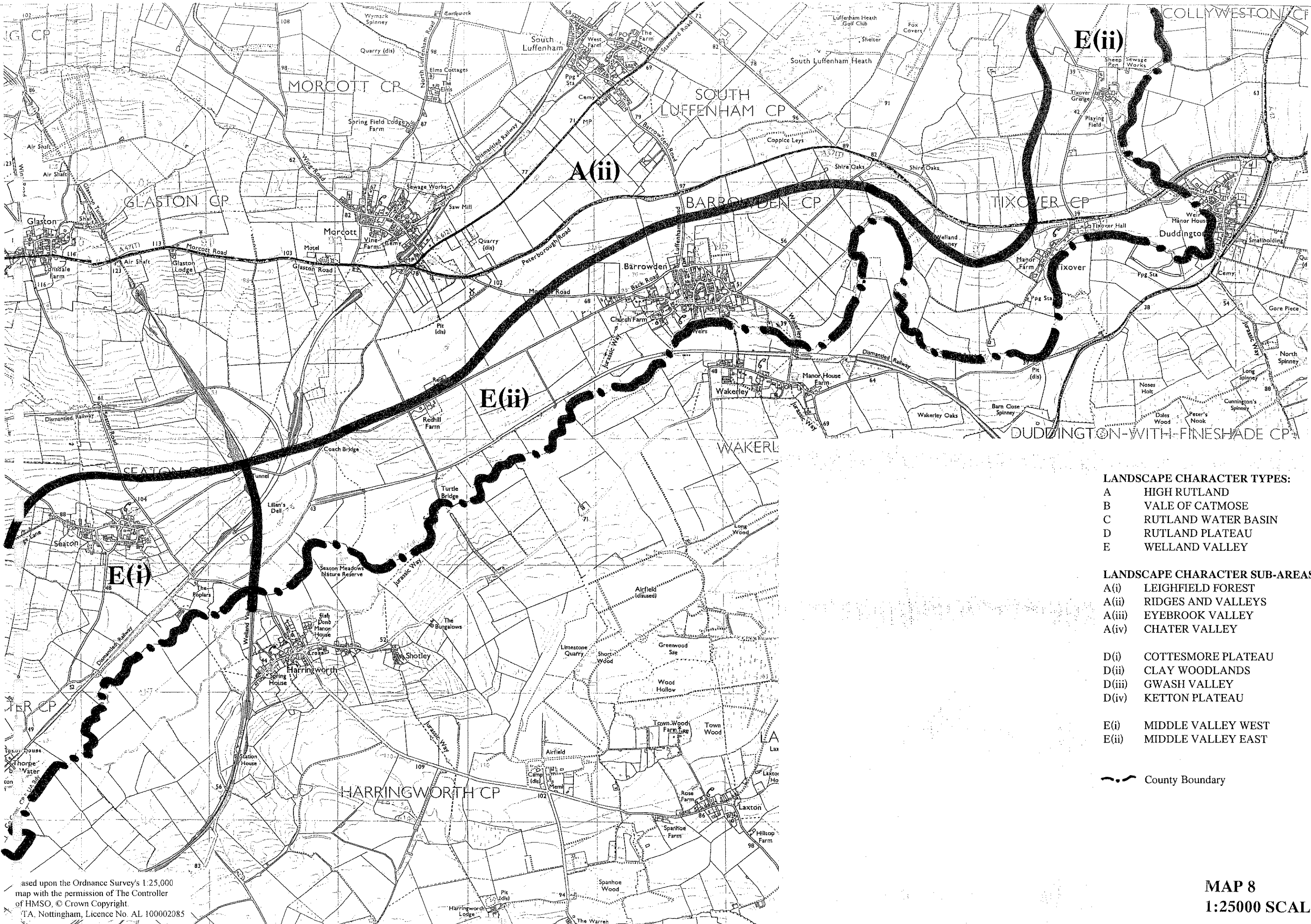


- LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES:**
- A HIGH RUTLAND
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  - D RUTLAND PLATEAU
  - E WELLAND VALLEY

- LANDSCAPE CHARACTER SUB-AREAS:**
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**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES:**

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- E(ii) MIDDLE VALLEY EAST

County Boundary

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**MAP 8**  
**1:25000 SCALE**





**HIGH RUTLAND**

Excellent example of good countryside management, Oakham Road, Braunston in Rutland. Hedge laid, hedgerow trees retained, pond cleaned and retained, field trees protected by fencing from sheep grazing on the pastures where ridge and furrow has been retained.



**HIGH RUTLAND**

Horse keeping can lead to substantial accumulations of buildings, vehicles and ancillary equipment and storage prominent in the steeply rolling countryside.



**HIGH RUTLAND**

Stoke Dry village looks conspicuous as it runs down the slopes overlooking Eye Brook Reservoir and associated woodlands



**WELLAND VALLEY**

The spectacular Welland Viaduct marks the distinction between the Middle Valley East and Middle Valley West sub-areas.



**VALE OF CATMOSE**

The Vale north of Oakham illustrating rough pasture with remnant ridge and furrow, hedgerow loss, and neglect emphasised by the characteristic over-mature hedgerow of ash and oak. This pastoral landscape is dominated by its treescape, although continued management is essential to its future well-being



**VALE OF CATMOSE**

Historic town of Oakham dominated by the prominent church nestles in the narrowest part of the Vale overlooked by the hills of High Rutland.



**RUTLAND WATER BASIN**

The Rutland Water reservoir is unique and dominates this landscape character type.



**RUTLAND PLATEAU**

The raised east slope of the North Brook valley displays the subtle transitional change from the Cottismore Plateau on to the Clay Woodlands sub-area. Arable and pastoral land use mixes with both deciduous and coniferous plantation which becomes more prevalent on the Woodlands. Field boundary management has suffered.



**RUTLAND PLATEAU**

Parkland characteristics such as treed avenues influence the agricultural landscape on the Clay Woodlands sub-area near to Clipsham.



**RUTLAND PLATEAU**

The lower Gwash valley where its sinuous river is tightly bounded by mature deciduous tree cover and pasture is displaced by a wholly arable farmed landscape. The resultant reduction in enclosure serves to emphasise the impact of the electricity pylon network.