Proposed SPD: Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development

Contents

1 Introduction

Purpose of this document

1.1 Supplementary Planning Documents (or SPDs) are produced to expand upon the policies contained in the adopted development plan for the area[(1)]. The role of an SPD is to provide guidance on the application of existing Policies in the Adopted Development Plan. The SPD does not form part of the development plan nor is it intended to provide policies beyond those within the development plan. The overall purpose of this SPD is to assist the interpretation and application of those policies concerned with landscape character and the location of renewable energy schemes. In particular the guidance seeks to:

- provide information on the relative sensitivity and capacity of the district's landscapes in relation to wind turbines;
- indicate criteria that need to be taken into account when considering specific proposals of this type; and
- provide guidance on potential mitigation measures where appropriate.

1.2 This SPD is a revision of the February 2006 SPD: Wind Power. The SPD has been revised in the light of:

- the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF);
- the development of the methodological approach to assessing the landscape sensitivity to wind turbine development that has taken place since 2005;
- certain inconsistencies that have been identified between the SPD and *Wind Turbine Development in Huntingdonshire* (2005), the study undertaken by Land Use Consultants that underpinned the SPD (described in this SPD as the LUC study); and
- the need for guidance on the siting and design of smaller turbines

1.3 This SPD contains important information for anyone contemplating or concerned with this type of development, and will be taken into account as a 'material consideration' when planning proposals are assessed.

1.4 Clearly, turbines can form a very visible feature in the landscape, although not all landscapes are sensitive to the same degree. This SPD provides strategic guidance on the characteristics that need to be considered, and is intended to set out a positive approach to guide development rather than absolute thresholds. It should help to guide proposals to the most appropriate locations and ensure that the key features and values of Huntingdonshire's landscapes are safeguarded.

1.5 **While this SPD provides an initial indication of the relative sensitivity and capacity of different areas it should not be interpreted as a definitive statement that a particular landscape is suitable for a particular development. Every site is unique, and any proposal involving wind turbines must be informed by a detailed site-specific analysis of landscape constraints and impacts.** Proposals will also need to address the many other factors that need to be taken into account, such as biodiversity value, the historic environment, tranquillity and the effect upon people living and working in the vicinity. Each proposal will be assessed on its own merits.

1.6 This SPD is split into sixteen chapters. This introduction continues with a brief overview of recent trends involving wind power development, and explains the basis for the guidance. Chapter 2 'Overview of landscape capacity' then sets out the principles that have informed the work, and provides an overview of the potential capacity of each landscape character area [LCA]. This is followed by ten chapters that provide detailed guidance for each of the nine character areas, and additionally for proposals located at the edge of urban areas. There has been no revision to the guidance for proposals located at the edge

1 See 15 'Policy sources' for details.

of urban areas. Chapter 13 and 14 are new; 13 'Siting and design issues for turbines less than 100m' contains advice on the siting of single or small groups of turbines below 100m, 14 'Landscape Sensitivity Criteria' list the criteria on which the landscape sensitivity assessments are based. Chapter 15 'Policy sources' provides links to relevant policies and Appendix 1: 'Glossary' contains a glossary of terms used in the SPD.

Recent trends

1.7 The effects of climate change have had an important impact on national and international policies towards energy supply. The UK Government has committed itself to achieving significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and an increase in the proportion of our energy that comes from renewable sources.

1.8 This commitment, coupled with Government support for renewable technologies, has led to an increasing number of applications for wind turbine developments across the country.

1.9 Paragraph 97 of the NPPF requires that local planning authorities should:

- have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable sources;
- design policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts; and
- consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure the development of such sources.

1.10 The footnote to the above paragraph in the NPPF recommends that planning authorities should follow the approach set out in the National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (read with the relevant sections of the Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy Infrastructure). Where plans identify areas as suitable for renewable and low-carbon energy development, they should make clear what criteria have determined their selection, including for what size of development the areas are considered suitable[(2)].

1.11 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to approve applications if their impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. It also requires that once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas[(3)].

1.12 This guidance does not seek to identify suitable areas for wind turbine development, however it does identify:

- the potential capacity of the landscape character areas [LCAs] found in the district to accommodate wind turbine development, of a range of group sizes, without significant adverse changes to the character of the landscape; and
- criteria to be used in the assessment of individual sites so that the landscape and visual impacts of individual proposals can be assessed in a consistent and transparent manner.

1.13 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development[(4)]. The primacy of the development plan remains, so development proposals that accord with the plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. However, if the plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date the presumption in favour of sustainable development means that development proposals

2 National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 97
3 National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 98
4 NPPF paragraph 14

should be approved unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole, or policies in the NPPF indicate that developments should be restricted.

1.14 Other relevant considerations and criteria are contained in the development plan detailed in Chapter 15 'Policy sources'.

Basis for the guidance

1.15 This Supplementary Planning Document is a revision of the February 2006 Wind Power SPD which was based upon the research undertaken for the District Council in the LUC study. That study built upon earlier work undertaken by Landscape Design Associates to characterise Huntingdonshire's landscapes. This was adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance in 2007[5]. The Landscape and Townscape Assessment identified nine landscape character areas in Huntingdonshire, ranging from the rolling Wolds in the west to the low-lying Fens in the north-east. These landscape character areas are shown in figure 1.1.

1.16 The work carried out by LUC aimed to articulate those characteristics of the landscape character areas that are sensitive to different forms of turbine development, and to combine this with an understanding of any special values attached to those landscapes in order to gain an understanding of their relative capacity for wind turbine development. In recent sensitivity studies the section on landscape values is more likely to be included as perceptual characteristics whose sensitivity to wind turbine development can be assessed alongside the sensitivity of the physical characteristics. Although the approach in the LUC study is more complicated it addresses the same issues and the final capacity judgement reflects both the physical and perceptual sensitivities of the landscape.

1.17 The LUC study was undertaken in accordance with best practice approaches to landscape assessment current in 2005[6] and was also informed by an understanding of those types of turbine development most likely to come forward in the area (taking into account prevailing wind speeds and the relative efficiency of different turbine models). The study assumes that commercial turbines of up to 120m in height (to the top of the blade) will be most efficient, but that variations in height of + or - 20m will not be discernible on the ground. Although there are now commercial turbines of up to 150m none of these have yet been proposed for Huntingdonshire. This SPD does not assess the capacity of the landscape to accommodate 150m high turbines although the analysis of the landscape characteristics would be relevant to the assessment of any proposals for turbines above 140m in height.

1.18 **When the LUC study was undertaken there were no operational or consented wind turbine developments in Huntingdonshire. The conclusions reached in the study refer to the capacity of the landscape without any existing wind turbines and these conclusions have not been revised. Their inclusion in this revised SPD does not imply capacity over and above those schemes that have been consented or built since the study was undertaken.**

1.19 The LUC study was concerned with turbines of between 100 and 140m. In recent years there has been an increase in the number of applications for single turbines below 100m. It is anticipated that these applications will continue and that in addition there may be applications for small groups of say 2 to 3 small turbines. Additional guidance on the siting of turbines below 100m in height has been provided in a new chapter (13 'Siting and design issues for turbines less than 100m').

1.20 A number of important points should be borne in mind concerning the scope and use of both the LUC study and this Revised Supplementary Planning Document:

5 Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment (HDC, 2007)

6 The principal guidance is still Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland (Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002)

- the study was undertaken from the starting point that wind turbine applications will continue to come forward within the district; it does not debate the merits of wind turbines *vis-à-vis* other forms of renewable energy development or offshore turbine development;
- the LUC study only considers landscape and visual considerations and, as noted above, there are many other factors which will influence decisions;
- this SPD provides a starting-point for decision-making, but local variations in character will need to be considered in relation to individual proposals, as part of the detailed site-specific assessment.

1.21 Huntingdonshire District Council has prepared a Guidance Note for Applicants and Agents of Wind Turbine Developments. This sets out what information the Council requires in order to effectively progress Pre-Application discussions and Planning Applications. It can be viewed on the HDC Planning and Buildings website.

Key to Figure 1.1

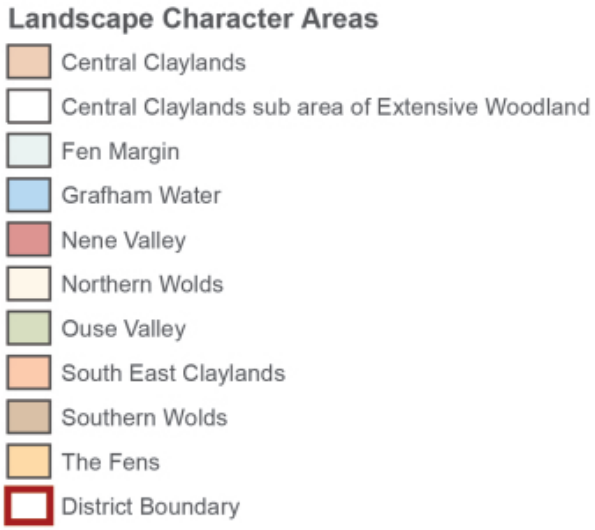
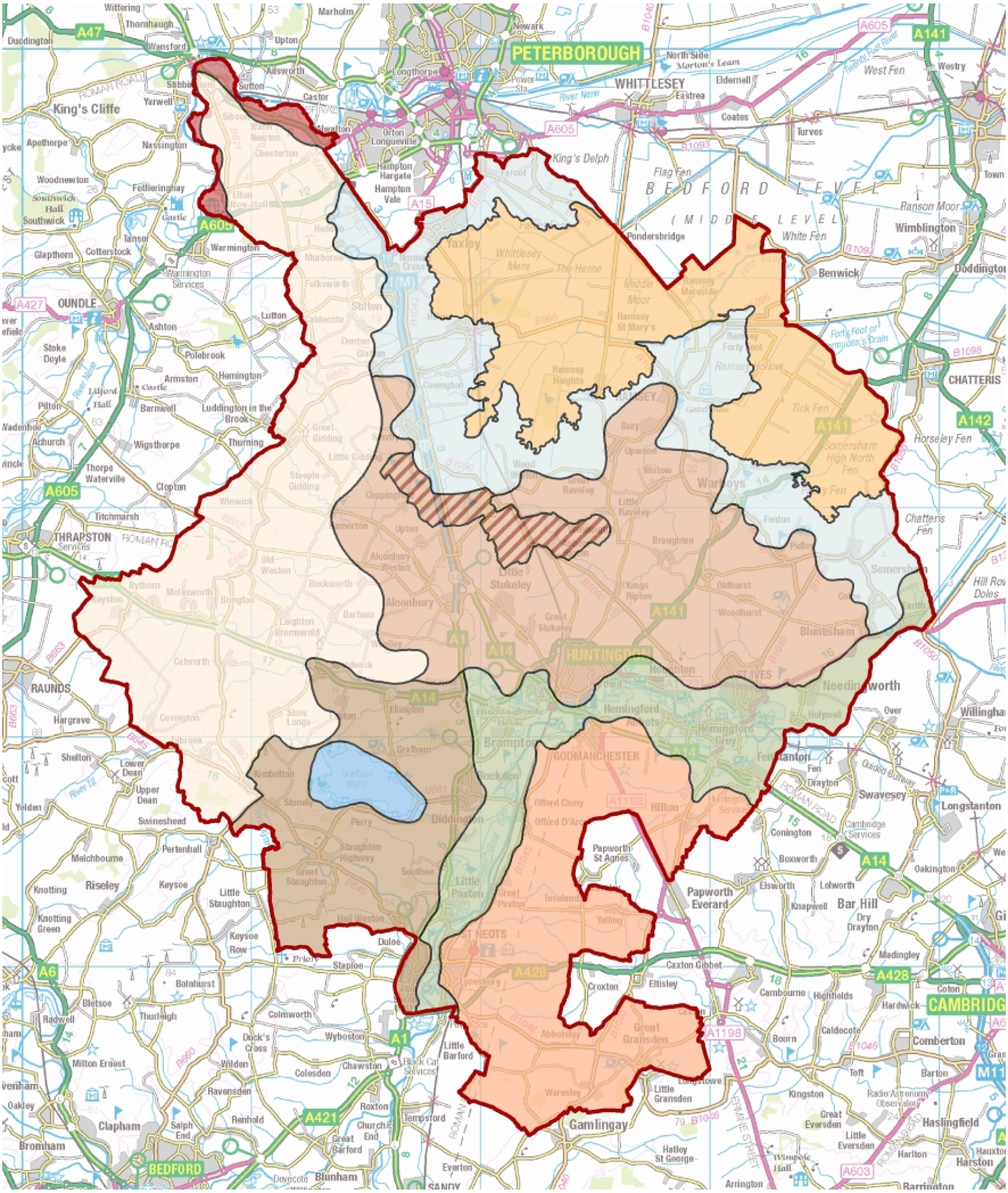


Figure 1.1 Landscape Character Areas in Huntingdonshire



2 Overview of landscape capacity

How to use the guidance

2.1 This chapter provides an overview of the guidance in the SPD, including the key landscape and visual considerations that need to be assessed and a summary of the potential capacity in the different landscape character areas.

2.2 More detailed guidance on the siting, form and arrangement of turbines and ancillary structures is contained in each of the chapters that follow (one for each character area). Further information on the basis for the capacity assessments can be found in the LUC Study.

2.3 One of the most significant changes between the original SPD and this revised SPD is the definitions of the scale of turbine development with regard to number of turbines within a group. The LUC study is one of the earlier landscape sensitivity studies undertaken in England. The assessment considered the sensitivity of the landscape to four broad types of development based on the number of commercial turbines and defined these as single (1), small (2-12) medium (13-24) and large (25 plus).

2.4 Subsequent wind turbine landscape sensitivity studies undertaken in southern and eastern England both by LUC and other consultants have tended to subdivide the first group and it is now widely recognised that 12 turbines do not represent a small group in terms of the landscapes of southern and eastern England. In more recent studies a small group has rarely included more than 6 turbines and sometimes as few as 3. Medium scale groups are generally up to 12 turbines with 12-25 considered either a large group or a medium/large group. 25 turbines and above are described as large or very large groups[7]. Even within a small group defined as 2-6 turbines it has been accepted at appeal[8] that it may be justified to advise that fewer than six (e.g. 2-3 turbines) may be the maximum that can be accommodated.

2.5 In the light of more recent approaches to the assessment of landscape sensitivity to wind turbine development the scales of turbine development applied in the original SPD have been refined and the original assessments reviewed.

2.6 The new group sizes to be considered are as follows:

- Single turbine
- Small Group: 2-5 turbines
- Medium Group: 6-12 turbines
- Large Group: 13-24 turbines

2.7 Within each of these groups there may be minor qualifications. These will be drawn out from the details of the original LUC study as assessed using professional judgement of suitably qualified landscape personnel, with the aim of making this revised SPD a more usable and coherent document.

2.8 The 25 plus group has been omitted from this SPD. Although this group size was initially considered the LUC study concluded that nowhere in the district was suitable for turbine groups of above 25. This conclusion is consistent with current approvals. The largest approved/ operational onshore scheme (not including those schemes with later extensions) in eastern England is a 13 turbine scheme at Wadlow Farm in Cambridgeshire[9]. Further support for this conclusion can be found in the 2008 study by Ove Arup for the East of England Regional Assembly[10] which undertook a regional level landscape sensitivity

7 Appendix A of the SPD consultation draft provided a comparative study of wind turbine sensitivities assessments with regard to the numbers of turbines considered within each group class.
8 Appeal Decision APP/L2630/A/08/2084443 Land around Busseys Loke, Hempnall, Norwich, Norfolk
9 Information derived from Renewable UK's (formerly BREA) UK Wind Energy Database – UKWED
10 Placing Renewables in the East of England, Ove Arup & Partners Ltd 2008

and capacity study. This study considered groups of 25 turbines and above but concluded that groups of this size were unlikely to be appropriate in the East of England[11]. In the detailed findings of the study the maximum number of turbines considered likely to be acceptable was 16[12].

2.9 Capacity judgements in relation to each scale of development are presented on the following basis:[13]

- **Low capacity** to accommodate wind turbines: development would be likely to result in a significant adverse change in landscape character and/or affect key landscape values
- **Moderate capacity** to accommodate wind turbines, without detriment to landscape character: there are likely to be key sensitivities or values that must be respected in relation to turbine development; in particular, proposals must follow the guidance on siting, form and cumulative impacts
- **High capacity** to accommodate wind turbines: there is an opportunity to locate turbine development without affecting key characteristics and/or values in the landscape, although the guidance on siting, form and cumulative impacts should be followed.

2.10 **Note that in the following chapters detailed guidance is provided only for those character areas where potential capacity has been assessed as either moderate or high.**

Key considerations

2.11 There are many issues that need to be taken into account when considering wind turbine development. This SPD deals solely with landscape and visual matters. Other considerations are set out in the policy documents listed in 15 'Policy sources', and these must also be addressed in the course of developing specific proposals. However there is a necessary overlap between the assessment of landscape and visual impacts and the assessment of the impact of wind turbines on the setting of heritage assets because in almost all cases the impacts on setting will be as a result of visual changes.

2.12 Included in the landscape characteristics identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment (HDC 2007) are those characteristics of the landscape that are derived from the presence of heritage assets, for example the presence of church spires or towers as landmark features. The impact on the setting of heritage assets will be considered separately as part of a cultural heritage assessment, however where heritage assets play a role in the defining the local landscape character it is essential that they are also considered as part of the sensitivity of the landscape. The Guidance Note for Wind Turbine Developments includes further information on the role of photographs and photomontages with regard to effects on cultural heritage assets, landscape character and visual amenity. It can be viewed via the HDC Planning and Buildings website.

2.13 Up-to-date advice on approaches to landscape assessment is set out in *Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland* published by The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002)[14].

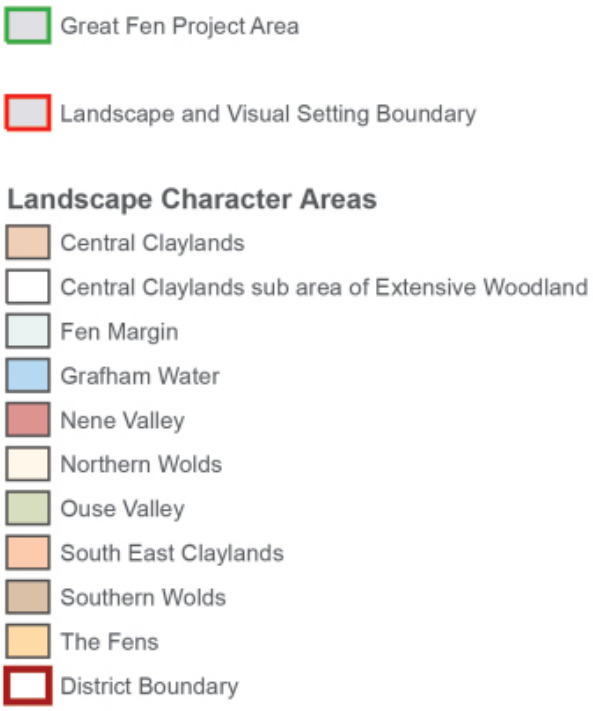
2.14 The LUC study identifies the landscape attributes, both physical and perceptual against which any proposal for wind turbines should be assessed. However it should be recognised that these headings are closely linked; for example information on scale and enclosure and land cover will influence the extent to which any development is visible in the landscape. The LUC study does not provide a list of criteria for assessing

11 Placing Renewables in the East of England Section 6.7.1 Pages 31-2
12 Placing Renewables in the East of England Appendix D Pages D11-12
13 In respect of landscape impacts, with reference to National Policy Statement EN-1 (5.9.15) it should be noted that significant adverse impacts do not necessarily render a proposal unacceptable in planning terms if it can be demonstrated that such significant adverse effects would be outweighed by the benefits (including need) for the project.
14 The accompanying Topic Paper 6 sets out further guidance on approaches to evaluating landscape sensitivity and capacity

landscape sensitivity to wind energy development but 14 'Landscape Sensitivity Criteria' of this SPD contains a list of criteria, derived from the conclusions of the LUC study and from more recent work by LUC[15].

2.15 The Great Fen Project had begun at the time of the original SPD but progress has been more rapid that originally envisaged. A landscape and visual setting for the Great Fen has been identified in the report produced by Landscape Design Associates and policy protection in this area[16] will limit the capacity for wind turbine development. This is illustrated in figure 2.1 which shows the different landscape character areas, the Great Fen boundary, and the boundary of its Landscape and Visual Setting.

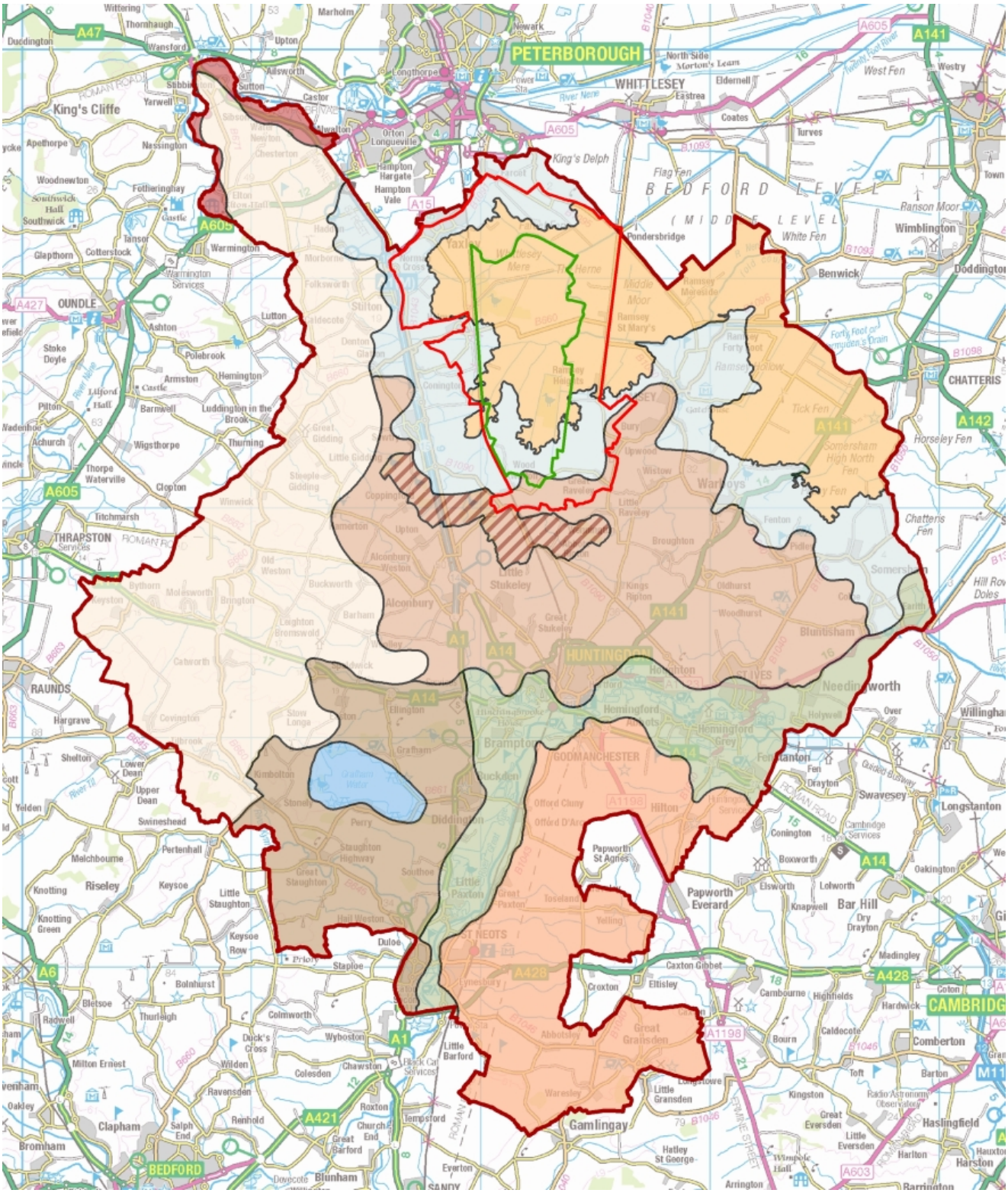
Key to Figure 2.1



15 An Assessment of the Landscape Sensitivity to Onshore Wind Energy & Field-Scale Photovoltaic Development in Torridge District November 2011.

16 Defining the Landscape and Visual Setting to the Great Fen Project Area, LDA July 2008 and HDC Huntingdonshire's Draft Local Plan: Stage 3, policy LP 7 and paragraph 4.75

Figure 2.1 Landscape Character Areas and the Great Fen Landscape and Visual Setting



Summary of potential capacity

2.16 Table 1 provides a summary of the overall capacity for wind turbine development in Huntingdonshire. It is accompanied by a map showing the various landscape character areas. The map at Figure 2.1 shows the different Landscape Character Areas, The Great Fen boundary, and the boundary of its Landscape and Visual setting.

2.17 **The information in this table provides a 'quick guide' but should not be used in isolation; it must be read in conjunction with the further guidance and information on cumulative development provided in chapters 3 to 13, together with the background material in the LUC Study.**

Table 1 Summary of landscape capacity for wind turbine development

Landscape character area	Single turbine (1 turbine)	Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)	Medium-scale group (6-12 turbines)	Large -scale group (13-24 turbines)
1: The Fens	High	High	High	Moderate (lower end of scale e.g. 13-15 turbines)
2: Fen Margin	High	High	High	Moderate (lower end of scale e.g. 13-15 turbines)
3: Central Claylands	High	High	High	Moderate
4: Ouse Valley	High	Moderate (lower end of scale 2-3 turbines)	Low	Low
5: South East Claylands	High	High	High	Moderate
6: Northern Wolds	High	Moderate	Low	Low
7: Grafham Water	High	Moderate (2 turbines only)	Low	Low
8: Southern Wolds	High	High	Moderate	Low
9: Nene Valley	Moderate	Low	Low	Low

Cumulative Capacity

2.18 Capacity judgements in relation to the potential for cumulative development with regard to each scale of development are presented on the following basis:

- **High capacity:** There is scope to accommodate a number of turbine developments of this scale without significant adverse changes in landscape character or key landscape values. However care will need to be taken in their location and relationship to each other and the specific guidance provided in Sections 3 -13 should be followed.
- **Moderate capacity:** There is some scope to accommodate a number of turbine developments of this scale without significant adverse changes in landscape character or key landscape values. However there are likely to be key sensitivities or values that will limit the number of potential schemes,

care will need to be taken in their location and relationship to each other and the specific guidance provided in Sections 3 -13 should be followed.

- **Low capacity:** More than one development of this scale is likely to result in significant adverse change in landscape character and/ or affect key landscape values.
- **None:** this character area would not be able to accommodate more than one scheme of this scale.

2.19 There is no assessment of cumulative capacity if the landscape character area has been assessed as unable to accommodate even a single development of the scale under consideration.

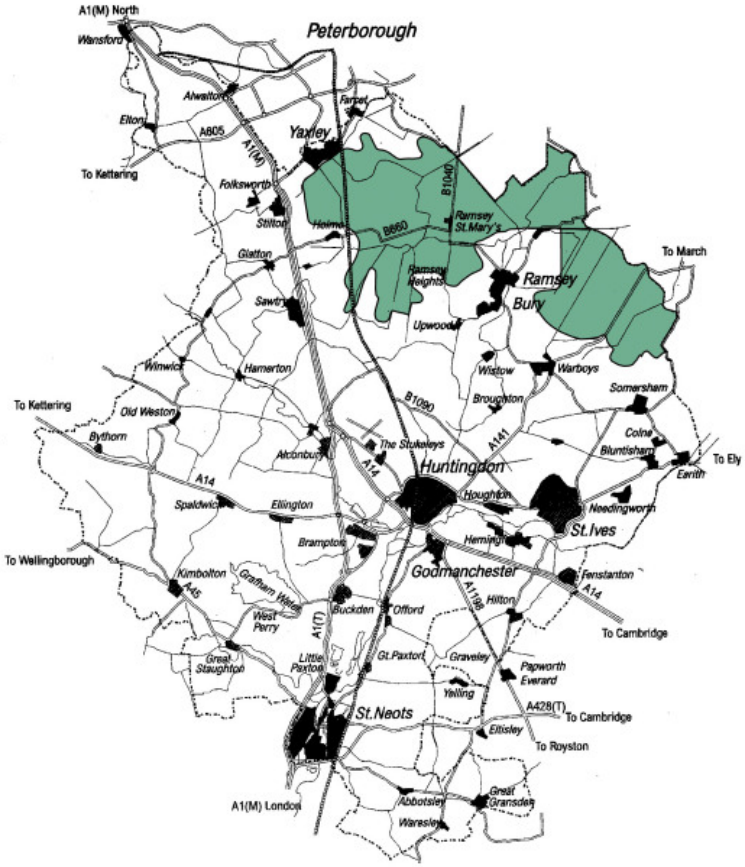
2.20 The assessments for cumulative capacity are given in relation to each scale of development. However there will also be cumulative issues where proposals are for different scales of development. For example, a landscape may have high capacity for a number of single turbines but this capacity will be reduced where there is an existing consent for one or more turbine groups. Similarly the presence of several single turbines may reduce the capacity of a landscape for a group of turbines.

2.21 Consideration will need to be given in all circumstances to the visual relationship between one turbine or turbine group and another when these can be viewed simultaneously. Visual relationships with other turbines or turbine groups will also be an important consideration when considering the location of turbines under 100m in height. The potential for cumulative impacts as a result of combinations of small, medium and large scale wind turbine developments, both in terms of height and turbine numbers, has added additional complexity to the cumulative assessments required, including assessments for turbines of less than 100m in height.

2.22 A key consideration will be the avoidance of cluttered or visually confusing images particularly from sensitive locations such as settlements; the location and style of turbines will be important in avoiding such impacts. Consideration will also need to be given to the visual relationship with turbine developments in adjacent landscape character areas and adjacent districts.

2.23 Cumulative assessments also need to consider the effect on the landscape area of successive and/or sequential views of single turbines or groups of turbines. It is important to avoid creating areas where wind turbines dominate the landscape character, or areas where turbines become the all pervasive landscape element.

3 The Fens



Single Turbine

3.1 The Fens have a **high** capacity to accommodate a single turbine. The expansive scale of the landscape, flat topography and simple land cover patterns would allow a single turbine to fit well and it could form a landmark feature or focal point. However, care will need to be taken in siting turbines to avoid the sites and setting of valued landscape components. The location of a single turbine should take into account the following guidance:

a. *Provide a positive contribution providing a focal point within long-range open views.*
b. *Avoid those areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter.*
c. *Consider relationships with the small-scale dispersed settlement pattern. The traditional linear form and single plot depth suggests there is no scope to attach a turbine to a settlement.*
d. *Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape for example the occasional large farm building, utility buildings or industrial areas. There may also be an opportunity for a single turbine to relate to infrastructure associated with the main roads.*
e. *Relate to the land cover pattern, in particular the geometric field patterns.*
f. *Avoid introducing solid built structures into isolated areas, which are generally characterised by the absence of buildings. Additional structures would be better accommodated in relation to existing farm/utility buildings.*

g. Avoid the site and setting of valued landscape components notably the remaining areas of peat, and woodland and wetland SSSI, plus areas identified for habitat restoration (Great Fen).

h. Consider the visual relationship with existing and proposed turbine developments in the adjacent areas of Fen landscape beyond the district boundary.

i. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment.

Cumulative development

3.2 There is scope for the Fens to accommodate a number of single turbines, but care will need to be taken in their location and relationship to each other. Single turbines within this landscape will act as a point of focus or landmark. Views of more than one turbine could dilute this perceived landmark function and create a potentially confusing viewing experience. Particular consideration should be given to the visual relationship with turbine developments in the adjacent districts.

Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

3.3 The Fens have a **high** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape a small-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. However there are a number of key sensitive elements that will need to be respected, notably the need to conserve isolated tranquil areas and important habitats including the Great Fen and its landscape and visual setting. Particular care will need to be taken in siting turbines to avoid creating visual confusion and clutter where existing vertical elements are already dominant. Providing it was appropriately sited, such a development would not have an adverse impact on key landscape values. The location of a small-scale group should take into account the following guidance:

a. Avoid those areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter. Introduction of new pylon lines will not generally be appropriate in the Fens.

b. Avoid the site and setting of valued habitat components (pasture, woodland and wetland) including areas identified as having potential for habitat creation through the Great Fen Project.

c. Consider relationships with the dispersed settlement pattern. Small-scale turbine developments should be sited away from settlements.

d. Relate to the land cover pattern, in particular the rigid geometric field patterns which could provide a template for the arrangement with a consistent and repetitive spacing of turbines. Note that some areas within the Fens have a more sinuous, organic pattern, where a geometric arrangement would be inappropriate.

e. Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings, utility buildings or industrial areas. Additional buildings or infrastructure associated with turbine development should not be introduced into areas characterised as being remote with an absence of built features.

f. Conserve and maintain areas characterised as having a strong sense of remoteness and isolation.

g. Consider the visual relationship with existing and proposed turbine developments in the adjacent areas of Fen landscape beyond the district boundary.

h. *Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape* Assessment.

Cumulative development

3.4 The landform and land cover pattern provides scope for more than one small-scale turbine group within this landscape. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments to respect the consistent character of the landscape. In this landscape long-range views are often characteristic and

views of more than one type of turbine development could create a potentially confusing viewing experience. Particular consideration should be given to the visual relationship with turbine developments in the adjacent landscape character area and adjacent districts.

Medium-scale group (6-12 turbines)

3.5 The Fens have a **high** capacity to accommodate a medium-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape a medium-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. However there are a number of key sensitive elements that will need to be respected, notably the need to conserve isolated tranquil areas and important habitats including the Great Fen and its landscape and visual setting. Particular care will need to be taken in siting turbines and to avoid creating visual confusion and clutter where existing vertical elements are already dominant. Providing it was appropriately sited, such a development would not have an adverse impact on key landscape values. The location of a medium-scale group: should follow the guidelines set out for a small-scale group. In addition the location of a medium-scale group should take into account the following guidance:

a. Consider a clustered arrangement to avoid disrupting long views to the horizon.
b. Respect existing landmark features and the views towards them.

Cumulative development

3.6 The landform and land cover pattern may provide scope for more than one medium-scale turbine group within this landscape. However the Great Fen and the surrounding policy area constitute roughly 44% of this landscape character area and the consequent limitations on development here will limit the scope for further medium scale schemes. The location of developments should follow the guidance set out for cumulative small scale groups.

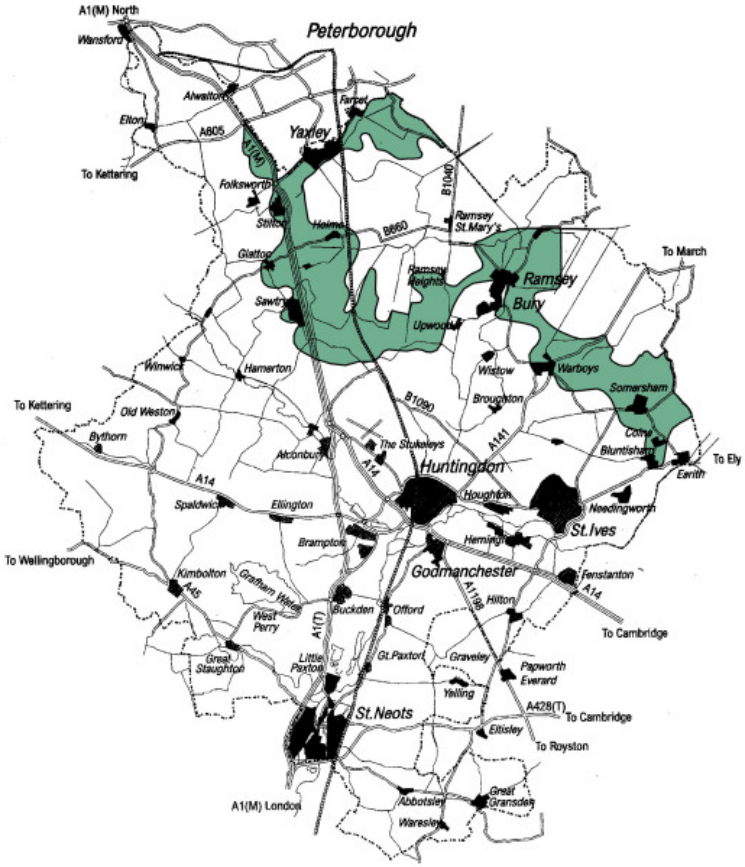
Large-scale group (13-24 turbines)

3.7 The Fens have a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a large-scale group although a group at the lower end of this scale of development will be more appropriate (e.g. 13-15 turbines). Although such a development could be accommodated within the context of the flat landform and expansive open landscape, it could impinge on the sense of remoteness and isolation and be out of scale in the context of the woodland and settlements. Locations for a large-scale group of turbines are constrained and should follow the guidelines set out above for small and medium scale groups.

Cumulative development

3.8 There is unlikely to be capacity for more than one large scale group within this character area. Hence capacity for cumulative development is low.

4 Fen Margin



Single Turbine

4.1 The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a single turbine. The scale of the landscape, gentle topography and land cover patterns would allow a single turbine to fit well and it could also correspond to settlement patterns forming a landmark feature or focal point in relation to the edge of larger extended villages. The location of a single turbine should take into account the following guidance:

a. Consider opportunities for a single turbine to provide a landmark 'gateway' feature or focal point in relation to the edge of larger villages such as Yaxley, Somersham, Ramsey and Sawtry. The aim should be to enhance the settlement edge and relationship with the surrounding landscape, and avoiding creation of visual clutter.

b. Avoid impinging on the setting of the smaller historic villages such as Conington.

c. Relate to the land cover pattern in particular the woodland edges and hedgerow field boundaries.

d. Avoid introducing turbines and additional structures into rural areas, which are generally characterised by a sense of tranquillity and isolation with limited access such as the area east of Sawtry.

e. Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings or industrial areas. There may also be an opportunity for a single turbine development to relate to infrastructure associated with the main road routes (A1).

f. Respect the sites and settings of valued landscape components including the woodlands and historic features.

g. Consider strategic opportunities for the creation of Fen Edge woodland.

h. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.

Cumulative development

4.2 There is scope for the Fen Margins to accommodate a number of single turbines, however care will need to be taken in their location and relationship to each other. Single turbines within this landscape will act as a point of focus or landmark within long open views and set against dramatic skies. Views with more than one turbine development could dilute the perceived landmark function and could create a confused viewing experience. The skyline ridge forming the backdrop to the Fens is also sensitive to more than one single turbine development.

Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

4.3 The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape a small-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. However, there are a number of key sensitive elements that will need to be respected, notably the more intimately scaled landscape around Colne and ensuring the development is sited to avoid impacts on valued landscape components, in particular the relationship with the Fens, settlements, and areas identified as having a tranquil and isolated character including the Great Fen and its landscape and visual setting. Proposals for a small-scale group of turbines should take into account the following guidance:

a. Avoid the more intimately-scaled wooded/orchard landscape around Colne.

b. Consider opportunities for a small-scale group of turbines to provide a landmark 'gateway' feature or focal point in relation to the edge of larger villages such as Yaxley, Somersham, Ramsey and Sawtry. The aim should be to enhance the settlement edge and relationship with the surrounding landscape, and avoiding creation of visual clutter.

c. Avoid impinging on the setting of the smaller historic villages such as Conington.

d. Relate to the land cover pattern in particular the woodland edges and hedgerow field boundaries with consistent, repetitive spacing between turbines.

e. Avoid introducing turbines and additional structures into those parts of the area which are generally characterised by a sense of tranquillity and isolation with an absence of built structures and limited access, such as the area east of Sawtry. Note that pylons are not currently a visible feature within the area and could be a very dominant influence cutting across the sloping topography.

f. Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings or industrial areas. There may also be an opportunity for a small-scale turbine group to relate to infrastructure associated with the main road routes (A1).

g. Respect the sites and settings of valued landscape components including the woodlands and historic features.

h. Consider a linear arrangement along contours as opposed to crossing contours.

i. Consider the important visual relationship with the adjacent Fens landscape. The skyline view from the Fens is particularly sensitive

j. Consider strategic opportunities for the creation of Fen Edge woodland.

k. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.

Cumulative development

4.4 The landform and land cover pattern provides scope for more than one small-scale turbine group within this landscape. A small-scale turbine development will act as a point of focus or landmark within long open views and set against dramatic skies. Views with more than one turbine development could dilute

the perceived landmark function and could create a confused viewing experience. The skyline ridge forming the backdrop to the Fens is also sensitive to more than one turbine development. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments.

Medium-scale group (6-12 turbines)

4.5 The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a medium-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape a medium-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. However, there are a number of key sensitive elements that will need to be respected, notably the more intimately scaled landscape around Colne and ensuring the development is sited to avoid impacts on valued landscape components, in particular the important visual relationship with the Fens, settlements, and areas identified as having a tranquil and isolated character including the Great Fen and its landscape and visual setting. Proposals for a medium-scale group of turbines should take into account the following guidance:

a. Avoid the more intimately-scaled wooded/orchard landscape around Colne.
b. Avoid impinging on the setting of the smaller historic villages such as Conington.
c. Relate to the land cover pattern in particular the woodland edges and hedgerow field boundaries with consistent, repetitive spacing between turbines.
d. Avoid introducing turbines and additional structures into those parts of the area which are generally characterised by a sense of tranquillity and isolation with an absence of built structures and limited access, such as the area east of Sawtry. Note that pylons are not currently a visible feature within the area and could be a very dominant influence cutting across the sloping topography.
e. Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings or industrial areas. There may also be an opportunity for a small-scale turbine group to relate to infrastructure associated with the main road routes (A1).
f. Respect the sites and settings of valued landscape components including the woodlands and historic features.
g. Consider a linear arrangement along contours as opposed to crossing contours.
h. Avoid siting a development on the Fens ridgeline which forms the backdrop skyline with the Fens
i. Consider strategic opportunities for the creation of Fen Edge woodland.
j. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.

Cumulative development

4.6 The landform and land cover pattern provides scope for more than one medium-scale turbine group within this landscape. A medium-scale turbine development will act as a point of focus or landmark within long open views and set against dramatic skies. Views with more than one turbine development could dilute the perceived landmark function and could create a confused viewing experience. However the Great Fen and the surrounding policy area constitute roughly 28% of this landscape character area and the consequent limitations on development here will limit the scope for further medium scale schemes. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments.

Large-scale group (13-24 turbines)

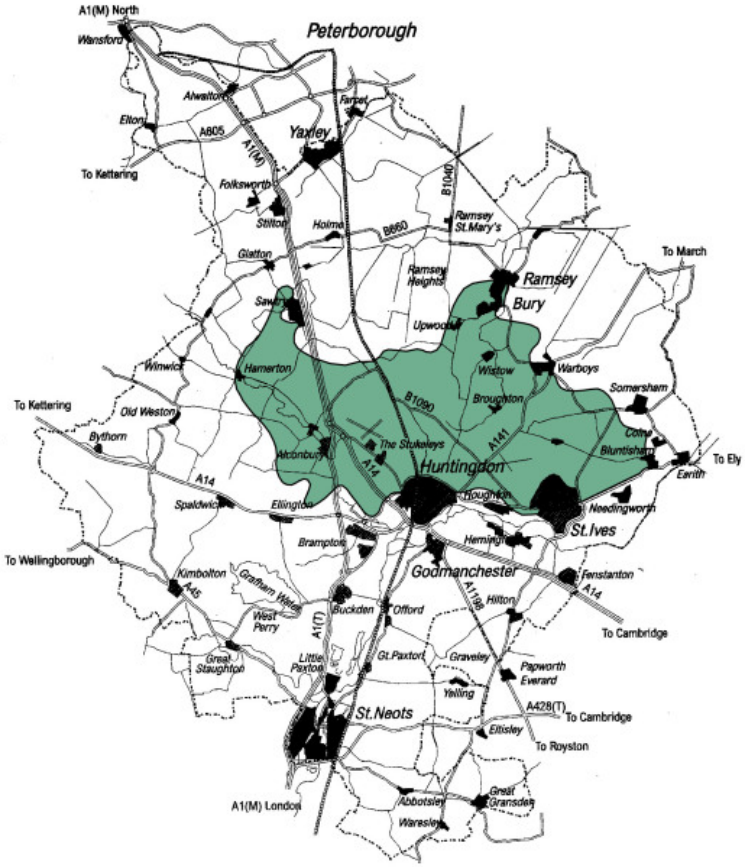
4.7 This landscape has a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a large-scale group. A large-scale group could relate to the landscape scale and gently sloping topography although it would not fit well in relation to the skyline and views from the Fens where it is considered that such a group could appear over dominant in the landscape. It is suggested that the lower end of a large-scale group (e.g.13-15 turbines) would be more appropriate than a larger number of turbines. Locations for a large-scale group are constrained and the following guidance should be taken into account:

a. *Where capacity is identified a turbine group at the lower end of the scale (i.e. 13-15 turbines) will be more appropriate.*
b. *Avoid the more intimately scaled wooded/orchard landscape around Colne.*
c. *Relate to the land cover pattern in particular the woodland edges and hedgerow field boundaries with consistent, repetitive spacing between turbines.*
d. *Avoid introducing turbines and additional structures into those parts of the area which are generally characterised by a sense of tranquillity and isolation with an absence of built structures and limited access. Note that pylons are not a feature of this area and would be a very visible intrusion in views from the Fens.*
e. *Ensure that the development does not conflict with settlements - a development of this size will be out of scale and over dominating in relation to the villages.*
f. *Relate to existing development, for example the occasional large farm buildings or industrial areas.*
g. *Respect the sites and settings of valued landscape components including the woodlands and historic features.*
h. *Consider the visual relationship of a large-scale group of turbines with the adjacent Fens landscape.*
i. *Avoid siting a development on the Fens ridgeline which forms the backdrop skyline with the Fens.*
j. *Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

4.8 Given the size of the area and importance of protecting the setting of settlements, the sensitive relationship with the Fens and conserving isolated tranquil areas (including the Great Fen and its landscape and visual setting) it is unlikely that more than one large-scale development could be accommodated. Hence capacity for cumulative development is low.

5 Central Claylands



Single Turbine

5.1 The landscape of the Central Claylands has a **high** capacity to accommodate a single turbine. The large-scale, open landform and simple arable dominated land cover pattern would allow a single turbine to fit well, forming a landmark feature or focal point. There is also scope for a single turbine to relate to existing built structures and development. In considering the location of a single turbine the following guidance should be taken into account:

a. Consider the greater sensitivities of the more enclosed wooded landscape to the north west and the intimate orchard-dominated landscape to the east around Bluntisham.

b. Avoid rural areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that development does not result in visual confusion and clutter and respect existing landmarks such as views to church spires.

c. Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example utility buildings or industrial areas or buildings associated with disused airfields. There may also be an opportunity for a single turbine to relate to infrastructure associated with the main road routes (A1, A14, A141).

d. Consider opportunities for siting in relation to extended urban areas on the edge of the larger settlement such as those at St Ives and Huntingdon. In this way a single turbine could take on a functional role as well as providing a new landmark or gateway on the urban edge (see guidance on urban peripheries in Chapter 12).

e. Relate to the landform with turbines sited on the extensive open plateau areas (where this does not conflict with other uses e.g. active airfield use).

f. Respect the sites and settings of key valued landscape features, particularly areas currently open, but where there are identified opportunities for woodland creation seek to link existing ancient woodland sites in the north west part of the character area.

g. Respect the scale and settings of the intact historic villages and historic landscape features such as the medieval moats.

h. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.

Cumulative development

5.2 There is scope for the Central Claylands to accommodate a number of single turbines, but care will need to be taken in their location and relationship to each other. Single turbines within this landscape will act as a point of focus or landmark. Views of more than one turbine development could dilute the perceived landmark function of a turbine and create a potentially confusing viewing experience. An exception is the location of turbines along communications corridors where it may be acceptable to have a regular spacing of single turbines relating to existing large-scale infrastructure.

Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

5.3 The Central Claylands landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape a small-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. Providing it was appropriately sited, such a development would not have an adverse impact on key landscape values. The guidance relating to the siting and design of a small-scale group of turbines is essentially the same as that for a single turbine, and the following matters should be taken into account:

a. Consider the greater sensitivities of the more enclosed wooded landscape to the north west and the intimate orchard dominated landscape to the east around Bluntisham.

b. Avoid rural areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that development does not result in visual confusion and clutter and respect existing landmarks such as views to church spires.

c. Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example utility buildings or industrial areas or buildings associated with disused airfields. There may also be an opportunity to relate to infrastructure associated with the main road routes (A1, A14, A141).

d. Consider opportunities for siting in relation extended urban areas on the edge of the larger settlements such as those at St Ives and Huntingdon. In this way a small-scale group could take on a functional role as well as providing a new landmark or gateway on the urban edge (see guidance on urban peripheries in Chapter 12).

e. Relate to the land cover pattern, in particular the large-scale field pattern, with turbines sited in a simple linear or grid arrangement with consistent and repetitive spacing between individual turbines.

f. Relate to the landform with turbines sited on the extensive open plateau areas (where this does not conflict with other uses e.g. active airfield use).

g. Respect the sites and settings of key valued landscape features, particularly areas currently open, but where there are identified opportunities for woodland creation seek to link existing ancient woodland sites in the north west part of the character area.

h. Respect the scale and settings of the intact historic villages and historic landscape features such as the Medieval moats.

i. Avoid introducing additional built structures into rural areas, which are generally characterised by the absence of buildings. Additional structures would be better accommodated in relation to existing farm/utility buildings.

j. Consider impacts on views in relation to the lower lying Fens and Fen Margins.

k. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.

Cumulative development

5.4 The landform and land cover pattern provides scope for more than one small-scale turbine group within this landscape. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments respecting the consistent character of the landscape. In this landscape some long-range views are often possible and views of more than one type of turbine development could create a potentially confusing viewing experience. Decisions will need to be made on a case-by-case basis.

Medium-scale group (6-12 turbines)

5.5 The Central Claylands landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a medium-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape a medium-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. Providing it was appropriately sited, such a development would not have an adverse impact on key landscape values. Locations for a medium-scale group of turbines should follow the guidelines set out above for a small-scale group although a medium scale group is unlikely to be suitable as a new landmark or gateway on the urban edge.

Cumulative development

5.6 The landform and land cover pattern provides scope for more than one medium-scale turbine group within this landscape. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments respecting the consistent character of the landscape. In this landscape some long-range views are often possible and views of more than one type of turbine development could create a potentially confusing viewing experience. Decisions will need to be made on a case-by-case basis.

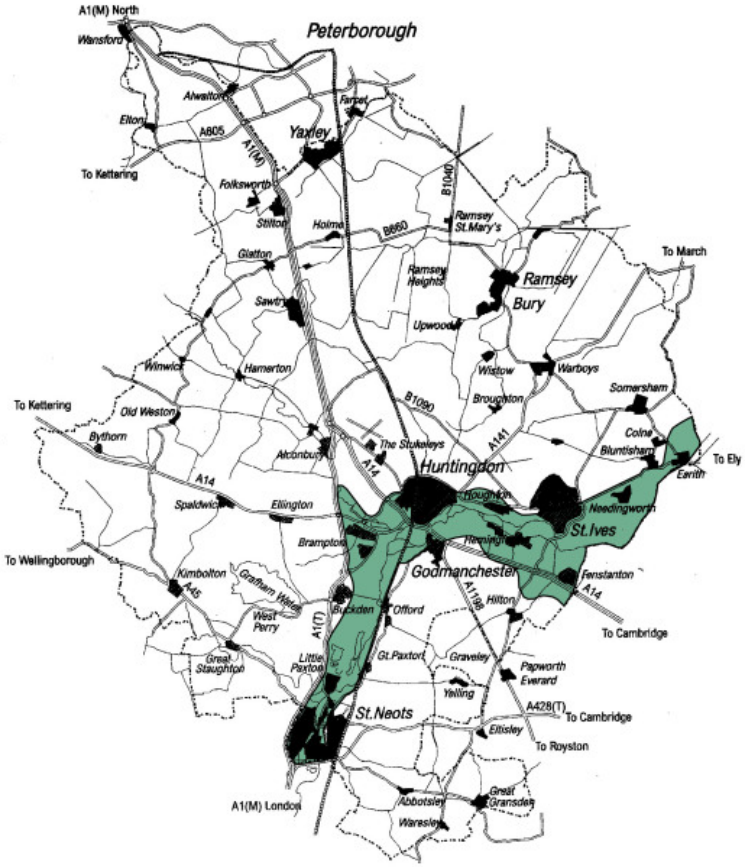
Large-scale group (13-24 turbines)

5.7 The landscape has a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a large-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature, a large-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern if efficiently arranged and could relate particularly well to the more open, level plateau areas. The guidance set out for small and medium scale groups applies, although in the case of urban extensions it is considered that more than 12 turbines will usually be too dominant in relation to the size of the market towns.

Cumulative development

5.8 The Central Claylands do have capacity to accommodate more than one large scale turbine group, although locations will be relatively constrained particularly in relation to settlements and impacts on long views, where the open exposed character could result in intervisibility between developments.

6 Ouse Valley



Single Turbine

6.1 The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a single turbine. A single turbine would fit well in relation to the more open areas of the flat valley floor and in conjunction with existing built features, for example amenity/ recreational uses or communication corridors. Locations for a single turbine are relatively constrained, particularly with regard to potential effects on nature conservation values. The following guidance should be taken into account:

a. Respect the nature conservation interests associated with the wetlands along the valley floor.

b. Retain the sense of tranquillity and relative isolation.

c. Maintain the recreational value of the Ouse Valley landscape.

d. Avoid areas which retain a distinctive valley landscape such as the summer grazing meadows. It is likely that only the more open arable or amenity areas will provide appropriate locations.

e. Consider opportunities for locating a turbine in association with existing infrastructure such as the railway or main roads (A1 and A14). There may be an opportunity for turbine development in relation to existing recreational infrastructure such as a visitor centre or marina.

f. Respect the setting of the small historic villages of the Ouse Valley e.g. Needingworth, the Hemingfords, Holywell.

g. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.

Cumulative development

6.2 Whilst there is scope for the Ouse Valley to accommodate more than one single turbine possible locations are constrained. This is a landscape that has an important role in providing an 'escape' for people living in the adjacent towns and is valued for its tranquillity and scenic quality; turbine development should not affect the perception of these qualities. Decisions will need to be taken on a case-by -case basis.

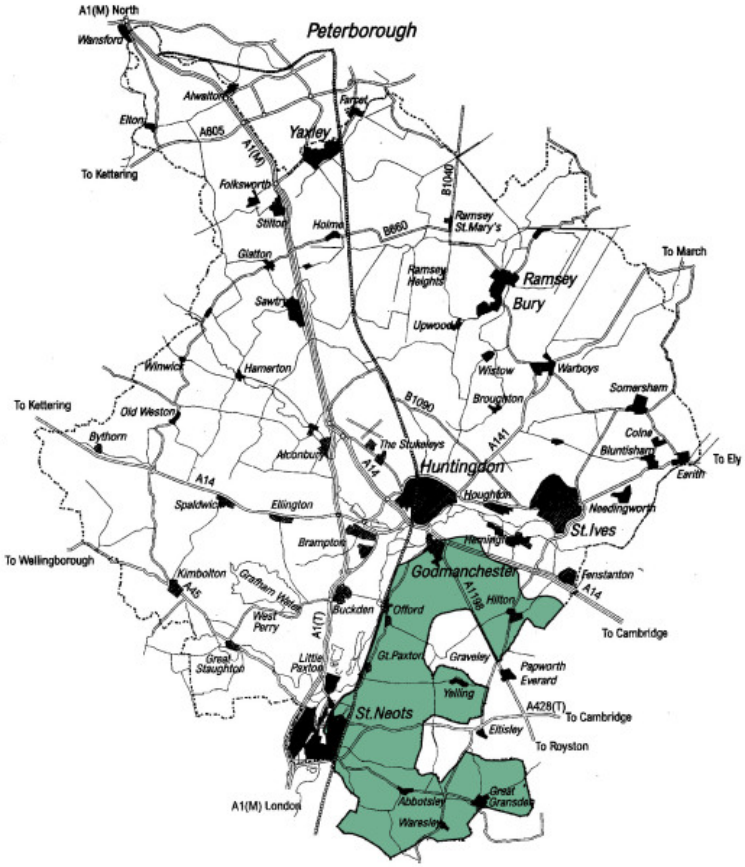
Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

6.3 The landscape has a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group. However, this capacity relates to the lower end of the scale (i. e. 2-3 turbines). The guidance for single turbines applies equally to this scale of development.

Cumulative development

6.4 There is very little scope for the Ouse Valley to accommodate more than one small-scale group. Decisions will need to be taken on a case-by-case basis.

7 South East Claylands



Single Turbine

7.1 The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a single turbine. The simple, open landform and medium to large-scale views means that a single turbine has the potential to form a focal point and appear balanced within the landscape. It would not intimidate or dominate the landscape and would not affect any key values. However, care will need to be taken in siting turbines, particularly in the more undulating wooded area in the south, and to avoid creating visual confusion and clutter where existing vertical elements are already dominant. The guidance set out below should be taken into account:

a. Seek to provide a positive focal point within medium to long-range open views, mirroring the landmark function of church towers and spires.

b. Avoid those areas where there is already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter.

c. Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings.

d. Relate to the geometric field pattern with the turbine sited at junctions of two or more boundaries.

e. Respect the sites and settings of key valued landscape features, notably remnant historic features.

f. Respect the scale and setting of the small, intact villages and views to church towers and spires.

g. Consider the visual relationship with the Ouse Valley and the 'hidden' tributary valleys that cross the landscape.

h. Avoid introducing solid built structures (e.g. transmission stations) into rural areas, which are generally characterised by the absence of buildings. Additional structures would be better accommodated in relation to existing farm/utility buildings.

i. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.

Cumulative development

7.2 There is scope for the South East Claylands to accommodate a number of single turbines, but care will need to be taken in their location and relationship to each other. Single turbines within this landscape will act as a point of focus or landmark. In this open landscape medium and long-range views are often possible and views of more than one turbine could dilute the perceived landmark function of a turbine and create a potentially confusing viewing experience.

Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

7.3 The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group. Although more obvious and dominant in the landscape, the generally open character of the South East Claylands means that a small-scale group of turbines would not dominate views and could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. Providing it was appropriately sited, such a development would not have an adverse impact on key landscape values. The following guidance should be taken into account:

a. Avoid the more undulating, intact and enclosed landscape to the south (around Waresley).

b. Avoid those areas where there is already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter.

c. Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings.

d. Respond to the geometric field pattern with turbines sited in a simple linear arrangement with consistent and repetitive spacing between individual turbines.

e. Relate to the landform with turbines located along contour lines as opposed to across them.

f. Respect the sites and settings of key valued landscape features, notably remnant historic features.

g. Respect the scale and setting of the small, intact villages and views to church towers and spires.

h. Consider the visual relationship with the Ouse Valley and the 'hidden' tributary valleys that cross the landscape.

i. Avoid introducing solid built structures (transmission stations etc) into rural areas, which are generally characterised by the absence of buildings. Additional structures would be better accommodated in relation to existing farm/utility buildings.

j. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.

Cumulative development

7.4 The simple landform and landcover pattern provides scope for more than one small-scale turbine group within this landscape. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments respecting the consistent character of the landscape. In this open landscape medium and long-range views are often possible and views of more than one type of turbine development could create a potentially confusing viewing experience.

Medium-scale group (6-12 turbines)

7.5 The northern part of this landscape character area, (approximately north of the B1046 which runs from St Neots southeast through Abbotsley and Great Gransden) has a **high** capacity to accommodate a medium-scale group. Although more obvious and dominant in the landscape, the generally open character

of this part of the South East Claylands means that a medium-scale group of turbines would not dominate views and could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. Providing it was appropriately sited, such a development would not have an adverse impact on key landscape values. Locations for a medium-scale group of turbines should follow the guidelines set out above for a small-scale group.

Cumulative development

7.6 The simple landform and landcover pattern provides scope for more than one medium-scale turbine group within this landscape. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments respecting the consistent character of the landscape. In this open landscape medium and long-range views are often possible and views of more than one type of turbine development could create a potentially confusing viewing experience.

Large-scale group (13-24 turbines)

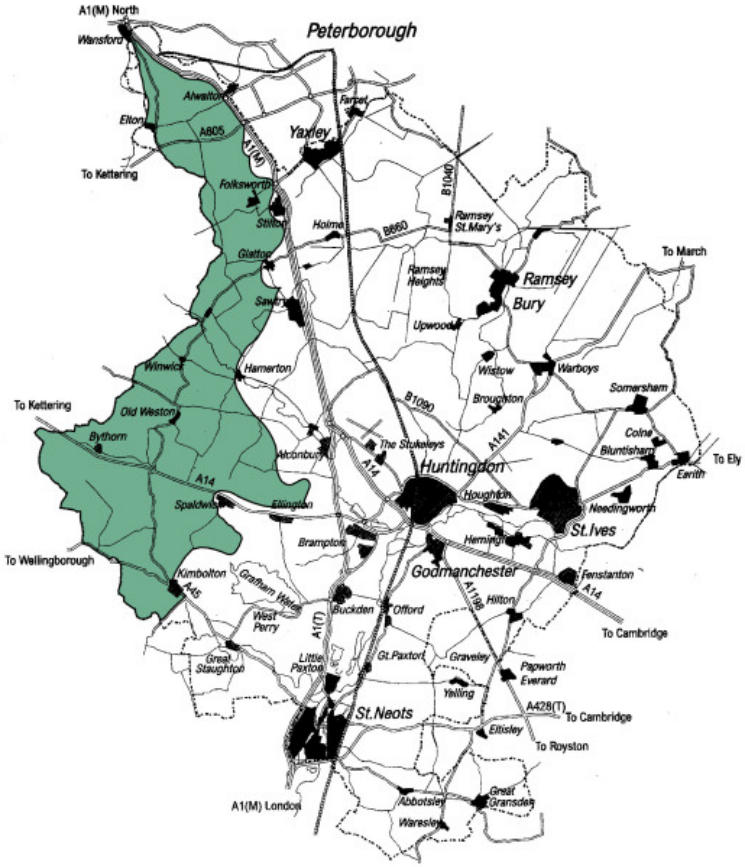
7.7 The northern part of this landscape character area (approximately north of the B1046 which runs from St. Neots south east through Abbotsley and Great Gransden) has a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a large-scale group of turbines. This scale of development could fit within the open, medium to large-scale landscape. However particular care will be needed in relation to siting and design to ensure that such a development respects key landscape values, particularly the perception of parts of the area as rural with serene and tranquil aspects. The introduction of transmission lines and additional built structures often associated with this type of development will generally not be appropriate within this open landscape which is characterised by an absence of buildings outside the villages. In considering the location of a large-scale group of turbines the following guidance should be taken into account:

a. Respect the small-scale and historic character of the intact villages.
b. Avoid areas where there is already a large number of existing vertical structures.
c. Consider the impact on views from adjacent landscapes, particularly the more sensitive landscapes of the Ouse Valley.
d. Respect the subtle variations in topography – appropriate locations generally being on summits or along contours – and relate to the regularity of the field pattern.
e. Respect the sites and settings of valued landscape components.
f. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.

Cumulative development

7.8 More than one development of this scale could change the perception of the landscape's character and could start to create a landscape which is seen to be dominated by turbines. Capacity for cumulative development is low.

8 Northern Wolds



Single Turbine

8.1 The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a single turbine. A single turbine would fit well with the scale of the landscape and land cover patterns on the arable land of the open plateau and ridges. Key sensitivities relate to the more intimate valleys, historic villages and valued elements, particularly with respect to historic features and the distinctive church spires. The location of a single turbine should take into account the following guidance:

a. Respect the landform and relate turbines to the strong ridges and plateau; avoid locating turbines within the more intimate landscape of the valleys and along valley crests where they will be out of scale with the landscape and settlements such as at Kimbolton.

b. Avoid siting turbines on areas of pasture with ridge and furrow.

c. Respect the site and settings of the historic villages which characterise the Northern Wolds.

d. Consider the views to and setting of the distinctive church spires which form a landmark feature, and ensure turbine development does not result in visual clutter in relation to these key views. A single turbine could form a separate focal point in its own right.

e. Consider opportunities to site a single turbine in relation to existing farm/utility or industrial buildings (e.g. disused airfields) creating a functional image.

f. Avoid the introduction of new pylon lines into the Northern Wolds. The area is currently characterised by the absence of disruptive features and pylon lines would be difficult to accommodate in relation to the distinctive ridge and valley topography.

g. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.

Cumulative development

8.2 While there is scope for the Northern Wolds to accommodate a number of single turbines, care will need to be taken in their location and relationship to each other. This is a landscape highly valued in the district for its 'unspoilt' quality and harmonious character; turbine development should not affect the perception of this special character. Decisions will need to be taken on a case-by -case basis.

Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

8.3 The landscape has a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape, a small-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and land cover pattern. Key sensitivities relate to the more intimate valleys, historic villages and valued elements, particularly with respect to historic features and the distinctive church spires. The location of a small-scale group should take into account the following guidance:

a. Respect existing landmark features such as key views to church spires.

b. Respect the landform and relate turbines to the strong ridges and plateau; avoid locating turbines within the more intimate landscape of the valleys and along valley crests where they will be out of scale with the landscape and settlements such as Kimbolton.

c. Avoid siting turbines on areas of pasture with ridge and furrow.

d. Respect the site and setting of the historic villages which characterise the Northern Wolds.

e. Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings, utility buildings or industrial areas (such as disused airfields).

f. Relate to the land cover pattern, in particular the woodland edges and field patterns with a consistent and repetitive spacing between turbines.

g. Consider the impact on views of the horizon from the Central Claylands, Southern Wolds, Fen Margins and Fens.

h. Consider a linear arrangement along contours as opposed to crossing contours.

i. Avoid the introduction of new pylon lines into the Northern Wolds. The area is currently characterised by the absence of disruptive features and pylon lines would be difficult to accommodate in relation to the distinctive ridge and valley topography.

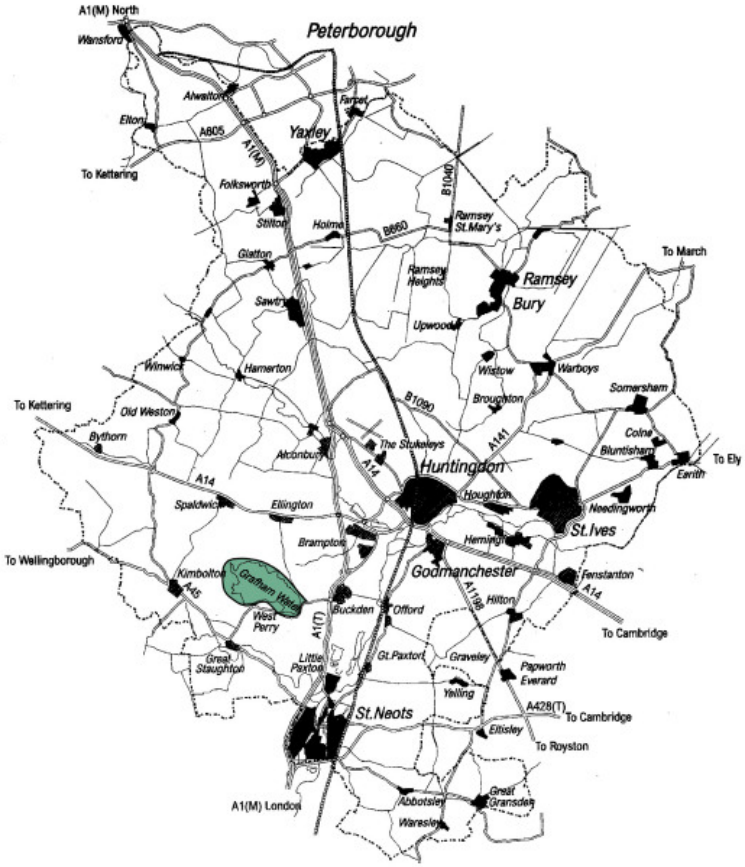
j. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.

Cumulative development

8.4 There is very little scope for the Northern Wolds to accommodate more than one small-scale group. This is a landscape highly valued in the district for its 'unspoilt' quality and harmonious character; turbine development should not affect the perception of this special character. Decisions will need to be taken on a case-by-case basis. Hence capacity for cumulative development is low.

Note – Guidance in the original SPD was that this LCA had high capacity for 2-3 turbines but low capacity for 4-12 turbines. This has been revised to moderate capacity for 2-5 turbines which more accurately reflects the detail of the LUC study and the definitions for low and moderate capacity.

9 Grafham Water



Single Turbine

9.1 The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a single turbine. The open character and large scale of the landscape would allow a single turbine to be successfully accommodated in the area.

9.2 The recreational value of this landscape also means that there is scope for a single turbine to become a focal point and educational feature in conjunction with the visitors' centre or other amenity/functional buildings. The location of a single turbine should take into account the following guidance:

a. Seek to make a positive contribution by providing a focal point in views and signalling the presence of Grafham Water from beyond the site.
b. Avoid those areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter.
c. Relate to existing building structures in the area, e.g. the visitors' centre/ amenity buildings, and consider opportunities for education/interpretation.
d. Consider potential impacts on the SSSI (bird population).
e. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.

Cumulative development

9.3 There is unlikely to be scope for accommodating more than one single turbine around Grafham Water. In such a small character area more than one turbine would be perceived as a small-scale group. More than one single turbine would effectively rule out the possibility of accommodating a small scale group.

Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

9.4 The landscape has a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group of turbines, but only towards the lower end of this range. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape, a small-scale development could respond well to the landscape scale. However, the available land area is small and there are a number of key sensitive elements that will need to be respected. It is therefore judged that 2-3 turbines would be the maximum number of turbines that could be accommodated. Proposals for a small-scale group of turbines should take into account the following guidance:

a. Respect existing vertical features that form landmarks such as key views to Grafham church spire and towers.

b. Avoid those areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter.

c. Consider opportunities for siting turbines adjacent to existing structures such as the visitors' centre or in amenity areas rather than the wider farmed landscape.

d. Consider a linear arrangement along contours as opposed to crossing contours.

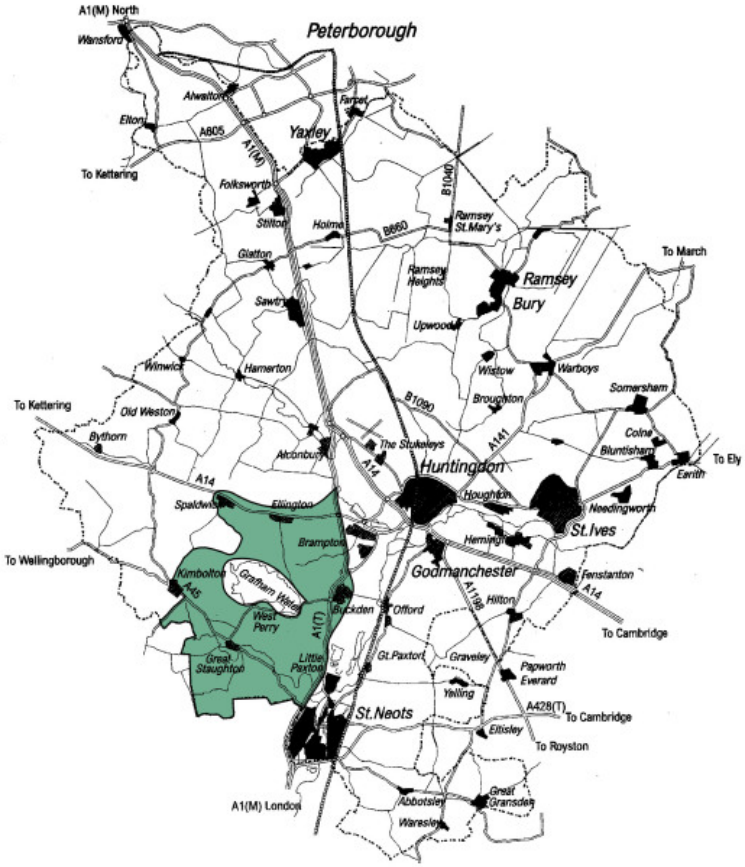
e. Consider potential impacts on the SSSI (bird population).

f. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.

Cumulative development

9.5 The small area of Grafham Water could not accommodate more than one small-scale (2-3 turbines) development.

10 Southern Wolds



Single Turbine

10.1 The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a single turbine. The medium scale of the landscape, gentle topography and land cover patterns would allow a single turbine to fit well and it could correspond to land cover and settlement patterns forming a landmark feature or focal point.

10.2 However, care will need to be taken in siting turbines and to avoid creating visual confusion and clutter where existing vertical elements are already dominant. The location of a single turbine should take into account the following guidance:

a. Seek to make a positive contribution by providing a focal point within medium to long-range open views, mirroring the landmark function of church towers and spires.

b. Avoid those areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter.

c. Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings, utility buildings or industrial areas. There may also be an opportunity for a single turbine to relate to infrastructure associated with the main road routes (A1, A14).

d. Consider opportunities for siting in relation to extended urban areas on the edge of the larger settlements. In this way a single turbine could function as a landmark or gateway.

e. Relate to the land cover pattern, in particular the woodland edges and geometric field patterns.

f. Respect the sites and settings of key valued landscape features, notably the extensive areas of woodland (SSSI).

g. Respect the more sensitive ridge which divides the valleys of the Kym and Ellington Brook – this ridge should remain a predominantly rural, wooded skyline.

h. Consider the visual relationship of a single turbine with the Ouse Valley.

i. Avoid introducing additional solid built structures such as sub-stations into rural areas, which are generally characterised by the absence of buildings. Additional structures would be better accommodated in relation to existing farm/utility buildings.

j. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.

Cumulative development

10.3 There is scope for the Southern Wolds to accommodate a number of single turbines, but care will need to be taken in their location and relationship to each other. Single turbines within this landscape will act as a point of focus or landmark. Views of more than one turbine development could dilute the perceived landmark function of a turbine and create a potentially confusing viewing experience. In particular the central ridge that divides the valleys of the Kym and Ellington Brook should remain a predominantly rural wooded skyline and should not be cluttered with numerous tall vertical structures.

Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

10.4 The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape, a small-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. However, there are a number of key sensitive elements that will need to be respected, notably the need to retain the strong wooded skyline afforded by the central ridge between the two valleys. Particular care will need to be taken in siting turbines and to avoid creating visual confusion and clutter where existing vertical elements are already dominant. The location of a small-scale group should take into account the following guidance:

a. Avoid those areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter.

b. Respect existing landmark vertical features such as key views to church spires and towers.

c. Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings, utility buildings or industrial areas. There may also be an opportunity for a small scale turbine development to relate to infrastructure associated with the main road routes (A1, A14).

d. Consider opportunities for siting in relation to extended urban areas on the edge of the larger settlements. In this way a small turbine group (e.g. 2-3 turbines) could function as a landmark or gateway.

e. Relate to the land cover pattern, in particular the woodland edges and geometric field patterns with a consistent and repetitive spacing between turbines.

f. Consider a linear arrangement along contours as opposed to crossing contours.

g. Respect the sites and settings of key valued landscape features, notably the extensive areas of woodland (SSSI).

h. Avoid the more sensitive ridge which divides the valleys of the Kym and Ellington Brook – this ridge should remain a predominantly rural, wooded skyline.

i. Avoid impinging on skylines that provide enclosure to the river valleys.

j. Consider the visual relationship with the Ouse Valley.

k. *Avoid introducing additional solid built structures, such as transmission stations, into rural areas, which are generally characterised by the absence of buildings. Additional structures would be better accommodated in relation to existing farm/utility buildings.*

l. *Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

10.5 The landform and land cover pattern provides scope for more than one small-scale turbine group within this landscape. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments respecting the consistent character of the landscape. In this landscape some long-range views are often possible and views of more than one type of turbine development could create a potentially confusing viewing experience.

Medium-scale group (6-12 turbines)

10.6 The landscape has a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a medium-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape, a medium-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. However, suitable locations will be limited by the number of key sensitive elements that will need to be respected, notably the need to retain the strong wooded skyline afforded by the central ridge between the two valleys. Particular care will need to be taken in siting turbines and to avoid creating visual confusion and clutter where existing vertical elements are already dominant. The location of a medium-scale group should take into account the following guidance:

a. *Avoid those areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter.*

b. *Respect existing landmark vertical features such as key views to church spires and towers.*

c. *Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings, utility buildings or industrial areas.*

d. *Relate to the land cover pattern, in particular the woodland edges and geometric field patterns with a consistent and repetitive spacing between turbines.*

e. *Consider a linear arrangement along contours as opposed to crossing contours.*

f. *Respect the sites and settings of key valued landscape features, notably the extensive areas of woodland (SSSI).*

g. *Avoid the more sensitive ridge which divides the valleys of the Kym and Ellington Brook – this ridge should remain a predominantly rural, wooded feature.*

h. *Avoid impinging on skylines that provide enclosure to the river valleys.*

i. *Avoid disrupting long views across the area and the sensitive views into and out of the Ouse Valley.*

j. *Avoid introducing additional solid built structures, such as transmission stations, into rural areas, which are generally characterised by the absence of buildings. Additional structures would be better accommodated in relation to existing farm/ utility buildings.*

k. *Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

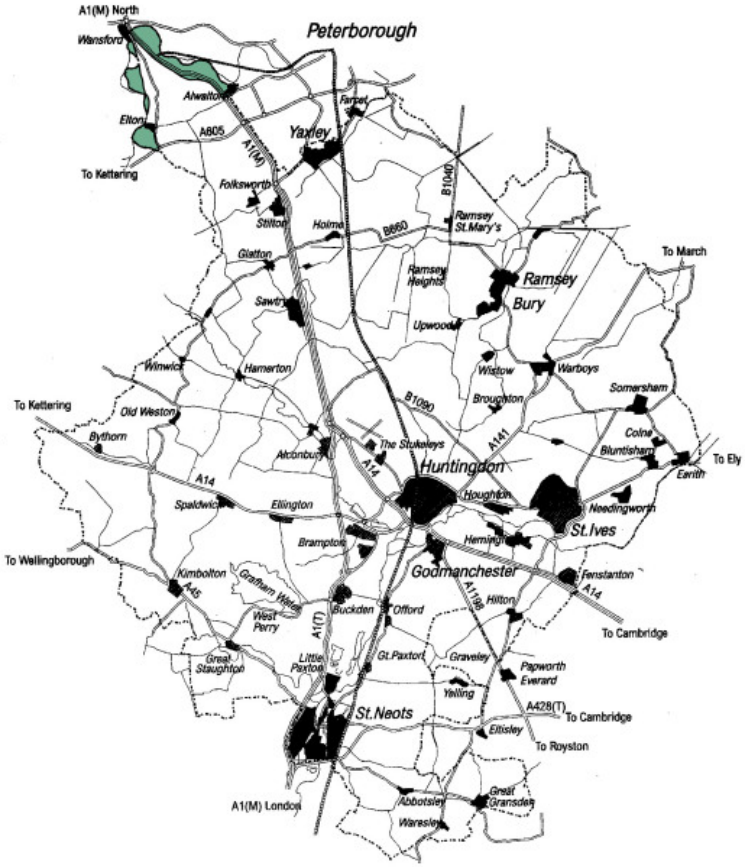
Cumulative development

10.7 Scope for more than one medium-scale turbine group within this landscape is limited due to the presence of key sensitivities within the landscape. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments respecting the consistent character of the landscape. In this landscape some long-range views are often possible and views of more than one type of turbine development could create a potentially confusing viewing experience.

10 Southern Wolds

Note – Guidance in the original SPD was that this landscape had high capacity for a group of 4-12 turbines but low capacity for a group of 13-24 turbines. This was reviewed due to the change in turbine group sizes and the abrupt change in capacity. The assessment has been revised to high capacity for a group of 2-5 turbines and moderate capacity for a group of 6-12 turbines. This reflects the sensitivities identified in the landscape and the definitions for high and moderate capacity.

11 Nene Valley



Single Turbine

11.1 The landscape has a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a single turbine. The intimate nature and small scale of the landscape and presence of a large number of highly valued landscape features, notably the distinctive limestone villages, historic landscapes and important nature conservation interests suggests that locations for siting a single turbine will be limited to the few open arable areas or in association with existing infrastructure along the A1 corridor. The location of a single turbine should take into account the following guidance:

a. Respect the nature conservation interests associated with the wetlands along the valley floor.
b. Respect the sites and settings of historic landscape features including the historic parkland and Scheduled Ancient Monuments.
c. Retain the sense of tranquillity and relative isolation.
d. Maintain the recreational value of the Nene Valley landscape.
e. Avoid areas which retain a distinctive valley landscape such as the water meadows. It is likely that only the more open arable land will provide an appropriate location.
f. Consider opportunities for locating a turbine in association with existing infrastructure along the A1 corridor.

g. *Respect the setting of the distinctive limestone villages of the Nene Valley e.g. Stibbington, Water Newton, Elton.*

h. *Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

11.2 The very small geographical extent of the Nene Valley in Huntingdonshire suggests that there would not be scope to accommodate more than one single turbine development.

Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

11.3 The landscape has a **low** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group of turbines for the reasons noted above. However, there may be an opportunity to locate a very small development (e.g. 2 turbines) in association with infrastructure along the A1 corridor. There is no capacity for cumulative development. The guidance in relation to a single turbine should be taken into account.

12 Urban peripheries

Introduction

12.1 This chapter provides 'generic' guidance on potential landscape capacity and mitigation requirements in relation to wind turbine development bordering urban areas (e.g. in association with urban extensions).

12.2 As well as the issues associated with the landscape adjoining such sites, various other visual considerations may affect the capacity to accommodate development of this type and scale. This guidance sets out these additional factors and should be taken into account when planning wind turbines near urban areas.

12.3 Land Use Consultants identified three sets of criteria for gauging the capacity of urban-related sites, which were developed from those used to assess the landscape character areas:

Townscape character:

- Landscape setting
- Character of the existing urban edge
- Landform and scale
- Size and form of settlement
- Urban structure
- Role and function

Visual sensitivity:

- Key landmarks
- Settlement skyline
- Key views
- Location of sensitive viewers

Values:

- Conservation areas
- Quality and condition of the urban edge
- Natural and historic values
- Special cultural associations
- Intrinsic values

12.4 Guidance reflecting these criteria is set out below; it is supported by a 'checklist' of questions contained in Annex A of LUC's report.

12.5 In addition there are three over-arching points that should be borne in mind at the urban periphery:

a. *In general turbines should only be located in landscape character areas that have been identified as suitable for development (on the scale proposed) elsewhere in this guidance.*
b. *There may be opportunities for locating wind turbines in urban extensions of mixed-use development, or in association with existing or new industrial areas.*
c. *Simple, large scale landforms are likely to be best suited to turbine development. Narrow valleys or areas of intimate landform are unlikely to be suitable.*

Townscape Character

12.6 The location of a wind turbine (or group of turbines) should take into account the following guidance **in addition to that for the landscape character area in which the site falls**:

a. *Wind energy developments should respond to the scale of the built form on the urban edge. For example, where the scale of built features on the urban edge is large, wind turbines may relate well to the built form.*
b. *The form of the urban edge (linear, organic etc.) may influence the layout of turbines. However, the landscape pattern will also be important. For example in the fens the rigid field pattern may be a stronger determinate of turbine form than an organic settlement edge.*
c. *Ensure any boundary treatment (e.g. fencing) or infrastructure accompanying the wind turbine development relates to townscape character and respects local styles and materials.*
d. *The turbine/ group of turbines should not dominate or overwhelm the urban area – smaller areas are likely to be able to accommodate smaller scale, and fewer, structures.*
e. *Where historic buildings form a settlement edge, that edge is unlikely to be suitable for turbine development.*
f. *The turbine/ group of turbines should not have an adverse effect on the visual or physical relationship of the urban area with the surrounding landform.*
g. *The turbine/ group of turbines should not have an adverse effect on the form or function of 'nodes', 'histroric gateways', 'memorable areas' or landscape 'buffers' as identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape assessment.*
h. *Consider opportunities for a turbine(s) to strengthen urban morphology, through the creation of new nodes, gateways or landmarks.*
i. *Consider opportunities for a turbine(s) to create a new role for the urban edge.*
j. *Ensure development does not have an adverse effect upon the function of the area in relation to the town, for example in terms of its recreational function, nature conservation function or open space function.*

Visual Sensitivity

12.7 The location of a wind turbine (or group of turbines) should take into account the following guidance **in addition to that for the landscape character area in which the site falls**:

a. *Ensure that wind turbines do not obstruct, intrude into, or detract from existing positive landmarks e.g. spires, towers, mills (refer to key landmarks identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment).*
b. *Consider opportunities for wind turbines to create a new positive focus in views.*
c. *Ensure that wind turbines contribute positively to the settlement skyline, particularly as seen from popular viewpoints.*
d. *Pay particular attention to the 'key views' identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment and ensure that turbines do not have a significant detrimental impact upon these views.*
e. *Consider views from sensitive visual receptors, such as local residents, in siting wind turbines.*
f. *Only use screen planting where it is appropriate to landscape character. For example, in a large scale open landscape it may be inappropriate to provide screen planting.*
g. *Consider the use of off-site tree planting to filter views of turbines, where appropriate to the landscape character.*

Values

12.8 The location of a wind turbine (or group of turbines) should take into account the following guidance **in addition to that for the landscape character area in which the site falls**:

a. *Ensure that turbine development does not have an adverse impact upon historic settlement cores or the character of conservation areas.*
b. *Seek opportunities to improve the condition/quality of the landscape/ townscape in which the development will occur. Consider off-site as well as on-site improvements which are in accordance with the recommendations provided in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape assessment.*

c. *Ensure wind turbines do not have an adverse impact upon any areas known for their special cultural or literary associations.*
d. *Ensure wind turbines do not have an adverse impact upon any intrinsic values such as nature conservation, heritage or recreational interests.*

13 Siting and design issues for turbines less than 100m

13.1 Although prepared for larger turbines the sensitivity assessment in the LUC study and the guidance and criteria to be considered when siting turbines are generally applicable to smaller turbines. A primary objective of the SPD is to guide potential developments to sites where landscape and visual effects (including cumulative effects) are acceptable. Turbines less than 100m height will have varying landscape and visual effects, as commercial scale turbines do, depending on height, cluster size, location and a variety of other factors discussed below. As with commercial scale turbines, smaller turbines must respect the setting of heritage assets[17].

13.2 The Council has prepared a Guidance Note for Wind Turbine Developments which includes advice on projects involving turbines of less than 100 metres height to blade tip. It can be viewed via the Council's website.

13.3 In addition to the guidance for landscape character areas (chapters 3-11) and for urban peripheries (chapter 12) the location of a single turbine less than 100m in height should take into account the location of any other single turbines or turbine groups in the area. The guidance on issues to be considered for cumulative development of single turbines within sections 3-11 and visual sensitivity in chapter 12 are of particular relevance.

13.4 Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) has recently produced helpful guidance on the siting and design of small scale wind turbines[18]. Although some of that guidance is specific to the landscape of Scotland much of the general advice is relevant to the landscape of Huntingdonshire and is outlined below.

13.5 Unlike taller turbines, turbines of less than 100m in height come in a variety of styles, designs and colours, generally with faster rotation speeds. The choice of turbine is a key factor in the ability of any particular landscape to accommodate a small turbine without significant adverse effects. It may be appropriate to reflect the style, rotational speed or the location of existing turbines to avoid complex visual mixes of turbine types in any location. Applicants should show that they have considered a number of different turbine options at the pre-planning stage.

13.6 The following paragraphs set out the siting and design issues that are of particular importance to small scale turbines:

Size and Scale:

13.7 Smaller turbines are often located close to built features (such as farms, walls, houses or settlements) and vegetation features like hedges or copses which provide scale indicators in the landscape. It is therefore particularly important to ensure that turbines relate to the scale of adjacent landscape features.

13.8 Even small turbines have the potential to dominate small scale topography. Care should be taken not to introduce turbines which would have an overbearing presence on complex or intricate landforms.

Relationship with settlements:

13.9 The following factors need to be considered when small turbines are located close to settlements:

- It is important to consider the height of the turbine in relation to nearby buildings or structures. The turbine should not have an overbearing presence or dominate adjacent buildings;

17 Land at Moorhays Farm, Elm Lane, Charlton Musgrove, Wincanton, APP/R3325/A/11/2162443.
18 Siting and Design of Small Scale Wind Turbines of between 15 and 50 metres in height (SNH March 2012)

- Where a turbine has no direct visual relationship to a building group it is important for its setting to have some logic. Consideration of its relationship to existing settlement pattern is required to give some rationale to its location;
- Greater care will be needed in settled areas designated for their ecological, landscape or historical value, such as the Great Fen (see section 2.15 and Figure 2.1 'Landscape Character Areas and the Great Fen Landscape and Visual Setting') and conservation areas;
- The relationship between small-scale turbines and the setting of and approaches to settlements is important. Care should be taken not to let turbines dominate views of the settlement from main approaches; and
- Views from within the settlement to important sites or distinctive landscape features should also be considered when siting and designing new small scale proposals.

Heritage assets:

13.10 As with larger turbines the assessment of the impact on heritage assets should be undertaken separately as part of a cultural heritage assessment. Views to and from heritage assets, both within settlements and in the wider landscape will be an important consideration in the siting of smaller turbines.

Landform:

13.11 Smaller turbines have more potential to use landform to restrict their visual impact than larger commercial models. This should be explored, particularly when there are potential adverse impacts on views from sensitive receptors, such as settlements or heritage assets, which could be mitigated through screening. Advantage should be taken of the combined screening properties of topography and vegetation

Ancillary infrastructure:

13.12 Attention to the initial siting and design of any ancillary development will help to minimise impacts and reduce visual clutter.

14 Landscape Sensitivity Criteria

14.1 The criteria that have been applied when assessing landscape sensitivity to wind energy development are described below in two groups, 'physical qualities' and 'perceptual qualities'. Only indicators of sensitivity likely to be relevant to the landscape of Huntingdonshire have been included.

Physical Qualities

Scale and Enclosure

14.2 Large scale open landscapes are likely to be less sensitive to wind turbine development than small scale intimate landscapes with a strong sense of enclosure. Turbines are more likely to appear out of scale and dominate landscapes with smaller and/ or irregular field sizes and landscapes with frequent human scale features.

Table 2 Indicators of sensitivity – Scale and Enclosure

Least Sensitive				Most Sensitive
Large scale open, elevated landscape	Medium-large scale landscape with limited sense of enclosure	Medium scale landscape, may contain a variety of field sizes, some sense of enclosure	Small-medium scale landscape field sizes mostly smaller, sense of enclosure	Intimate small scale landscape, small irregular fields, strong sense of enclosure

Landform and Topography

14.3 A smooth, convex or flat landform is likely to be less sensitive to wind turbine development than a landscape with a dramatic rugged landform, distinct landform features or pronounced undulations because turbines are less likely to detract from visually important landforms, appear confusing or unsettling (due to turbines being at varying heights or on the crest of valleys).

Table 3 Indicators of sensitivity – Landform and Topography

Least Sensitive				Most Sensitive
Smooth, convex or flat landscape, extensive lowland, elevated plateau	Simple, gently undulating landform, few distinct landform features	Distinct landform, convex hills, plateau incised by valleys	Distinct or irregular landform features, noticeable changes in level	Distinct or irregular landform, sharp/ marked changes in level

Land Cover Pattern

14.4 Simple, regular landscapes with extensive areas of uniform ground cover are likely to be less sensitive to wind energy development than landscapes with more complex or irregular land cover.

Table 4 Indicators of sensitivity – Land Cover Pattern

Least Sensitive				Most Sensitive
Uniform groundcover	Large-scale fields, little variety in land cover	Medium sized fields, some variations in land cover	Irregular smaller scale fields, variety in land cover	Irregular small scale fields, complex and varied land cover

Settlement Pattern and Density

14.5 More sparsely settled areas are likely to be less sensitive than more densely settled areas or areas with a high proportion of historic villages as there will be opportunities to site turbines so that they do not dominate distinctive settlements.

Table 5 Indicators of sensitivity – Settlement Pattern and Density

Least Sensitive				Most Sensitive
Sparse settlement	Widely dispersed settlement	Dispersed settlement; modern housing	Frequent villages, some historic, limited sprawl or modern development	Frequent historic villages, historic settlement pattern apparent

Landmarks and Visible Built Structures

14.6 Landscapes that contain large scale infrastructure, major communications routes and large-scale developments are less sensitive to wind turbine development although development needs to be carefully sited to avoid visual clutter. Historic landmarks such as important views to distinctive church spires and towers increase sensitivity, especially where they occur frequently.

Table 6 Indicators of sensitivity – Landmarks and Visible Built Structures

Least Sensitive				Most Sensitive
Few or no historic landmark features, landscape dominated by large scale development/ infrastructure or major communication routes	Few historic landmark features, large scale development/ infrastructure or major communication routes present but not dominant	Infrequent historic landmark features, some large development/ infrastructure, or major communication routes	Some historic landmark features, little influenced by large development/ infrastructure, or major communication routes	Frequent historic landmark features, lack of large scale development or infrastructure

Skyline

14.7 Prominent and distinctive skylines, or skylines with important landmark features that are identified in the landscape character assessment, are likely to be more sensitive to wind turbine development because turbines may detract from these skylines as features in the landscape, or draw attention away from existing landform or landmark features on skylines.

Table 7 Indicators of sensitivity – Skyline

Least Sensitive				Most Sensitive
Large-scale flat or plateau landscape where skylines are not prominent and/or there are no important landmark features on the skyline	Large-scale landscape where skylines are not prominent and/or there are very few landmark features on the skyline – other skylines in adjacent LCAs are more prominent	Landscape with some prominent skylines, but these are not particularly distinctive. There may be some landmark features on the skyline	Landscape with prominent skylines that may form an important backdrop to views from settlements or important viewpoints, and/ or with many landmark features on the skyline	Landscape comprising prominent or distinctive skylines and/ or with particularly important landmark features on the skyline

Visual Connections with Adjacent Landscapes

14.8 Where the landscape character assessment has identified that views to and from adjacent landscapes are important the sensitivity to wind turbine development may be increased as landscape impacts may extend to adjacent landscape character areas.

Table 8 Indicators of sensitivity – Visual Connections with Adjacent Landscapes

Least Sensitive				Most Sensitive
Self-contained, very limited connections with adjacent LCAs	Occasional views from adjacent LCAs	Intervisiblity with adjacent LCAs	Extensive views from adjacent LCAs	Extensive views from adjacent LCAs, these views are a key characteristic of one or more adjacent LCAs

Perceptual Qualities

14.9 In the LUC study these are covered in the Landscape Value section although there are no individual sensitivity assessments.

Human Response

14.10 Landscapes whose scenic qualities are highly valued within the district are likely to be more sensitive to wind turbine development than landscapes of lower scenic quality or where there has been a loss of character due to agricultural intensification.

Table 9 Indicators of sensitivity – Human Response

Least Sensitive				Most Sensitive
Landscape is considered to have low scenic quality such as an industrial area or despoiled land and is not highly valued	Landscape has low-medium scenic quality, valued locally but has been subject to agricultural intensification	Landscape has a medium scenic quality valued locally for its rural character	Landscape has a medium-high scenic quality, valued for its rural character and/or recreational opportunities	Landscape has a high scenic quality , valued for its recreational opportunities, tranquillity, varied topography, and/ or unspoilt character

Remoteness and Tranquillity

14.11 Relatively remote or tranquil landscapes, due to freedom from human activity and disturbance and having a perceived naturalness or a strong feel of traditional rurality, tend to be more sensitive to wind turbine development because wind turbine development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from the sense of tranquillity and or remoteness/ naturalness. Landscapes that contain many signs of modern development are generally less sensitive.

Table 10 Indicators of sensitivity – Remoteness and Tranquillity

Least Sensitive				Most Sensitive
Landscape with much human activity and development, significantly affected	Landscape with human activity and dispersed modern development, Some	Landscape with some modern development and human activity but	Landscape with little modern human influence and development, rural	Tranquil landscape with little modern human influence and development, sense

Least Sensitive				Most Sensitive
by major communications routes	impact from major communications routes	retaining some rural and serene aspects	and serene aspects are most apparent	of quiet and isolation are preeminent

15 Policy sources

15.1 The development plan is currently made up of the East of England Plan, saved policies from the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan 2003, saved policies from the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 and Alteration 2002 except those superseded by the Core Strategy, the Core Strategy 2009, and the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan 2011. Also in use but not adopted as part of the Development Plan is the Development Management DPD: Proposed Submission 2010.

15.2 The council has recently embarked on the process of producing a single Local Plan for Huntingdonshire that will replace all current parts of the Development Plan except the East of England Plan. Government has indicated its intention to revoke the East of England Plan along with all other RSS and has started a process of strategic environmental assessment in order to achieve this objective.

15.3 The guidance in this SPD supplements the policies contained in a number of documents. The key sources and policies are as follows:

The Adopted Development Plan Policies:

- East of England Plan 2008, policy ENG2: Renewable Energy Targets;
- Core Strategy 2009, policy CS 1: Sustainable Development in Huntingdonshire

Emerging Development Plan Policies:

- Development Management DPD: Proposed Submission 2010, policy C 3: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy.
- Draft Development Management Policies, policy DM 21: Renewable and low carbon energy

Other relevant sources of Planning Policy and Guidance include:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012)
- Companion Guide to PPS22 (ODPM, 2004)

Appendix 1: Glossary

Ancient woodland
An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD.*

Cumulative effects
Cumulative effects are the summation and or additional effects that result from changes caused by a development in conjunction with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable actions.**

Designated heritage asset
A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.*

Diversity
Where a variety of qualities and characteristics occur.**

Development plan
This includes adopted Local Plans and *neighbourhood development plans*, and is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. (Regional strategies remain part of the development plan until they are abolished by Order using powers taken in the Localism Act. It is the government's clear policy intention to revoke the regional strategies outside of London, subject to the outcome of the environmental assessments that are currently being undertaken.)*

Heritage asset
A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).**

Historic environment
All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.**

Land cover
Combinations of land use and vegetation that cover the land surface.**

Landform
Combinations of slope and elevation that produce the shape and form of the landscape.**

Landscape capacity
The degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate change without unacceptable adverse effects on its character. Capacity is likely to vary according the type and nature of change being proposed.**

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 features
A prominent eye-catching element, for example, wooded hilltop or church spire.**

Landscape sensitivity
The extent to which a landscape can accept change of a particular type and scale without unacceptable adverse effects on its character.**

Appendix 1: Glossary

Landscape value
The relative value or importance attached to a landscape; (often as a basis for designation or recognition) which expresses national or local consensus, because of its quality, special qualities including perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness, cultural associations or other conservation issues.**

Local Plan
The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.*

Mitigation
Measures including any process, activity, or design to avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate for adverse environmental impact or effects of a development project.**

Open space
All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

Photomontage
An illustration of a proposed development that has been superimposed on or combined with a photograph from a recorded location.

Receptor
Physical landscape resource, special interest, or viewer group that will experience an effect.**

Renewable and low carbon energy
Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).*

Scale Indicators
Landscape elements and features of a known or recognisable scale such as houses, trees and vehicles that may be compared to other objects where the scale of height is less familiar, to indicate their true scale.

Site of Special Scientific Interest
Sites designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.*

Supplementary planning documents
Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.*

Tranquillity
A perceptual description applied to landscapes that are perceived to be relatively more natural, peaceful and quiet when compared to other areas which may be visually developed or noisy.

Visual effect
Change in the appearance of the landscape as a result of development. This can be positive (i.e. beneficial or an improvement) or negative (i.e. adverse or a detraction).**

Visual Sensitivity
The intrinsic sensitivity of visual receptors, such as residents, to visual change.

* Definitions derived from the National Planning Policy Framework
** Definitions derived from *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* 2nd Edition (2002) Landscape Institute/ Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment