

TRANSFORMING THE TRENT VALLEY

Landscape Partnership



Review of Landscape Character Assessment

ASHMEAD·PRICE
LANDSCAPE PLANNING AND DESIGN CONSULTANTS

in association with Steven Warnock

Ashmead Price 16 Bond End, Yoxall, Burton on Trent DE13 8NH Tel: 01543 473222

March 2018



LOTTERY FUNDED

Contents

	Page	
1	Introduction and Purpose of the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)	3
2	Scope of the report	3
	Baseline Map	4
3	Boundary Review Methodology	5
4	Detailed mapping analysis	6
	Scheme Boundary Map	6
	Options Table and Map	8
	Optional Areas to Consider Maps	8
	TTTV Landscape Boundary amends	9
5	Final Resolution of the Scheme boundary	12
	Landscape Character Type Descriptions:	
6	River Meadowlands	15
7	River Terrace Farmlands	19
8	Lowland Village Farmlands	21
9	Settled Heathlands	23
10	Wet Pasture Meadows	25
	Appendix	27

1 Introduction and Purpose of the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)

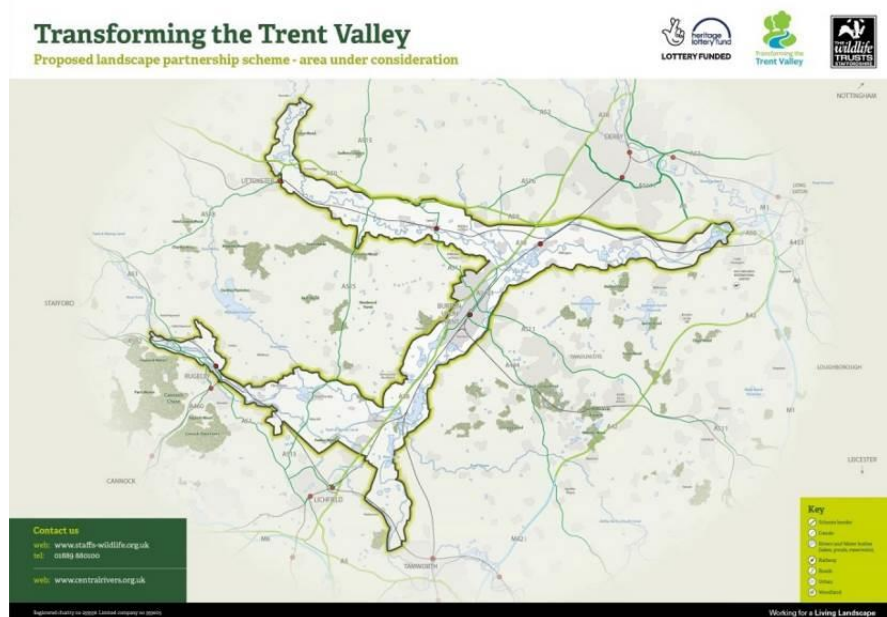
- 1.1 The Transforming the Trent Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS) is made up of a number of individual projects within a defined landscape character area. These individual projects will be integrated in a way that achieves a long-term legacy for the area. The TTTV LPS has evolved from The Central Rivers Initiative (CRI), a broad based partnership representing key interests who are working together to shape and guide the progressive restoration and revitalisation of the river valley between Burton, Lichfield and Tamworth - an area of central England that covers over 50 square km.
- 1.2 The area has expanded into Derbyshire and additional partners have become involved. The landscape boundary was defined as part of the early programme development through Natural England's National Character Areas, local Landscape Character Assessments and in communication with the partners engaged in the scheme.
- 1.3 The partnership is currently developing a series of environmental, cultural, community and interpretation projects across the landscape that will meet the outcomes set by HLF. Landscape Partnership projects need to be good for people, good for heritage and good for communities.
- 1.4 Through development of the cultural and access audits, the Landscape Partnership Scheme has identified the need for minor refinements to the landscape boundary. Additionally, recent updates of the county-wide landscape character studies mean that there is now scope to refine the boundary to ensure a consistent rationale and approach. A stand-alone Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is therefore required for the TTTV landscape area to bring this knowledge together.
- 1.5 The LCA will form part of the series of reports that will be submitted to HLF with the second stage application for a delivery grant. It will provide the rationale and justification for the landscape area that has been selected for a Landscape Partnership Scheme.
- 1.6 The LCA will form an appendix to the Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP) has been compiled using details and analysis from the Staffordshire and Derbyshire landscape character definitions.

2 Scope of the report

- 2.1 Ashmead Price was commissioned on 25th January 2018 by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust as the lead partner of the 'Transforming the Trent Valley' Landscape Partnership Scheme to complete a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) for the 'Transforming the Trent Valley' landscape area. This was to be based upon existing LCAs in Staffordshire and Derbyshire as well as making reference to the Central Rivers Initiative LCA that covers a quarter of the current landscape area. This report is written to be included within HLF grant application literature as part of a round 2 Landscape Partnership Scheme funding submission.
- 2.2 The scope of works undertaken included the following tasks set out in the brief:

- Review existing LCAs and correspond with relevant partners for information as required. The current LCAs that cover the landscape have been written by Staffordshire County Council and Derbyshire County Council. Both local authorities are partners within the scheme.
- Formalise the landscape descriptions to ensure consistency.
- Undertake site visits and ground-truthing exercises, as required, to fill any gaps in knowledge that may arise when integrating the LCAs of two different counties.
- Provide broad guidance within the report based on guidance within the existing LCAs.
- Provide a detailed justification for the project boundary through the consideration of landscape types, cultural boundaries, and the historic environment. Also consider the communities within the landscape, how they connect to the valley and how they might identify themselves with the valley to help refine the boundary.
- Ensure that the landscape area encompasses the proposed projects to ensure that any refinements do not exclude projects from the scheme.
- Produce a definitive landscape boundary in GIS mapping format to be made available to all the partners.
- Provide a detailed report with an executive summary that can be directly incorporated into the LCAP; showing both the original and revised landscape and a table referenced to the map detailing the suggested revisions and reasons.

2.3 The following map was provided as a base line for consideration in the study. It was prepared as part of the initial funding application to HLF.



Baseline Map

3 Boundary Review Methodology

3.1 We met with the TTTV Landscape Partnership Manager Louise Morris on 25th January 2018 to gather the latest information on parallel development stage reports commissioned by the Partnership. We understood the broad principal that the Scheme is around two thirds in Staffordshire and one third in Derbyshire. To date, nineteen delivery projects have been identified within the study area around three themes:

- Connecting Communities through Action
- River Valley Connections
- Transforming the Landscape

3.2 An Access and Visitor Audit has been compiled together with a Cultural Heritage Audit. A Natural Heritage Audit is still in development and the new boundary will feed into this audit. A community consultation has been undertaken and a high quality public dialogue project, Community Conversations, is coming to completion. The responses from these have been used to inform the boundary changes.

3.3 Key sites within the river valley have emerged in the access audit which may be used as demonstration sites to help people understand and interpret the scope of the project. These key sites are:

- Tucklesholme quarry
- Willington gravel pits
- Barton Marina
- Burton Washlands
- Wolseley Centre
- National Memorial Arboretum

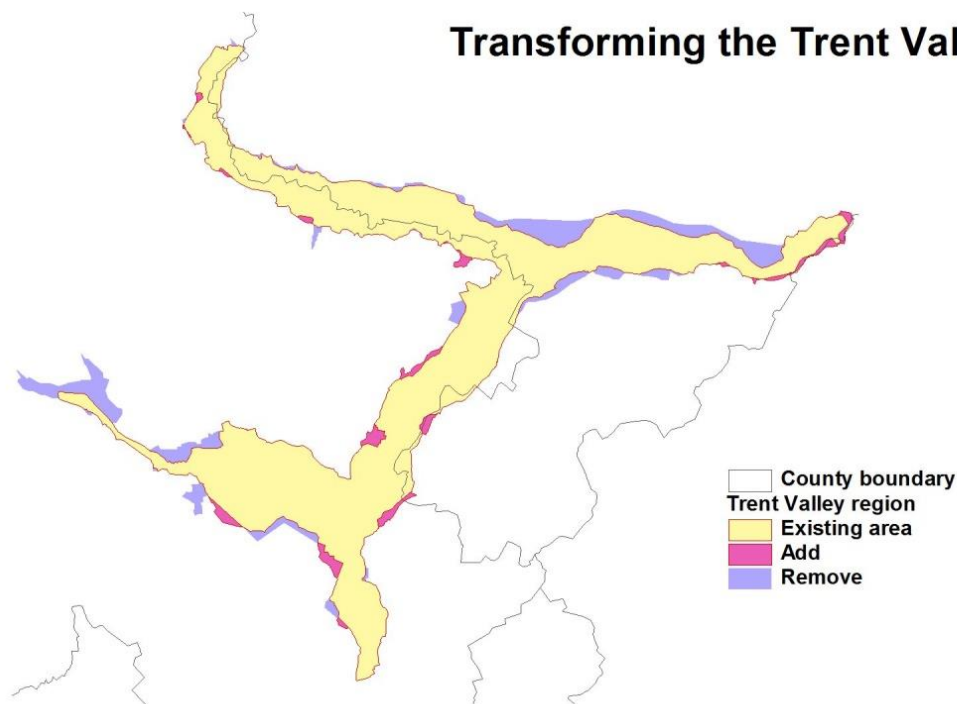
4 Detailed mapping analysis

4.1 We were provided with 1:25,000 scale Ordnance Survey maps of the proposed Scheme area and the original project boundary in GIS format via the respective County Councils. The boundary was overlain onto the maps and Land Description units (LDU) boundaries were highlighted as a layer from the Staffordshire and Derbyshire Landscape Character Assessment publications. Soils information was used as a key layer of information to identify the alluvial soils characteristic of the river valleys, and contour information was considered as a significant indicator to define the valley bottom landscapes.

4.2 Land Description Units systematically divide the countryside into discrete and relatively homogenous units of land, within which the constituent physical, biological and historical elements occur in repeating patterns and share certain aesthetic characteristics. These units of land are the building blocks of the landscape and they form a coherent framework for assessing landscape change and for mapping differences in the inherent cultural, ecological

and visual sensitivity of the landscape. A refined Level 2 (1:50,000) LDU map had recently been produced for Staffordshire and we used this together with LCA information from Derbyshire as the baseline framework on which to carry out the study. We also referred to the more detailed Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) work that has now been completed for Staffordshire.

- 4.3 The rationale for the Transforming the Trent Valley Scheme boundary is to include the four landscapes which are characteristic of the Trent Valley, including the main **River Meadowlands** and associated **River Terrace Farmlands**, along with the more settled **Lowland Village Farmlands** and the **Settled Heathlands**. The latter is characterised by a planned, late enclosure pattern of square fields and straight roads, with a strong relic heathy character. A fifth Landscape, **Wet Pasture Meadows**, is also associated with the low lying ground around the southern fringe of Derby and this could be incorporated subject to constraints of total land area allowed within the Scheme boundary.
- 4.4 There is much potential for habitat restoration and creation in the Trent Valley Landscapes which makes it an ideal Landscape Partnership Scheme.
- 4.5 The initial map analysis highlighted a number of potential adjustments to the TTTV Scheme boundary and these were presented to the Partnership Manager below:



- 4.6 The next stage of the study was to undertake a detailed review of the proposed changes. The implications of the proposed boundary changes were discussed in detail with other considerations drawn in from the Community Conversations and Cultural Heritage Audit.

The project steering group were then able to consider the wider implications of the changes to the various Landscape Partnership Scheme Projects.

4.7 Further proposed boundary changes were introduced in order to re-balance the proportion of land within the Scheme between Staffordshire and Derbyshire, as well as considering the locally distinctive Wet Pasture Meadows on the southern edges of Derby.

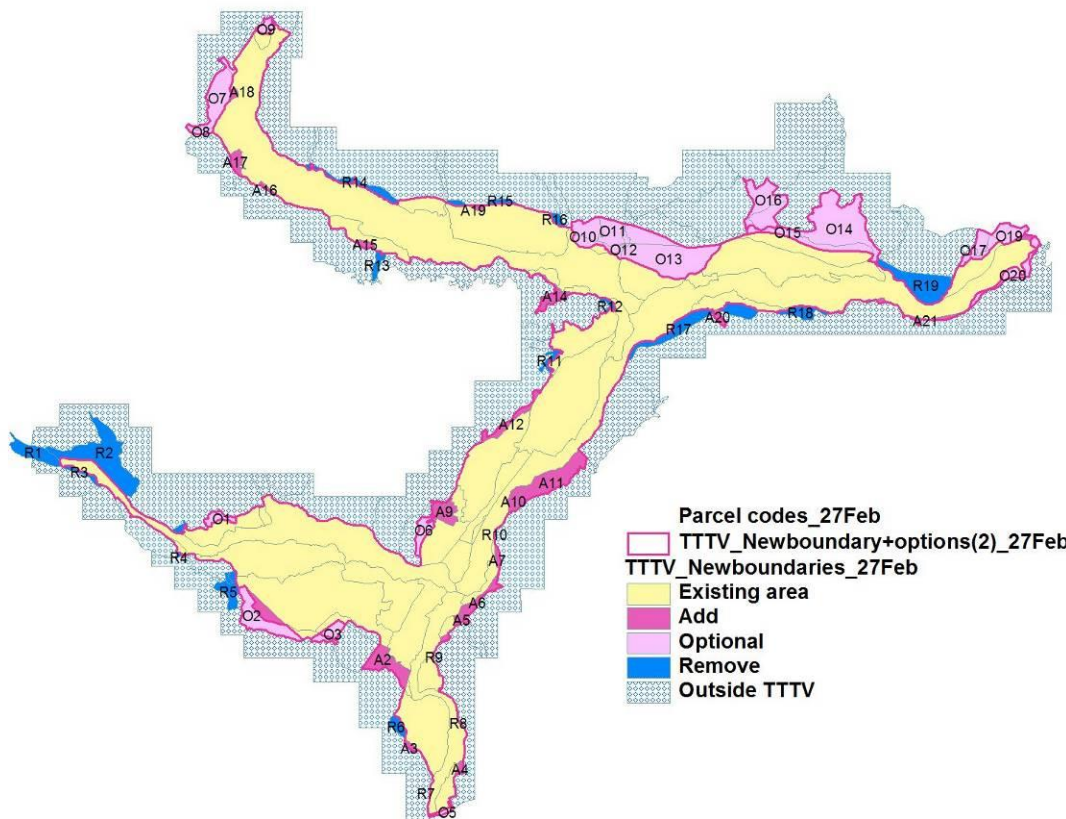
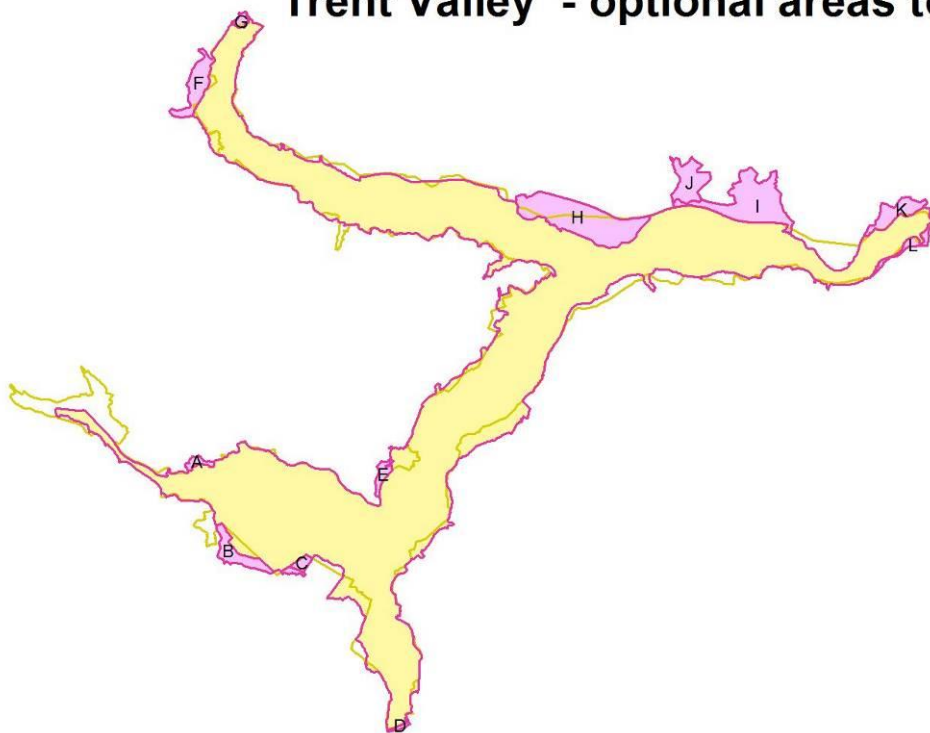
4.8 The draft modifications to the Scheme boundary were justified on a number of grounds as follows:

- Removing land falling outside of the valley bottom landscape character types of River Meadowlands and River Terrace Farmlands- often defined by contours, soil types and rising ground for example at Bishton and Hill Ridware on the Trent and west of Rolleston to Draycott and Sudbury to Doveridge in the Dove valley.
- Removing parcels of land affected by recent urban development for example at Fradley Park
- Following landscape type boundaries more accurately rather than the arbitrary straight lines drawn on the proposed scheme for example at Fradley Heath and Brookhay
- Providing clearer definition of the extent of the project at the 'gateways,' for example at Wolseley Bridge, Rocester and Shardlow.
- Inclusion of key communities closely associated with the river valleys for example at Barton under Needwood, Hilton, Repton and Rolleston on Dove.
- Following existing strong landscape and man- made features to define the Scheme boundary for example the Trent and Mersey Canal, A50 and urban edges.

4.9 Following the detailed review, further maps were produced giving options for additional land to be included in the scheme. The options table and map is reproduced below to demonstrate the scope of the discussions held about the Scheme boundary:

Ref	Place name	Landscape	Edit	Comments
A	Hill Ridware	Lowland Village Farmlands	Add?	Adjust boundary to include lowlying/wet area of terrace
B	Hanch hall	Settled Heathlands	Add?	Move TTTV boundary to landscape boundary?
C	Fradley	Settled Heathlands	Add?	Check extent of commercial development
D	Coton	River Terrace Farmlands	Add?	Existing boundary diffuse - move to road along Coton edge
D	Coton	River Meadowlands	Add?	Existing boundary diffuse - move to road along Coton edge
E	Wychnor	Lowland Village Farmlands	Add?	Include as part of Lowland Village Farmlands
F	Crakemarsh	River Terrace Farmlands	Add?	Area of flat river terrace forming part of Dove valley
F	Tean Valley	River Meadowlands	Add?	Narrow river corridor
G	Rocester	Urban	Add?	Include historic town in TTTV?
H	Hilton village	Urban	Add?	Link with area to south to include whole settlement
H	Etwell Common	Settled Heathlands	Add?	Link with area to south and extend to A50
I	Sinfin Moor	Wet Pasture Meadows	Add?	Former wetland area on southern edge of Derby in Trent valley
I	Twyford/Barrow on Trent	Lowland Village Farmlands	Add?	Low rolling hill between Sinfin Moor and Trent Valley
J	Findern Moor	Wet Pasture Meadows	Add?	Smaller and less coherent than Sinfin Moor
K	Aston on Trent	Lowland Village Farmlands	Add?	Extend to boundary with A50?
K	Aston Moor	Wet Pasture Meadows	Add?	Former wetland area in Trent valley-extend to A50?
L	Leics Trent Valley	River Meadowlands	Add?	Low lying area of river alluvium - include in TTTV?

Trent Valley - optional areas to consider



TTTV Landscape Boundary amends

Area	Label	Comments	Further comment
Haywood	R1	Agree removed	Better defined edge of Scheme at Wolseley Bridge
Bishton	R2	Agree removed	Settled farmlands area which does not relate to the Trent Valley
W. of Rugeley	R3	Agree removed	Sloping land in Sandstone Hills and Heaths- now partly housing.
Armitage	R4	Agree removed	Minor adjustment to conform to Staffs LDU mapping boundary
Handsacre	R5	Agree removed	Settled farmlands area which has small to medium sized fields.
Hill Ridware	O1	Include	Boundary adjusted to include low lying/ wet area of terrace
Fradley Heath	O2	Include	Settled Heathlands character which has opportunities for habitat development
Fradley Park	O3	Include	As O2 above- excluding recent large scale development areas.
Whittington	R6	Agree removed	Settled farmlands area which has small to medium sized fields.
Whittington	R7	Agree removed	Settled farmlands area which has small to medium sized fields.
Coton	O5	Include	Existing boundary adjusted to follow road along Coton edge
Comberford	A4	Agree include	Adjust boundary to edge of River Terrace farmlands
Elfordlow	R8	Agree removed	Adjust boundary to edge of River Terrace farmlands
Elford	R9	Agree removed	Adjust boundary to remove parcel with small fields and settlement
Croxall	A5	Agree include	Adjust boundary to follow well defined break of slope
Catton	A6	Agree include	Adjust boundary to follow well defined break of slope
Walton	A7	Agree include	Adjust boundary to follow well defined break of slope
Walton	R10	Agree removed	Adjust boundary to follow well defined break of slope
Wychnor	O6	Agree include	Extend to include Wychnor deserted medieval village
Barton u Needwood	A9	Agree include	Include large village closely associated with the Trent Valley
Drakelow	A10	Agree include	Large area of River meadowlands landscape
Drakelow	A11	Agree include	Large area of River meadowlands landscape
Tatenhill	A12	Agree include	Include area of River meadowlands

Area	Label	Comments	Further comment
			landscape
Outwoods	R11	Agree removed	Suburb of Burton un-related to river valley
Clay Mills	R12	Agree removed	Minor adjustment to follow edge of meadowlands
Rolleston on Dove	A14	Include	Village closely related to Dove valley with historic pools
Draycott in the Clay	R13	Agree removed	Settled Farmlands with rolling topography not related to valley
Marchington	A15	Agree include	Boundary moved to road to follow terrace farmlands boundary
Uttoxeter racecourse	A16	Agree add	Minor adjustment to reflect break of slope
Crakemarsh	O7	Include	Area of flat river terrace forming part of Dove Valley
Spath Tean Valley	O8	Include	Area of flat river terrace forming part of Dove Valley
Crakemarsh	A18	Agree Include	Include small settlement
JCB parkland and Rocester	O9	Include	Include historic town in Scheme
Sudbury to Doveridge	R14	Agree remove	Minor adjustments to follow boundary between River meadowlands and Settled sandstone farmlands
Dove Valley Park to Sudbury	A19	Agree remove	Minor adjustments to follow boundary between River terrace farmlands and Settled sandstone farmlands
Dove Valley Park to Sudbury	R15	Agree remove	Minor adjustments to follow boundary between River terrace farmlands and Settled sandstone farmlands
Hoon Ridge	R16	Agree remove	Minor adjustments to boundary to follow River terrace
Hilton	O10	Include	Expanding settlement associated with river valley
Eggington / Etwall Common	O11	Exclude	Settled Heathlands area cut off by A50
Eggington / Etwall Common	O12	Exclude	Settled Heathlands area cut off by A50
Eggington / Etwall Common	O13	Exclude	Settled Heathlands area cut off by A50
Sinfin Moor	O14	Tentative include – will give connectivity with Derby	Wet Pasture meadows
Sinfin Moor	O15	Include	Wet Pasture meadows
Findern Moor	O16	Tentative include – will give connectivity with Derby	Wet Pasture Meadows
Newton	R17	Agree removed	Adjust boundary to remove strip of

Area	Label	Comments	Further comment
Solney			undulating farmland on south side of valley
Repton	A20	Agree include	Include historic settlement
Milton and Ingleby	R18	Agree removed	Adjust boundary to remove strip of undulating farmland on south side of valley
Kings Newton	A21	Agree include	Adjust boundary to include River meadowlands to break of slope
Weston	R19	Agree removed	Adjust boundary to follow canal and River meadowlands
Aston	O17	Include	Add in area of Lowland Village farmlands up to A50
Aston Moor	O19	Include	Wet Pasture Meadows included to boundary of A50

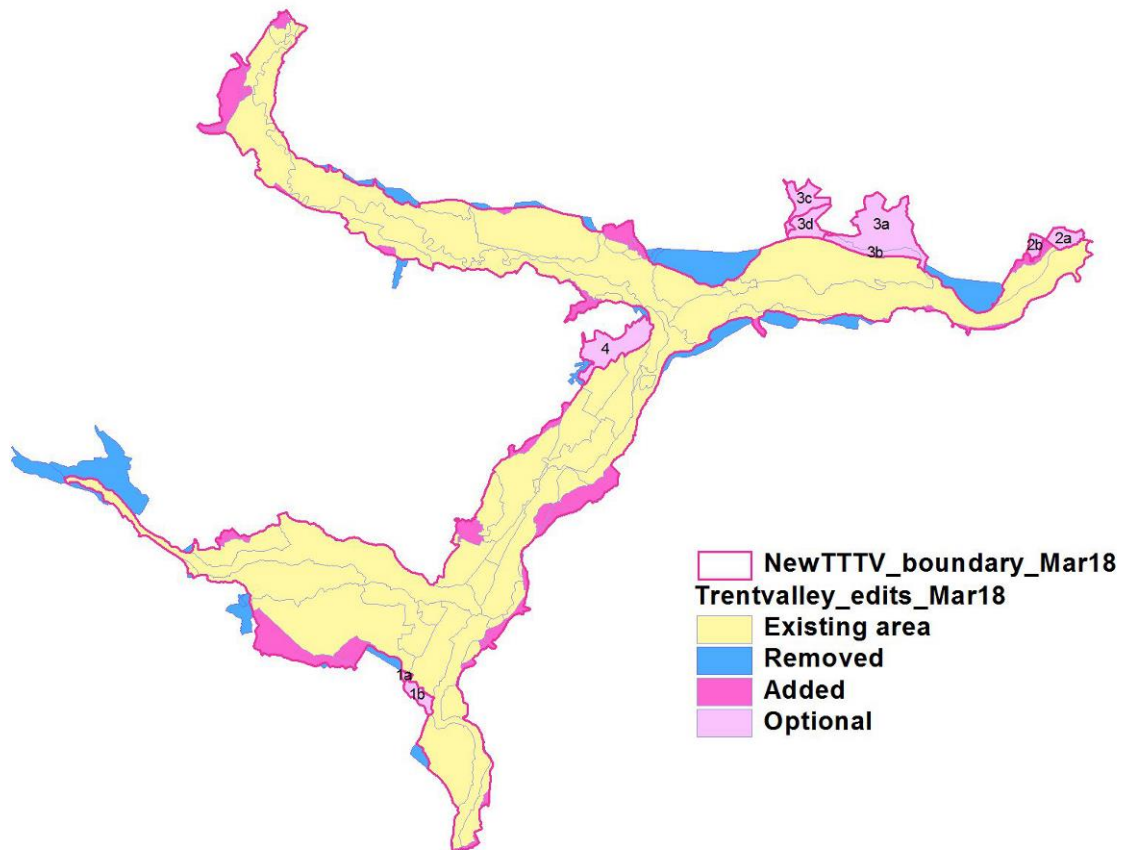
5 Final Resolution of the Scheme boundary

5.1 The suggested detailed Scheme boundary amendments exceeded the maximum allowed area of 200km² by some 7km². The Partnership was presented with further options to consider reducing the Scheme area to conform to the Heritage Lottery Fund guidelines.

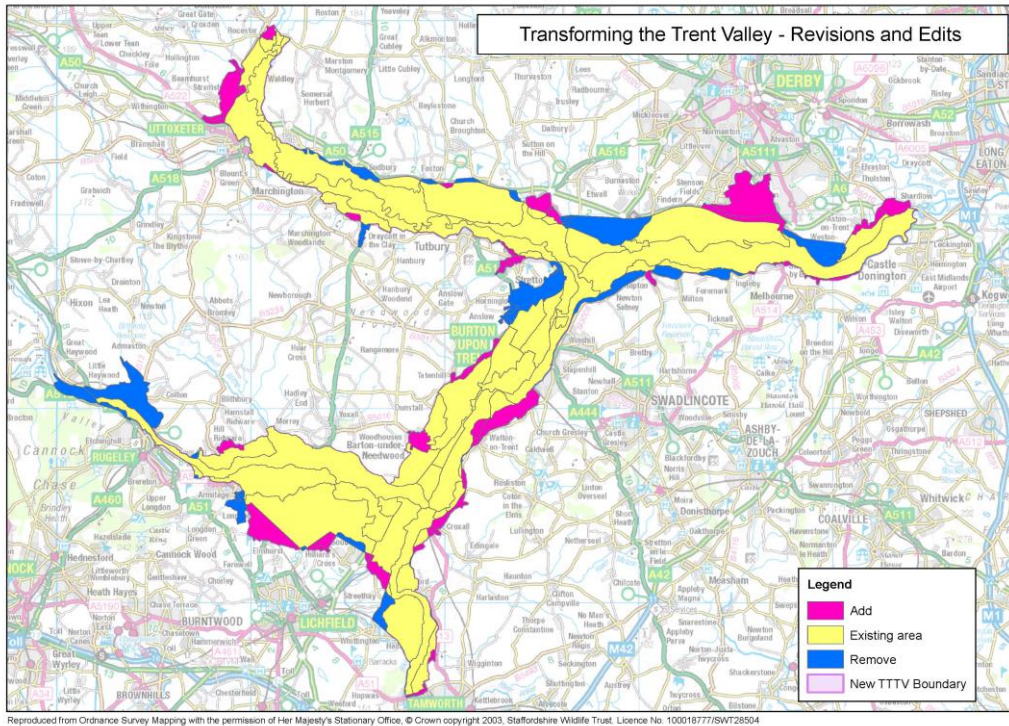
5.2 After consultation with the relevant partners the final agreed Scheme boundary was agreed with the following amendments (see map below):

- Remove urban area of Stretton Ref. 4 (3.2km²)
- Remove Findern Moor and area of land to the south Ref. 3c, 3d. (2.9km²)
- Remove Aston Moor Ref. 2b. (0.5km²)
- Include Shardlow village for cultural reasons Ref.2a (0.9km²)

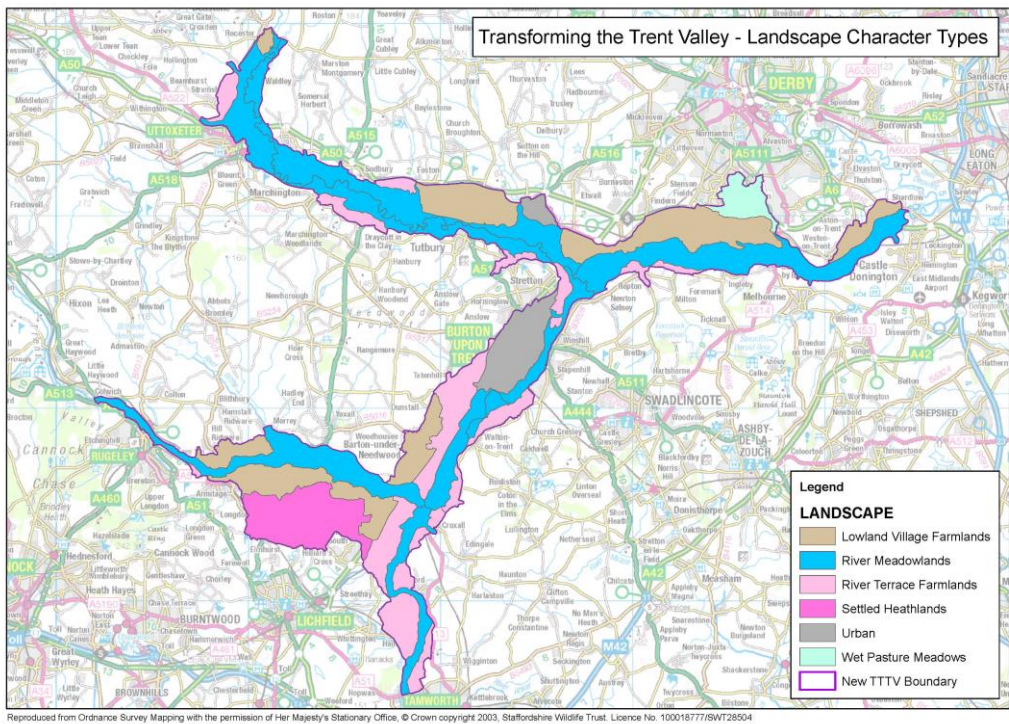
5.3 The proportion of land in the Scheme is 60% in Staffordshire to 40% in Derbyshire. The Scheme area is 200.2km².



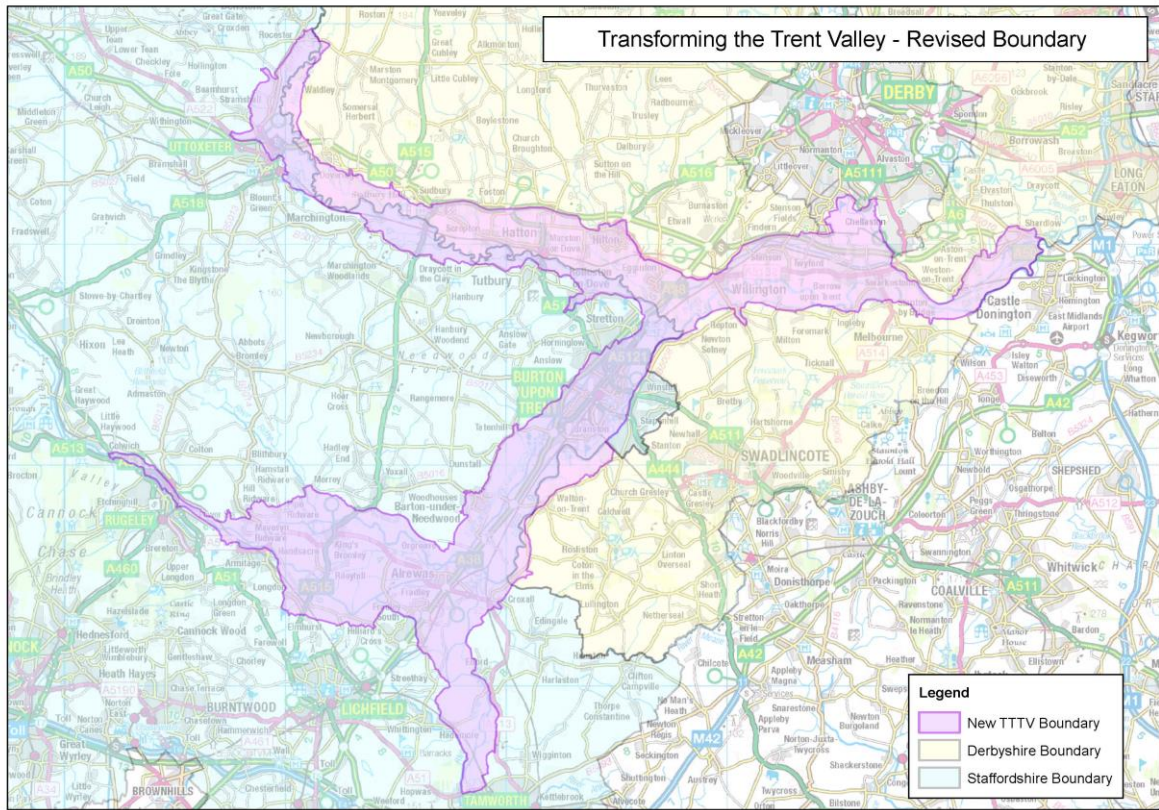
5.4 The three maps below illustrate the final agreed Landscape Partnership Scheme boundary changes; the Landscape Character Type boundaries represented in the Scheme and the Proposed TTTV boundary.



Map showing final agreed Scheme boundary changes from the original boundary presented to HLF in Round 1.



Map showing Landscape Character Types within the final agreed Scheme.



Map showing Proposed Transforming the Trent Valley boundary, with the County boundary of Staffordshire with Derbyshire marked.

Landscape Character Type Descriptions

6 River Meadowlands



- 6.1 A narrow, meandering river corridor landscape associated with a flat, generally well-defined alluvial floodplain. Although normally defined by strong hedgelines along the edge of the floodplain, in places, the river corridor is framed by low, but often steeply rising river banks. Overall, this is a secluded pastoral landscape, characterised by meandering, tree-lined rivers, flanked by alluvial meadows with grazing animals.

Visual character

- 6.2 These riverine landscapes are characterised by their flat topography and visual links with landform and land uses of surrounding areas. The predominantly pastoral farming on the floodplain gives way to areas of arable cropping where this becomes possible as a result of land drainage or on higher ground.
- 6.3 The landscape is characterised by trees associated with waterside planting, with willow, alder and poplar predominating along the river, stream and dyke courses. The hedgerow pattern varies from irregular to small areas with straight hedgerows and a regular pattern. Hedgerows are intact and well looked after mainly in the pastoral areas, whilst deterioration in other places is resulting in remnant hedgerows and extensive wire fences. The only woodlands of any note occupy an old, slightly elevated river terrace on the Trent, north of Lichfield. The wet grasslands and open water of the valleys are of particular value to breeding and over-wintering waders and wildfowl, and some of the more open arable farmland supports the county's largest population of corn bunting.

- 6.4 The landscape is mostly of a medium scale. In some areas, as a result of a smaller scale field pattern, increased tree cover limits views. In other areas, mainly linked to the introduction of arable farming, the scale is increased. Here the flat even expanse of arable production is unrelieved by the few scattered remnants of hedgerow trees, not related to boundaries on the ground. Landcover patterns are created by the open lanes servicing isolated farmsteads, and dykes. The Victorian farmhouses are now associated with large modern agricultural buildings.
- 6.5 Views across the landscape are variable: some areas appear well treed as a result of grown up thorn and extensive tree cover, whereas in open arable areas there is little to restrict through views. The surrounding rising land and woodland edges provide the only relief in these landscapes, with the river often unseen and visually unimportant.
- 6.6 Habitation tends to occur adjacent to the floodplain and can have significant influence on the landscape. Where roads cross these areas they are generally small winding lanes, with fast through routes running along the edges. Canals feature strongly and contribute to local character.
- 6.7 Adjacent larger built up areas considerably change the character of the landscape by visually dominating the landscape features, such as at Rugeley and Burton-upon-Trent where the landscape is visually contained by built development. In these areas, pressures on the use of land for transport routes, power supply, sewage treatment and other typical land uses, e.g. for horse pasture, erode the character of a predominantly rural landscape.
- 6.8 A very significant feature of this landscape south of Burton upon Trent, north of Uttoxeter on the Dove and east of Willington is the occurrence of active and reclaimed sand and gravel extraction sites, with visually intrusive processing plants, stockpiles and open excavations.

Characteristic landscape features

- 6.9 Flat valley landform and floodplain; river channel with meanders, shallows and marginal vegetation; canals following the river valley contours; waterside tree species; drainage channels and ditches; hedgerow oaks; narrow lanes; poplar planting and small woodlands; red brick buildings; flood pasture and hedged fields; arable farming.

Incongruous landscape features

- 6.10 Urban edge; busy main roads; sand and gravel extraction; railways; industrial development; large modern distribution warehousing; post and wire fencing; large modern farm buildings; disintegrated field pattern.

Factors critical to landscape character and quality

- 6.11 The critical factors which currently limit landscape quality are: the loss of characteristic landscape features; the poor condition of those features that remain; the poor survival of historic elements that contribute to landscape character, such as field, settlement and road patterns; the poor representation of characteristic semi-natural (i.e. riparian and wetland) vegetation, and the introduction of the incongruous landscape features listed above.

Opportunities for Landscape Enhancement

- 6.12 Waterside poplar, willow and alder are most characteristic of these landscapes and these species would, therefore, most appropriately predominate in any new planting. It would be particularly valuable to plant limited numbers of native black poplars of Staffordshire provenance within the river floodplain.
- 6.13 Proposals for larger scale planting may be appropriate in some areas to create new landscape structure and buffer new development. However the intimate enclosed character that is so important to some areas should be retained and reinforced by additional small scale or hedgerow planting. Views through these flat landscapes are important, and in more intimate areas keeping any larger scale planting away from roads and rivers will help to retain existing character and enhance views through the landscape.
- 6.14 New planting can be fitted into the landscape better if designed to link with existing hedgerow trees and woodlands. The irregular spacing of river-side copses and groups of trees will help to avoid the creation of continuous woodland cover along the water courses and to maintain wetland habitats. Naturalising ditches would offer potential for delivering landscape enhancement.
- 6.15 Planting should also seek to fulfil the objectives of the National Forest where appropriate.
- 6.16 In the area south of Burton-upon-Trent and elsewhere east of Willington to Shardlow there has been some loss of characteristic features and deterioration in the condition of those features that remain. Gravel extraction and restoration of quarry sites is exerting a change on this landscape, resulting in an extensive chain of new lakes which are not characteristic of the former valley floodplain, but which have the potential to create a new landscape of great character. Between Burton-upon-Trent and Fradley, where there has already been deterioration in landscape quality, an innovative approach to landscape enhancement is appropriate, rather than attempting to replicate old characteristic features that have been lost. This is reflected in the creation and ongoing development of innovative new landscapes such as at the National Memorial Arboretum.
- 6.17 Recent gravel extraction has extended up the Tame from the Arboretum towards Elford, further increasing the land affected by gravel working and restoration.
- 6.18 Between Elford and Tamworth, west of the River Tame, there has been some loss of characteristic features. The emphasis should be on the re-creation of character through the provision of new features. The planting of small woodlands could help to re-create the sense of enclosure and the reduction in scale of the landscape previously provided by the field pattern.
- 6.19 East of the River Tame the landscape is in moderately good condition though in places there has been some erosion of strength of character and deterioration in the condition of landscape elements. Small-scale landscape conservation schemes such as hedgerow maintenance, habitat creation and tree and woodland planting, would help to stem decline that will otherwise become more evident. Part of the river valley from Broad Meadow to

Comberford, to the north and west of Tamworth, was identified as a 'landscape at risk' of sudden loss of quality; where visual strength of features is currently strong but deteriorating due to changes in land management and farming practice, and there is a need to target conservation and enhancement of these elements.

- 6.20 North of Uttoxeter in the Dove valley gravel extraction has affected the condition of the river meadowlands towards Rocester. Traffic on the busy B5030 further disturbs the peaceful river meadowlands landscape of the Dove.

7 River Terrace Farmlands



- 7.1 A flat, low-lying, predominantly arable landscape associated with the broad river terraces of major river valleys. This is a large scale, intensively farmed landscape defined by large rectilinear fields, although there are also pockets of older, semi-regular fields. Scattered hedgerow trees, small plantations and lines of willows and alders along streams and ditches often provide quite a strong sense of enclosure in this flat landscape.

Visual character

- 7.2 This is a flat landscape, predominantly of intensive arable and improved pastoral farming. The field pattern tends to be mainly large scale and regularly shaped although there are pockets of ancient, irregularly shaped fields. This difference is indistinct on the ground, however, as the lack of landform results in views through the landscape being controlled by the intactness of the hedgerows and density of the tree cover. In proximity to villages the scale reduces to a landscape of very small, irregularly shaped fields with plentiful hedgerow oaks controlling views to a maximum of one field distance. These areas are now characterised by low intensity pastoral farming and horse keeping.

- 7.3 Throughout the arable areas the loss of stock control function has led to sculpted, gappy and overgrown thorn hedges. Scattered hedgerow oaks partially filter views through the landscape, with distant views becoming an important feature. In the few places where small woodlands are present their edges coalesce with hedgerow trees to give a strong sense of enclosure. Streams and ditches also reinforce this enclosure with lines of willows and alders. The hedgerows and woodlands have a heathy character in the area around Fradley.
- 7.4 In areas where vegetable growing takes place, hedgerows have been removed, hedgerow trees are sparse and the sense of enclosure has been lost as the scale of the landscape has increased.
- 7.5 A widely spaced network of straight roads and lanes services the scattered brick farmsteads and act as commuter runs for extended rural villages which still retain much of their original character. Adjacent busy roads intrude into the quietness of the area.
- 7.6 The character of the landscape is largely shaped by planned enclosure in the 19th century, with a large scale, rectilinear field pattern. There are pockets of older, semi-regular fields created by piecemeal enclosure, particularly around the settlements, with some surviving ridge and furrow in pastoral areas. This difference is indistinct on the ground, due to the flat landform.
- 7.7 Early settlement is evidenced by many late-prehistoric cropmarks, similar to those in the adjacent River Meadowlands, including a cursus and causeway enclosure. Fisherwick contains cropmark evidence for substantial prehistoric and Roman activity, for example ring ditches, enclosures and possible settlement.

Characteristic landscape features

- 7.8 Small broadleaved woodland; hedged fields and hedgerow trees; waterside tree species along ditches; flat landform; intensive mixed pasture and arable farming; large fields; lush improved pasture; scattered brick farmsteads; straight roads and small winding lanes; traditional village character; canal.

Incongruous landscape features

- 7.9 Stag headed trees; electricity pylons; sand and gravel quarrying; large modern farm buildings; horse pasture; busy roads; large distribution warehouses, fencing; village expansion.

Factors critical to landscape character and quality

- 7.10 The critical factor which most limits landscape quality is the relatively poor representation of characteristic semi-natural vegetation. To a lesser degree landscape quality is limited by a decline in the condition of those features that remain, and the representation of incongruous features.

Opportunities for Landscape Enhancement

- 7.11 Gravel extraction and restoration of quarry sites is exerting a change on the landscape around Barton under Needwood, resulting in a chain of new lakes which are not characteristic of the river terraces, but which have the potential to create a new landscape of great character. East of Tatenhill there is pressure from new housing development.
- 7.12 Much of the area falls within the National Forest. Within this changing landscape opportunities should be sought to create a new landscape structure to mitigate for loss of characteristic features, halt the decline in condition of those remaining, and minimise visual impact from development. Hedgerows, hedgerow trees and small copses will contribute to the enclosed small scale and respond to the strong landcover pattern without subverting it. Occasional farm woodlands and spinneys would be appropriate to reflect the small-scale landscape of ancient hedged fields. Extensive new planting would not be appropriate in former parkland landscapes.
- 7.13 The river terrace at Fisherwick has suffered significant loss of characteristic landscape features and patterns, so that restoration is not possible, and replacement landscapes of a new character are required. Extraction at Elford Quarry on the northern edge of the area has created new lakes but otherwise restoration is to farmland with the restoration of hedged fields sympathetic to landscape structure. Elsewhere opportunities to encourage land management enhancements such as through planting hedgerows, hedgerow trees and small copses, will help to reflect the traditional smaller-scale landscape of ancient hedged fields, and would help to deliver landscape enhancement. Planting could be undertaken in association with other land management improvements such as water course naturalisation.

8 Lowland Village Farmlands



- 8.1 A well- ordered agricultural landscape associated with productive Brown soils, characterised by nucleated villages, estate farms and small game coverts. These occupy a lowland mixed farming landscape set within a semi-regular pattern of medium to large hedged fields. This landscape owes much of its present day character to the late enclosure of former medieval open fields.

Visual character

- 8.2 The gently rolling landform and varying density of hedgerows and tree cover enables views out of the Lowland village Farmlands, often towards rising ground and/or woodland edges in adjoining landscapes. Busy roads and post-war commercial developments, however, frequently impinge on the character of this landscape while more recent development continues to spread into the area, further eroding its character.
- 8.3 This is an open landscape of medium to large sized, mostly regular fields enclosed by thorn hedgerows. The overall character of this landscape is strongly related to the planned enclosure of open fields by Parliamentary Act. There are also a few areas with an older sub-regular field pattern, often associated with surviving ridge and furrow. This older field pattern tends to be set back from the roadside and the gently rolling landform does not allow it to register strongly in the landscape. Across this landscape fields have been enlarged as a result of agricultural intensification during the latter part of the 20th century, although the earlier character can often still be discerned from surviving field boundaries.

- 8.4 Discrete nucleated villages, which have developed around a church and manor house, are a distinctive feature in this landscape. Many smaller farmsteads are associated with the village settlements, while the larger estate farms, dominated by regular farm layouts, are mostly associated with the planned enclosure of the surrounding open fields. The majority of older buildings on farms and within settlements are of red brick, although timber framing is well represented, occasionally hidden by later facades. The villages and their surrounding estate farms are connected by both 'A' and 'B' roads and a widely spaced network of narrow country lanes with wide grass verges.
- 8.5 Landscaped parks are a feature of this landscape. These tend to be modest in size for example at Wychnor Hall Park and Orgreave Hall.
- 8.6 Prehistoric settlement is evidenced by cropmarks showing enclosures and ditches, particularly around King's Bromley. This suggests several phases of prehistoric landscape development.

Characteristic landscape features

- 8.7 Gently rolling landform; productive arable farming with pockets of pasture around villages; planned enclosure pattern of large hedged fields; Small, regularly shaped game coverts; tree lined stream corridors; large country houses, often set in mature grounds; discrete rural villages; narrow country lanes bounded by wide grass verges.

Incongruous landscape features

- 8.8 Busy roads; post-war commercial developments; recent housing development spreading into the area. Much of the original character of this landscape has been seriously impacted upon by modern large scale development. Large power stations dominate views across the landscape as do the many pylons carrying the resultant electricity. The gentle topography above the flood plain has always been attractive for road construction and modern roads, like the A50 and A52, pass through this landscape. The underlying mineral deposits have resulted in sand and gravel extraction, and the restoration of these sites has created areas of restored agricultural land and large water bodies.

Factors critical to landscape character and quality

- 8.9 The critical factor which most limits landscape quality is the relatively poor representation of characteristic semi-natural vegetation. To a lesser degree landscape quality is limited by a decline in the condition of those features that remain, and the pressure to change from recent large scale housing and commercial development.

Opportunities for Landscape Enhancement

- 8.10 Promote the use of indigenous tree and shrub species, including a proportion of large, long-lived species. Conserve and enhance the tree groups that occur within and around rural settlements and isolated farmsteads.

- 8.11 Conserve ridge and furrow features that help to define landscape character. Promote new agri -environmental projects which aim to restore semi natural vegetation and increase appropriate native woodland plantations.

9 Settled Heathlands



- 9.1 A flat, low-lying landscape associated with impoverished, sandy soils derived from an old river terrace. This is a planned, mixed farming landscape, where place names reflect the former extent of commons in the area. This is emphasised by the regular pattern of small and large hedged fields, straight roads with uniform verges and a dispersed settlement pattern of roadside dwellings. Much of this area is reasonably well wooded and together with the scattered hedgerow trees, this creates a strong sense of visual enclosure.

Visual character

- 9.2 The woodland blocks and visual coalescence of hedgerow trees create a strong sense of enclosure in the Settled Heathlands. The woodland and tall hedgerows also provide a sense of apparent informality in what is otherwise a planned landscape. However, the industrial development at Fradley, the business of the road network that passes through the area and the increased commuter travel within the area itself, all have a major cumulative impact on the rural character of this landscape.
- 9.3 This landscape has been shaped by the planned enclosure of heathland in the early 19th century and is characterised by a regular pattern of small and large hedged fields. The settlement pattern is dispersed, with a high density of roadside dwellings and small farms. These may well have originated as common-edge settlements. Settlement is linked by a network of generally straight lanes with uniform verges, also deriving from the wider re-ordering of the landscape in the early 19th century.

- 9.4 Most farmsteads reflect the planned character of the landscape and are predominantly large, and regular in form. Older buildings are mostly red brick with clay tile roofs. Hanch Hall is a small country house set in parkland containing a small lake. The relatively new developments at Fradley and around the former airfield are a significant feature in the eastern part of this area. Prehistoric cropmarks are also a feature within the landscape including a rare Scheduled Monument Neolithic causewayed enclosure, the ploughed out remains of barrows (ring ditches) and pit alignments.

Characteristic landscape features

- 9.5 Flat, lowland topography; River sands and gravels creating poor soils with a relic heathy character; Mixed farmland with extensive areas of grazing land and pony paddocks; discrete blocks of both ancient and secondary mixed woodland; Dispersed settlement pattern with scattered roadside dwellings; Straight, late enclosure highway network with uniform verges; Numerous place names reflecting presence of former commons.

Incongruous landscape features

- 9.6 Large scale industrial development; Busy road network dominated by HGV traffic and increased commuter travel have a major cumulative impact on the rural character of this landscape.

Factors critical to landscape character and quality

- 9.7 This is a landscape of impoverished soils characterised by its heathland origins, which is reflected in the recurring presence of bracken and birch in the woodlands and hedgerows. Little heathland remains and much of the land is now used for stock rearing and cropping. Blocks of woodland, some of ancient origin, create a more 'wooded' character in places, which is reinforced by the widespread occurrence of mainly small sized hedgerow oaks that are scattered throughout the area. This woodland also provides some biodiversity and ecological interest, along with remaining fragments of heath associated habitat.

Opportunities for Landscape Enhancement

- 9.8 Enclose large scale development with appropriate native woodland belt planting to reduce the visual impact of large industrial and distribution buildings in the landscape. Encourage agri-environmental schemes which restore the heathy character.

10 Wet Pasture Meadows



- 10.1 This is a flat, low-lying landscape, defined by irregular shaped basins, fringed by low hills and slopes. The underlying geology is that of river and lacustrine (lake) alluvium. The land-use is mixed farming with an increasing move towards arable. Winter waterlogging is common and grazing is restricted during wet periods to prevent poaching. The water level is increasingly being controlled by ditches and field drainage, allowing for more extensive cropping.

Visual character

- 10.2 A key characteristic of this landscape is its enclosure pattern. Much of the agricultural land, having originated from former wasteland, was enclosed as part of the Parliamentary Enclosure Acts. The resultant fields are typically regular to geometric in shape and medium to large in size, usually enclosed by tall hawthorn hedgerows with some elm. Trees are apparent throughout, usually scattered along hedgerows, ditches and minor streams. Pollarded willows are a particularly distinctive feature.
- 10.3 Tree cover is not a prominent feature of this landscape, although trees are well represented throughout and, coupled with tall hedgerows, provide filtered views.
- 10.4 Few roads cross this landscape, due to its generally uninhabited nature. Where roads occur they are straight and direct, with uniform width verges, as a result of the pattern set out by parliamentary enclosure. This is traditionally an uninhabited landscape due to the risk of flooding, although there are occasional scattered farmsteads. These farmsteads are generally large in size, were probably established at the time of enclosure, and typically are constructed of red brick with Staffordshire blue clay tile roofs.

- 10.5 This landscape immediately abuts the urban fringes of Derby and urban expansion, especially residential, is having a major visual impact on this landscape type.

Characteristic landscape features

- 10.6 Flat low-lying irregular shaped basins; Waterlogged soils; Mixed farming with patches of unimproved grassland; Scattered trees along hedgerows and ditches; Visually prominent willow pollards; Medium to large regular or geometric shaped fields with hawthorn hedgerows; Largely uninhabited with very occasional, large, red brick farmsteads.

Incongruous landscape features

- 10.7 To the north of Findern, the A38 crosses the landscape on an embankment, creating a major visual intrusion. Urban residential development spreading southwards from Derby is having a significant impact on this traditionally vacant landscape. Large scale drainage improvements and intensification of arable cropping has altered and impoverished the ecological value of this landscape.

Factors critical to landscape character and quality

- 10.8 A key characteristic of this landscape is its distinctive planned enclosure pattern. As arable intensification continues, the original field patterns are disappearing and fields are enlarged to accommodate machinery. As a result the fringing trees and vegetation and traditional pollards are being removed. The tall hedgerows filter views and provide ecological corridors in the intensively farmed open landscape.

Opportunities for Landscape Enhancement

- 10.9 Potential for habitat restoration and creation on a large scale in order to re-create the 'waste' that existed prior to enclosure. This could form a valuable buffer against the expanding urban edge of Derby, as well as opportunities for public access in an otherwise intensively farmed landscape.
- 10.10 Opportunities would have to be balanced against the need for food production as the land is very productive at present, however the land owners could benefit from environmental initiatives to restore habitat close to the urban edge.

Appendix 1

List of Source materials and supporting information

- Staffordshire County Council Planning for Landscape Change .The Draft updated version dated 2015 was used in writing the Landscape Descriptions.
- The Landscape Character of Derbyshire 2013 (ten year review).
- Central Rivers Initiative Landscape Character and Opportunities for Landscape Enhancement September 2014
- Trent Valley Washlands National Character Area profile
- TTTV Scheme Boundary in GIS format from the Landscape Partnership Manager.
- Cultural Heritage Audit November 2017
- Visitor Experience and Access Audit March 2018
- Spatial Strategy (on-going report to be completed by April 2018)
- GIS mapping for the study area provided at 1:25,000 scale and 1:50,000 scale by Staffordshire County council and Derbyshire County council. (OS Licence 100018777/SWT28504)
- Central Rivers Area Strategy Update 2008