LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Landscape Character Assessment for land to the West of Waterford Lane, Cherry Willingham, Lincolnshire.

ON BEHALF OF:
Cherry Willingham Parish Council

PREPARED BY:
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DOCUMENT HISTORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue No</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
## CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION  

2. METHODOLOGY  

3. PLANNING CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS  

4. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER  

5. LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND CAPACITY  

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS  

## APPENDICES

A. CHARACTER ASSESSMENT PLANS AND PHOTOGRAPHS
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Lincs Design Consultancy has been commissioned by Cherry Willingham Parish Council to undertake a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) for an area of land to the West of Waterford Road, Cherry Willingham, Lincolnshire (See Figure 1).

1.2 The aim of this assessment is provide a clear understanding of the Study Area and its setting in landscape and visual terms, identifying its landscape character, quality and value. The assessment will provide an understanding of the sites sensitivity to change and provide recommendations to inform future decision making.

1.3 The Study Area is defined as a parcel of land to the west of Cherry Willingham (as shown in Figure 1). This Landscape Character Assessment will define the character, quality and value of the Study Area. The Study Area encompasses the grassed field and surrounding boundaries. The Study Area will influence and will be influenced by the character of the surrounding area; therefore the character, quality and value of surrounding landscape will be described.

FIGURE 1: Aerial Photograph Showing the Location of the Site (Google Maps).
2 METHODOLOGY

THE ROLE OF THE LCA

2.1 In this context, the aim of the LCA aims to establish the following:
- Study of baseline factors such as topography, geology, land use and vegetation as well as perceptual factors formed from site visits
- Provide a clear understanding of the site and its setting in landscape and visual terms, identifying its landscape character, quality and value
- Understand the locations sensitivity to change
- Provide recommendations to inform decision making

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

2.2 The methodology used in the preparation of this assessment has been developed from the following guidelines:
- Landscape Character Assessment- Guidance for England and Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Countryside Agency 2002

2.3 A range of data relating to the study area has been obtained as part of the assessment through both field surveys and desk-based research. Sources of information have included:
- Field visits during November 2012
- West Lindsey District Council’s Website (www.west-lindsey.gov.uk)
- Natural England Website (www.naturalengland.org.uk)
- The Magic Website (www.magic.gov.uk)

2.4 The assessment process follows a standard approach:
- **Desk study**
  Assembly and analysis of data to identify landscape character types and the analysis of the factors that jointly contributes to the landscape character. This includes topography, geology, ecology, land cover pattern, land use and settlement pattern.
- **Field survey**
  The collection of field data to define the landscape character, to identify aesthetic and perceptual qualities which are unlikely to be evident from desk information, and to identify the current condition of landscape elements.
- **Classification and description.**
  Classify the landscape character, quality and value based on all the information collected, followed by a clear description of the character.
- **Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study**
- **Making conclusions and recommendations.**
  Provide recommendations to inform decision making.
3 PLANNING CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

3.1 The importance of preserving or enhancing the landscape character in any context is firmly embedded within International and National Planning Policy, the relevant policy documents are listed below;

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

3.2 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) is the first international convention to focus specifically on landscape. The convention promotes landscape protection, management and planning, and European co-operation on landscape issues.

3.2 Signed by the UK Government in February 2006, the ELC became binding from March 2007. It applied to all landscapes, towns and villages, as well as open countryside; the coast and inland areas; and ordinary or even degraded landscapes, as well as those that are afforded protection. The Convention was reaffirmed as being part of the Defra delivery framework through the Natural Environment White Paper June 2011.

3.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27th March 2012; replacing the Planning Policy Statements. This is a key part of the Governments reforms to make the planning system less complex and more accessible, to protect the environment and to promote sustainable growth. The following paragraphs from the NPPF are relevant in the context of landscape character and visual amenity;

Paragraph 7
There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles…
● an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

Paragraph 17
● take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it;
● contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework;

Paragraph 109
The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
● protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;
● recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;
● minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government’s commitment to halt the establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
● preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability;
and
● remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

**Paragraph 114**

Local planning authorities should:
● set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure; and
● maintain the character of the undeveloped coast, protecting and enhancing its distinctive landscapes, particularly in areas defined as Heritage Coast, and improve public access to and enjoyment of the coast.

**Paragraph 115**

Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.

**Paragraph 116**

Planning permission should be refused for major developments in these designated areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:
● the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
● the cost of, and scope for, developing elsewhere outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
● any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

**Paragraph 118**

When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles:

● if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;

● planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss;
LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

3.4 At a local level, the West Lindsey Local Plan (saved Policies) has a number of cross-cutting policies relating to Landscape Character; the relevant policies are as follows,

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<tr>
<th>Policy Code</th>
<th>Policy Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>POLICY STRAT 1</td>
<td>Development Requiring Planning Permission</td>
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<tr>
<td>POLICY STRAT 3</td>
<td>Settlement Hierarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLICY STRAT 12</td>
<td>Development in the Open Countryside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLICY SUS 9</td>
<td>Development Appraisals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POLICY ECON 3</td>
<td>Protection of Agricultural Lands</td>
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<tr>
<td>POLICY CORE 9</td>
<td>Retention of Important Open Spaces/ Frontages</td>
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<td>POLICY CORE 10</td>
<td>Open Space And Landscaping Within Developments</td>
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<tr>
<td>POLICY CRT 5</td>
<td>Countryside Recreation Facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>POLICY CRT 9</td>
<td>Public Rights Of Way</td>
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<tr>
<td>POLICY NBE 9</td>
<td>The Lincolnshire Wolds - Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty</td>
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<tr>
<td>POLICY NBE 10</td>
<td>Protection of Landscape Character In Development Proposals</td>
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<td>POLICY NBE 11</td>
<td>Development Affecting Sites Of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserves</td>
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<td>POLICY NBE 12</td>
<td>Development Affecting Locally Designated Nature Conservation Sites and Ancient Woodlands</td>
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<td>POLICY NBE 13</td>
<td>Nature Conservation in Wildlife Corridors</td>
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<td>POLICY NBE 20</td>
<td>Development on the Edge of Settlements</td>
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LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

3.5 The Study Area does not lie within any nationally or locally designated landscapes. (See Figure 2).

CONSERVATION AREA

3.6 The Study Area does not lie within or adjacent to a Conservation Area.

TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS (TPOs)

3.7 There are no trees protected by a TPO within or adjacent to the site.

PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

3.8 There are no designated public rights of way that cross the Study Area or run along its boundaries, although there are numerous public rights of way in the surrounding area that may influenced by the Study Area. There is a Bridleway located to the north of the Study Area on the opposite side of the railway track. There is a series of public footpaths approximately 1km to the east of the Study Area that provide access to Lincoln. The Viking Way runs along the edge of the River Witham approximately 1km to the south of the Study Area. (See Figure 3).
FIGURE 2; Rural Designation Plan (magic.gov.uk)

FIGURE 3; Map showing Public Rights of Way (streetmap.co.uk)
4 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

4.0.1 A landscape baseline has been established by identifying, describing and classifying the landscape character of the site and surrounding area. This will identify the character, value and capacity of the landscape; thereafter defining the overall sensitivity of the landscape.

STUDY AREA

4.1 The Study Area is defined as a parcel of land to the west of Cherry Willingham (as shown in Figure 1). This Landscape Character Assessment will define the character, quality and value of the specific site. The Study Area encompasses the grassed field and boundaries. The Study Area will influence and will be influenced by the character of the surrounding area; therefore the character, quality and value of surrounding landscape will be described.

4.2 NATIONAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION

4.2.1 As part of the Natural Environment White Paper Biodiversity 2020 and the European Landscape Convention the existing Joint Character Areas (published by the Countryside Agency 1998-1999) are being replaced by the National Character Areas (NCA); revised profiles for all 159 character areas are due to be published by 2014. The Study Area falls within an area covered by profiles that have yet to be updated therefore for the purpose of this assessment the Joint Character Area (JCAs) will be referred to.

4.2.2 Due the lack of detail and clarity of the JCA mapping the Study Area appears to fall on the boundary of two character areas. These character areas will both influence the Study Area and therefore will both be referred to in this assessment. The following summarises the character areas (See Figure 4);

JCA 45 Northern Lincolnshire Edge with Coversands

- Large-scale ‘upland’ arable escarpment broadly divided into north and south by River Witham at Lincoln. Area broadens to south.
- Prominent scarp slope of Lincoln ‘Cliff’ marks western edge of area.
- Open landscape with rectilinear fields and few boundaries. Where enclosure still present, a mixture of limestone walls, discontinuous hedges and shelter belts.
- Sparse settlement on top of escarpment. Spring-line villages to west at foot of ‘cliff’ and small parklands to east towards the clay vale.
- Active and redundant airfields.
- More complex landscape of the northern section includes a double scarp, urbanisation and dereliction in Scunthorpe area and the Coversands area of heath, blown sand habitats and conifer woods.
- Roman roads and ancient track ways such as Ermine Street or High Dyke follow north-south routes with one significant east-west route - Salter’s Road. Green lanes occur in the southern area.
JCA 44 Central Lincolnshire Vale

- Broad low-lying arable vale. Balanced, yet simple, open landscape.
- A regular pattern of medium-sized fields with enclosure by hedgerows of limited species and few hedgerow trees. Variations include pre-enclosure hay meadows and pasture near Wragby and the drained landscape north of Brigg.
- Variable woodland cover; little in the central and northern clays. Exceptions include coniferous plantations on both the Coversands, the sands and gravels around Woodhall Spa and, most notably, the Central Lincolnshire Limewoods between Wragby and Bardney.
- Sparse nucleated settlements throughout the area.
- Traditional building materials, predominantly local brick and limestone, from adjoining Lincolnshire Edge.
- Rich in ridge and furrow and deserted medieval villages.
- Wolds scarp gives strong visual boundary to east; distant views to Lincoln Cathedral in west.

FIGURE 4; Joint Character Area Maps 44 and 45
4.3 LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION
4.3.1 The West Lindsey Landscape Character Assessment (1999) further expands on the defined JCA’s. Again, due to the lack of clarity in the West Lindsey Landscape Assessment Mapping the Study Area appears to fall on the boundary of two character areas. These character areas will both influence the Study Area and therefore will both be referred to in this assessment. The following summarises the character areas:

Area 6- Lincoln Fringe

- Flat agricultural landscape with a number of expanded settlements
- Medium sized fields with low hawthorn hedge boundaries and few hedgerow trees
- Approached to settlements generally dominated by built form
- Views to Lincoln Cathedral

Area 8- Lincolnshire Lime Woods

- Diverse, undulating landscape crossed by many rivers and streams.
- Ancient lime woodland caps shallow hills and forms contrast to surrounding arable fields.
- Medium sized fields, with good hedgerow boundaries and some hedgerow trees.
- Tiny dispersed settlements and individual farms, linked by an extensive network of minor roads and lanes.
- Desertion and shrinkage of some settlements.

4.4 SURROUNDING CONTEXT AND LAND USE
4.4.1 The Study Area is located to the west of the large village of Cherry Willingham. The settlement is separated into two areas of built form located to the north and south of the railway. The smaller area of settlement to the north of the railway appears to be newer development and has a suburban form that includes the Community School. The larger main area of settlement to the south of the railway has a relatively small historical core based around the High Street and Church Lane with a small number of Listed Buildings. The village has spread to the south of the High Street with numerous more modern suburban developments. The most recent of these is a relatively large non-descript development to the east of the village. The sports pitch and primary school fields in the centre of the village create a break in the built form. There is a variety of dwelling typologies within the village mainly constructed of traditional materials.

4.4.2 The railway runs across the northern boundary of the main part of the settlement. This has created an obvious development boundary for the settlement and has prevented it from spreading north. Fiskerton Road runs across the southern boundary of the village and forms another obvious settlement boundary as does Waterford Lane which runs along the eastern boundary the village. These roads created a landscape feature that has contained and prevented the development from spreading into the countryside. The majority of properties are located on the village side of the road and face south and east looking across the surrounding valley landscape. This composition is a key feature that categorises the external character of the village.
4.4.3 The village sits in an agricultural context surrounded by arable and pastoral fields with sporadic small areas of woodland and intermittent hedgerows. The city of Lincoln is located approximately 5km to the west of the village and forms the areas major conurbation. There are numerous other settlements in the surrounding area mainly based around the A15 and B1308. The River Witham is located approximately 100m to the south of the village running west to east. The river sits within an area of valley over which Cherry Willingham looks. (See Appendix A for Context Analysis Plan)

4.5 GEOLOGY
4.5.1 The National and Regional Landscape character assessments have expressed that the Study Area is approximately located on the boundary of differing character areas. This is somewhat reinforced by the geology of Lincolnshire and the surrounding area. The Limestone Heath which forms a line of hills cutting through Lincolnshire and the Clay Vale both influence the Study Area.

4.5.2 The British Geological Survey 50k Bedrock Map shows that the north eastern portion of the Study Area is composed of The Combrash Formation (Limestone). The South western portion is formed from Blisworth Clay Formation (Mudstone). The geological pattern of the surrounding area is consistent with that of the wider geological mapping. The majority of the geology to the west of the site is of limestone formation creating a line of hills. The geology to the east is formed mainly of clay creating the lower lying vale landscape. 
(See Appendix A for Geology Maps).

4.6 TOPOGRAPHY
4.6.1 The topography to the west and north of the Study Area is characterised by a more undulating and hilly landscape directly linked to the limestone geology; this is reflected in the regional and national landscape character assessments. The landscape to the east of the site has a flatter topography associated with the clay formation geology. The River Witham runs to the south of the Study Area and has formed a valley over which Cherry Willingham and the neighbouring village of Washingborough look. The Study Area gently slopes from the raised position of Cherry Willingham down into the valley. The topography allows views from the Study Area across the surrounding landscape to the east and also makes the Study Area relatively prominent from the west. (See Appendix A for Topography Plan).
4.7 LAND USE HISTORY

4.7.1 Historical maps for Cherry Willingham are shown below. The map from 1890 (Figure 5) shows Cherry Willingham as a small development based around the historical core. The railway defines the northern edge of the village. The Study Area is defined as an agricultural field with Waterford Lane already wrapping around its southern and eastern boundaries.

4.7.2 The map from 1976 (See Figure 6) shows how the settlement of Cherry Willingham spread from the historical south and east. The railways still defined the northern edge of the settlement. The village spread to the natural settlement boundary of Waterford Lane and Fiskerton Road. The Study Area is defined as an agricultural field.

FIGURE 5; Historical Map from 1890

FIGURE 6; Historical Map from 1976
4.8 CHARACTER OF STUDY AREA

4.8.1 Field visits undertaken during November 2012 by this practice have confirmed that the Study Area and near locality remain broadly typical of the above district character type descriptions. The following information summarises information collected the site visits. (See Appendix A for Study Area Analysis Plan).

4.8.2 The Study Area is approximately 1.67 hectares in size and is located to the east of Cherry Willingham. The Study Area is separated from the village by Waterford Lane which runs along the south and east boundaries. Residential properties of varying character are located to the east and south of the Study Area on the opposite side of Waterford Road, these properties face out across the surrounding countryside. The properties to the east of Waterford Lane have a clear view through the Study Area towards the rolling hills of the Limestone Heath. The settlement pattern and road layout has wrapped around the east and south of the Study Area.

4.8.2 The railway track runs along the northern boundary of the Study Area. The track and associated embankments are at a higher level than the Study Area; allowing sporadic views into the site from the trains. The raised position of the railway track creates a steep embankment that encloses the northern boundary of the Study Area and has an effect on its character. The Study Area is separated from the railway by an intermittent hedgerow and small rough self-seeding trees along the track embankment. There is a residential property located to the north of the railway track that has views across the Study Area.

4.8.3 The Study Area is composed of a rough grass field that it is assumed is used for agricultural purposes. The southern and eastern boundaries are defined by Waterford Lane. The northern boundary is separated from Waterford Lane by a grass verge and sporadic tree and hedge planting. There is a small track to the north eastern boundary that leads to the railway, in this position there is an area of thicker and more mature vegetation. The southern boundary is defined by a tall mixed hedgerow with sporadic tree planting.

4.8.4 The surrounding landscape slopes south from the village of Cherry Willingham towards the River Witham. This causes the village to have a relatively prominent position in the landscape to views from the south and west. The Study Area is positioned on this slope and therefore forms a prominent feature to views into the village from the south and west. The Study Area slopes from the Waterford Road to the east down away from the village to the western boundary. The western boundary is defined by a drainage ditch and has a very open character with no vegetation.
4.9 SITE LANDSCAPE CONDITION

4.9.1 The Study Area is not designated as being of landscape importance and none of the trees have a TPO.

4.9.2 The Study Area is composed of a relatively open grass field that it is assumed is used for agricultural purposes. The field appears to be in good condition and to be fit for its purpose.

4.9.3 The vegetation to the northern boundary separates the Study Area from the railway track. This vegetation is composed of an intermittent hedge with sporadic self-seeding trees on the railway bank. The hedge planting is of mixed quality and species but it is assumed will provide a habitat for native wildlife. The self–seeding trees are common along most stretches of railway.

4.9.4 The vegetation to the north eastern boundary is good condition with a mixture of juvenile and semi-mature trees and hedges. The majority of the eastern boundary is relatively open with sporadic tree and hedge planting; a few of the trees are of landscape value. The hedge and tree planting to the southern boundary is in relatively good condition but would benefit from improved management.

4.10 VISUAL SIGNIFICANCE

4.10.1 In the context of visual significance there are two main points that need to be highlighted and discussed (A View Point Assessment can be found in Appendix A);

1) **View from Fiskerton Road looking East to the study area**;
   The topography of the area causes the village of Cherry Willingham and therefore the Study Area to be prominent to views from the west and south. This view point is taken from along Fiskerton Road looking east towards the study area; *The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessments* would classify this as being of Medium Sensitivity.
   The Study Area sits centrally within the view. The edge of the settlement can be seen to the south of the study area defined by boundary landscaping with the dwellings facing out into the countryside. The ground slopes up towards the Study Area and carries on rising north towards the railway track. The settlement pattern and topography gives the Study Area a prominent position within the landscape. The Study Area is important for views towards Cherry Willingham from the south and west.

2) **View from Waterford Lane looking West across the study area**
   The view point is taken from Waterford Road looking east over the Study Area, it represents a similar view to the adjacent residential properties; *The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessments* would classify this as being of Medium Sensitivity.
   The local topography causes this area of Cherry Willingham to sit at an elevated position. The landscape slopes gently south down the valley of the River Witham. The area of land to the north slopes towards the railway. The raised position of the view point allows panoramic views across the surrounding landscape. The viewpoint looks directly across the valley towards the hills and settlements to the south. This view is important to the character of the Study Area and the character of Cherry Willingham.
4.11 SUMMARY AND CHARACTERISATION

4.6.1 The following summarises the landscape baseline;
- The Study Area is defined as a parcel of land to the west of Cherry Willingham
- Cherry Willingham is a relatively large settlement with a historic core and surrounding suburban spread.
- The village is characterised by the bounding roads to the south and east and the railway to the north that have formed the edge of the settlement and restricted the village’s expansion.
- In terms of national landscape assessment the study area is located on the boundary of the JCA 45 Northern Lincolnshire Edge with Coversands and JCA 44 Central Lincolnshire Vale
- In terms of local landscape assessment the study area is located on the boundary of the Area 6 - Lincolnshire Lime Woods and Area 8 - Lincoln Fringe
- The location of the Study Area on the boundary of differing character areas is reinforced by the local geology and topography.
- The landscape to the north and west is characterised by hills and rolling landscape formed by the limestone topography. The landscape to the east is characterised by a flatter low lying vale
- The surrounding landscape is composed of agricultural fields, sporadic woodland and intermittent hedge rows there are numerous other settlements based around the A15 and B1308. The River Witham and the railway impact the on topography and views.
- The Study Area sits in an elevated position on the edge of the valley to the south formed around the River Witham.
- The Study Area is composed of a grassed field with sporadic hedgerow and tree planting to its boundaries. The northern boundary is defined by the railway and the western boundary is open. The study area slopes gently from the village to the west.
- The Study Area does not lie within any nationally or locally designated landscapes.
- There are no trees protected by a TPO within or adjacent to the Study Area.
- The topography and position of the Study Area make it important for views into the village from the west, and also for views out of the village to the south and west across the surrounding valley landscape.
- The Study Area is important to the character of Cherry Willingham’s settlement boundary and the village’s growth pattern

4.11.2 The Study Area can be characterised as;
- Relatively small, sloping agricultural field
- Prominent elevated position on the western edge of Cherry Willingham
- Currently composed of rough grassland
- Northern boundary defined by railway embankment and self-seeding plant species
- Southern boundary defined by native hedgerows and trees of varying quality
- Eastern boundary has sporadic tree and hedge planting with large breaks
- Open character of western boundary allowing expansive views to the south and west
- Important for views from the west into Cherry Willingham
5 **LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND CAPACITY**

5.1 Judging landscape character, sensitivity and capacity requires professional judgement about the degree to which the landscape in question is robust, in that it is able to accommodate change without adverse impacts on character. This means making decisions about whether or not significant characteristic elements of the landscape will be liable to loss through disturbance, whether or not they could easily be restored, and whether important aesthetic aspects of character will be liable to change. Equally, consideration must be given to the addition of new elements, which may also have a significant influence on character.

5.2 The landscape baseline (section 5) has described and characterised the Study Area through the study of relevant documentation and site visits. The aim of this section is to judge the Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity of the Study Area. It is important to provide a definition of Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Capacity in the context of this assessment;

**Landscape Sensitivity**
Relates to the stability of character, the degree to which that character is robust enough to continue and to be able to recuperate from loss or damage. A landscape with a character of high sensitivity is one that, once lost, would be difficult to restore; a character that, if valued, must be afforded particular care and consideration in order for it to survive.

**Landscape Capacity**
Landscape capacity refers to the degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate change without significant effects on its character, or overall change of landscape character type.

5.3 Topic Paper 6 of the Countryside Agency’s landscape Character Assessment Guidance deals specifically with techniques and criteria for judging landscape sensitivity, value and landscape capacity. The characteristics of the study area are analysed against criteria identified in Topic Paper 6, along with identification of any designations, gap policy, and consideration of the historic landscape characterisation of the area. This information is then fed into the landscape sensitivity and landscape value assessments.
5.4 OVERALL LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

5.4.1 Landscape Character Sensitivity
Landscape Character Sensitivity of the Study Area relates to the sensitivity of individual aspects of landscape character. The Sensitivity of the Landscape Character will be judged on Natural Factors, Cultural factors, Landscape Quality/Condition and Aesthetic Factors.

5.4.2 The landscape baseline has produced a detailed analysis of the Study Area and the surrounding context. This describes the Study Area as;

- Relatively small, sloping agricultural field
- Prominent elevated position on the western edge of Cherry Willingham
- Currently composed of rough grassland
- Northern boundary defined by railway embankment and self-seeding plant species
- Southern boundary defined by native hedgerows and trees of varying quality
- Eastern boundary has sporadic tree and hedge planting with large breaks
- Open character of western boundary allowing expansive views to the south and west
- Important for views from the west into Cherry Willingham

5.4.2 The Natural Factors that form the character of the Study Area, for example the trees, hedges and grass field are of low sensitivity. If these elements were lost they would not be difficult to restore.

5.4.3 The Cultural Factors involve the historical land use, settlement pattern, enclosure pattern and field boundaries. It is assumed that the agricultural land use of the Study Area has been in place for a long period of time. The field boundaries of the Study Area form part of the wider landscape character. The edge of Cherry Willingham’s settlement boundary has a definite character that has restricted the village’s growth to the south and west. The character of the edge of the settlement has formed the internal settlement pattern of the village. The Study Area is located in a prominent position on the edge of the village and forms part of this settlement pattern and edge character. If the character of the Study Area was changed or lost it would impact on the wider landscape character would be difficult to restore.

5.4.5 The Landscape Quality/Condition involve the intactness, representation of typical character and state of repair of individual elements. The Study Area reflects the character of the surrounding agricultural landscape with a sloping topography and hedgerow boundaries. The elements are in relatively good condition.

5.4.6 The Aesthetic Factors involves scale, enclosure, texture, pattern and form/line. The landscape baseline has described the Study Area as being in a prominent position and important for views into and from the village. The form of the Study Area relates to the pattern of the surrounding land form and is important to medium and long views.

5.4.7 The elements that form the Study Area ie. the natural factors are not of high sensitivity and would not be difficult to restore. The Study Area though is important to the wider character especially to the settlement edge of Cherry Willingham and wider views.
Therefore Landscape Character has been judged as being of **Medium** Sensitivity.

**5.4.8 The Visual Sensitivity**

The Visual Sensitivity for the Study Area will be judged on General Visibility, Population and Mitigation Proposals.

**5.4.9** The landscape baseline has described the Study Area as being in a prominent position in the landscape and important for views to and from the village. The topography of the Study Area and the surrounding area causes the site to be prominent to views from the south and west. The Study Area affects views towards Cherry Willingham from motorists and users of the public footpaths. The visibility of the Study Area from the south and west is affected by vegetation creating intermittent views when travelling. The elevated position of the Study Area allows views to the south and west across the adjacent valley and surrounding landscape. These wide panoramic views are important for residents along Waterford Lane and to the character and setting of Cherry Willingham.

**5.4.10** In the context of this assessment it is impossible to judge the potential for mitigation measures as in this case there is not a proposed change or development. Yet it is possible to assume that the visual effects of appropriate development could be mitigated when judged against, and designed in conjunction with a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. This would create a landscape led design that would not cause the mitigation in itself to cause unacceptable effects.

**5.4.11** The Study Area sits in a prominent position in the landscape and is important for long and medium views into and from the village. It has been assumed that appropriate development could involve mitigation that would minimise visual effects. Therefore the Visual Sensitivity of the study area has been judges as being **Medium**.

**5.4.12** Table 1 combines Landscape Character Sensitivity (Medium) and Visual Sensitivity (Medium) to give an overall Landscape Sensitivity. This assessment has defined the Overall Landscape Sensitivity of the study area as being **Medium**.
### TABLE 1; OVERALL LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landscape Character Sensitivity</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**VISUAL SENSITIVITY**

### TABLE 2; LANDSCAPE CAPACITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Landscape Sensitivity</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>LOW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>LOW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.5 **LANDSCAPE CAPACITY**
Landscape capacity refers to the degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate change without significant effects on its character, or overall change of landscape character type. This assessment will judge the Capacity of the Study Area by combining the Overall Landscape Sensitivity, which has been defined as Medium and The Landscape Value.

5.5.1 **Landscape Value**
The Landscape value is concerned with the relative value that is attached to different landscapes. In a policy context the usual basis for recognising certain highly valued landscapes is through the application of a local or national landscape designation. Yet a landscape may be valued by different communities of interest for many different reasons without any formal designation, recognising, for example, perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness; special cultural associations; the influence and presence of other conservation interests; or the existence of a consensus about importance, either nationally or locally.

5.5.2 The landscape base line has shown that the Study Area does not fall within any areas of local or national designation. Also there no TPO’s with or adjacent to the site. Topic Paper 6 of the Countryside Agency’s landscape Character Assessment Guidance does describe alternative judgements of value based landscape quality and condition; perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity, rurality, remoteness or wildness. Although, the Study Area is in a prominent visual position and is important to the settlement pattern of Cherry Willingham, it has in this assessment been defined as being of Low Value.

5.5.3 Table 2 combines Overall Landscape Sensitivity (Medium) and Landscape Value (Low) to produce a Landscape Capacity. This assessment has judged the Landscape capacity as being **Medium**.

5.5.4 A capacity rating of Medium identifies a landscape character area with the capacity for limited development, having regard for the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and sensitivity of adjacent local landscape character areas. In the context of this assessment the accuracy and relevance of the capacity rating is restricted because it has not been judged against a specific change or development.
6 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 CONCLUSIONS
6.1.2 This assessment has created a landscape baseline for the study area through a desk top study and site visits; this characterised study area as;

- Relatively small, sloping agricultural field
- Prominent elevated position on the western edge of Cherry Willingham
- Currently composed of rough grassland
- Northern boundary defined by railway embankment and self-seeding plant species
- Southern boundary defined by native hedgerows and trees of varying quality
- Eastern boundary has sporadic tree and hedge planting with large breaks
- Open character of western boundary allowing expansive views to the south and west
- Important for views from the west into Cherry Willingham

6.1.3 The landscape baseline described the importance of the Study area in terms of the views into and from the village of Willingham. The Study area is also of importance to the edge of the village’s settlement boundary and to the spread of the settlement. If the character of the Study Area was changed or lost it would impact on the wider landscape character and would be difficult to restore. Therefore the Overall Landscape Sensitivity is defined as being Medium.

6.1.4 This assessment has defined the Study Area as having a Medium Landscape Capacity. A capacity rating of Medium identifies a landscape character area with the capacity for limited development, having regard for the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and sensitivity of adjacent local landscape character areas. In the context of this assessment the accuracy and relevance of the capacity rating is restricted because it has not been judged against a specific change or development.
6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out to deliver new developments in sustainable locations. As such it is expected that new residential development will be directed to sustainable locations such as Cherry Willingham. This pressure for new development will probably see the further growth of Cherry Willingham. This new development should be located in the most appropriate location in the form of well-designed landscaped extensions that relate to landform and of a size appropriate to the size of the settlement.

6.2.2 This assessment has defined the Study Area as being of landscape importance for views into and from the village, the character of the settlements edge and the village’s growth pattern. Therefore the study area was classified as having a Medium Sensitivity. It is assumed that there are potential sites for development within Cherry Willingham that are of a lower sensitivity. A full Landscape Character and Visual Assessment should be undertaken to characterise the landscape of Cherry Willingham; this will identify sites of less sensitivity that should be developed ahead of the Study Area. If such sites are identified they should be designed to mitigate against any detrimental impact on landscape character.

6.2.3 The assessment has defined the Study Area as having a Medium Landscape Capacity and therefore with the capacity for limited development, having regard for the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and sensitivity of adjacent local landscape character areas. If the Study Area is chosen for development then it should be designed alongside a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment to produce mitigation measures that would limit the residual effects on landscape character and visual amenity. Mitigation measures are generally more effective if they are designed as an integral part of an on-going process of project planning and design. Mitigation is thus used as a design approach that is, where possible, implemented from project inception when alternative designs or site options are being considered. A Construction Effect Management Plan should also be put into place to mitigate any effects the construction process may have on the landscape.
TERMINOLOGY

The phrases, vocabulary and terminology used throughout this chapter are described below;

Landscape:
Those physical components that together form the appearance of land, including its shapes, colours and textures. Landscape also reflects the way in which these various components combine to create a distinctive landscape character that might be particular to a specific locality.

Study Area:
The area within which desk and/or site surveys have been carried out when determining the extent of the influence of the development upon the adjoining landscape.

Landscape Character:
The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape, and how this is perceived by people. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement. It creates the particular sense of place of different areas of the landscape.

Landscape Character Type (LCT):
Areas with similar landscape characteristics. Normally sub-divided landscape areas on a local scale. Typical landscape components that define an area’s landscape character could include landform, land cover, vegetation, settlement pattern, remoteness and degree of tranquillity.

Landscape Receptor:
Physical landscape resource that will be affected by any element of the proposed development.

Visual Receptors:
People (for example residents, visitors, travellers through the area and other groups of viewers) who have viewpoints that will be affected by any element of the proposed development. Individual visual receptors are identified and categorised in terms of their sensitivity to visual change.

Baseline Conditions:
The baseline landscape and visual conditions have been evaluated through both desk-based and site appraisal during November 2009. The baseline conditions are evaluated in terms of landscape planning context and landscape form and features.

Landscape Sensitivity
Relates to the stability of character, the degree to which that character is robust enough to continue and to be able to recuperate from loss or damage. A landscape with a character of high sensitivity is one that, once lost, would be difficult to restore; a character that, if valued, must be afforded particular care and consideration in order for it to survive.

Landscape Capacity
Landscape capacity refers to the degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate change without significant effects on its character, or overall change of landscape character type.
APPENDIX A

CHARACTER ASSESSMENT PLANS AND PHOTOGRAPHS
View Point 1; View looking East towards Cherry Willingham from Fiskerton Road

View Point 2; View looking West from Study Area
Lincolnshire Geology Map

BGS 50k Geology Map (NTS)