

Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis: Hereford and the Market Towns

Local Development Framework

January 2010



Landscape and Biodiversity Team
Herefordshire Council

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1.0 METHODOLOGY

1.1 SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE URBAN FRINGE SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS

- 1.1.1 The Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis is a technical paper which supports the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. The aim of the Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis is to classify the level of sensitivity of the urban fringe landscape of Hereford and the five market towns: Bromyard, Kington, Ledbury, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye.
- 1.1.2 This study considers land which is mainly outside the settlement boundaries of Hereford and the market towns. In planning terms, land outside the settlement boundaries is defined as 'open countryside'.
- 1.1.3 Sensitivity is taken to mean the sensitivity of the landscape itself. It is a combination of the sensitivity of the landscape resource, including landscape as a physical resource, its historical features and elements and the visual sensitivity of the landscape, such as views and visibility. It also includes landscape value, including designations.
- 1.1.4 It should be noted that the Urban Sensitivity Analysis does not consider the ecological sensitivity of the landscape because this is assessed in a separate ecological technical study: '*Building Biodiversity into Herefordshire.*'
- 1.1.5 The purpose of the Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis is to inform the process of identifying potential housing sites and likely constraints to development. However, given that it is an assessment of the sensitivity of the landscape, it could be used to inform other elements of the Core Strategy.
- 1.1.6 The Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis was produced by the Landscape & Biodiversity Team of Herefordshire Council in the period 2008/2009.

1.2. OVERVIEW OF THE URBAN FRINGE LANDSCAPE OF HEREFORD AND THE MARKET TOWNS

- 1.2.1 Herefordshire is considered to be the Midlands' most rural County.¹ This is reflected in the high quality and integrity of much of the rural landscape setting of Hereford and the market towns. Part of the landscape setting of Ledbury and Ross-on-Wye falls within the Malvern Hills and Wye Valley Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, respectively. The landscape on the fringe of Hereford and the market towns is particularly rich in terms of its historic interest. Within the landscape setting of the towns there are historic parks and gardens and Conservation Area designations which extend out from the historic core of the towns, to encompass open spaces such as river floodplains. Features such as woodlands, trees, orchards and hedgerow field patterns also contribute to the historic character of the urban fringe landscape and to local distinctiveness. Hereford and the market towns are all associated with major watercourses. River valleys are a dominant feature in Hereford, Ross-on-Wye, Bromyard and Kington. The topographical position of these towns within river valleys means that there are extensive, sometimes

¹ State of Herefordshire Report, May 2009; *Herefordshire Council Research Team*. Herefordshire has the fourth lowest overall population density in England (0.8 persons per hectare).

dramatic views in and out of these towns from the surrounding hills and also long views along the river valleys. The landscape setting of Leominster and Ledbury are not influenced to the same degree by the rivers associated with them, but more by the topography, both being hillside towns.

- 1.2.2 There is a more detailed overview of the urban fringe landscape of the towns within the scope of this study, in the Visual Analysis document for each town.

1.3 SUMMARY OF THE METHODOLOGY

- 1.3.1 The Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis comprises an assessment of the existing landscape – a landscape baseline study, followed by an analysis of the sensitivity of the landscape. This information is presented in a set of documents and maps for each of the towns, as set out below:

1.3.2 Landscape baseline study

- Visual analysis document
- Map of the photographic viewpoints
- Map of the Landscape Types
- Map of landscape related designations
- Map of the landscape zones under analysis

1.3.3 Landscape sensitivity analysis

- Landscape sensitivity analysis document
- Map of the landscape sensitivity of the urban fringe

1.3.4 Limitations

This study only considers the sensitivity of the urban fringe landscape, at a broad scale; it is not a capacity study. Once the direction of growth of Hereford and the market towns has been established, through the Core Strategy, it will be necessary to take this Urban Fringe Sensitivity Study one stage further, and produce capacity studies for specific areas. These capacity studies would consider the capacity of a particular landscape to accommodate specific types of development, taking into account, for example, building heights. In addition, any capacity study would need to take into account guidelines for development for particular areas, such as the recommended ratio of development in relation to open space, which are being developed in the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

1.4 LANDSCAPE BASELINE STUDY

- 1.4.1 The purpose of this study is to collate existing landscape information, undertake research to supplement existing information and to analyse the existing landscape features and characteristics on the fringe of each town. This includes the way in which this landscape is experienced, including views in and out of different areas and the level of tranquillity. In this study, the definition of 'tranquillity' is taken to be: "a composite feature related to low

*levels of built development, traffic, noise and artificial lighting*². Both field studies and desk studies were undertaken to gather the landscape baseline information.

1.4.2 The final stage of the baseline study was to classify the landscape into zones which have a distinct and recognisable type and character. It is these zones which are used in the second part of the study – the landscape sensitivity analysis.

1.4.3 Field Survey

Each town was circumnavigated, mainly on foot, in order to record the following information:

- Topographical features, e.g. hills, river valleys
- Aspect
- Inter-relationship between topography, aspect and the evolution of the settlement pattern
- Views in and out of each area
- Visual relationship of the urban fringe areas with the existing settlement
- Land use
- Landscape character: key characteristics, which contribute to local distinctiveness
- Landmark features, both natural & manmade, e.g. hills, trees, church spires
- Visual detractors
- Landscape condition: maintenance and condition of elements, e.g. hedgerows, woodlands, pastoral land
- Integrity of the rural landscape: the degree to which key landscape characteristics have endured
- Amenity value, including the presence of public rights of way and areas of open land accessible to the public
- Level of tranquillity

This study did not consider the issue of light pollution.

1.4.4 Identification of viewpoints

For each town, a set of representative viewpoints was identified, which included viewpoints within the towns and from the wider landscape, as well as within the urban fringe landscape. Photographs taken from these viewpoints illustrate key landscape issues identified in the Visual Analysis document for each town. These viewpoints are recorded on Maps of Photographic Viewpoints as follows: Map 2.1a - Hereford, Map 2.2a - Bromyard, Map 2.3a - Kington, Map 2.4a – Ledbury, Map 2.5a – Leominster, Map 2.6a – Ross-on-Wye.

² Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland, 2002; p.57. *Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage*

1.4.5 Desk study

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)

The Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis draws on information contained in the Herefordshire Landscape Character Assessment, 2004. This is an assessment of the whole of the Herefordshire landscape.

1.4.6 Landscape Character is defined as '*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*'.³

1.4.7 In the Landscape Character Assessment, the process of characterisation identifies two types of unit:

- Landscape character areas: Sub-regional Character Areas (regional scale), Landscape Description Units (local scale) and Land Cover Parcels (local scale – these are a subdivision of the Landscape Description Units). All of these landscape units are individual, unique areas with their own identity and character.
- Landscape character types: Landscape Types. These have been identified through assessing the characteristics that make up landscape character. Different combinations of these characteristics result in different Landscape Types.

1.4.8 All of these landscape units have been mapped for the whole of the county of Herefordshire.

1.4.9 The Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis draws on information relating to Landscape Types and Landscape Description Units, because the scale of these landscape units is appropriate to the level of detail of the Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis.

1.4.10 Included in the Landscape baseline study, for reference, is a map of the Landscape Types which make up the landscape surrounding each town. The maps of the Landscape Types are Map 2.1b – Hereford, Map 2.2b – Bromyard, Map 2.3b – Kington, Map 2.4b – Ledbury, Map 2.5b – Leominster, Map 2.6b – Ross-on-Wye. In the Visual Analysis document for each town, descriptions of each area are cross-referenced to the Landscape Type of the area being assessed and the photographs were selected to illustrate key characteristics of the different Landscape Types, where possible.

1.4.11 Planning designations:

The following planning designations are relevant to the urban fringe of some or all of the towns within the scope of this study. Relevant designations are shown on Maps of National and Local Landscape related Designations for each town: Map 2.1c – Hereford, Map 2.2c – Bromyard, Map 2.3c – Kington,

³*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, Second Edition; The Landscape Institute & Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, 2002

Map 2.4c – Ledbury, Map 2.5c – Leominster, Map 2.6c – Ross-on-Wye. The designations are also listed in the Visual Analysis documents for each town and there are cross-references to these designations in the commentary on landscape contained in the Visual Analysis documents and the Sensitivity Analysis documents for each town.

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Herefordshire contains part of two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: the Malvern Hills AONB, which applies to land to the east of Ledbury and the Wye Valley AONB, which applies to much of the town of Ross-on-Wye, together with land to the north, west and south-west of the town.

Historic landscape

There are historic parks and gardens within the urban fringe of all of the towns within the scope of this study. All of these parks and gardens are of local interest, and identified as Unregistered Parks & Gardens with the exception of Hergest Croft, which is a Registered Park, on the edge of Kington. Both Registered and Unregistered Parks and Gardens are considered historic assets and a material consideration in the planning process.

Conservation Areas

All of the towns contain one or more Conservation Areas. Some of the Conservation Areas which encompass areas within the towns contribute significantly to the quality of views into and out of the towns, because of open spaces and trees within them and the historic grain and scale of the townscape. In addition, some of the Conservation Areas extend beyond the settlement boundaries of the towns to encompass open spaces and areas of river floodplain. Conservation Areas are shown on the maps of the National and Landscape related designations and are referenced in the Visual Analysis and Sensitivity Analysis documents for each town.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments

There are Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the landscape on the fringes of Hereford, Ross-on-Wye and Kington.

1.4.12 Classification process

Having gathered the necessary information through the field survey and desk study, classification of the urban fringe was undertaken. The aim of this process is to sort the landscape into units of distinct and recognisable type and character. As stated previously, the Landscape Types and Landscape Description Units mapped in the Landscape Character Assessment were the starting point for this exercise. Many of the zones of land identified in the Landscape Baseline Study are contiguous with either Landscape Type or Landscape Description Unit boundaries. For some areas, the zones of land identified in this study comprise two or more Landscape Types.

1.4.13 For some areas, the boundaries of the zones of land identified in the Landscape Baseline Study do not match the boundaries of Landscape Types or Landscape Description Units. This is because the zoning of landscape

undertaken in the Landscape Baseline Study, while being rooted in the Landscape Character Assessment, has a different aim: to zone land into units which are perceived visually and experienced as separate areas. Topography, view sheds (the field of vision seen from a viewpoint), the proximity or isolation of an area from built development, the presence of main roads, which may form a visual and physical barrier, differences in levels of tranquillity are all elements which were taken into account when zoning land into units in the Landscape Baseline Study.

- 1.4.14 The landscape zones for the urban fringe of each town are shown on Maps entitled '*Landscape zones under analysis*'. These comprise Map 3.1 – Hereford, Map 3.2 – Bromyard, Map 3.3 – Kington, Map 3.4 – Ledbury, Map 3.5 – Leominster and Map 3.6 – Ross-on-Wye.

2.6 ROSS-ON-WYE: VISUAL ANALYSIS



View from Brampton Abbotts

2.6.1 Overview of topography, views, landmarks and landscape character

2.6.2 The topography of the River Wye and its tributaries dictates which views of Ross-on-Wye can be obtained from the surrounding countryside to the north, east, south-west and west. Viewpoints are found on the major and minor ridgelines that have been formed by the River Wye and its tributaries. The steep hills (Chase Wood and Penyard Park) provide the principal viewpoints of Ross-on-Wye from the south-east, although the woodland on these hills limits the views that can be obtained.

2.6.3 The topographical position of Ross, with the historic core of the town being located on an escarpment above the River Wye, increases the prominence of the town in the landscape. The spire of St. Mary's Church and mature parkland trees in The Prospect and along the top of the river escarpment (John Kyrle's Walk) remain predominant in views of Ross from much of the surrounding landscape.

2.6.4 However, modern housing extensions to the town, which extend onto higher and steeper ground - Greytrees and Three Crosses to the north, Archenfield and Tudorville to the south, are also prominent elements. Large-scale industrial and retail development along the M50 corridor impinges on views of Ross from more elevated ground to the north of the town. Key viewpoints are shown on Map 2.6: Ross-on-Wye – Photographic Viewpoints. The landscape types for the Ross area are shown on Map 2.6b: Ross-on-Wye – Landscape Types.

2.6.5 Designations relevant to the urban fringe

- **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB):** this designation applies to part of the town, together with land to the north, west and south-west of the town
- **Conservation Area:** the Conservation Area designation on the historic core of the town extends westwards to encompass part of the river escarpment, at Ashfield and the floodplain adjacent to the town.

- **Historic parks & gardens (Unregistered):** The Prospect, John Kyrle's Garden, John Kyrle's Walk, Lincoln Hill House

The above data is shown on Map 2.6c: Ross-on-Wye - National and Local landscape related designations.

Viewpoint 1: Blackfields, Abbots Close



The land to the north of Blackfields, which falls within the Wye Valley AONB, is rolling agricultural land that falls to the south-west, towards the River Wye. This area is very rural in character, with only a glimpse view of a house at Netherton, on the ridge in the distance.

Viewpoint 2: Brampton Road, by Westfields



This view, across the garden of Westfields, show that housing at Greytrees has extended over the ridge of the hill, impinging on the rural character of the landscape to the north of Greytrees.

Viewpoint 3: Netherton, by Mallards Barn



From Netherton, at a similar elevation to Greytree, the housing at Greytree is largely obscured by woodland on the north-facing slope of the stream valley at Netherton.

Viewpoint 4: Netherton, footpath BA4



From this elevated viewpoint, on a footpath between Netherton and Brampton Abbots, there is an expansive view of Ross-on-Wye and its wider landscape setting including May Hill, in Gloucestershire, Penyard Park and Chase Wood, with agricultural land in the foreground. However, the large scale industrial units along the A40 corridor have a high adverse impact on this view of Ross-on-Wye.

Viewpoint 5: Brampton Abbots, Gatsford Lane



The large-scale industrial/retail units on the M50 corridor dominate this view of Ross. A landmark, the spire of St. Mary's Church is visible, viewed against the backdrop of the wooded hills to the south-east of Ross. The rural setting of Ross – arable land, bisected by a stream, which drains into a tributary of the River Wye, is evident.

Viewpoint 6: Brampton Abbots, Gatsford Lane



Again, the large-scale industrial/retail units on the M50 corridor are dominant elements. The open agricultural land to the east of Three Crosses and the A40 is also evident. Tudorville, a modern housing estate, which is visible on the lower slopes of Chase Wood, is incongruent with the historic settlement pattern of Ross, which is focussed on the river escarpment.

Viewpoint 7: Rudhall Road, bridge over M50



This view encompasses Hildersley, on the eastern edge of Ross, the historic core of the town on the river escarpment, the Rudhall Brook corridor and the modern estate at Three Crosses, on the north-eastern edge of Ross. This estate is prominent, being built on ground that ascends from the Rudhall Brook up to the A40 corridor. The straight eastern edge of Ross, formed by the containment of built development by the A40 is evident.

Viewpoint 8: Kingstone, looking west to Ross



Kingstone is situated on a low hill, affording views of the central part of Ross-on-Wye and the housing estate at Three Crosses, adjacent at the A40. The hard edge of this estate is evident, due to the lack of planting between the estate and the A40.

Viewpoint 9: Weston-under-Penyard, Penyard Park, looking towards A40



Views of Ross from Penyard Park are very limited, due to the woodland cover. There are no views from the footpath (RR6) that runs across the ridge of Penyard Park, past Lawns Farm. This view is from the steep track that descends from Penyard Park to Weston-under-Penyard. The only part of Ross-on-Wye that is visible is the modern housing estate at Three Crosses. Again, the hard edge of this development is evident, due to the lack of planting between the estate and the A40.

Viewpoint 10: Hildersley, Marsh Farm



In the foreground is the Rudhall Brook corridor, streamside trees and associated low-lying damp meadows. The modern housing estate at Three Crosses is on the south-facing side of the Rudhall Brook valley. The straight edge of this estate, formed by building the estate tight up to the A40, appears quite harsh within the landscape.

Viewpoint 11: Hildersley, Marsh Farm



This is a view looking south-east, towards the historic core of the town. It shows the significant contribution of mature trees to the Ross townscape and in particular, to the skyline views. The spire of St. Mary's Church is also prominent on the skyline from this viewpoint.

Viewpoint 12: Hildersley, bridge over dismantled railway



A modern housing estate has extended out to meet a long-established farm. Land at Hildersley is fairly flat.

Viewpoint 13: Hildersley, Hildersley Farm, looking south-west towards Merrivale



This is a view of the flat agricultural land between Hildersley Farm and the rifle range, which lies beyond the line of conifers.

Viewpoint 14: Alton Court, looking north-east, over the rifle range



This highlights the contrast between the character of the land at Hildersley and that of the fields to the north-east and south-west of Alton Court. Land at Hildersley is flat and the historic field pattern has been degraded by the loss of field boundary hedgerows and disrupted by the insertion of the rifle range. The line of conifers weakens the rural character of the landscape.

The land in the foreground, which is adjacent to Alton Court is more steeply sloping and pastoral.

Viewpoint 15: Alton Court, footpath to Merrivale Wood, looking towards Ross



The land below Alton Court Wood is more steeply sloping, poorer ground, which has been maintained as pasture. At the foot of the slope, adjacent to the industrial estate and housing at Merrivale, are small paddocks and the disused waterworks. This corridor of land – between Ross-on-Wye and Merrivale Wood, is a key part of the rural setting of Ross-on-Wye.

Viewpoint 16: Alton Court, looking south-west towards Tudorville



The land ascends fairly steeply up to Tudorville. Some of the field boundary hedgerows have been lost, increasing the scale of the fields. Nonetheless, this corridor of land has maintained its rural character.

Viewpoint 17: Old Hill, looking south-west towards Pencraig



This view from Old Hill highlights the agricultural character of the setting of Ross-on-Wye.

Viewpoint 18: Arbour Hill, looking north-east towards Archenfield



From this elevated viewpoint, the prominent position of the historic core of Ross-on-Wye, on a ridge, and the high quality of the historic townscape, including mature trees, is evident. The modern housing estate at Greytree, which is visible to the left of the spire of St. Mary's Church, is a detractor, largely due to the lack of trees within this area. The modern housing estate at Archenfield, in the foreground, impinges significantly on the rural setting of Ross-on-Wye, because it is not contained on lower ground.

Viewpoint 19: Lower Cleeve Farm



From this viewpoint, the low density residential development at Ashfield, in the middle ground, permits views of the spire of St. Mary's Church and the mature trees at The Prospect. There is also an uninterrupted view across to the north-west, to the river escarpment.

Viewpoint 20: Ashfield, Hawthorne Lane



The open paddocks afford fine views of the spire of St. Mary's church and the trees at The Prospect. The Prospect falls within the Ross-on-Wye Conservation Area.

Viewpoint 21: Archenfield, looking north-east towards Ashfield



This photograph illustrates the strip of agricultural fields that remain on the land that lies between the minor road to Ayles Marsh and the edge of the River Wye escarpment. Part of this land falls within the Ross-on-Wye Conservation Area. These agricultural fields are a key element in the rural setting of Ross-on-Wye and allow views of the spire of St. Mary's church and of mature trees along the John Kyrle Walk, which runs along the edge of the river escarpment.

Viewpoint 22: Ashfield, looking south-west towards Lincoln Hill



The presence of the strip of agricultural land between the minor road to Ayles Marsh and the River Wye escarpment contributes greatly to the amenity of the footpaths that cross this area. There are fine views across to Lincoln Hill, as illustrated.

Viewpoint 23: Ashfield, looking south-east towards Penyard Park



The presence of open agricultural land allows fine views from the footpaths in the Ashfield area across to Penyard Park. The presence of small-scale paddocks is a distinctive feature and they give a domestic character to this part of Ashfield.

Viewpoint 24: Ashfield, on John Kyrle's Walk, looking north-east towards The Prospect



Again, the open agricultural land on the land falling away from the River Wye escarpment contributes greatly to the setting of Ross – it allows views of the fine trees at The Prospect. John Kyrle's Walk and The Prospect fall within the Ross-on-Wye Conservation Area.

Viewpoint 25: Palace Close, looking north-west over the River Wye corridor



This illustrates the landscape character of the River Wye corridor: the broadness of the floodplain, the linear pattern of the riverside trees and the absence of built development, except for the rowing clubhouse. The River Wye floodplain is included in the Ross-on-Wye Conservation Area.

Viewpoint 26: Long Acres, looking across the riverside public open space



This photograph illustrates how the topography of Wye valley creates distinctive character areas in Ross-on-Wye: the flat floodplain, which is used for recreation, wooded river cliffs and the historic core of the town, built on a ridge of land. This area is included in the Ross-on-Wye Conservation Area.

Viewpoint 27: Wyelea, looking south-east towards Greytree, Ross centre, Tudorville, Chase Wood & Penyard Park



This view illustrates how the historic part of Ross-on-Wye capitalises on and is in harmony with the topography of the lower Wye valley, whilst the modern housing extensions are a detractor.

The spire of St. Mary's Church and the mature trees associated with The Prospect and John Kyrle's Walk, which are landmarks, rise above the rolling hills in the middle ground. The modern housing extensions to Ross-on-Wye - Greytree, on the northern edge and Tudorville, on the southern edge of the town, extend up the surrounding slopes, with no visual integration with the historic core of the town. Visually, they appear as 'bolt-on' additions to the town.

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Urban Fringe Landscape Sensitivity Analysis

MAP 2.6a ROSS ON WYE

Photographic Viewpoints
KEY

33 → Viewpoints

SCALE 1:18000

NORTH

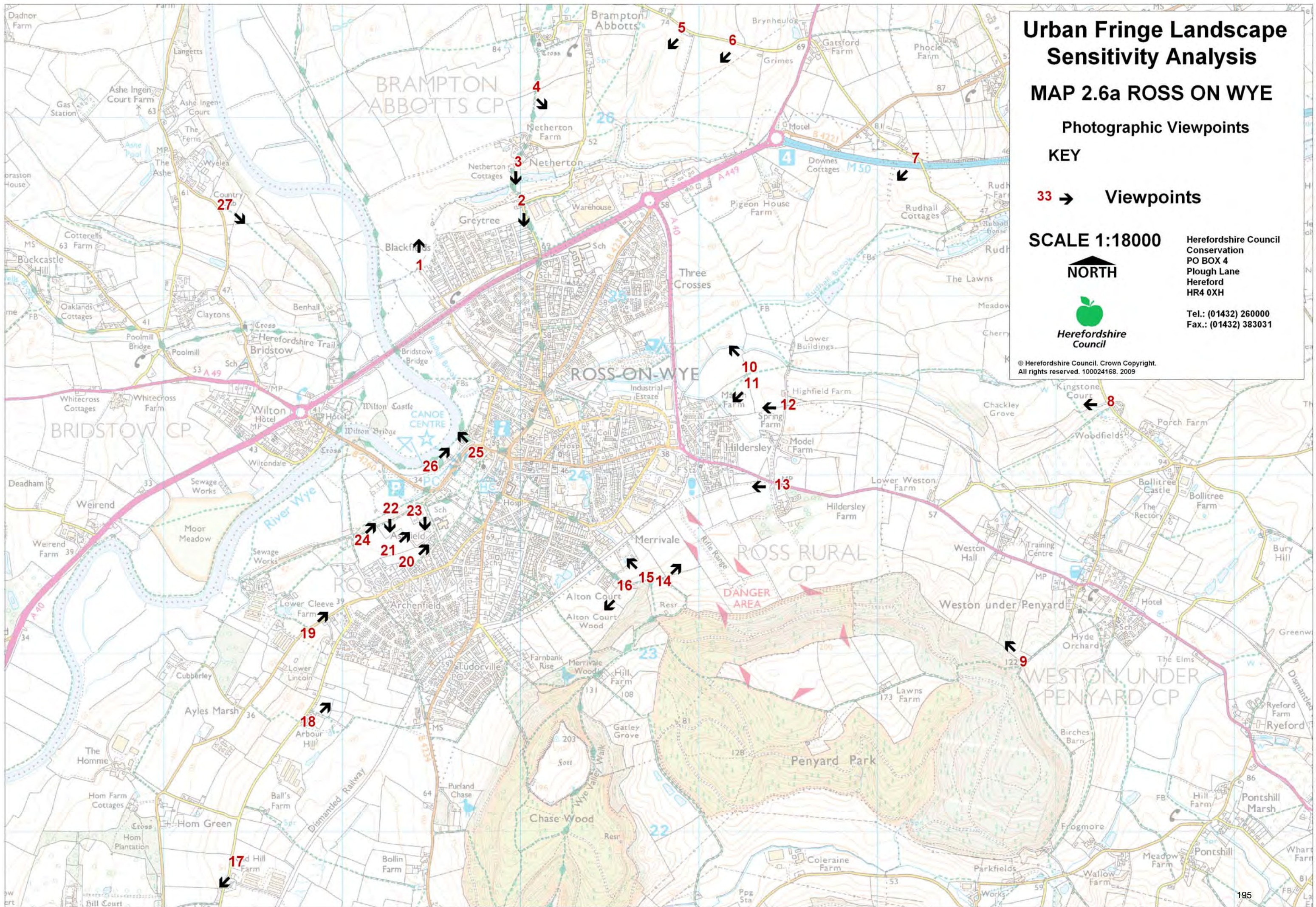


Herefordshire Council

Herefordshire Council
Conservation
PO BOX 4
Plough Lane
Hereford
HR4 0XH

Tel.: (01432) 260000
Fax.: (01432) 383031

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Urban Fringe Landscape Sensitivity Analysis

MAP 2.6b ROSS-ON-WYE

Landscape Character Types

KEY

-  Principal Settled Farmlands
-  Principal Wooded Hills
-  Wooded Hills & Farmlands
-  Riverside Meadows

SCALE 1:18000

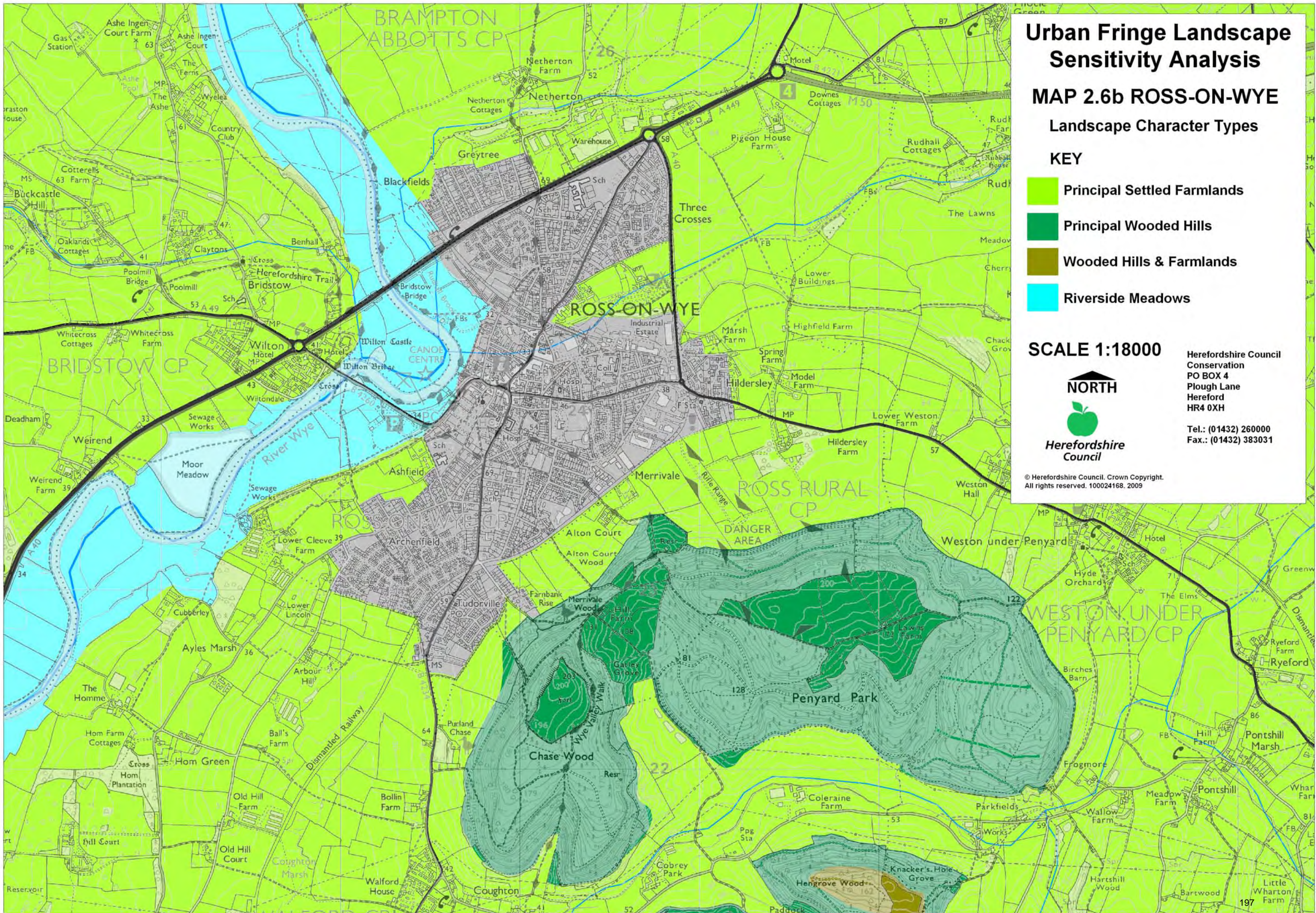


Herefordshire Council

Herefordshire Council
Conservation
PO BOX 4
Plough Lane
Hereford
HR4 0XH

Tel.: (01432) 260000
Fax.: (01432) 383031

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Urban Fringe Landscape Sensitivity Analysis

MAP 2.6c ROSS-ON-WYE

National & Local Landscape-related Designations

-  AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)
-  Conservation Areas
-  Scheduled Ancient Monuments
-  Registered Historic Parks & Gardens
-  Unregistered Historic Parks & Gardens

SCALE 1:16000

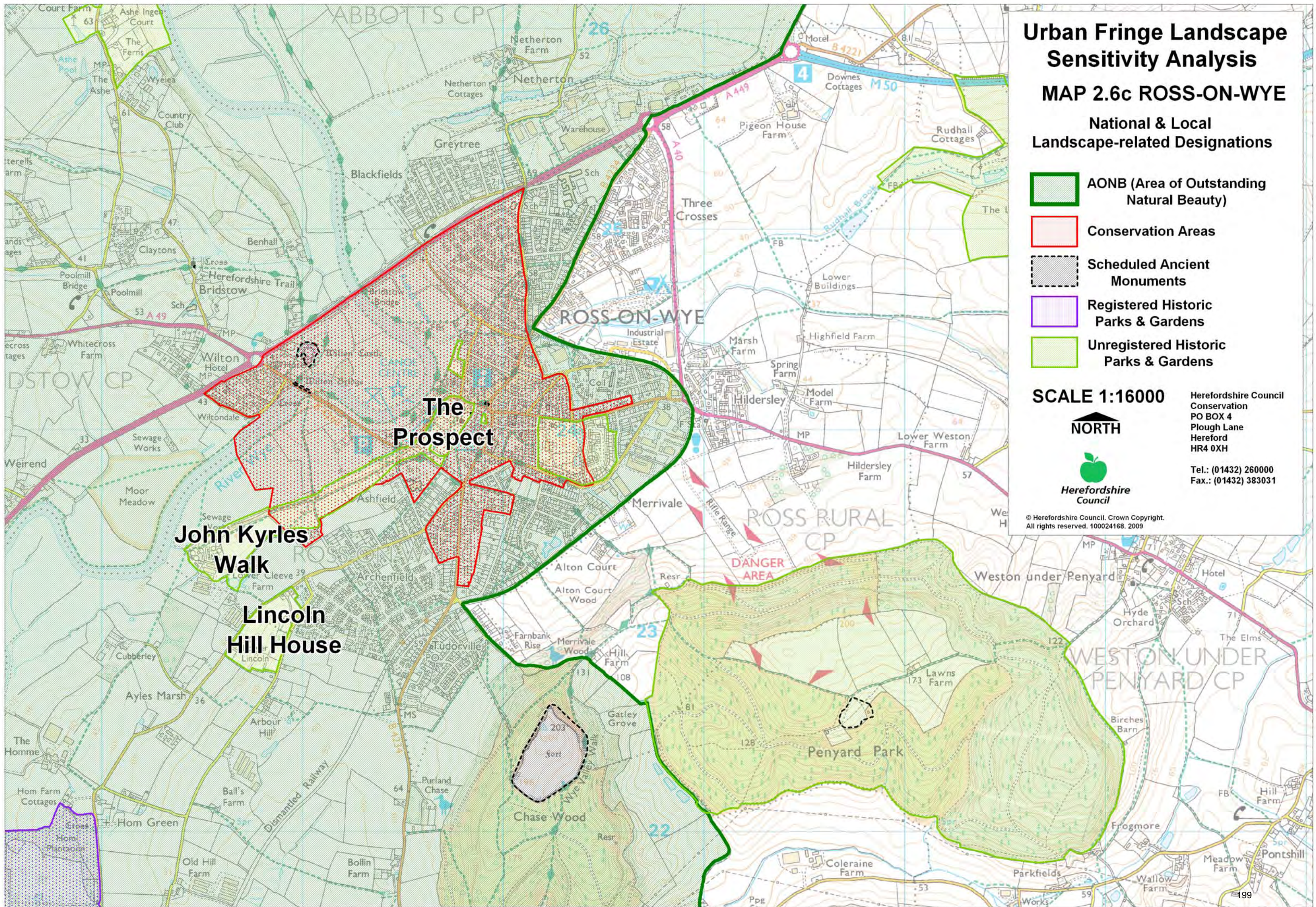


Herefordshire Council

Herefordshire Council
Conservation
PO BOX 4
Plough Lane
Hereford
HR4 0XH

Tel.: (01432) 260000
Fax.: (01432) 383031

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Urban Fringe Landscape Sensitivity Analysis

MAP 2.6d ROSS ON WYE

Landscape zones under analysis

KEY

 Landscape zones

SCALE 1:16000

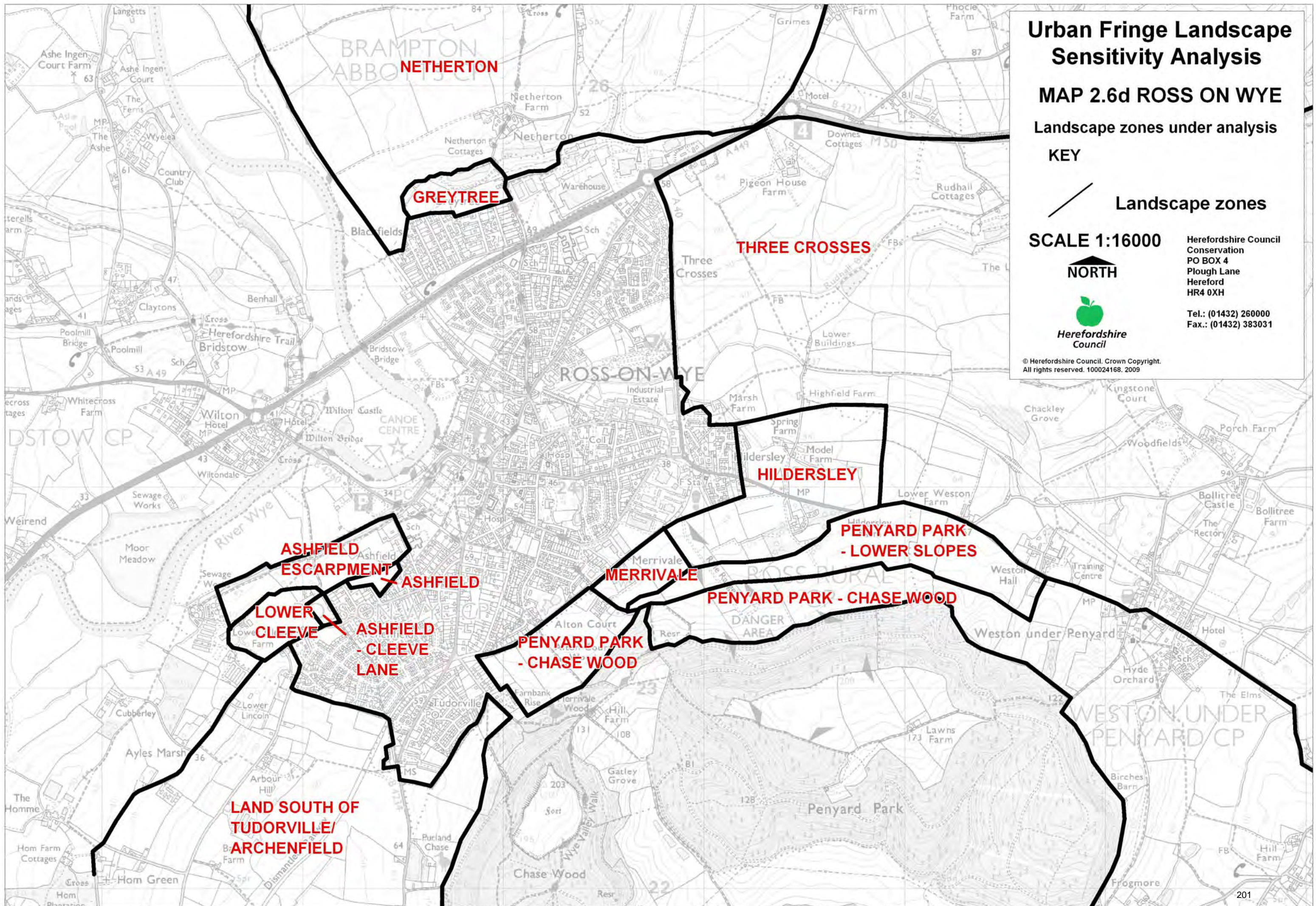
 NORTH



Herefordshire Council
Conservation
PO BOX 4
Plough Lane
Hereford
HR4 0XH

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Fax.: (01432) 383031

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3.6 ROSS-ON-WYE – SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS OF THE URBAN FRINGE

3.6.1 Sensitivity classification is as follows:

- 1: Low: key characteristics of landscape are robust and/or of relatively low intrinsic value as a landscape resource
- 2: Medium–low: key characteristics of landscape are resilient to change and/or are of limited intrinsic value as a landscape resource
- 3: Medium: key characteristics of landscape are susceptible to change and /or have value as a landscape resource
- 4: High–medium: key characteristics of landscape are vulnerable to change and/or have high value as a landscape resource
- 5: High: key characteristics of landscape are very vulnerable to change and/or have significant value as a landscape resource.

The landscape sensitivity of the urban fringe of Ross-on-Wye is shown on Map 3.6: Ross-on-Wye – Landscape Sensitivity.

1: Low sensitivity

None of the land around the periphery of Ross-on-Wye was classified as low sensitivity. This is reflective of the fact that brownfield sites and sites closely related to the town have already been developed or have planning permission for housing (e.g. Tanyard Lane).

2: Low-medium sensitivity

Hildersley

Photographic viewpoints: 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14
Landscape type: Principal Settled Farmlands

The landscape character of Hildersley is very mixed. It is encircled to the north and east by small-scale farms and to the south-east by Hildersley Farm, where a business park is located. Modern housing estates have been built, which are accessed from the A40, as is a small ambulance station. A dismantled railway runs along the northern edge of Hildersley and to the south-west is a rifle range.

As an area, it is visually incoherent, due to the number of disparate elements within it. Visually, it does not act as a distinctive 'gateway' to Ross-on-Wye. The landscape character of the eastern part of Hildersley will change significantly when Model Farm is developed as an employment site; the character will change from agricultural to light industrial.

Reasons:

- Flat, low-lying land
- Existing landscape partially degraded by intensive agricultural use with corresponding loss of hedgerows and by the rifle range – this disturbs the historic pattern of hedgerows
- Visually incoherent landscape

- Good connections with the Ross Town & Country trail (cycle path)
- Good access to open countryside: Penyard Park & footpaths in Rudhall Brook area

Ashfield – field to the south-west of Cleeve Lane

Photographic viewpoints: 21

Landscape type: Principal Settled Farmlands

This field forms part of the band of agricultural land that has been retained between the minor road to Ayles Marsh (C1274) and the edge of the River Wye escarpment. To the north of this field is a listed building, The Cleeve, and another property, The Old Barn. Both of these properties fall within the Ross-on-Wye Conservation Area, which extends out along the River Wye escarpment. However, when viewed from the C1274, The Cleeve is concealed behind its boundary hedgerow and trees, which means that the field between The Cleeve and the C1274 is not a significant element in its setting. With regard to views across this field from the south-west, looking towards St. Mary's Church, the foreground to this view is the detached properties along Cleeve Lane.

Reasons:

- Visually related to existing housing

3: Land with medium sensitivity

Merrivale: land to the north-east of Alton Court

Photographic viewpoints: 15

Landscape Type: Principal Settled Farmlands

This area is fairly flat and comprises small-scale paddocks and disused waterworks. A public right of way (ZK27) runs along the south-western edge of this area. This area forms part of the large corridor of undeveloped, rural land, which lies between the Town & Country trail and Chase Wood and Penyard Park. It is a relatively tranquil area, due to its isolation – the town and country trail separates it from the Alton Road Industrial Estate.

Reasons:

- Forms part of the corridor of undeveloped land between the Town & Country trail and Chase Wood and Penyard Park
- Tranquillity of the area

Ashfield

Photographic viewpoints: 20

Landscape Type: Principal Settled Farmlands

This area comprises small-scale fields, some of which are used as paddocks. The land falls gently to the south. A public right of way (ZK23) runs along the southern

boundary of this parcel of land and there is residential development to the east, south and west. This area of land provides an attractive outlook for the residential development which surrounds it and increases the amenity value of the public right of way. The retention of this open land also contributes to the amenity of John Kyrle's Walk, which runs along the top of the river escarpment, because it allows expansive views from this footpath, across Ross-on-Wye, to Chase Wood and Penyard Park.

Reasons:

- Open land affords expansive views from John Kyrle's Walk across Ross-on-Wye, to Chase Wood and Penyard Park
- Need to conserve the amenity of the public right of way

4: Land with High-medium sensitivity

Greytree

Photographic viewpoints: 1, 2, 3

Landscape Type: Principal Settled Farmlands

The existing housing at Greytree occupies the south-east facing and south-west facing slopes of a hill on the north-western side of the A40 corridor. To the north of the housing are two open fields, one on the summit of the hill, which is bounded to the east by Brampton Road, and one on land which falls to the west.

The existing housing at Greytree detracts from the rural setting of Ross because it extends to the top of the slope. Building housing on the field on the summit of the hill would exacerbate the harm that has already been caused. With regard to the lower field, new housing on this site would be exposed to views from the north and would impinge on the rural setting of Ross-on-Wye.

Reasons:

- Existing housing at Greytree has exceeded the landscape capacity of this area – housing extends onto prominent, upper slopes
- Elevated, visually prominent area, in particular when viewed from the north
- Rural character of Brampton Lane

Three Crosses/Rudhall Brook/Marsh Farm

Photographic viewpoints: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

Landscape Type: Principal Settled Farmlands

The views of this area from higher ground to the north illustrate that the area of land between the A40 and Kingstone, which is bisected by the Rudhall Brook, is wholly agricultural in character. There is no built development except for farms and wayside dwellings at Kingstone and Rudhall. With regard to the eastern side of Ross-on-Wye this large tract of agricultural land forms the rural setting of the town and maintains the quality of the Wye Valley AONB.

Reasons:

- Contributes to the rural setting of Ross
- Rolling topography of land to the east of the A40 – lack of visual containment
- Slope down from the M50 corridor to the Rudhall Brook is visually prominent
- Low-lying damp meadows between Marsh Farm and the Rudhall Brook are a landscape asset
- Amenity value – good network of footpaths

Penyard Park – lower slopes

Photographic viewpoints: 14

Landscape Type: Principal Settled Farmlands

This zone of land is the mid-slope area of the north-eastern facing slope of Penyard Park, extending from Alton Court, across the upper part of the rifle range towards the A40. It comprises medium scale agricultural fields, which are predominantly arable. This zone is visually sensitive due to its elevation and because of its contribution to the rural setting of Ross-on-Wye. In combination, the open agricultural fields and the woodland on the steeper slopes above, form a visually cohesive backdrop to Ross-on-Wye, on its south-eastern side.

Reasons:

- Elevated, visually prominent area
- Contributes to the rural setting of Ross-on-Wye

Lower Cleeve

Photographic viewpoints: 19

Landscape Type: Principal Settled Farmlands

This area of land comprises fairly flat arable land to the north-west of Cleeve Farm within the Wye Valley AONB. A footpath (ZK22) runs along the north-western edge of this zone of land, separating it from the river escarpment, which ascends towards the north-east. The footpath continues along the Lower Cleeve Farm driveway to link with the Ayles Marsh minor road. This area does not relate visually to the built-up edge of Ross-on-Wye, because residential development is fragmented on the opposite side of Ayles Marsh Road. Opposite Lower Cleeve Farm, on the southern side of Ayles Marsh Road, is open land and an Unregistered Parkland (Lincoln Hill House) lies on the steep north-west facing slope of Lincoln Hill. To the south-west of Roman Way, a small cul-de-sac, accessed from the Lincoln Hill Road, extends across to the Ayles Marsh road, but on the north-eastern side of Roman Way, there is a public open space.

Reasons:

- Lack of visual relationship with existing residential development at Archenfield
- Area forms part of the rural setting of Ross-on-Wye
- Contributes to the quality of the Wye Valley AONB landscape

5: Land with high sensitivity

Netherton

Photographic viewpoints: 2, 4

Landscape Type: Principal Settled Farmlands

Netherton is within the Wye Valley AONB. These views illustrate the rural setting of Ross but demonstrate that industrial/retail development relating to the A40 corridor detracts significantly from the rural character, particularly from viewpoints in the Netherton area.

Reasons:

- Elevated, visually prominent area
- Contributes to the rural setting of Ross
- Contributes to the quality of the Wye Valley AONB
- Industrial/retail development associated with the A40 corridor has already caused harm to the rural setting of Ross

Land between Town & Country Trail & Penyard Park/Chase Wood

Photographic viewpoints: 16

Landscape Type: Principal Settled Farmlands

In combination, the open agricultural fields and the woodland on the steeper slopes above, form a visually cohesive backdrop to Ross-on-Wye on its south-eastern side. They also provide a very large, tranquil area for recreation. This area can be accessed by the Town & Country trail and its linking footpaths. The absence of built development along this corridor, with the exception of Alton Court, is key to maintaining the rural character of this area. The modern housing development (Okell Drive) on the higher slope at the south-western end of this corridor is highly visually intrusive and this demonstrates how damaging further built development would be to the character of this area. The rural character of the corridor of agricultural land has been degraded slightly by the loss of some of the historic field hedgerows. The presence of small paddocks, adjacent to the disused waterworks, gives the base of the slope a domestic character.

Reasons:

- Elevated, visually prominent area
- Contributes to the rural setting of Ross
- Tranquillity of the area
- High amenity value - excellent pedestrian access from the town due to the absence of barriers, such as major roads

Land to the south of Tudorville/Archenfield

Photographic viewpoints: 17, 18, 22

Landscape Type: Principal Settled Farmlands

This area is within the Wye Valley AONB. In terms of landscape character, there is a sharp differentiation between the modern housing development at Tudorville and

Archenfield and the land to the south. The B4234 corridor of land between Ross-on-Wye and Coughton has maintained a rural character, despite the fact there is only 1km between the two settlements. Arbour Hill has also maintained a rural, tranquil character and the density of settlement is very low, comprising mainly of dispersed farms. Lower Lincoln and Arbour Hill form part of the rural backdrop to Ross-on-Wye and the high quality of this landscape (in particular, the mature trees at Lincoln Hill House, an Unregistered Historic Garden), is evident in photograph 16, which illustrates views of Lower Lincoln from the Ashfield area of Ross-on-Wye.

Reasons:

- Contributes to the quality of the Wye Valley AONB landscape
- Contributes to the setting of Lincoln Hill House, an Unregistered Historic Garden

Ashfield – river escarpment

Photographic viewpoints: 21, 22, 23, 24

Landscape Type: Principal Settled Farmlands

The river escarpment is within the Wye Valley AONB. This area has particular historic landscape value. The Ross-on-Wye Conservation Area extends along it and John Kyrle's Walk, (designated as an Unregistered Parkland) runs from The Prospect, along the edge of the river cliff, to Lower Cleeve. From John Kyrle's Walk there are fine views of Penyard Park, Chase Wood, Lincoln Hill and the trees at The Prospect.

Reasons:

- Contributes to the quality of the Wye Valley AONB landscape
- Contributes to the historic character of the Ross-on-Wye Conservation Area
- John Kyrle's Walk, an Unregistered Parkland is a historic landscape asset

Urban Fringe Landscape Sensitivity Analysis

MAP 3.6 ROSS-ON-WYE

Landscape Sensitivity

KEY

-  High Sensitivity
-  High-Medium Sensitivity
-  Medium Sensitivity
-  Medium-Low Sensitivity
-  Low Sensitivity

SCALE 1:18000

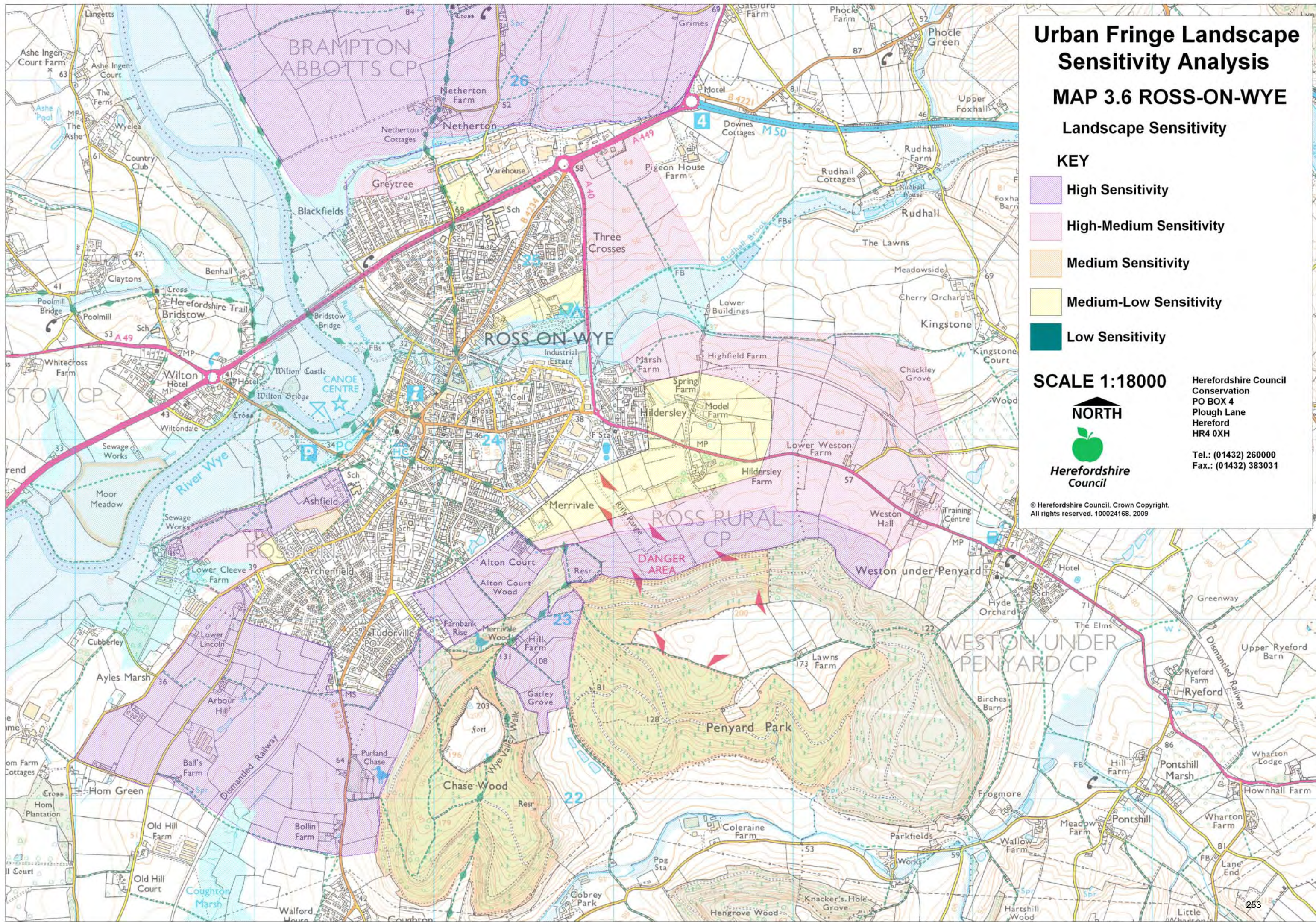


Herefordshire Council

Herefordshire Council
Conservation
PO BOX 4
Plough Lane
Hereford
HR4 0XH

Tel.: (01432) 260000
Fax.: (01432) 383031

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4.0 REFERENCES

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5.0 FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information on the Urban Fringe Sensitivity Analysis can be obtained from: Juliet Wheatley, Team Leader, Landscape & Biodiversity

Tel: 01432 260157

Email: jwheatley@herefordshire.gov.uk

6.0 RELEVANT ORGANISATIONS

Natural England, Herefordshire Team, Government Buildings, Whittington Road, Worcester, WR5 2LQ

Tel: 0845 6003078 www.naturalengland.org.uk

Landscape Character Network, Natural England, John Dower House, Crescent Place, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL50 3RA

Tel: 01242 533338 www.landscapecharacter.org.uk

Landscape Institute, 33 Great Portland Street, London W1W 8QE

Tel: 020 7299 4500 www.landscapeinstitute.org

Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership, Malvern Hills AONB Office, Grange Road, Malvern, Worcestershire, WR14 3EY

Tel: 01684 560616 www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk

Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Unit, Wye Valley AONB Office, Hadnock Road, Monmouth, Monmouthshire, NP25 3NG

Tel: 01600 713977 www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk