



# Section 4

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## **4.1 Introduction**

4.1.1 The Fields and Enclosed Land Broad Type dominates the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland HLC. At 195,083 ha, this Broad Type accounts for just below 77% of the total area characterised. Fields and Enclosed Land also holds the second largest number of polygons of any of the Broad Types with 4,188 separate records created. With 8,067 records the Settlement Broad Type represents the largest group in terms of polygons created.

4.1.2 The dominance of Fields and Enclosed Land within the LLR HLC reflects the overwhelmingly rural nature of much of the study area. Mixed farming regimes are operated on a large number of holdings which, across Leicestershire and Rutland, average about 61 ha in size (Defra 2007 Agricultural and Horticultural Survey – England). Dairy production has long been a traditional mainstay of the agricultural economy with sheep and beef also important contributors. Arable farming is also significant across the study area with 99,574 ha, according to Defra 2007 figures, being given over to crops or bare fallow.

## **4.2 Enclosure Character**

4.2.1 Leicestershire and Rutland are, for the most part, regarded as classic Midlands counties. The predominantly rural field pattern is dominated by planned and/or Parliamentary enclosure with ridge and furrow earthworks a recurring feature across the landscape. This popular image is, to an extent, borne out through examination of the HLC. Across the study area several HLC Types within the Fields and Enclosed Land Broad Type grouping are likely to date from either the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century. These include Planned Enclosure, Planned Enclosure Containing Ridge and Furrow, Planned Woodland Clearance, Other Large Rectilinear Fields and Other Small Rectilinear Fields. Together these represent 32% of the project area and 42% of the area covered by the Fields and Enclosed Land group. Of these Planned Enclosure is clearly the dominant HLC Type representing 24.5% of the project area and 32% of the area covered by the Broad Type. Also significant here is Re-organised Piecemeal Enclosure; an HLC Type derived from Piecemeal Enclosure patterns that has undergone a process of significant field boundary loss or straightening of boundaries since the publication of the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6" OS map. The rationalisation of field boundaries is a process that was occurring from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century and Re-organised Piecemeal Enclosure also includes groups of fields with a Late Post-medieval date.

4.2.2 Whilst areas characterised as planned enclosure occur across much of the study area there are a number of notable concentrations of this HLC Type. These concentrations include much of the northern half of Melton District, a large proportion of central and eastern Rutland, a band across much of the south eastern border of Leicestershire and areas of former heathland in the Charnwood Forest area. To a large extent there would appear to be a strong correlation here with the work done by Beresford (1948

pp 78-126) in Leicestershire and Ryder (2006) in Rutland both of whom have appraised the glebe terriers and acts of Parliament in providing dates for enclosure. Beresford drew up two maps for Leicestershire. The first of these shows areas enclosed c1450-1550 and areas enclosed 1550-1750. The second map shows areas enclosed by Act of Parliament 1750-1850. Figure 138 below combines both of these maps and includes data for Rutland compiled by Ryder. The map reflects a strong correlation between patterns of Planned and other 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure and those areas identified through historical research as being later enclosure.

4.2.3 Similarly the composite map also demonstrates a correlation for earlier enclosure, which seems to be occurring mostly in south-west Leicestershire and around much of the border area between Leicestershire and Rutland.

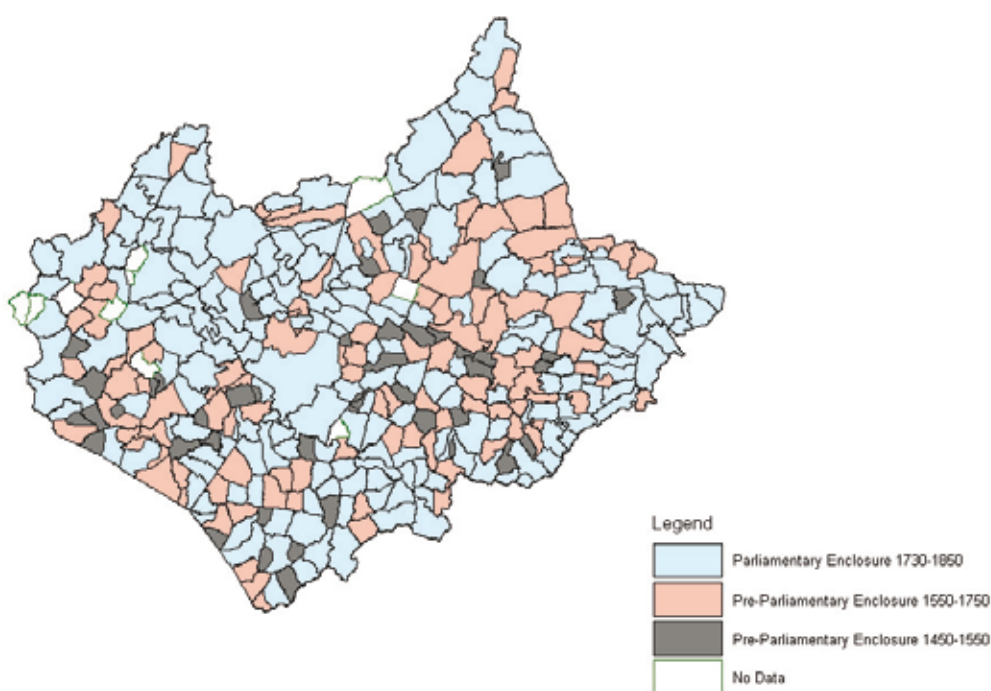


Figure 138. Enclosure Across Leicestershire and Rutland (after Beresford and Ryder)

4.2.4 In terms of area the most significant of the HLC Field Types that predates Parliamentary enclosure is Piecemeal Enclosure. Covering a total of 14631ha this type represents 5.7% of the study area and 7.5% of the landscape characterised as Fields and Enclosed Land. These areas together with smaller, both in term of average polygon size and total coverage of the project area, HLC Field Types such as Paddocks and Closes, Small Assarts, Squatter Enclosures and some Small Irregular Fields represent the oldest field patterns characterised within the project area; these are unlikely to date much earlier than the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century.

4.2.5 Most of the areas characterised as belonging to the Fields and Enclosed Land Broad Type have been placed into one of three date ranges; Post-medieval (16<sup>th</sup>-late 17<sup>th</sup> century), Late Post-medieval (18<sup>th</sup>-late 19<sup>th</sup>

century), and Modern (Early 20<sup>th</sup> century-Present). Figure 139 shows Fields and Enclosed Land by date range. What this map clearly illustrates is that Late Post-medieval Enclosure dominates much of the eastern part of Leicestershire and a significant proportion of Rutland. This distribution of Late Post-medieval Enclosure shows a significant level of fit with the distribution of Parliamentary Enclosure Illustrated in Figure 138. What is also apparent by comparing these two maps is that the distribution of HLC identified 20<sup>th</sup> century enclosure and Post-medieval enclosure, when taken together, coincides with much of the Pre-Parliamentary Enclosure identified through earlier historical research. This correlation would seem to suggest that where earlier Pre-Parliamentary Enclosure took place the resulting field patterns proved to be less conducive to 20<sup>th</sup> century agricultural practices than the more regularly planned enclosures of the Late Post-medieval period. Although there are some significant pockets of earlier enclosure, most notably through the central part of North West Leicestershire and down into Hinckley and Bosworth and also in southern Melton, these patterns have been greatly denuded by the modern reorganisation and removal of field boundaries through the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and particularly since the Second World War. Where there is some survival of older field patterns it is often, though by no means exclusively, in close proximity to settlements where perhaps there are likely to be a larger number of people having tenure over smaller plots of land.

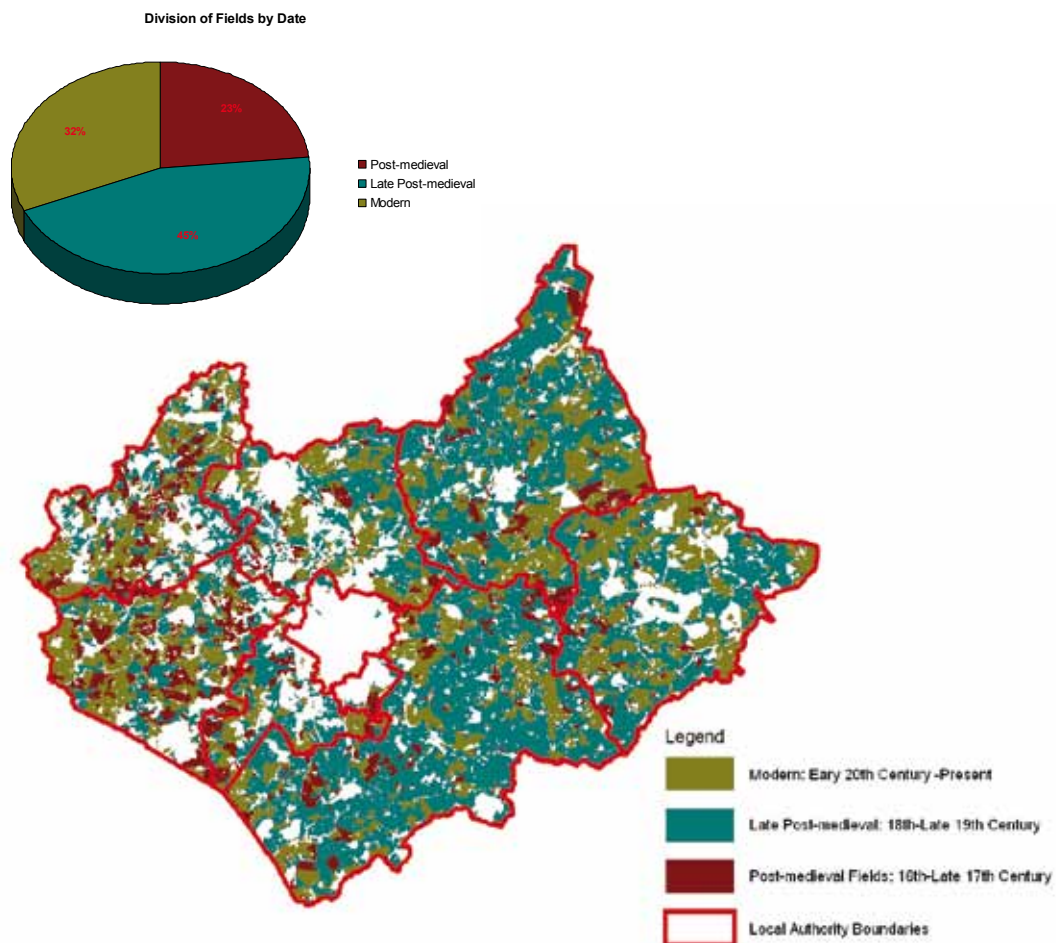


Figure 139. HLC Mapped Enclosure by Period

### 4.3 Field Boundary Loss

4.3.1 Since the publication of the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6" OS maps large parts of the landscape within the study area have been through significant processes of change. Many of these changes have occurred as a consequence of the more intensive farming practices introduced across much of the country since the end of the Second World War typically involving widespread removal of field boundaries and the ploughing up of large areas of ridge and furrow and other earthwork features. In more recent years the rate of field boundary loss may have declined, particularly with the introduction of the Environmental Stewardship Scheme in 2005. This scheme was originally run by Defra but is currently administered by Natural England (the Defra sponsored non-departmental body that advises the government on matters relating to the natural environment) and provides funding for farmers and other land managers in England who deliver effective environmental management on their land.

4.3.2 The primary objectives of the scheme include the conservation of wildlife, maintaining and enhancing landscape quality and character and the protection of historic and natural resources. Although this scheme provides a financial incentive for farmers and land managers to retain and enhance features such as hedgerows and ridge and furrow earthworks there are many, particularly smaller, holdings outside the Environmental Stewardship Scheme. This has resulted in uneven levels of protection in relation to landscape character and landscape features. To illustrate, when grain prices dramatically increased during 2007/2008 it became economically viable for many farmers to plough over ridge and furrow and convert pasture to arable cultivation. This trend of fluctuating market benefits outweighing the financial incentives provided through environmental schemes clearly has the potential to continue into the future as demand for biomass crops results in more land being put into cultivation.

4.3.3 Figure 140 illustrates the percentage of field boundary loss since the publication of the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6" OS map. What is striking here is that many of the areas with the highest recorded percentages of field boundary loss coincide with the areas of Pre-Parliamentary enclosure identified through Beresford's research in Leicestershire and Ryder's in Rutland. This is a similar result to that illustrated by the comparison of HLC Enclosure by date and the map of Parliamentary and Pre-Parliamentary Enclosure. The earliest enclosure patterns have proved to be the least favoured for modern farming methods and have gone through more comprehensive change and proportionately higher levels of boundary loss over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This highlights the fact that earlier enclosure should be regarded as a fast diminishing resource requiring particularly sensitive management.

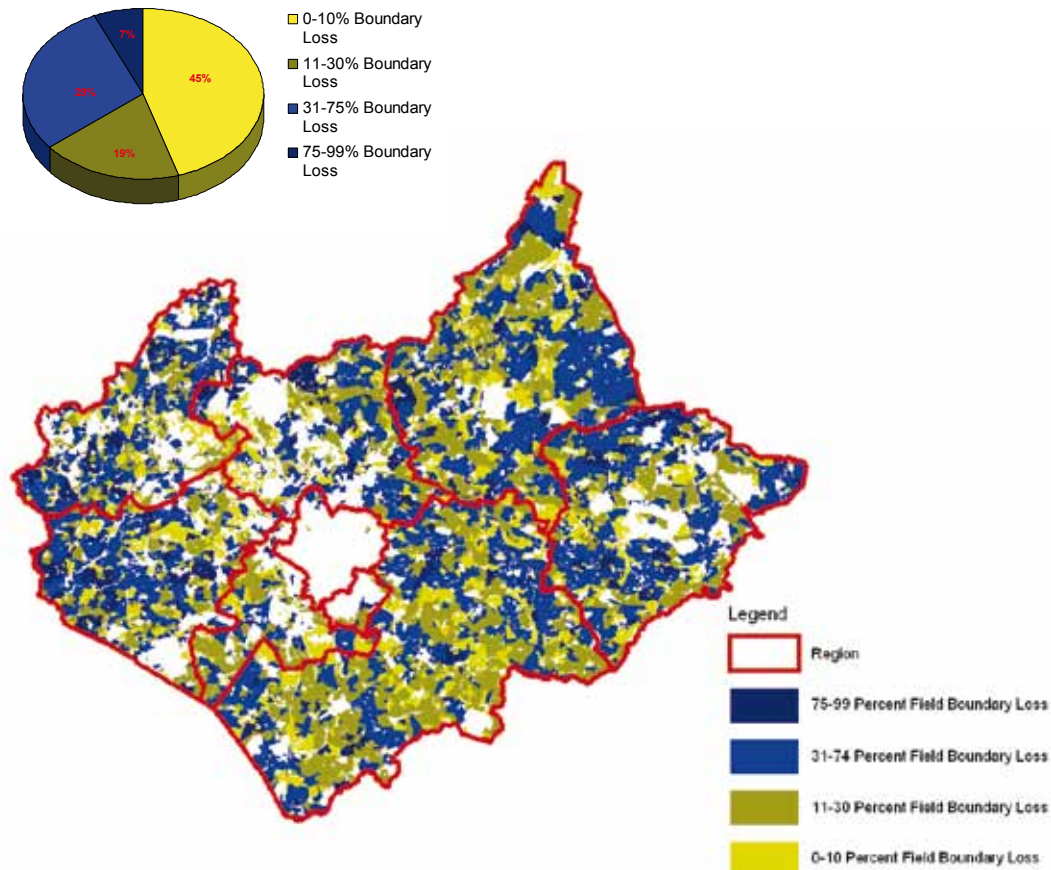


Figure 140. Field Boundary Loss Since Publication of 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map

## 4.4 Ridge and Furrow

4.4.1 In 2001 David Hall, as part of the Turning the Plough project produced by Northamptonshire County Council in partnership with English Heritage, mapped the surviving ridge and furrow within the Midland Core of the Central Province as defined by Roberts and Wrathmell (2000). This Midland Core comprises two of the sub-Provinces; the Inner Midlands and the East Midlands. In total this covers an area of about 14,000 square kilometres and included all or part of nine counties: Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Gloucestershire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire and Warwickshire. Almost all of the HLC project area was included in David Hall's Ridge and Furrow Assessment with only Leicestershire's northern border and the extreme western tip of the county not being covered. The mapping project identified the extent of surviving ridge and furrow from aerial photography which, for Leicestershire and Rutland, was taken in 1991. Fields that could confidently be identified as earthwork ridge and furrow were outlined in green with less certain areas marked in purple. The four maps below show the distribution of ridge and furrow identified by David Hall in Leicestershire and Rutland and with the same data overlying enclosure identified from glebe terriers and Acts of Parliament, over field boundary loss and over enclosure dated through HLC.

4.4.2 This set of maps clearly illustrates the fact the mapped ridge and furrow is concentrated most densely on the eastern side of Leicestershire, through Melton Borough and Harborough District and on the western border of Rutland. The western side of the project area has a far lower occurrence of ridge and furrow. An initial examination of the ridge and furrow distribution gives the impression that there is a total absence along the northern border area of Leicestershire particularly through the Vale of Belvoir. Whilst this is a landscape dominated by intense arable production with ridge and furrow an uncommon feature, the complete absence may be attributed to the fact that this area falls outside the Turning the Plough project area. This series of map seems to illustrate the fact that the best survival of ridge and furrow occurs in the areas of Parliamentary enclosure which can be attributed to the fact that following enclosure the land was given over to pasture and earthwork features were fossilised in the landscape. To the west of Leicester in the Charnwood Forest area the lower densities of ridge and furrow are a result of the fact that until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century this was an area of uncultivated, unenclosed waste. Where earlier enclosure has been identified through examination of the glebe terriers there appears, in many cases, to have been a high level of boundary loss with a significant proportion of these areas being characterised though HLC as Modern.

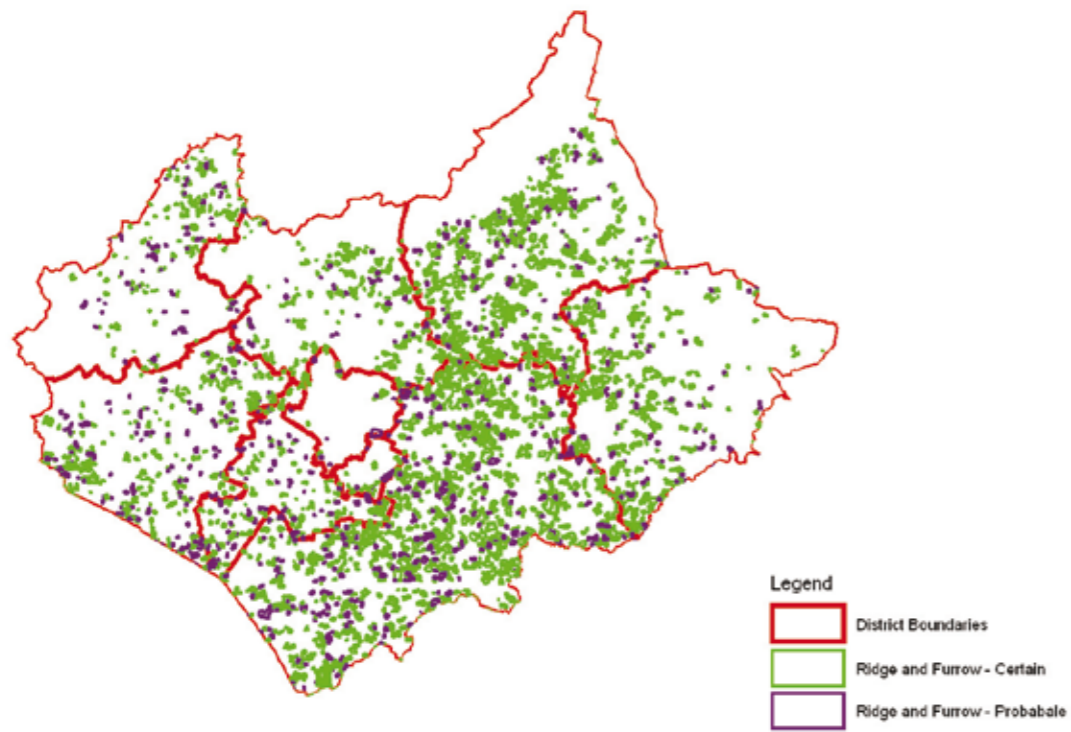


Figure 141. Surviving Ridge and Furrow Mapped by David Hall

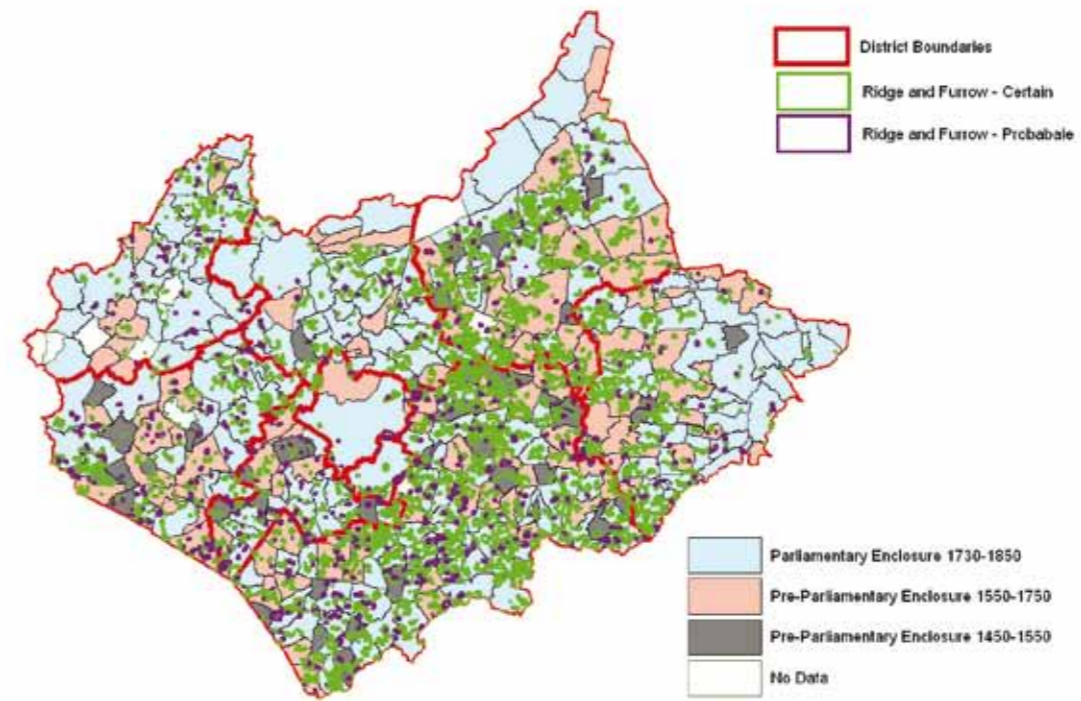


Figure 142. Surviving Ridge and Furrow Overlying the Enclosure Map

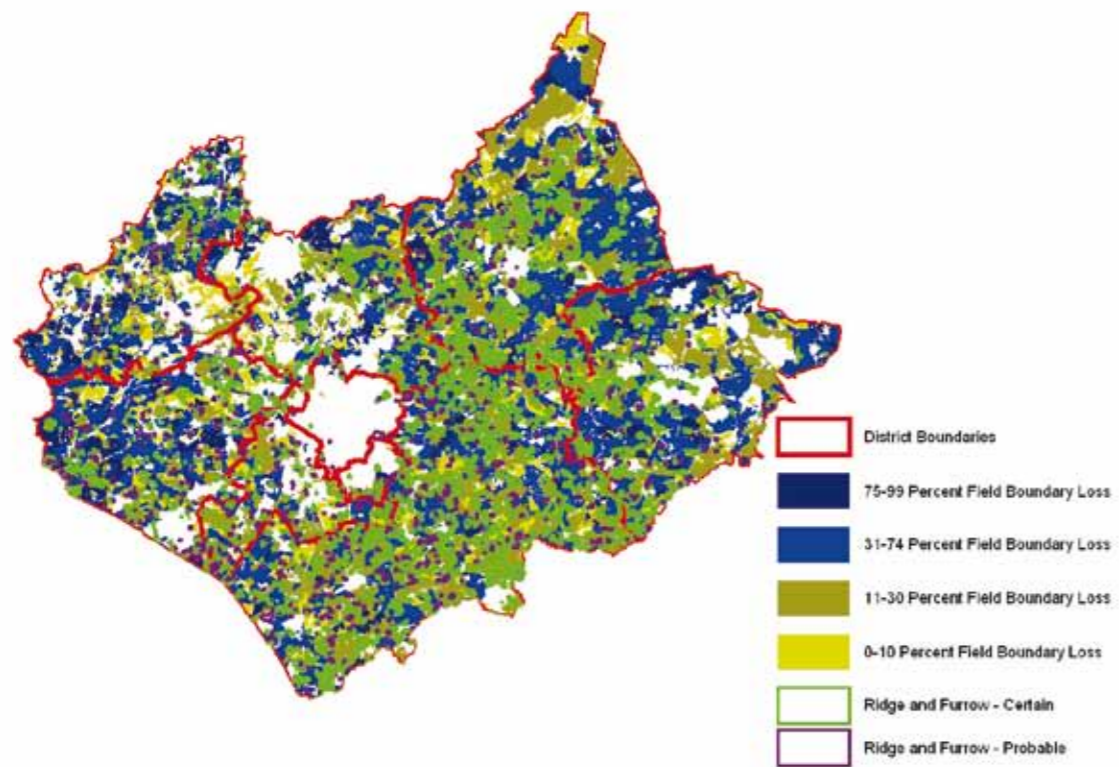


Figure 143. Surviving Ridge and Furrow Overlying Field Boundary Loss

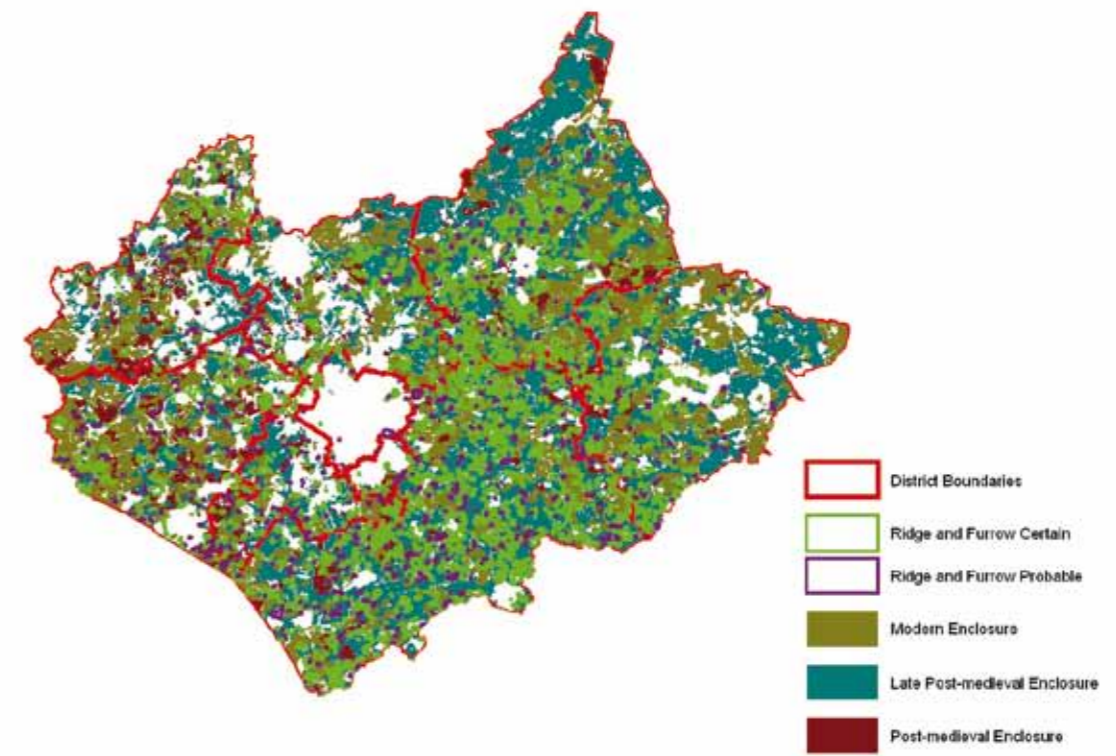
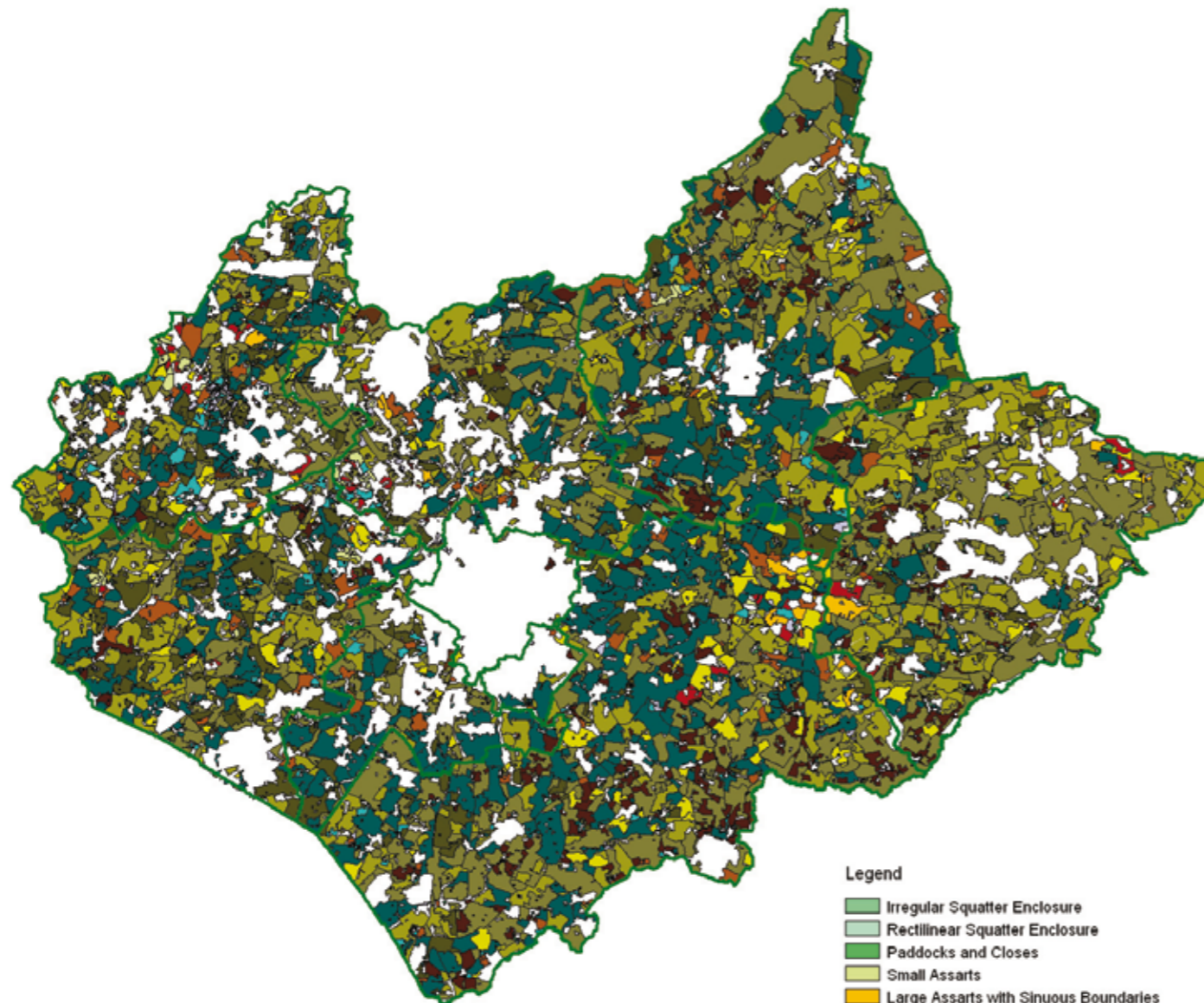


Figure 144. Surviving Ridge and Furrow Overlying HLC Enclosure by Period

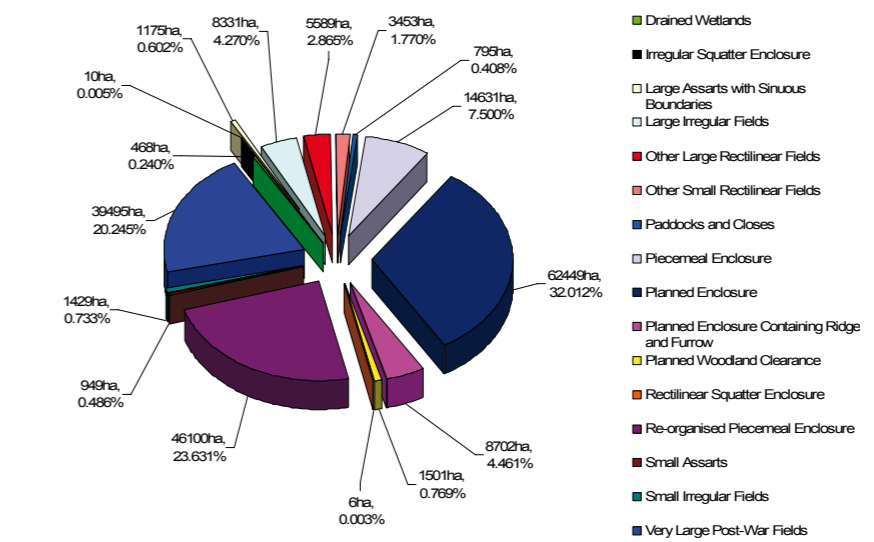


4.4.3 The following series of maps examines the distribution of HLC types belonging to the Fields and Enclosed Land Broad Type category across the whole study area, and separately for Leicestershire, each of the local authorities and for the area covered by the National Forest in Leicestershire. Each sheet also gives a breakdown of the composition of field types within each authority area and what those figures represent as a proportion of the whole study area.

## Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland HLC Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types



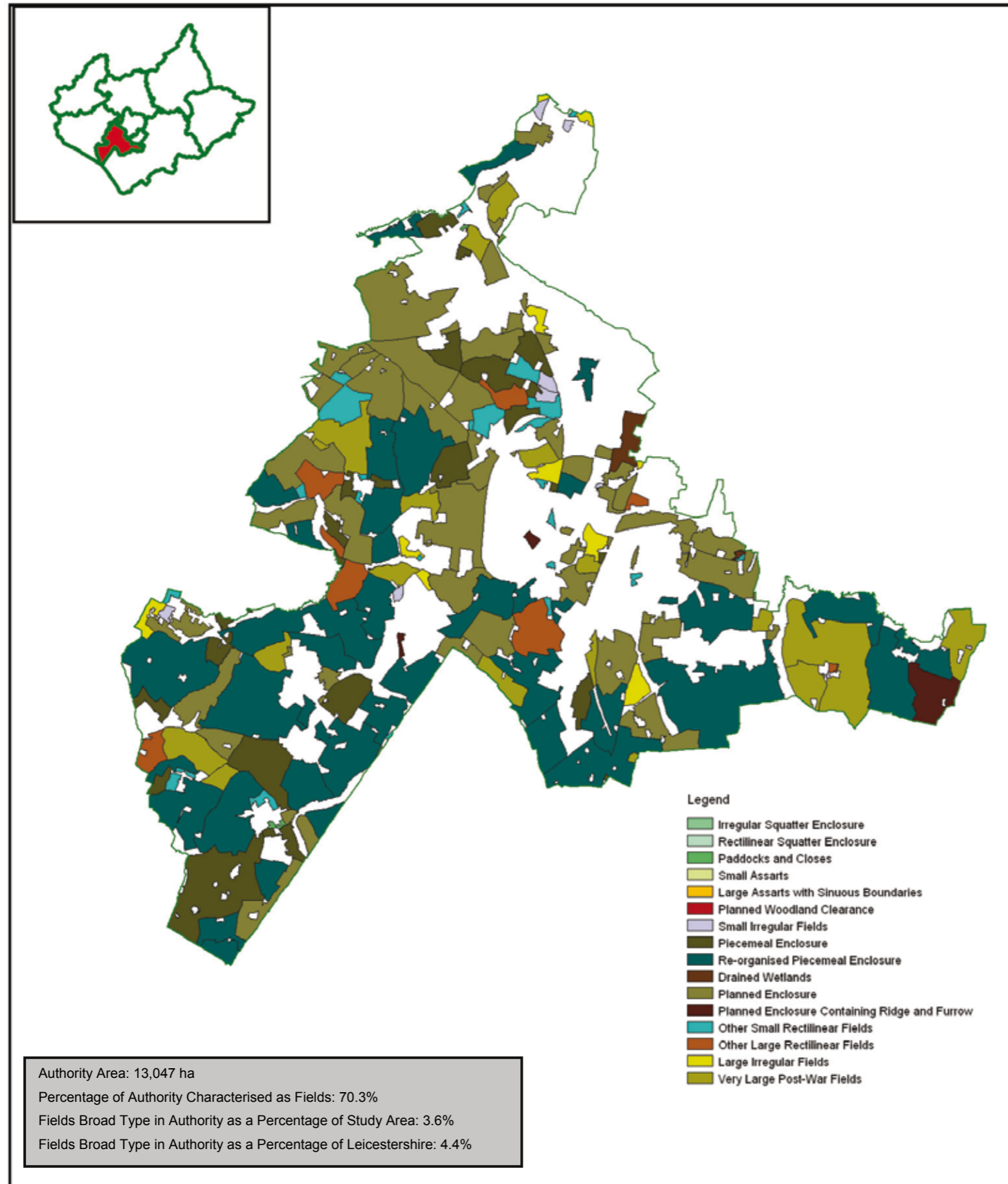
- Legend**
- Irregular Squatter Enclosure
  - Rectilinear Squatter Enclosure
  - Paddocks and Closes
  - Small Assarts
  - Large Assarts with Sinuous Boundaries
  - Planned Woodland Clearance
  - Small Irregular Fields
  - Piecemeal Enclosure
  - Re-organised Piecemeal Enclosure
  - Drained Wetlands
  - Planned Enclosure
  - Planned Enclosure Containing Ridge and Furrow
  - Other Small Rectilinear Fields
  - Other Large Rectilinear Fields
  - Large Irregular Fields
  - Very Large Post-War Fields



Composition of Field and Enclosed Land HLC Types across whole study area

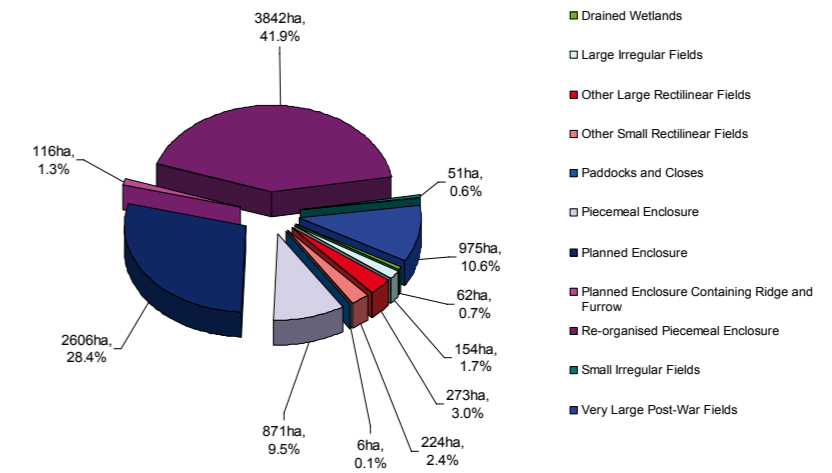
Total Area Characterised: 254,734 ha  
 Percentage of Study Area Characterised as Fields: 76.6%  
 Total Number of Fields Polygons: 4,188  
 Percentage of all Polygons Characterised as Fields: 22%

Figure 145. Field Types: Whole Study Area

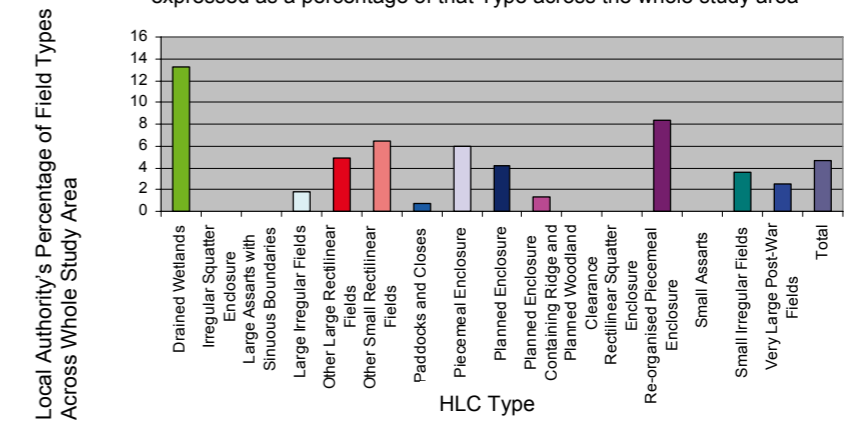


## Blaby District Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types

Composition of Field and Enclosed Land HLC Types within local authority administrative area



Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types within local authority expressed as a percentage of that Type across the whole study area



Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types within local authority expressed as a percentage of that Type across Leicestershire

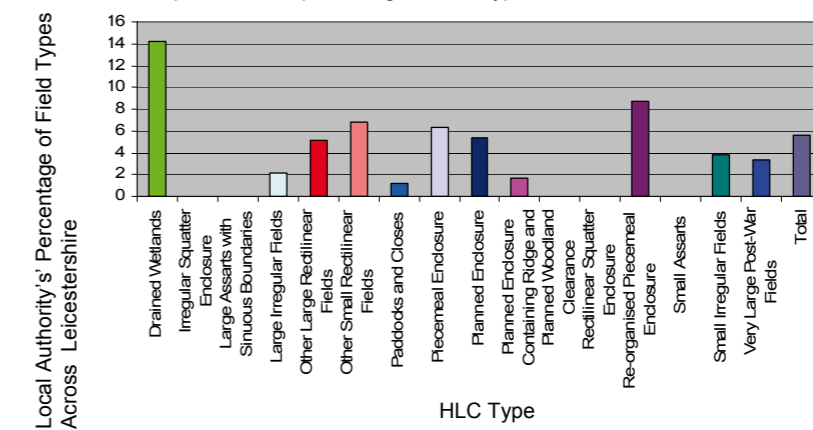
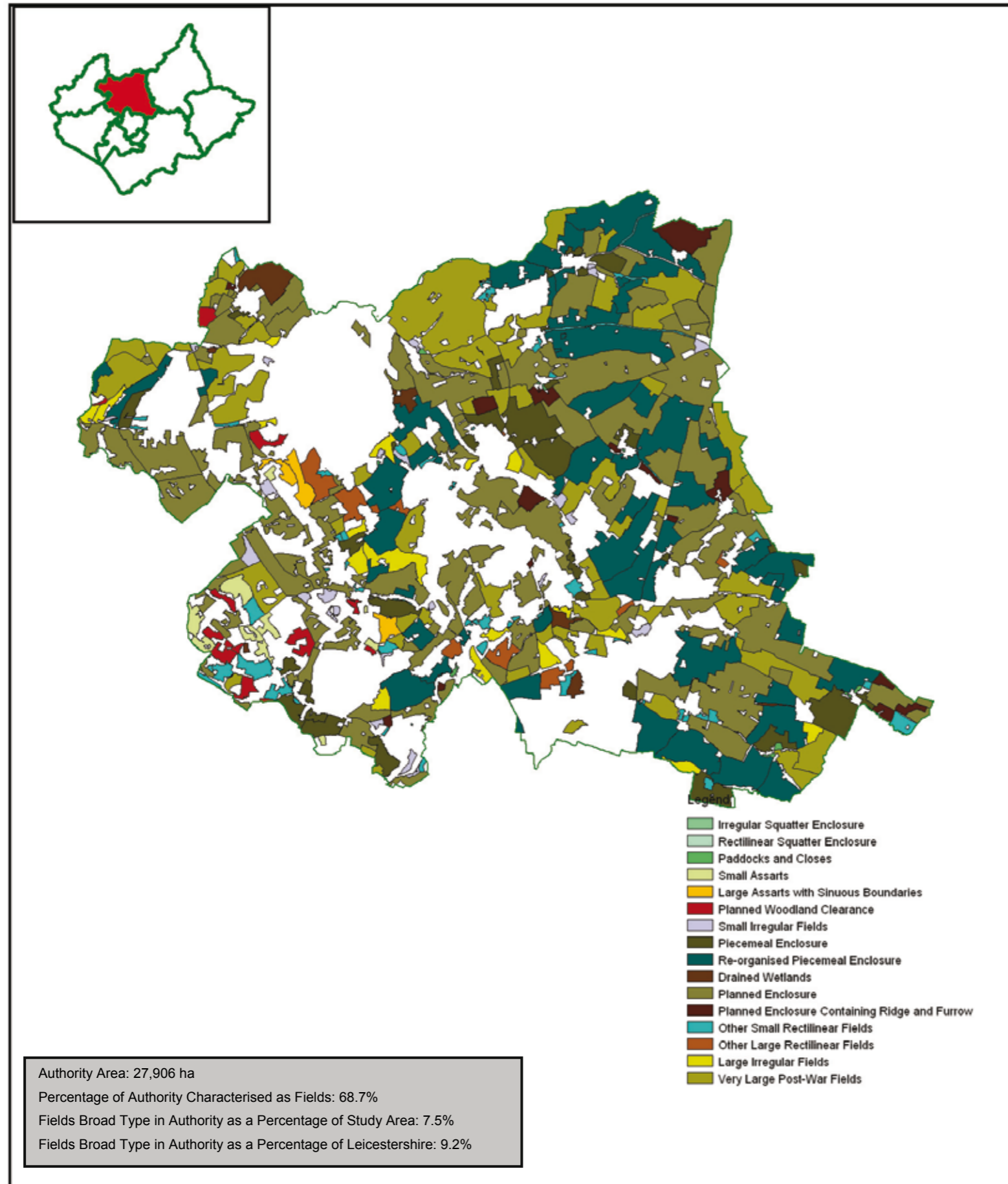
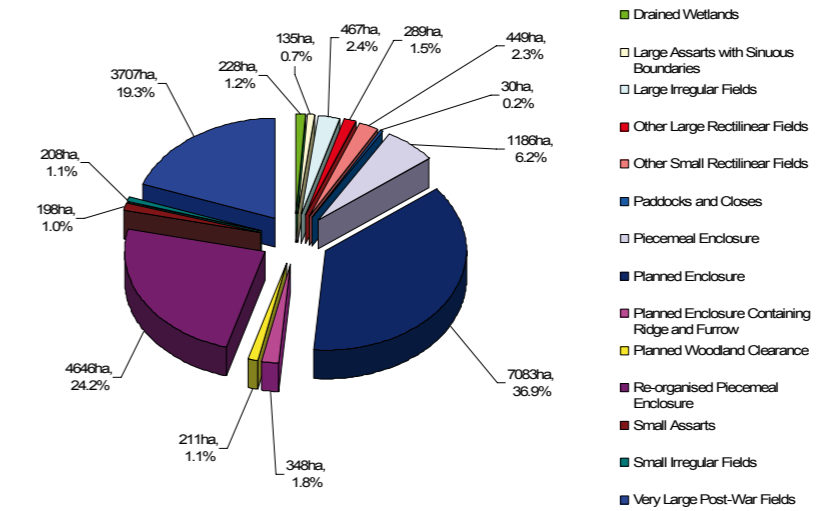


Figure 146. Field Types: Blaby

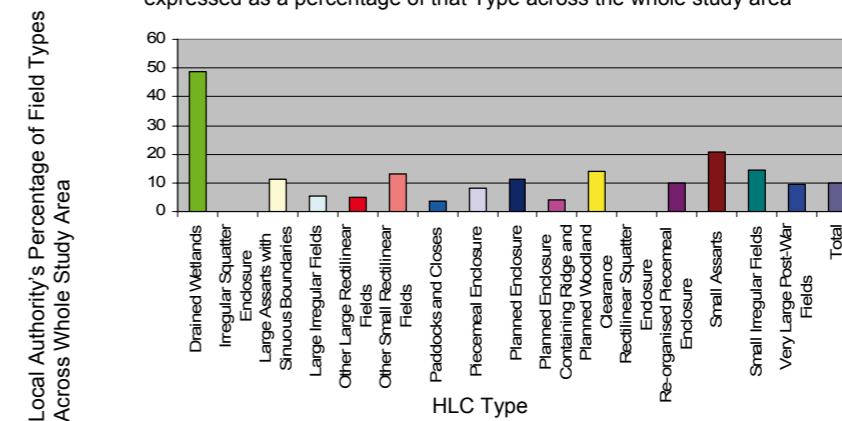


## Charnwood Borough Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types

Composition of Field and Enclosed Land HLC Types within local authority administrative area



Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types within local authority expressed as a percentage of that Type across the whole study area



Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types within local authority expressed as a percentage of that Type across Leicestershire

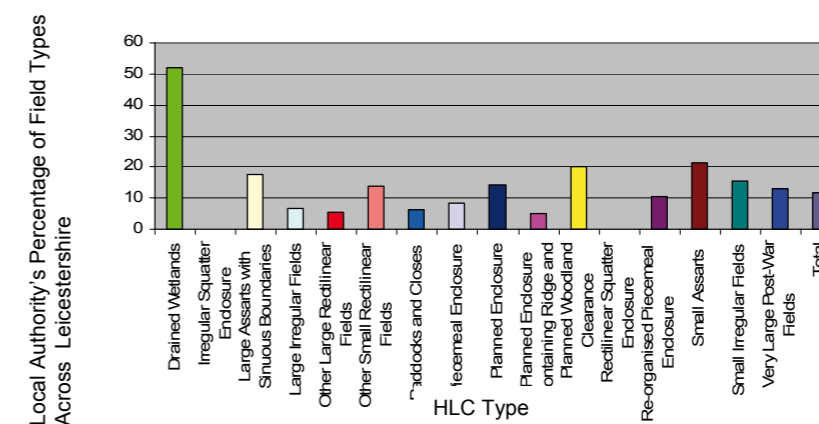
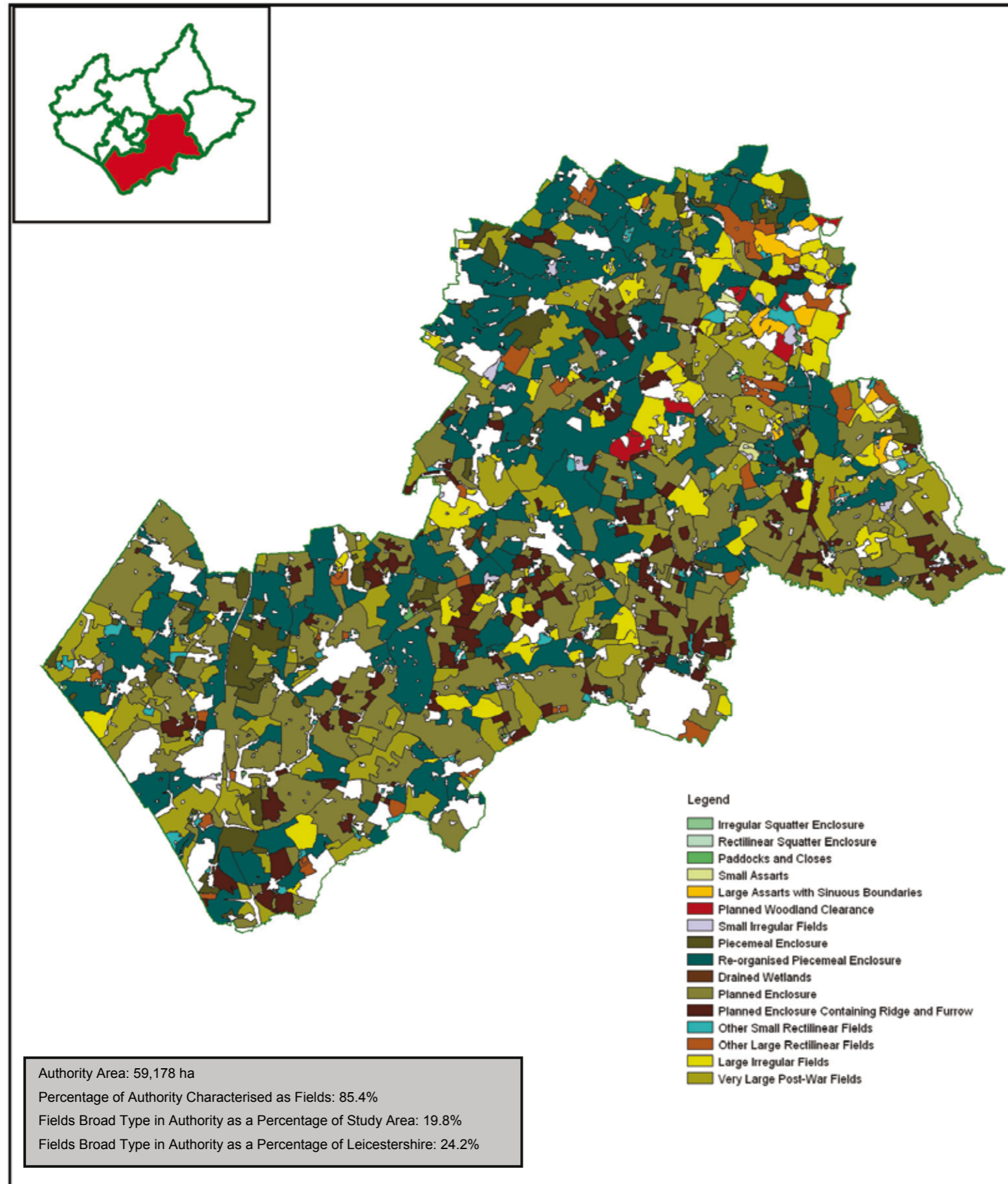
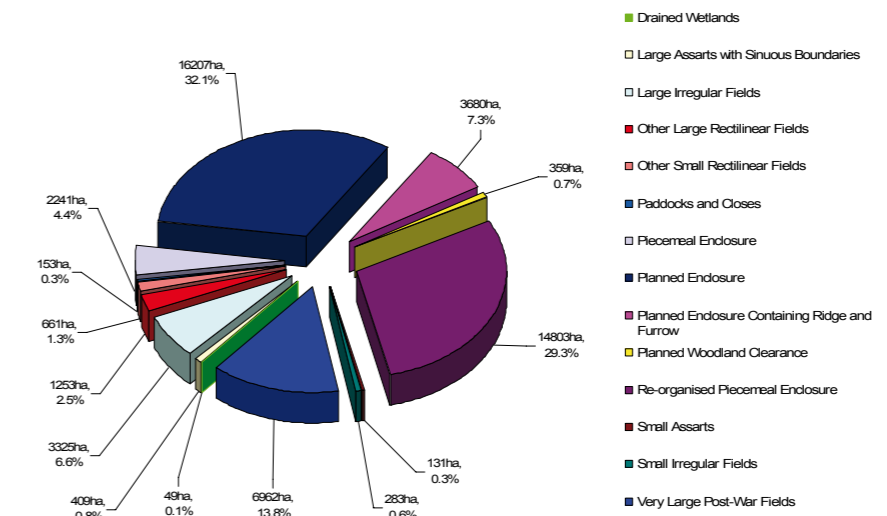


Figure 147. Field Types: Charnwood Borough

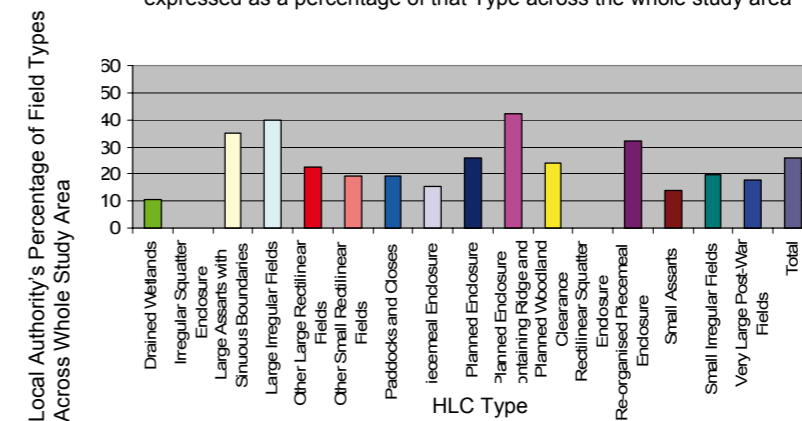


## Harborough District Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types

Composition of Field and Enclosed Land HLC Types within local authority administrative area



Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types within local authority expressed as a percentage of that Type across the whole study area



Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types within local authority expressed as a percentage of that Type across Leicestershire

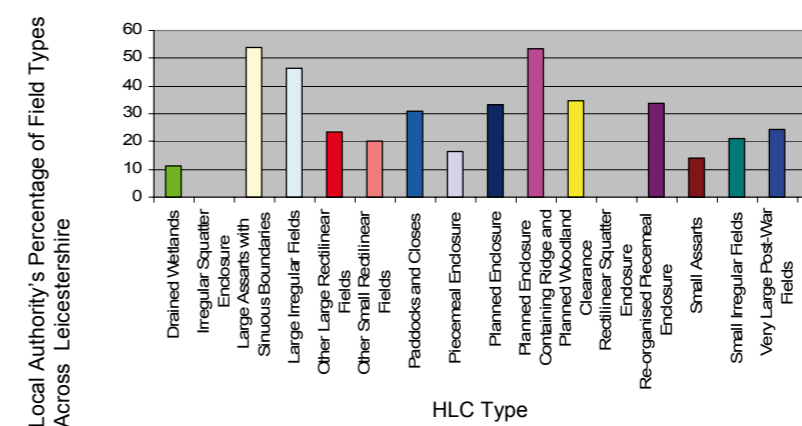
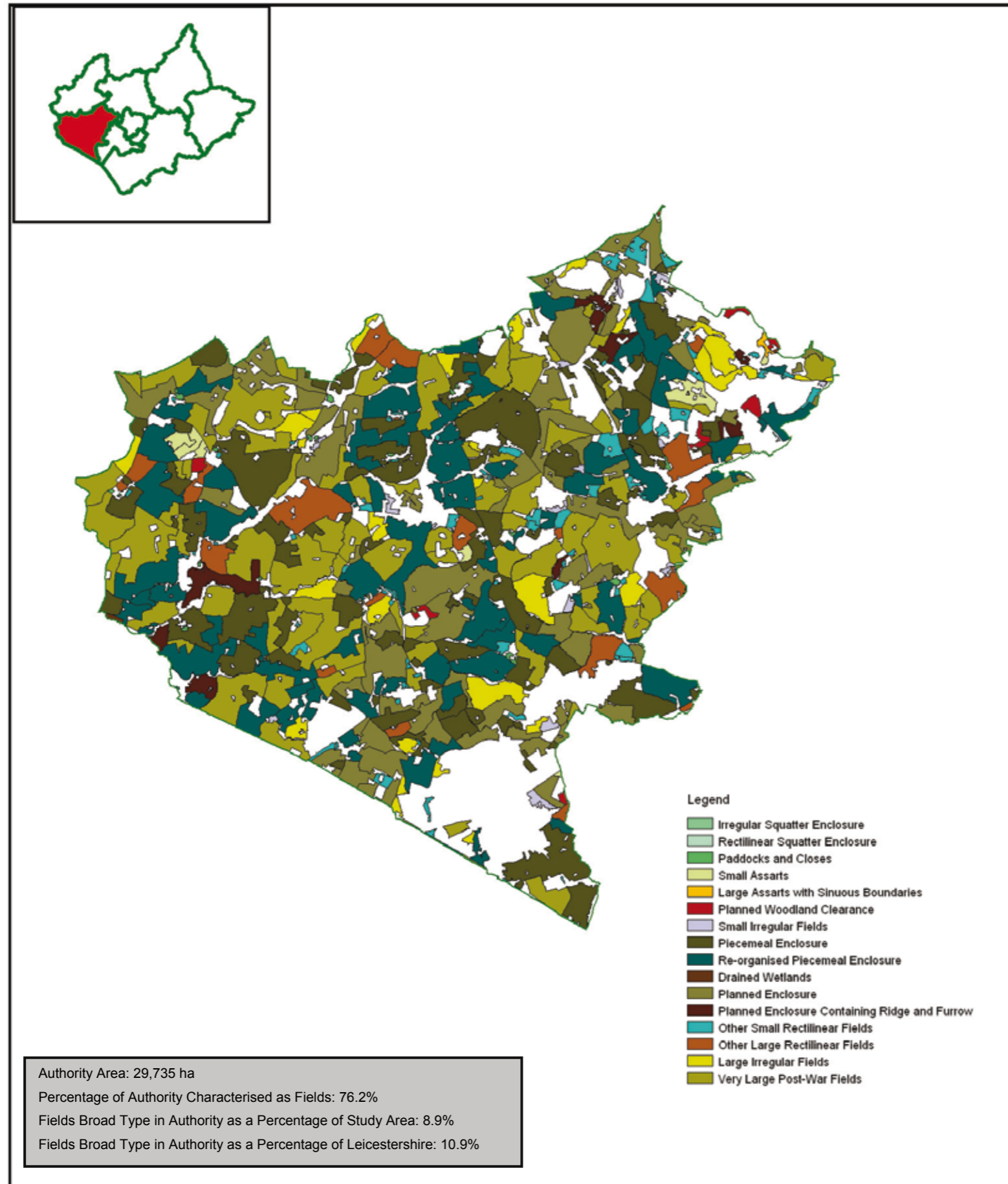
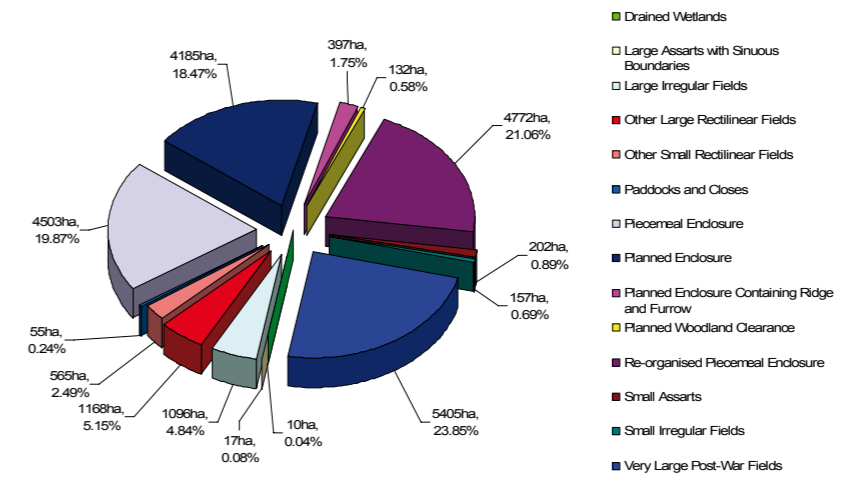


Figure 148. Field Types: Harborborough District

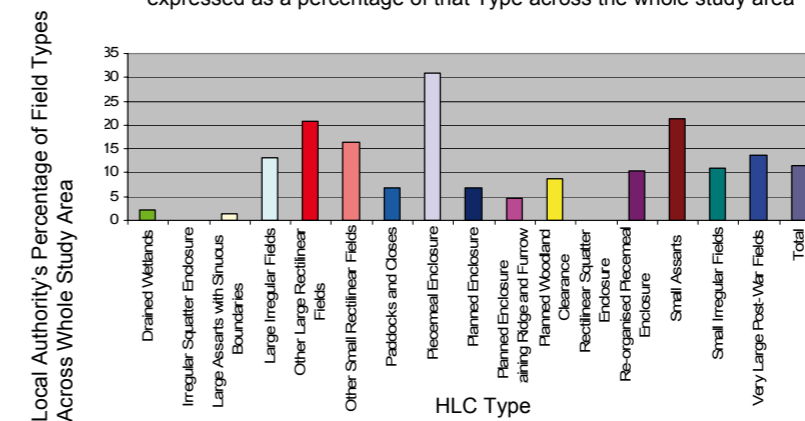


## Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types

Composition of Field and Enclosed Land HLC Types within local authority administrative area



Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types within local authority expressed as a percentage of that Type across the whole study area



Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types within local authority expressed as a percentage of that Type across Leicestershire

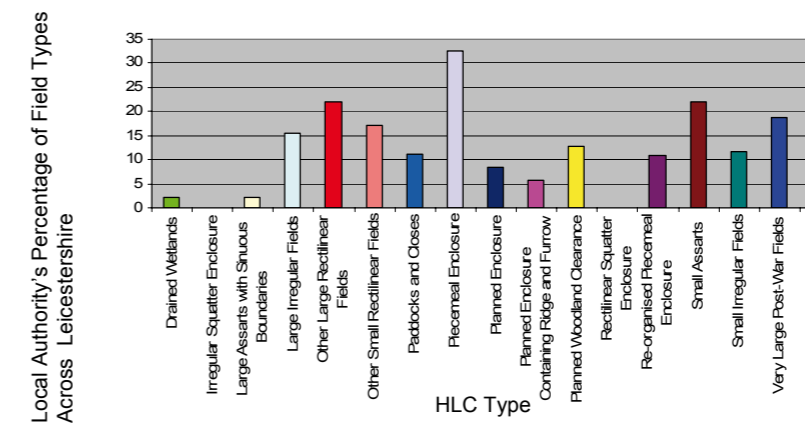
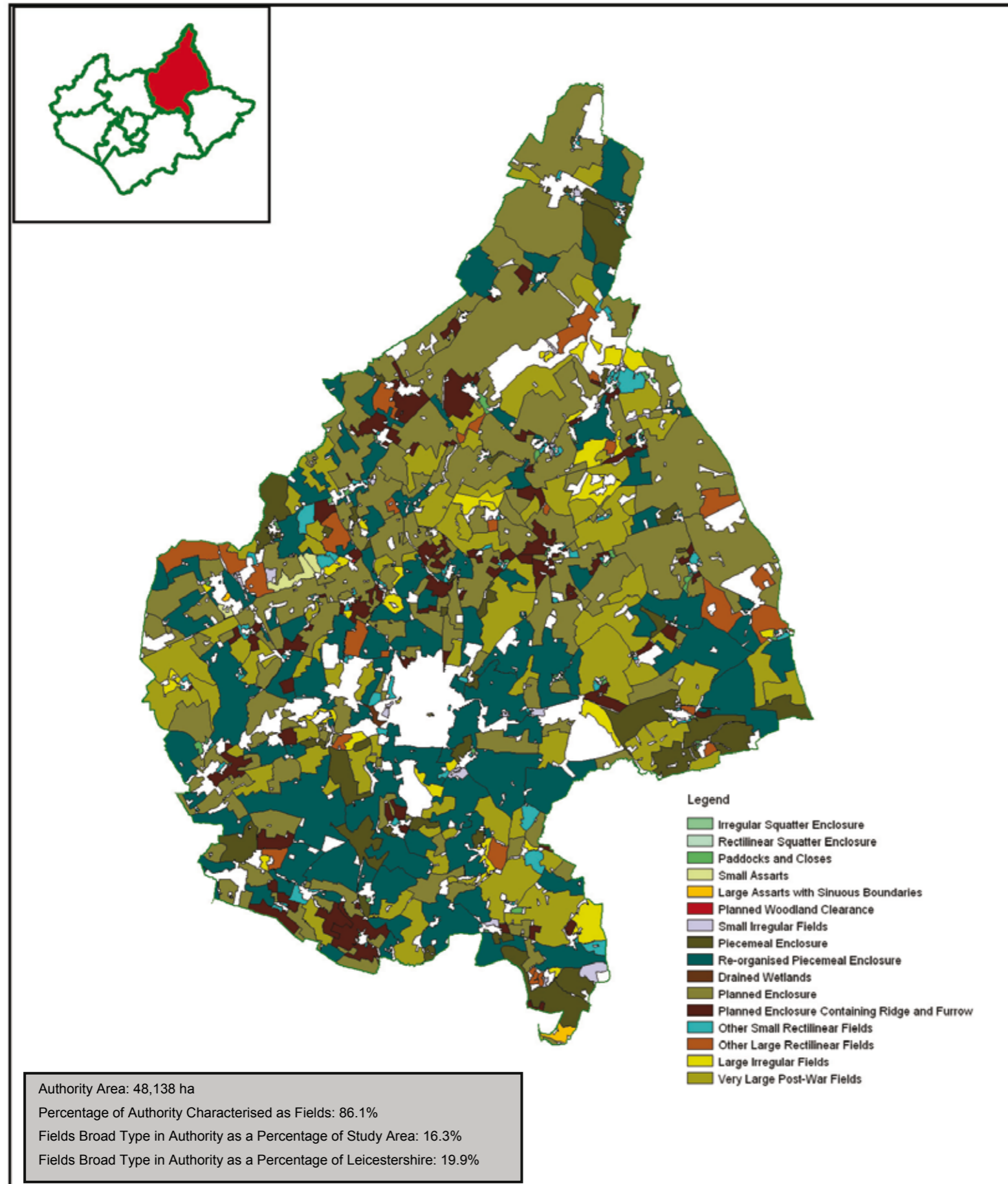
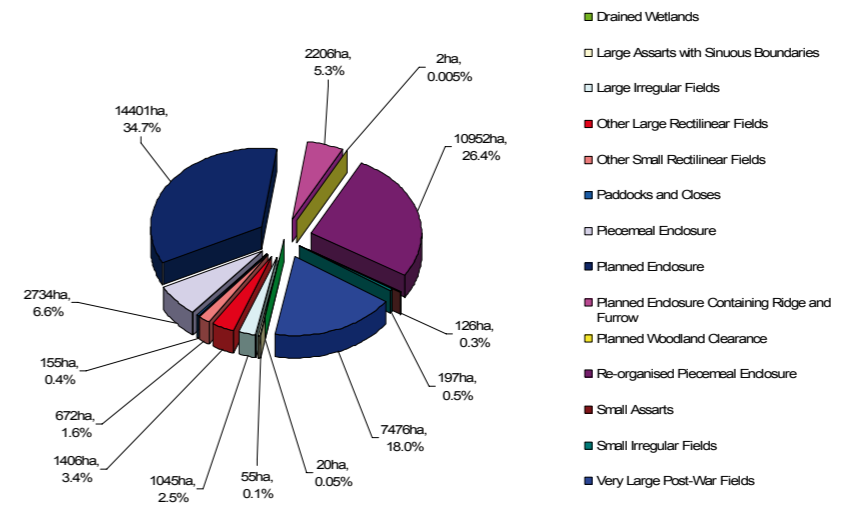


Figure 149. Field Types: Hinckley and Bosworth Borough



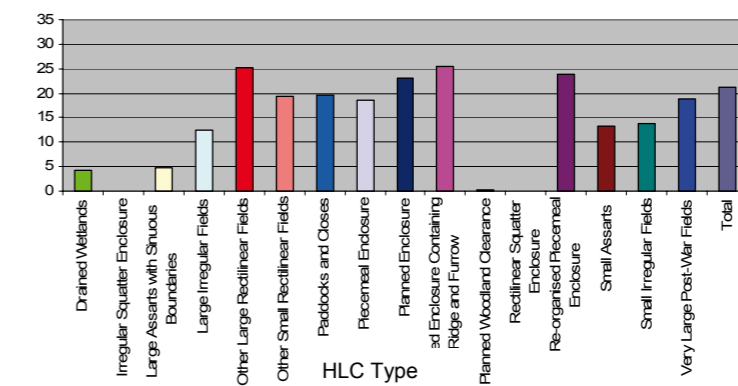
## Melton Borough Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types

Composition of Field and Enclosed Land HLC Types within local authority administrative area



Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types within local authority expressed as a percentage of that Type across the whole study area

Local Authority's Percentage of Field Types Across Whole Study Area



Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types within local authority expressed as a percentage of that Type across Leicestershire

Local Authority's Percentage of Field Types Across Leicestershire

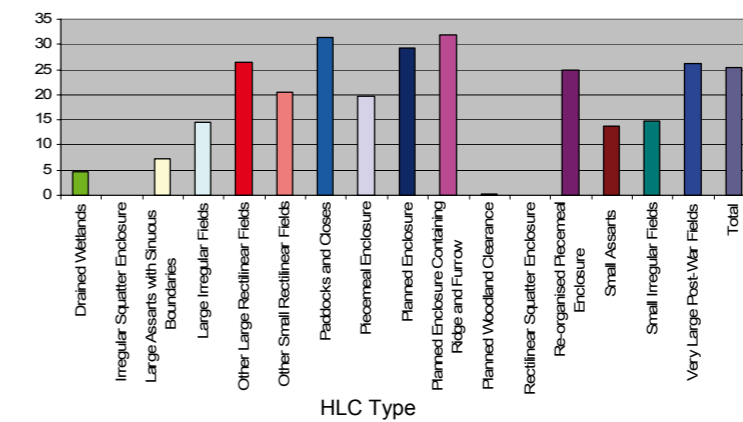
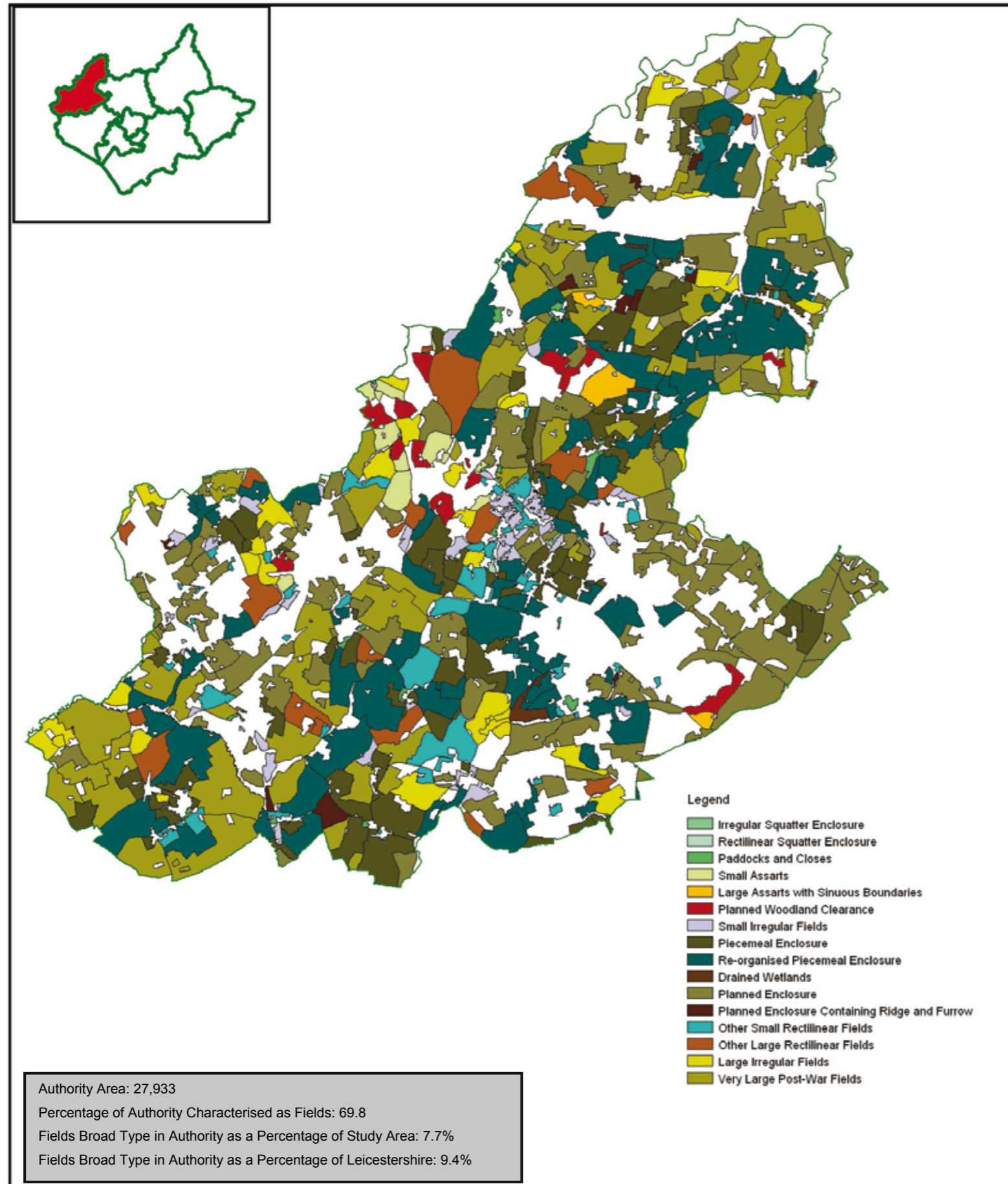
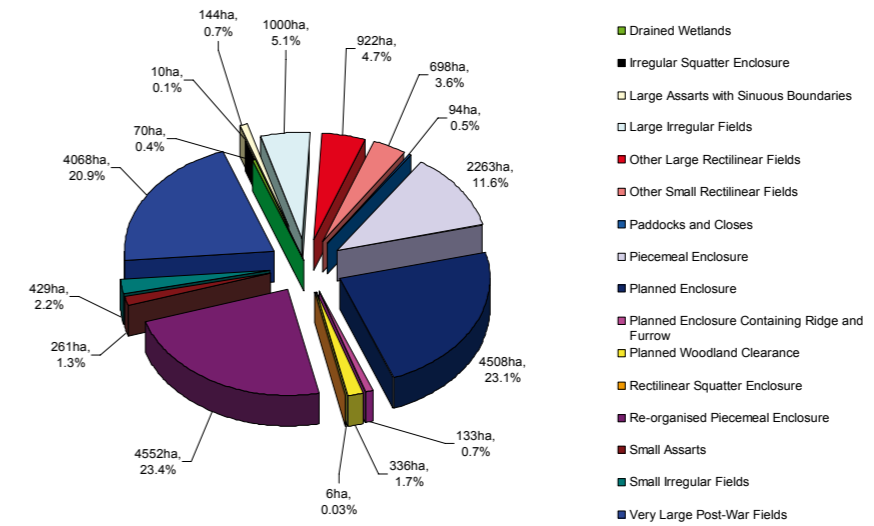


Figure 150. Field Types: Melton Borough

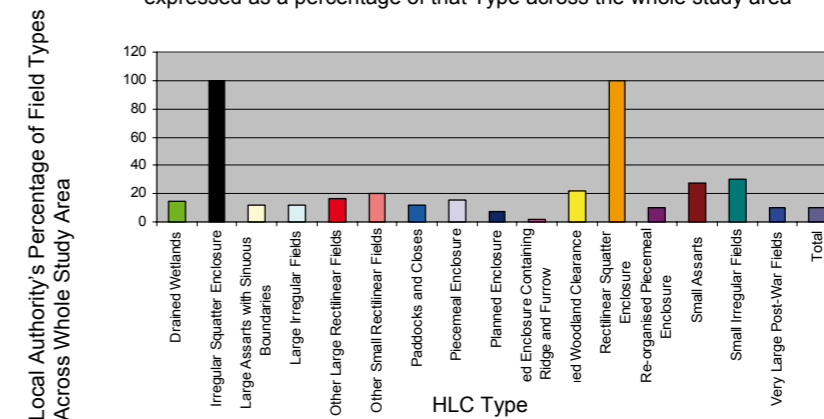


## North West Leicestershire District Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types

Composition of Field and Enclosed Land HLC Types within local authority administrative area



Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types within local authority expressed as a percentage of that Type across the whole study area



Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types within local authority expressed as a percentage of that Type across Leicestershire

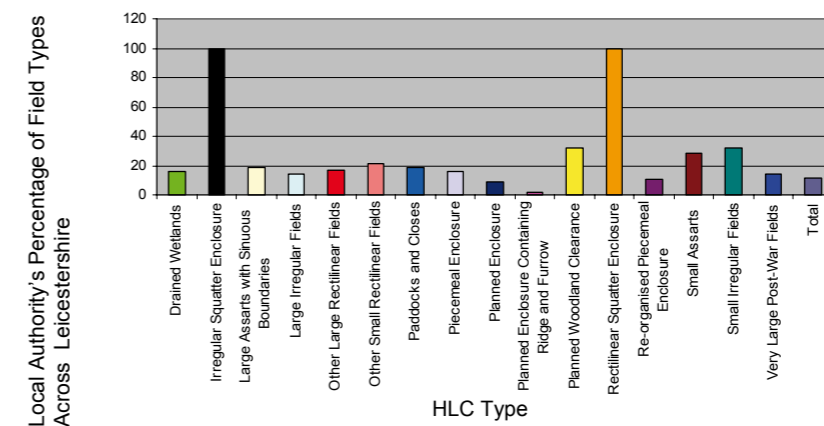
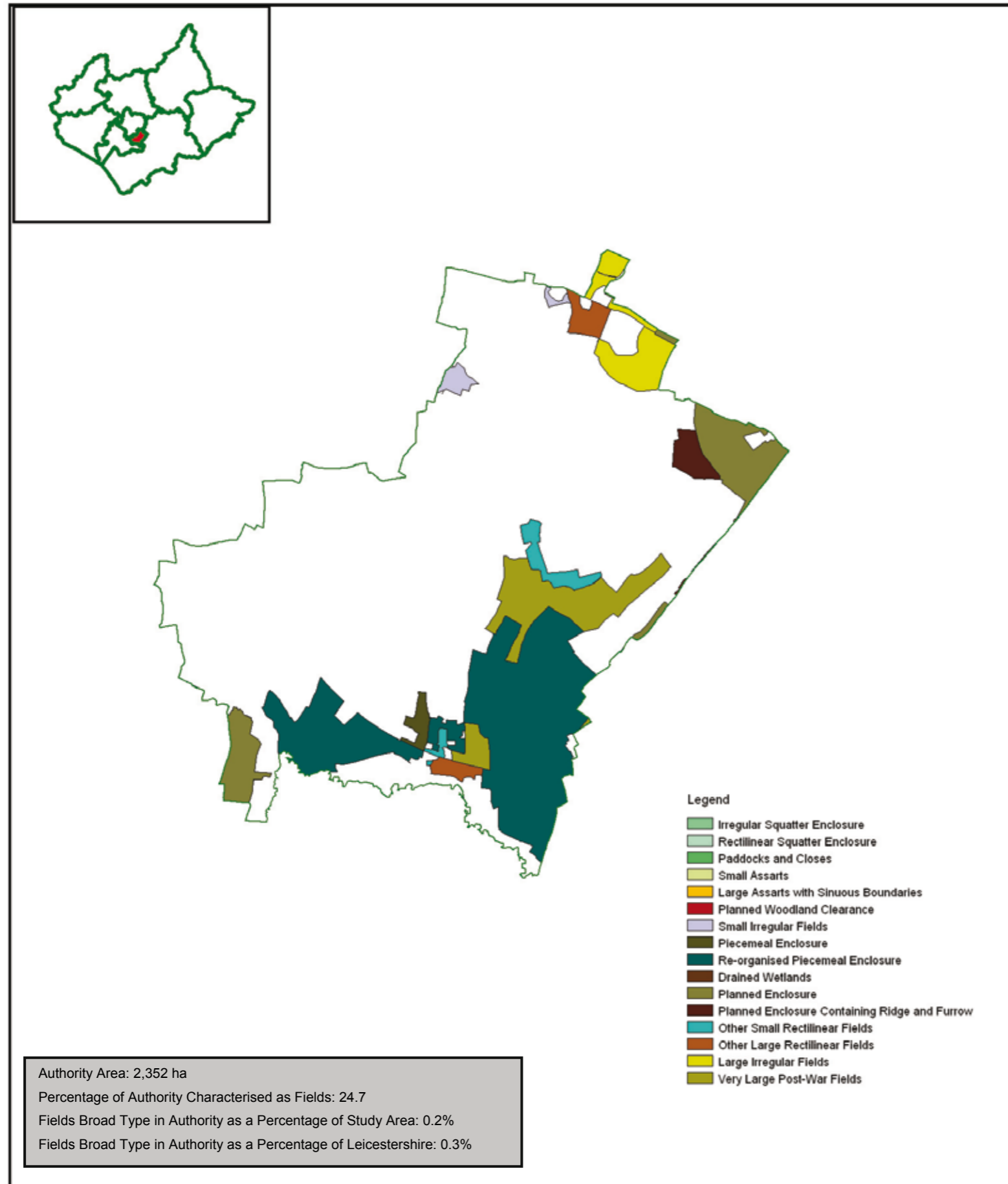


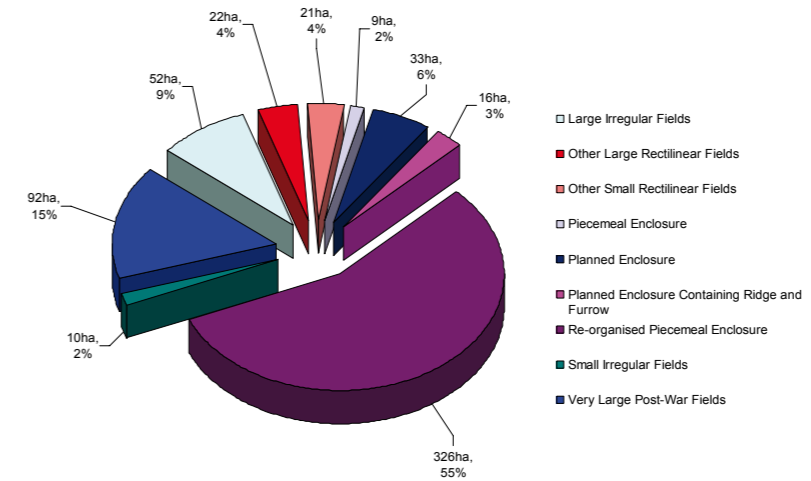
Figure 151. Field Types: North West Leicestershire District



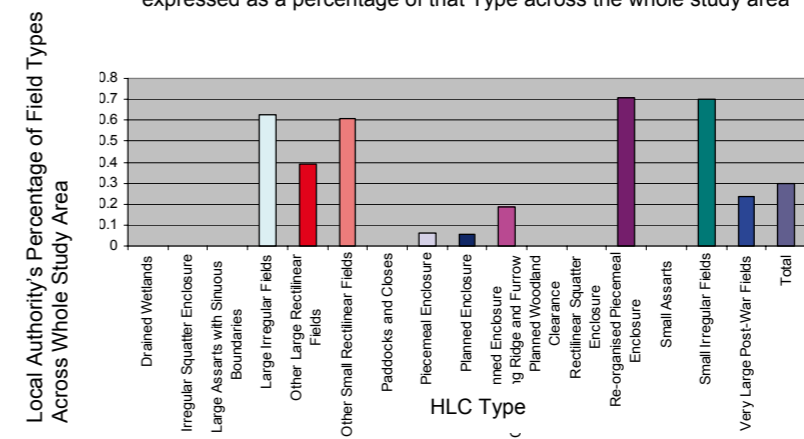


## Oadby and Wigston Borough Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types

Composition of Field and Enclosed Land HLC Types within local authority administrative area



Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types within local authority expressed as a percentage of that Type across the whole study area



Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types within local authority expressed as a percentage of that Type across Leicestershire

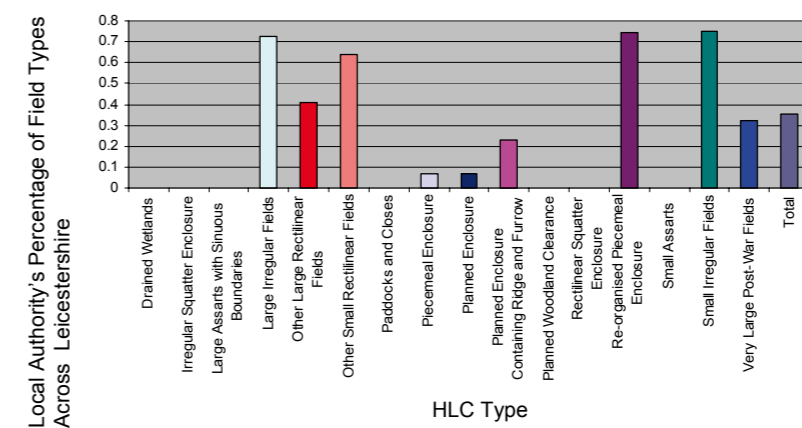
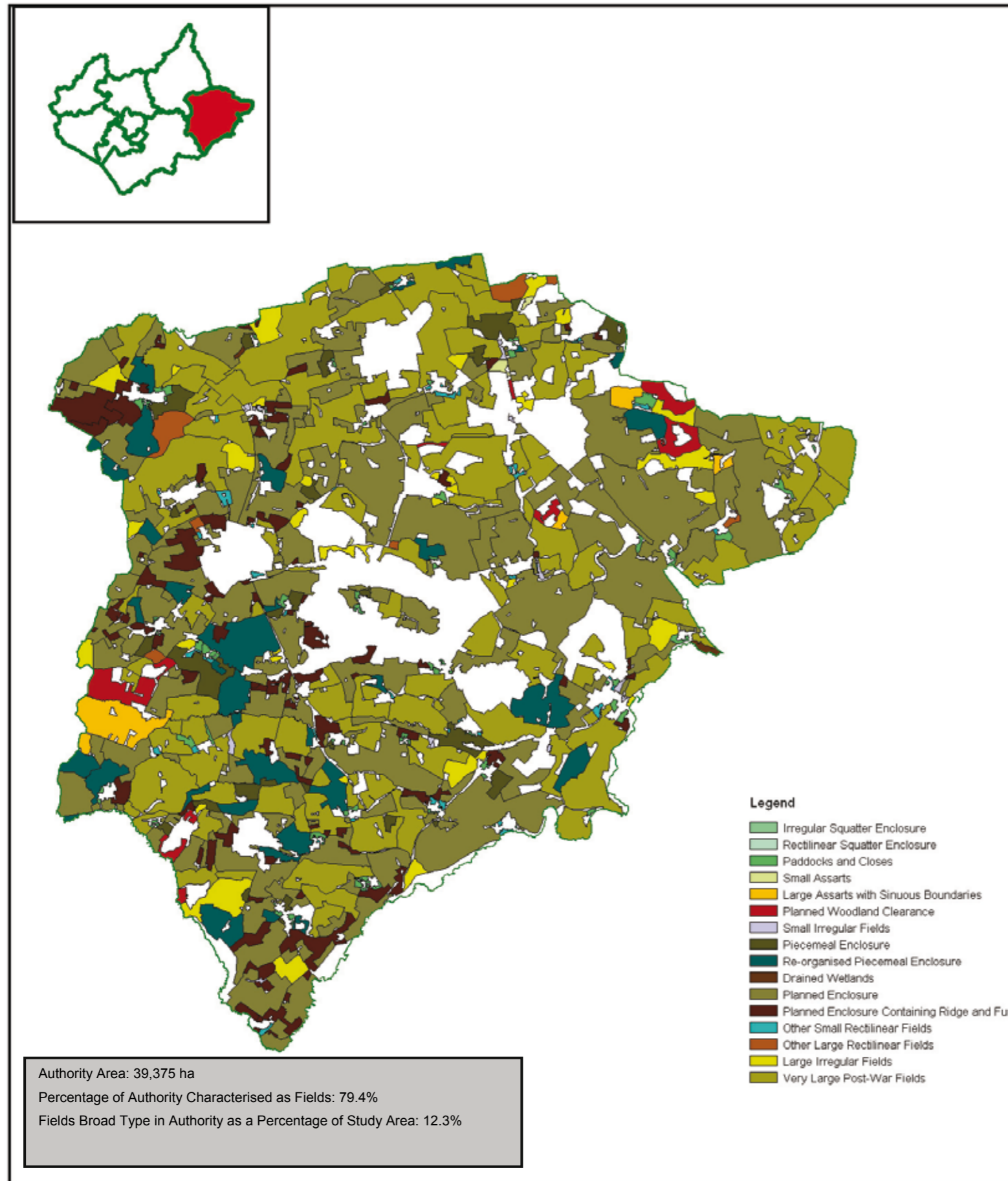
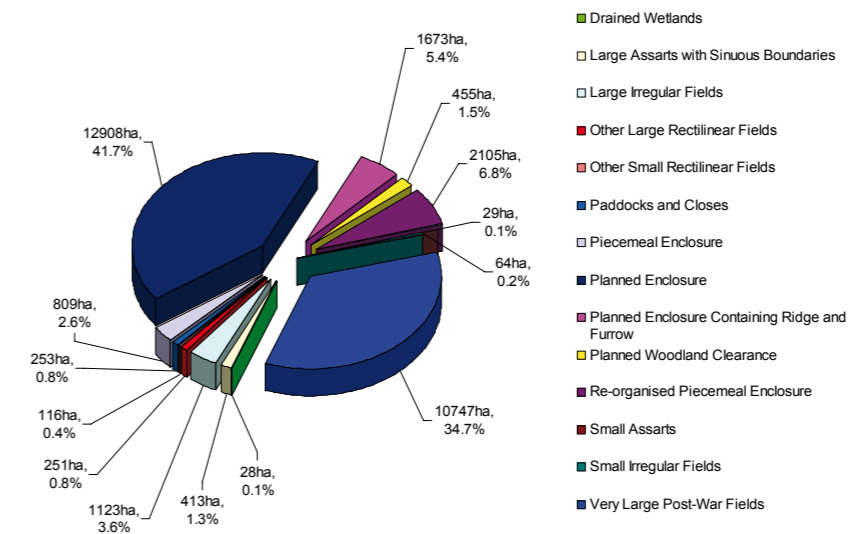


Figure 152. Field Types: Oadby and Wigston Borough



## Rutland County Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types

Composition of Field and Enclosed Land HLC Types within local authority administrative area



Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types within local authority expressed as a percentage of that Type across the whole study area

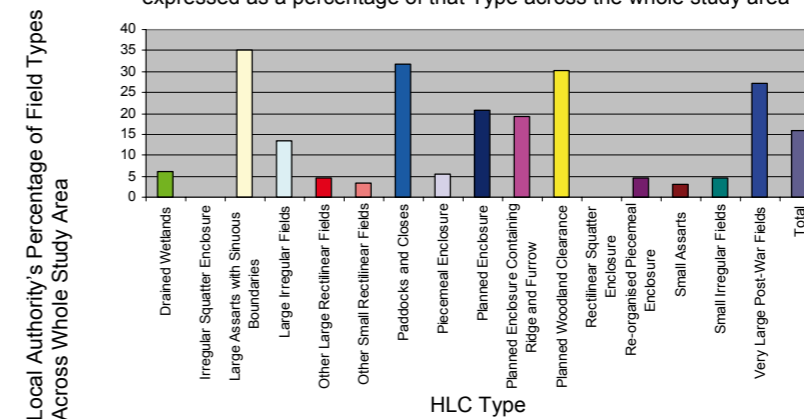
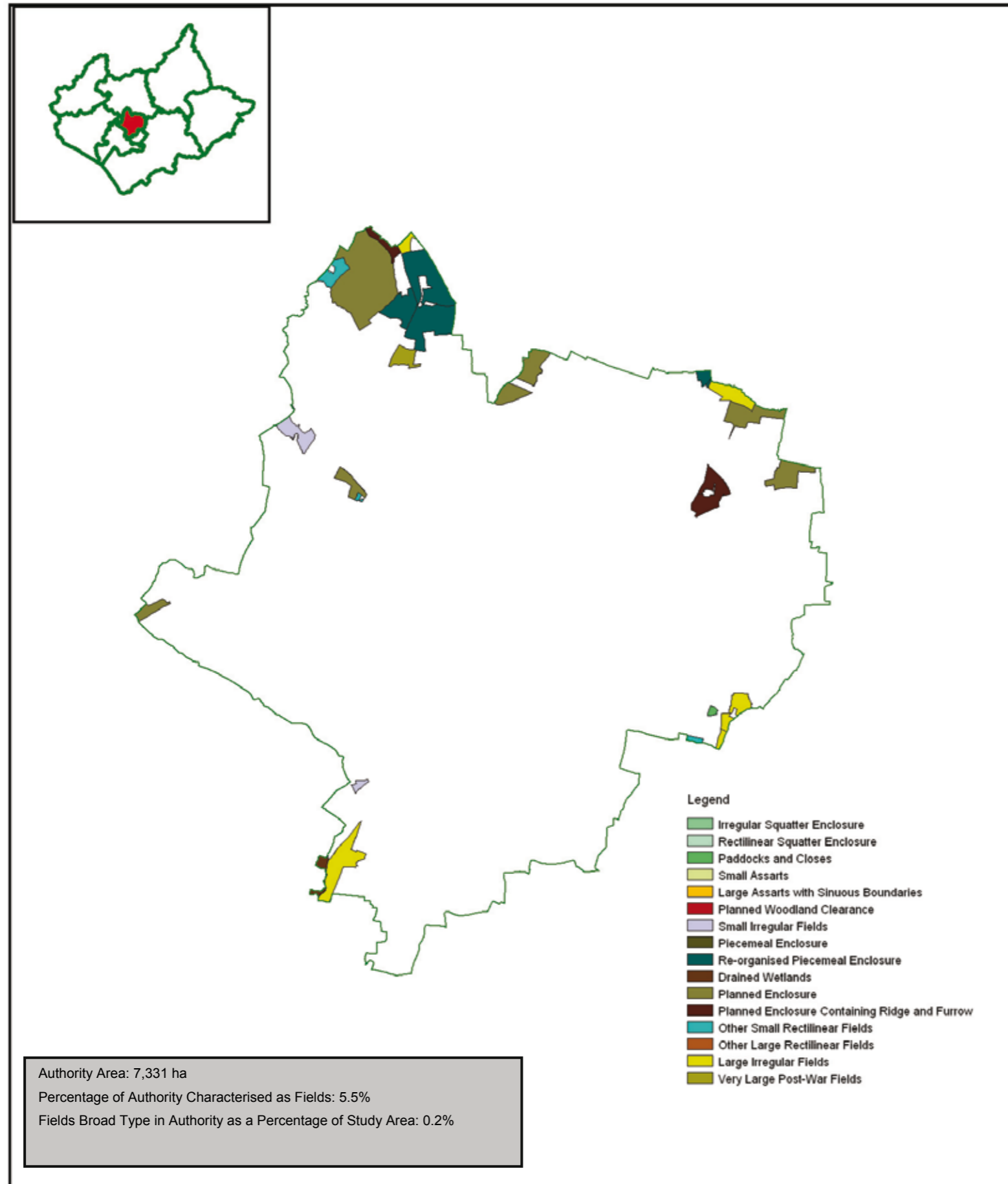
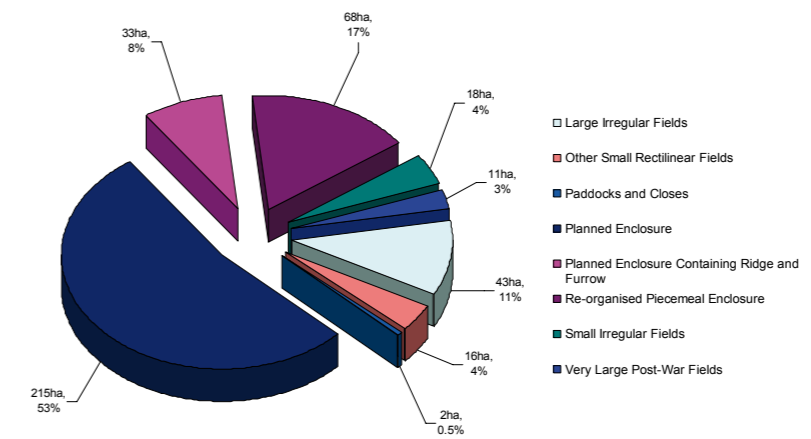


Figure 153. Field Types: Rutland County



## Leicester City Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types

Composition of Field and Enclosed Land HLC Types within local authority administrative area



Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types within local authority expressed as a percentage of that Type across the whole study area

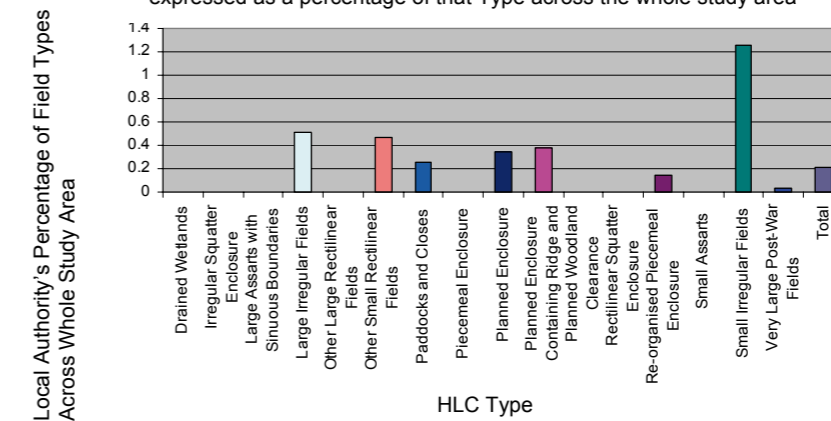
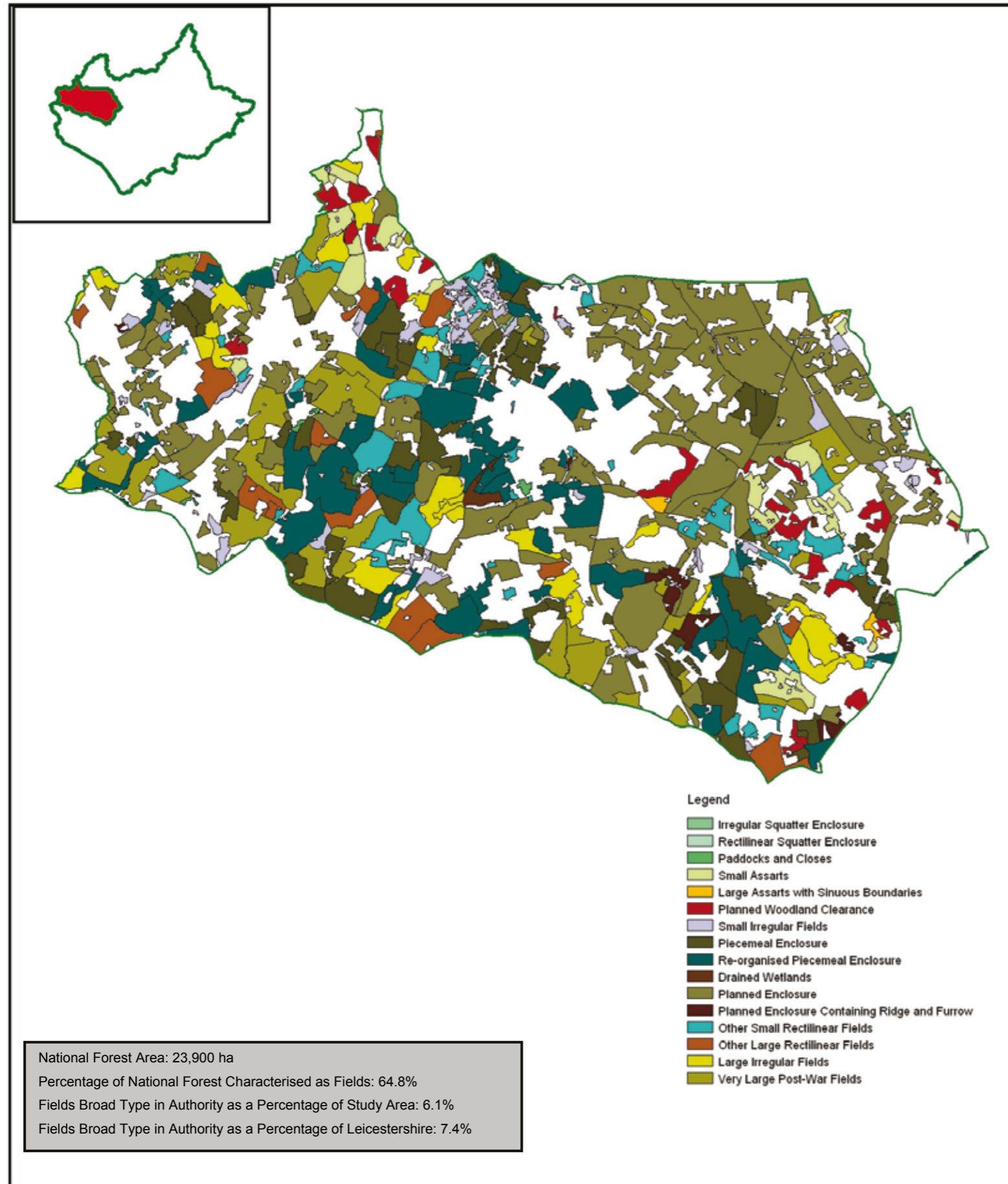
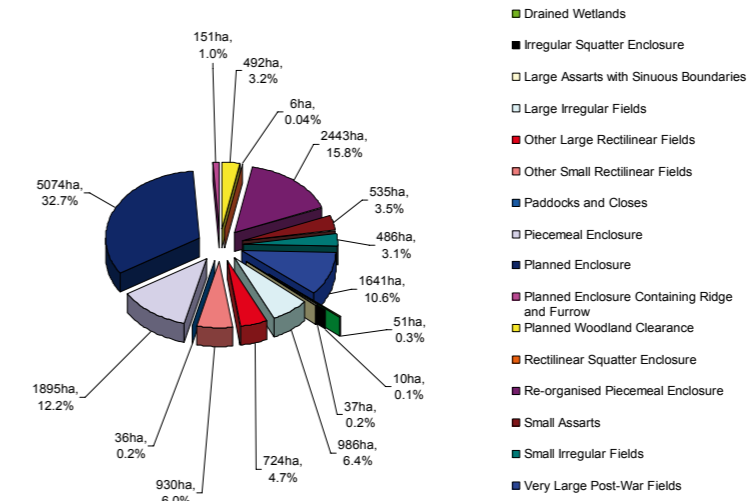


Figure154. Field Types: Leicester City

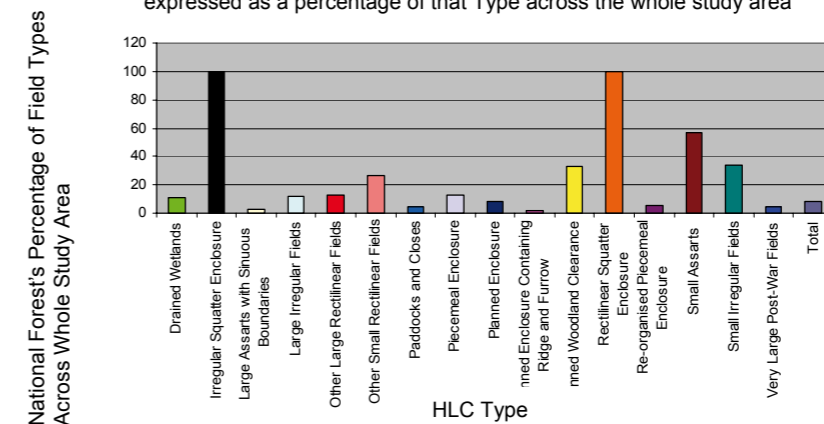


## National Forest within Leicestershire Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types

Composition of Field and Enclosed Land HLC Types within local authority administrative area



Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types within National Forest expressed as a percentage of that Type across the whole study area



Fields and Enclosed Land HLC Types within National Forest expressed as a percentage of that Type across Leicestershire

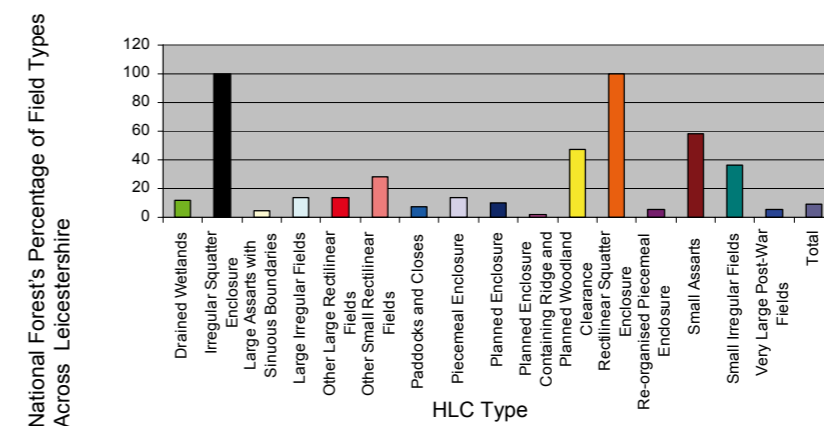


Figure155. Field Types: National Forest within Leicestershire