

February 2024

London Luton Airport Expansion

Planning Inspectorate Scheme Ref: TR020001

Volume 8 Additional Submissions (Examination)
**8.194 Excerpts of Relevant Landscape Character
Assessments**

Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010

Application Document Ref: TR020001/APP/8.194

The Planning Act 2008

The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010

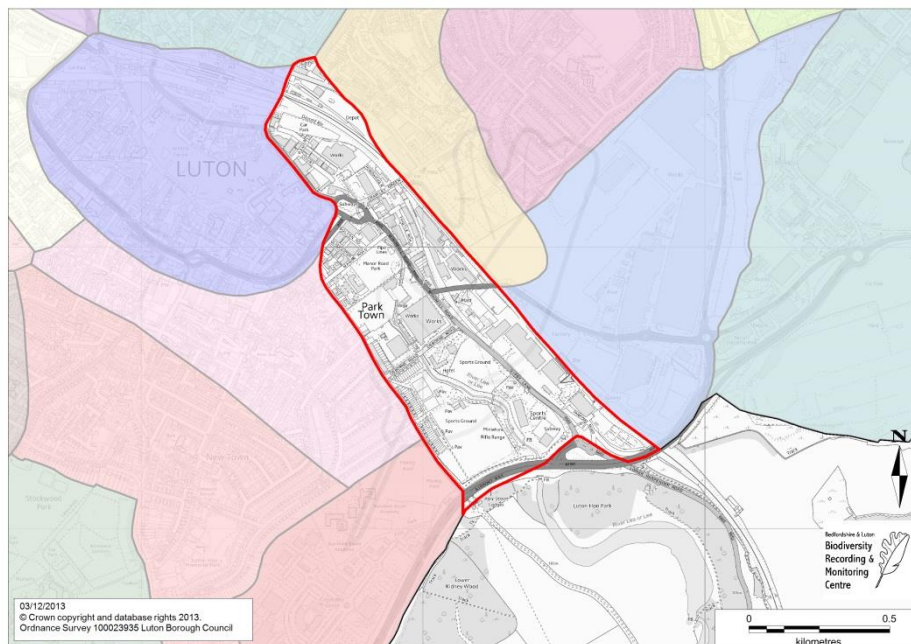
**London Luton Airport Expansion Development Consent
Order 202x**

**8.194 EXCERPTS OF RELEVANT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER
ASSESSMENTS**

Deadline:	Deadline 11
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Issue 1	February 2024	Additional Submission – Deadline 11

Character Area 4c: Lea Valley Lower



A flatter area to the south of the town, the northern part is the former Power Court area currently being re-developed. To the south of this is the roundabout with the A505 where the River Lea re-emerges from being buried underground. Beyond an area of industrial/office type buildings the river flows through a more open area, surrounded by sports pitches and facilities of the Vauxhall Recreation Club, with a hotel in the north of this part. The river is largely invisible, though trees/scrub along its straight, heavily modified channel indicate its presence. It flows out of the area at its southern boundary, under the steeply embanked A1081 Airport Way (to re-emerge in the parkland of Luton Hoo).

Gipsey Lane runs through much of the area, with a retail park adjacent. The mainline railway line forms the eastern boundary (with LCAs 8b and 16), while rising ground to the chalk valley side forms the western boundary.

There is little by way of accessible green space, with the majority of the southern part being privately owned – the Manor Road Recreation Ground being the main exception. It includes a section of the river running along its eastern side, which although heavily modified is quite attractive and accessible.

There are good views west up to the chalk valley side, with its Victorian water tower and the Capability Green Business Park. To the east there are views up to Hart Hill (with its Victorian Water Tower). The A1081 Airport Way blocks all views of Luton Hoo to the south, with the exception of a small underpass at Park Street, where a tall hedge does extend at least a fragment of the parkland landscape into this area.



Analysis

Quality/Condition

Where it is possible to assess quality, it is generally moderate, with a range of detractors even in the least developed areas, including buildings, pylons, abandoned sports facilities etc. The river channel is heavily modified.

Tranquillity is generally low, although in the centre of the more open area there are quieter areas. The proximity of the airport means there are frequent audible interruptions alongside the noise from roads and trains.

Sensitivity

Overall moderate, but the southern, more open part of the area is extremely sensitive to change. The loss of open space would completely change the landscape.

Issues

Development pressure is high – land here is extremely valuable given the proximity to the M1 and airport.

The river is largely invisible and separated from its floodplain, which has been ‘lifted’ in part to enable sports facilities to be created.

The embankment of the A1081 completely severs this part of the landscape from Luton Hoo.

Opportunities

Enough quality and importance in landscape terms in the southern part of the area remains to merit consideration for local landscape designation.

In the north the re-development of Power Court could create opportunities for bringing the river back to the surface and making a feature of it.

In the south there are significant opportunities to re-connect the river with its floodplain, create a more natural form and channel and create habitats such as meadows and wet woodland.

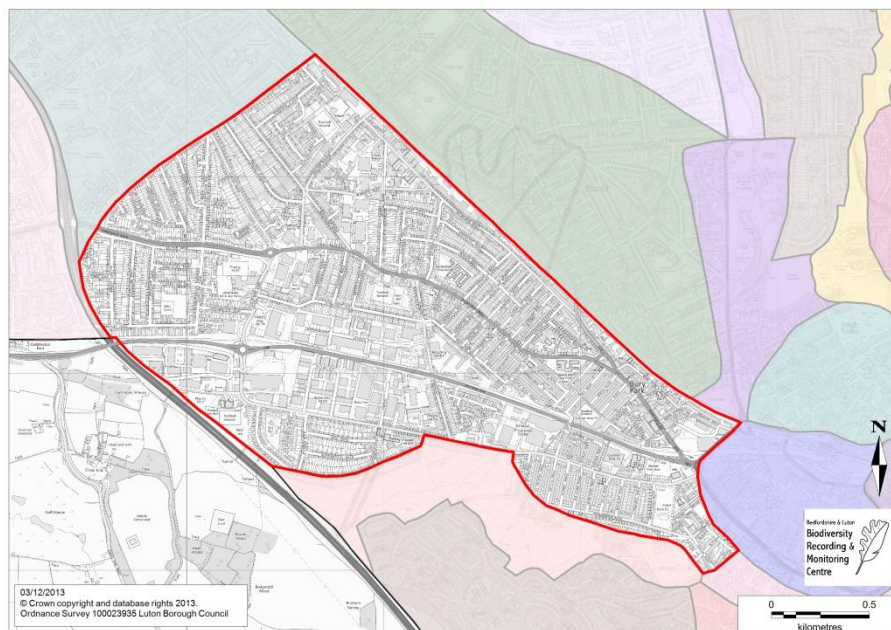
Access should also be provided within this area – significant development is planned nearby, and this is already an area of severe access deficit. Such access would connect people with the landscape

and the river, with opportunities to interpret this and the wider surrounding landscape. While there is no opportunity to re-connect with Luton Hoo in a landscape sense, there are opportunities to enhance access.

Constraints

In addition to the general constraint of the built environment, the generally private nature of the southern part of the area currently restricts opportunities. The embankment of the A1081 Airport Way is a major constraint.

Character Area 5: Western Transit Corridor



Description and Characteristics

A highly developed and urban part of the town, with a mix of residential, retail and industrial areas, and with major roads running through in a roughly east-west direction; the A505 Hatters Way and the part-dualed Dunstable Road. In addition to this the Guided Busway route also runs through the area alongside the A505. There is a subtle gradient from the west towards the town centre.

It is bounded by the railway line to the north-east, Legrave (LCA 3) to the north, Dallow Downs (LCA 19a) to the south and the M1 to the west. The town centre is at its very eastern end. Industrial and retail areas are generally in the south and west adjacent to the main road routes, which are elevated in places, providing views across the town. There is very little landscaping within these areas, which have large expanses of car park in addition to large, rectangular buildings.

Residential areas are largely pre/inter-war with wide streets particularly to north and west, but closer to the town centre there are Victorian terraces with narrow streets to the south and east.

There is little green space. Dallow Downs, immediately to the south, is a prominent landscape feature, visible from various points in the area, particularly the higher points, although often through

Views from eastern boundary – airport buildings in background



View looking s-w from eastern boundary demonstrating proximity of aircraft / Wigmore Park



Analysis

Quality/Condition

The landscape in this area is of a high quality, with few visible intrusions beyond the urban edge. Airport buildings are on the whole well screened.

However, tranquillity is only considered medium, despite the rural location. While the adjacent road creates a zone of low tranquillity along the edge, the main issue is the airport. While there are periods of high tranquillity, these are frequently interrupted by aircraft noise.

Sensitivity

High. The area is very sensitive to change, being such a stark contrast to the adjacent rural area, and also because it is relatively flat. The hedges, trees and small areas of woodland in the area serve an extremely useful purpose in screening the airport.

With part of the area being a well-used public park there is also a high level of sensitivity to change in terms of the impact upon users.

Issues

Aside from the airport, the major issue is the fact that part of this area has been allocated for business park type development – considering the prime location and demand for land this is not

surprising. However, this will have a severely detrimental effect on what is currently a very rural area.

Opportunities

While it would not serve any purpose to attempt to fit a local landscape designation to an area already allocated to development, the landscape should be preserved as far as possible. With Wigmore Valley Park having high landscape quality and warranting consideration for local landscape designation, it is suggested that the main hedgerow feature, extending right along the southern boundary, is also included in this consideration.

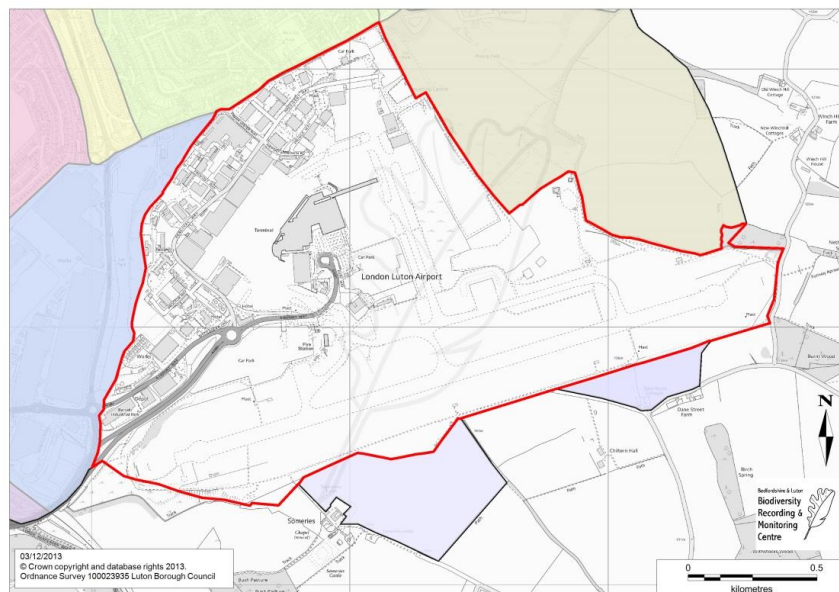
When the business park is developed, existing landscape features should be retained and where possible enhanced and linked into the wider landscape. Building design should take account of the very rural location.

Constraints

The allocation for the business park has already been made in the previous local plan.

The proximity of the airport will always be a constraint.

Character Area 14: Luton Airport



Sitting on top of what is an artificial cutting into the steep chalk valley side on the south-west of the town, this LCA is essentially an area of 'dipslope' – very flat and wide open (hence a good location for an airport). This location is actually quite well screened from the town – there are locations from which the taller buildings and control tower can be seen, but the runway is hidden by the landscape unless the observer is within this LCA.

The western boundary is the cutting into the valley side, below which the A1081 'Airport Way' runs, but does also include part of the cutting/slope where key roads feed in. The eastern boundary is

with LCA 13, and the southern boundary is the Luton administrative boundary, with the exception of LCAs 15a and 15b. Security fencing marks much of the airport perimeter – highly necessary but obtrusive. The majority of the area is featureless short grassland, with a long asphalt runway, and various related buildings, some in bright colours and including the prominent control tower. Aircraft not in use also stand close to the buildings. These are mainly in the north of the area. The airport complex also includes car parking and hotels.

Views from the southern edge are of a high quality, across the rolling Hertfordshire countryside as the land gently slopes away, with few buildings and roads visible, just trees, hedgerows and small woodlands. From the south-western corner it is possible to look down over part of Luton Hoo parkland. The area to the south was classified in the South Bedfordshire LCA as “11D: Luton Airport – Chiltern Green Chalk Dipslope”.



Analysis

Quality/Condition

Moderate. Although much of the area is open and well-managed, it is essentially sterilised and featureless.

Although the southern part of the LCA can be quite tranquil when aircraft are not taking off or landing, interruptions are frequent and therefore tranquillity is considered to be low.

Sensitivity

Being very open and flat the landscape is extremely sensitive to change, but given the nature of the use of this area this would be extremely unlikely. The northern part is much less sensitive.

Issues

Aside from the areas use as an airport, which is considered a necessary given, there are no issues.

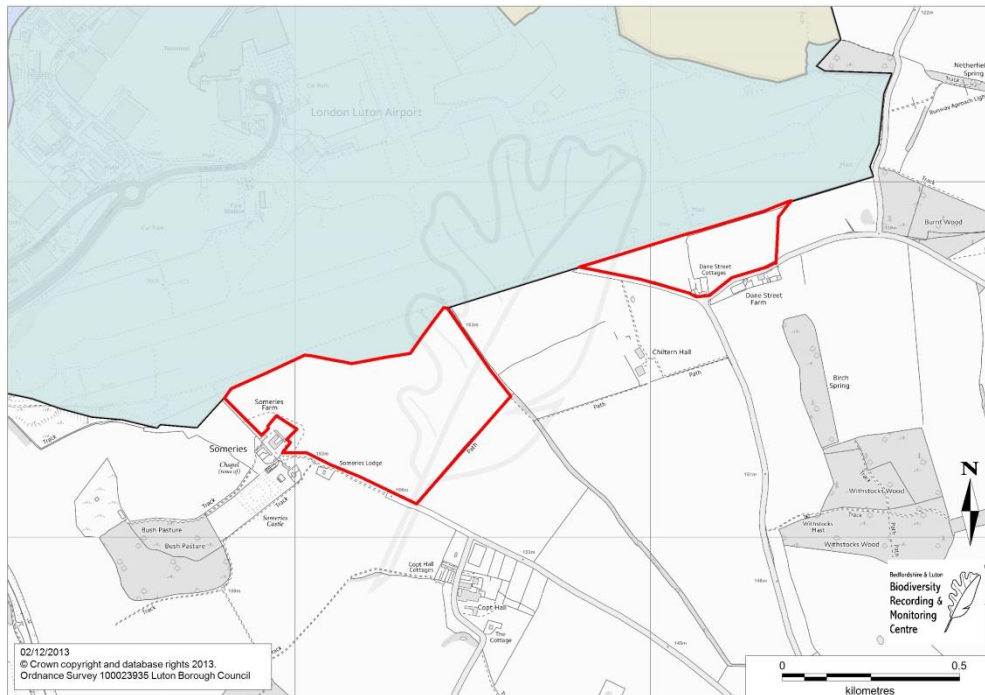
Opportunities

There are no opportunities for enhancing the landscape of the area that would not impact upon the airports function or security.

Constraints

The use of the area as an airport is a major constraint, but the airport is a critical element of the town.

Character Area 15: Dane Street Farm and Someries Farm



This LCA consists of two separate but similar areas where the Luton administrative boundary extends beyond the southern boundary of the airport (LCA 14). Dane Street Farm is the eastern area, Someries Farm is to the west.

Both are bounded by the airport to the north, with the high chain link security fence an evident visible boundary and incongruity. Both consist of areas of large, open arable fields, gently sloping away to the south and including boundary hedgerows with landmark trees.

The hedgerows are gappy in places, but the area is generally highly attractive, especially when viewed from the airport boundary with the perimeter fence behind the viewer. While these two areas are identified as a distinct LCA for the purpose of this study, the reality is that they are part of the wider “Luton Airport – Chiltern Green Chalk Dipslope” LCA described in the South Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (2007).

The area adjacent to the airport is popular with aircraft enthusiasts, parking along the adjacent lane and walking along the fence line.

A small landfill operation adjacent to Someries Farm is a significant incongruity, having raised sides. It is active and machinery is evident, both working and stationary, and heaps of spoil are left along Someries Farm Lane, prominent in the open landscape.

To the west of Someries Farm Lane the countryside becomes more rolling with arable fields and hedges interspersed with areas of woodland as it drops away into the Lea Valley.

Just outside the area, but visible from it, is Someries Castle. It actually consists of the ruin of the gatehouse and chapel, and is Britain's oldest brick-built building of its type. It is an attractive ruin but is hemmed in on two sides by farm buildings and yard.

From Dane Street views across to Chiltern Hall are attractive. The eastern end of the Dane Street area, immediately adjacent to the airport, becomes progressively scrubbier and culminates in a small area of woodland. There are also good views west across to Luton Hoo, Crawley Green Business Park on top of the opposite chalk valley side across the Lea valley in southern Luton, and further beyond across Luton.

Views south from airport perimeter



View along southern perimeter fence of airport



Landfill operation at Someries Farm



Analysis

Quality/Condition

High – the countryside in this area is generally well managed with interesting field patterns, though some hedgerows have significant gaps.

Tranquillity is very difficult to assess in this LCA, as it is at times very high, and at others (when aircraft are approaching, landing, taking off) it is very low.

Sensitivity

High. Being very rural, open and relatively flat this landscape is extremely sensitive to change.

Issues

Other than the impact of the airport, the main issue is the landfill operation at Someries Farm, which stands proud of the landscape. There are also spoil heaps and machinery adjacent to the lane nearby. This severely detracts from the landscape.

Although just outside the area, it is unfortunate that Someries Farm was built with so little consideration of the setting of Someries Castle.

Opportunities

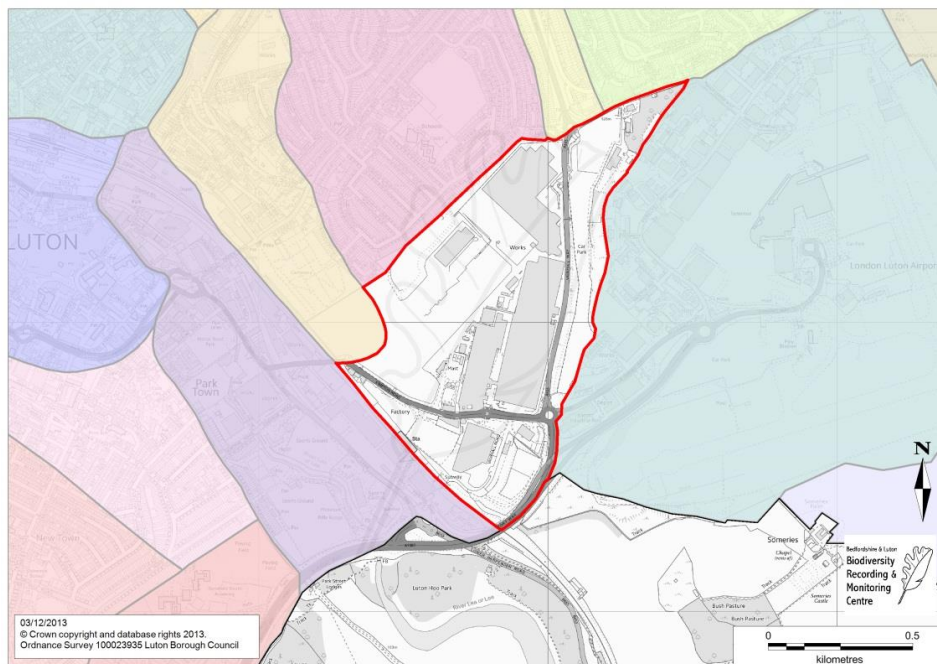
These areas were identified as 'Areas of great Landscape Value' in the previous Local Plan, and would merit consideration for a similar level of local landscape designation now.

Any opportunity to reduce the impact of the landfill operation and manage it more closely, removing spoil heaps and ensuring appropriate restoration, should be taken.

Constraints

The opportunity to reduce impact and influence restoration of the landfill operation is likely to be extremely limited as it will be covered by an existing permission. The only real opportunity would be to encourage enforcement action were the operators to be exceeding their permission.

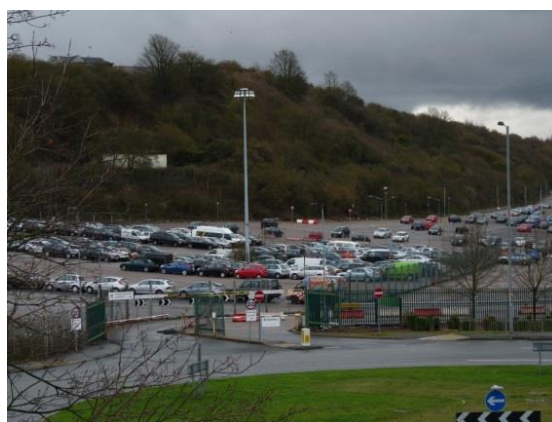
Character Area 16: Luton South Industrial



This area is highly industrial and urbanised, and assessment is difficult and limited. The dominant features are the very large buildings of the Vauxhall plant, airport Car park areas, and major roads such as the A1081 Airport Way, which has been cut into the steep chalk valley side exposing the underlying geology.

Parts of the cutting have grassland or scrubby vegetation and create a narrow green feature running north-south. While this landscape is man-made it is still of great interest, and highlights the presence of the chalk bedrock.

There are views out over the Vauxhall plant and across the Lea valley, but these are very urban views. Airport buildings are also visible in places.



Analysis

Quality/Condition

The majority of the landscape has been heavily modified and is of either low quality or it is not possible to assess. The exception is the narrow green corridor/cutting, which is in moderate condition as development is very close to it.

Tranquillity is low throughout.

Sensitivity

Low, with the exception of the green corridor along the cutting, which is high.

Issues

Blighted by industry and development, road and aircraft noise.

Opportunities

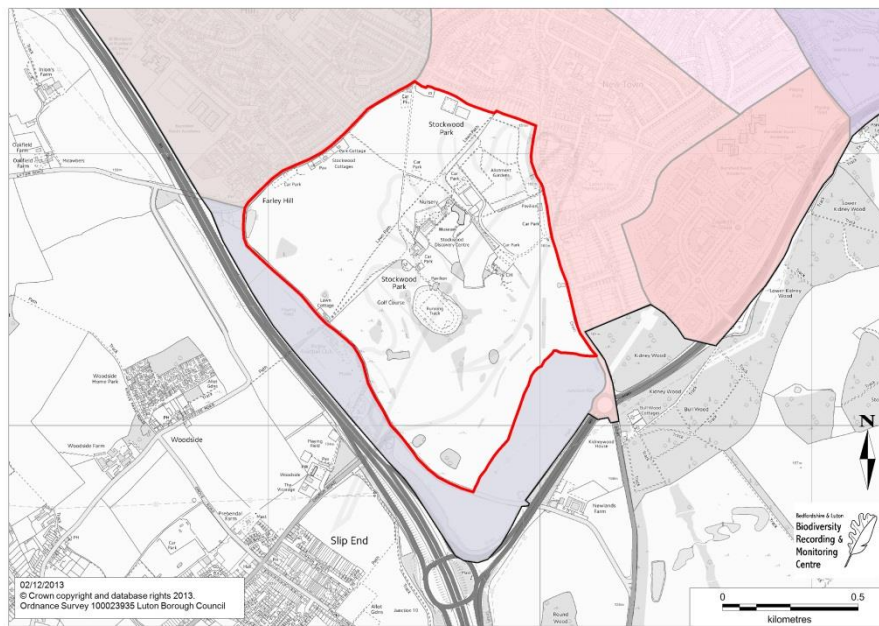
There are few opportunities to enhance this area, although every effort should be made to ensure that any future planning consents require landscape enhancements.

Despite the nature of the wider area, the green corridor, particularly along the 'ridge' in the north, is worthy of protection and should be considered for local landscape designation.

Constraints

General constraints of industrial landscape.

Character Area 22: Stockwood Park



A very well defined LCA, with its boundaries being the boundary of Stockwood Park, a historic park (18th Century) associated with Stockwood House (demolished in the 1960s). An estate wall runs along parts of the boundary, which is enclosed by London Road to the east, Farley Hill (and the Farley Hill estate) to the north, Newlands Road (and LCA 23, with the M1 a short distance beyond) to the west and agricultural land (also part of LCA 23) to the south. The area is largely open with parkland, walled gardens, sports pitches, allotments and tree avenues, belts and clumps – elements of the original design remain, but with a variety of other uses. Various buildings from the estate remain, including stable blocks and gateways, with other newer buildings and car parks. The ‘Stockwood Discovery Centre’ is close to the entrance on the eastern side, plus there is an entrance in the north-west corner. Around the perimeter there are occasional small buildings relating to the estate. Just across London Road, on the south-eastern side, is Kidney Wood, a block of ancient semi-natural woodland. The adjacent part of Stockwood Park is one of very few areas in Luton where soils are slightly acidic, and there is a small area of heathland type habitat.

There is an athletics track in the centre, clearly visible from the air but well-screened at ground level. Approximately half of the overall area is taken up by a golf course, which nestles into the well-designed landscape populated by a variety of mature and attractive tree specimens. Large open expanses provide views through the site, and beyond to the wider countryside to the west of the M1 and to the south. A significant line of pylons is visible to the south.

The land is highest on the eastern half, forming a plateau, dropping away towards the western side. The western boundary is relatively well wooded, providing a visual screen from the (embanked) M1.

Views across northern part of the site



Analysis

Quality/Condition

High. A strong feel of the designed landscape is still evident, other elements generally blend in well and there is also a strong sense of naturalness. The area is managed to a very high quality.

Tranquillity is moderate around the edges, with the influence of busy roads, but higher towards the centre of the area – although occasional noise from aircraft, often flying low, does punctuate the relative calm.

Sensitivity

High. Surrounded on two sides by residential areas and roads, the motorway on another and a road improvement/re-alignment scheme taking place to the south, this green oasis with high historic/cultural value is highly sensitive to change. While the western boundary is relatively well screened by trees, others are more open. The boundary to the south is less pronounced and not well screened.

Issues

While the Park itself is relatively static and safe, a proposed road re-alignment scheme to the south (not started at the time of survey but due to start during 2014) could have negative impacts, affecting land close to the Park. Efforts have been made to minimise the potential impacts at the planning stage.

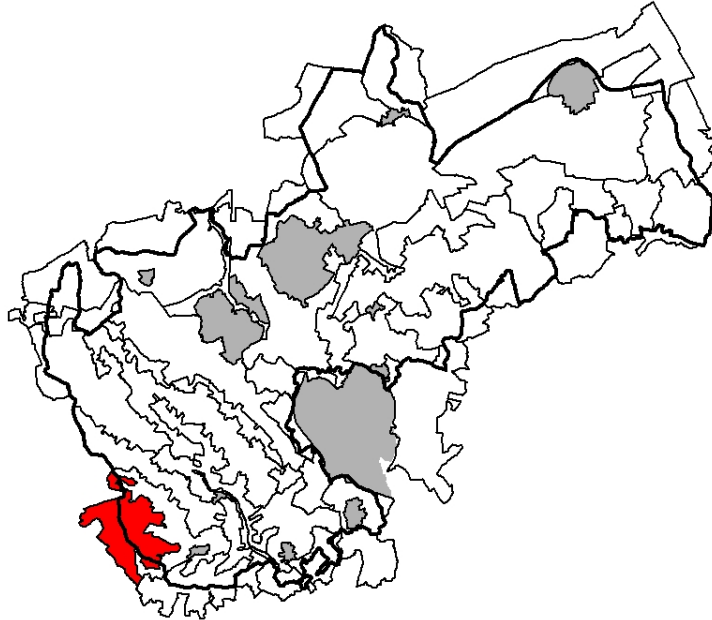
Opportunities

The area had AGLV status in the previous Local Plan and is of such landscape quality to warrant consideration for similar designation now.

The road re-alignment scheme does present opportunities for improvements to the southern part of the site, including potential increase of the small heathy area.

Constraints

Existing uses such as sports facilities and allotments currently restrict any further restoration of the historic landscape.

LOCATION

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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Character Area extends from boundary of Luton Airport in the north to Kimpton valley in the south.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Gently rolling elevated landscape plateau defined by steep sided incised valleys to east, west and south.

Many large exposed arable fields with smaller pockets of grazing around settlements. Occasional scattered dwellings. Field pattern degraded with relatively few remaining hedgerows. Remnant mature hedgerow trees. Mixture of woodland types, some mature, well-established, deciduous woodland interspersed with more recent mixed woodland plantations. Character Area truncated by the man-made landscape features associated with Luton Airport.



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KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Elevated plateau
- Predominantly large scale arable use
- Smaller pastoral fields closer to settlements
- Large to medium sized mixed woodland plantations
- Historic houses and associated parkland

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Lawrence End parkland
- Man-made landscape at Luton Airport boundary
- Water-tower at Peters Green

ASSESSMENT**PHYSICAL INFLUENCES****Geology & soils**

Soils are free-draining loamy acidic brown soils over glacial drift till.

Topography

The plateau covers a broadly rectangular area extending some 4km from north to south and 3km from east to west. The plateau appears flat to gently sloping to the southeast.

Degree of slope

Minimal, typically 1:200 across the plateau.

Altitude range

125m to 160m.

Hydrology

There are no significant water courses. There are, however, a number of small ponds associated with farms in the north.

Land cover and land use

The predominant land use is arable farming.

Vegetation and wildlife

Scattered woodland in discrete parcels including both ancient deciduous woodlands and more recent mixed plantations. Species include hornbeam coppice, oak and ash. Regenerating elm in hedgerows also some holly is common. Lime is the dominant parkland tree at Lawrence End Park which is largely improved grassland.

This Character Area contains a few ancient semi-natural woodlands, which are typically dominated by oak and coppiced hornbeam. Bluebells are frequently a feature of the groundflora, but other ancient woodland indicators are also present. Withstocks Wood, Bishey Wood and Burnt Wood are examples of ancient semi-natural oak and hornbeam woodland. These woods have been replanted with conifers to varying extents, but their seedbanks of ancient flora are retained, as denoted by the presence of ancient woodland indicator species. Occasional ancient, species-rich hedgerows are another feature of this Character Area.

The Character Area has generally a sparsity of ecologically interesting sites.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

In the west are the remains of a chapel and Someries Castle.

Field pattern

The historic agricultural landscape pattern consists of a mixture of prairie fields with post-1950s boundary loss, pre-18th century irregular enclosure, 18th century and later enclosure and ancient woodland. Today there are predominantly large irregular fields with smaller parcels of grazing land around settlements.

Transport pattern

Winding sunken lanes complement the more direct connecting roads. To the north the pattern of roads and lanes are truncated by the development at Luton Airport.

Settlements and built form

The historic settlement pattern is characterised by farms and villages.

EVALUATION**VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION**

The Character Area is only locally visible from the surrounding areas due to its elevated land form. The Character Area is generally peaceful, however, in the north aircraft noise is a particularly notable element. The landscape has been de-valued by extensive arable production and has open and exposed aspects. The parkland to the north is a more discrete landscape with unified features and contained views.

Rarity & distinctiveness

This landscape type is frequent in the county.

VISUAL IMPACT

There are few built detractors.

ACCESSIBILITY

The local network of roads and public rights of way radiates out from the hub, which covers the Character Area between Peters Green to Chiltern Green. The Character Area is well served by footpaths and bridleways.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) have undertaken Tier B (Community of Place) consultations. Views of the local community have been sought and contributor's responses to each of the Character Areas will be analysed and a summary of the responses provided by HCC.

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

LC1 Landscape Conservation Area

EVALUATION

CONDITION

Land cover change: Widespread
 Age structure of tree cover: Mixed
 Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: Relic
 Management of semi-natural habitat: Good
 Survival of cultural pattern: Declining/Relic
 Impact of built development: Low
 Impact of land-use change: Moderate

Matrix Score: **Good**

ROBUSTNESS

Impact of landform: Apparent
 Impact of land cover: Prominent
 Impact of historic pattern: Insignificant
 Visibility from outside: Locally visible
 Sense of enclosure: Partial
 Visual unity: Coherent
 Distinctiveness/rarity: Frequent

Matrix Score: **Moderate**

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
		ROBUSTNESS		

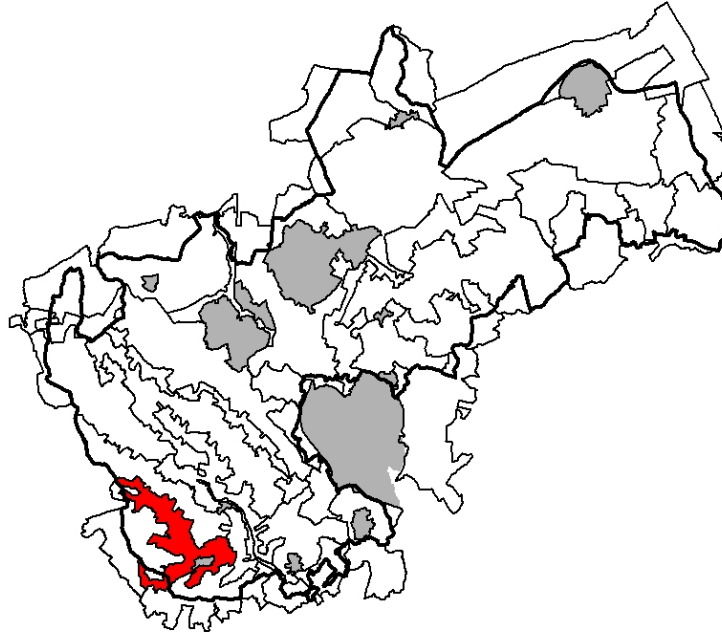
GUIDELINES

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE:

Conserve and Strengthen

- Promote management of ancient woodland to encourage a diverse woodland flora
- Promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and areas of semi-natural habitat and the creation of links between habitat areas
- Encourage policies for the safeguarding of existing hedges and the creation of new boundaries at appropriate locations, consistent with agricultural management practices
- Protect and preserve the pattern of narrow winding lanes and associated hedge banks, sunken lanes, verges and hedges
- Promote the diversity of hedgerow species and the planting of standard hedgerow trees
- Maintain and extend the rights of way network
- Encourage the management of hornbeam, oak and ash coppice
- Encourage the preparation and implementation of restoration and management plans for parkland landscapes including Lawrence End

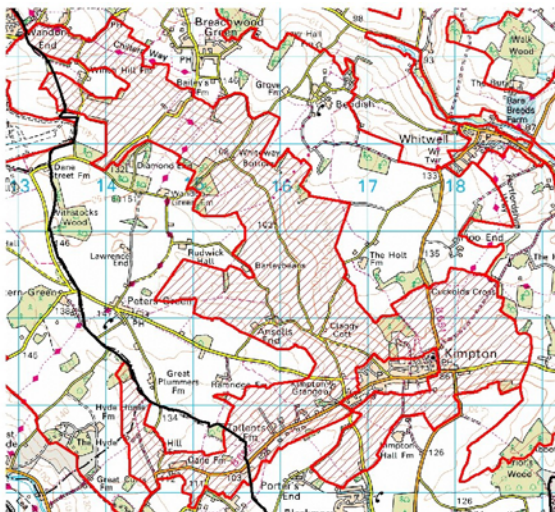
LOCATION



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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

The Whiteway valley extends from the eastern edge of Luton to a point west of Kimpton where the valley joins the Whitwell valley. Kimpton village lies at the confluence of the two valleys. The head of the Kimpton valley is located west of Plummers Lane, joining Kimpton Bottom Lane at Dane Farm.



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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Steeply sided dry valleys with Whiteway Bottom Lane following the bottom of the valley and the B652 Kimpton Bottom Road to the south. To the north of Whiteways small winding lanes cross perpendicular to the line of the valley. Predominantly arable use. Whiteways Bottom is largely devoid of settlement whilst Kimpton Bottom has a linear settlement. Locally smaller field parcels on the more steeply sloping land. Scattered woodland parcels along the top edge of valley sides.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Steep sided valley slope
- Dominant arable use
- Scattered woodland parcels

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Abuts Luton Airport runway

ASSESSMENT**PHYSICAL INFLUENCES****Geology & soils**

Free draining loamy brown soils over Upper and Middle Chalk. Chalk is masked by overlying Clay-with-Flints and peri and post glacial coombe deposits.

Topography

Narrow valley in upper reaches gradually widening at confluence with other tributaries. The valley is approximately 1km wide east of Kimpton.

Degree of slope

Typically 1:10 slopes to valley sides.

Altitude range

Valley falls from 135m at suburban edge of Luton to 80m at Kimpton Mill. 125m at the head of the Kimpton valley.

Hydrology

Whiteway valley is a dry valley, but in time of high water table the historic river Kym can reappear at Kimpton Bottom.

Land cover and land use

The predominant land use is arable farming.

Vegetation and wildlife

Limited woodland cover in the upper reaches of the valleys. Large woodland block to the north of Kimpton (Park Wood). Ancient semi-natural woodland is present on valley sides such as Hurst/Sewetts Wood, groves near Rowdalls Plantation and Hoo Park. Most of this woodland tends to be transitional between oak/hornbeam and ash/beechn, depending on the presence or absence of chalk near the surface. Cherry is also common.

Fragments of calcareous grasslands remain along Kimpton Bottom and on road verges at Whiteway Bottom and north of Kimpton.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

In 1086 Kimpton was assessed for 4 hides and formed part of the possessions of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux. The village of Kimpton still retains its 12th century church of St Peter and St Paul. To the west of Kimpton lie ring ditches, linear ditches and enclosures of unknown origin

Field pattern

The historic agricultural landscape comprises a mixture of prairie fields with post-1950s boundary loss, pre-18th century irregular enclosure, pre-18th century irregular sinuous enclosure, 18th century and later enclosure and ancient woodland. Today a high proportion of hedges have been removed, there is predominantly large-scale field pattern but with smaller fields on some steeply sloping ground. Smaller field parcels associated with fringes of settlements and along Kimpton Bottom, west of Kimpton.

Transport pattern

A combination of primary routes following valley bottoms interconnected by small winding lanes often sunken and rising up the valley side.

Settlements and built form

The historic settlement pattern is characterised by outlying cottages, villages and farmsteads. The Character Area includes the larger settlement of Kimpton and incorporates some associated ribbon development. The scattered farmsteads are further up the valleys. Kimpton contains several 17th century houses and cottages.

EVALUATION

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

The Character Area is a combination of undeveloped open landscapes, mainly in the upper valley reaches, with a sense of remoteness, contrasting with the well settled, sub-urban character in the lower part of the valley.

Rarity & distinctiveness

Landscape type frequent in the west of the District.

VISUAL IMPACT

More recent ribbon development associated with Kimpton and Whitwell intrudes into the valley setting especially associated pony paddocks and stabling. Some narrower steeper sided valleys provide sense of visual containment. From certain vantage points, especially where there is little woodland cover, there are long distance views down the valley.

ACCESSIBILITY

Whereas the road network follows the valley bottoms, with feeder roads connecting to adjacent areas, the network of rights of way often cuts across the valleys.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) have undertaken Tier B (Community of Place) consultations. Views of the local community have been sought and contributor's responses to each of the Character Areas will be analysed and a summary of the responses provided by HCC.

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

LC1	Landscape Conservation Area
GD 1909	Hoo

EVALUATION

CONDITION

Land cover change: Widespread
 Age structure of tree cover: Mixed
 Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: Relic
 Management of semi-natural habitat: Not obvious
 Survival of cultural pattern: Relic
 Impact of built development: Low
 Impact of land-use change: Moderate

Matrix Score:	Poor
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ROBUSTNESS

Impact of landform: Prominent
 Impact of land cover: Apparent
 Impact of historic pattern: Insignificant
 Visibility from outside: Locally visible
 Sense of enclosure: Contained
 Visual unity: Coherent
 Distinctiveness/rarity: Frequent

Matrix Score:	Moderate
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CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
ROBUSTNESS				

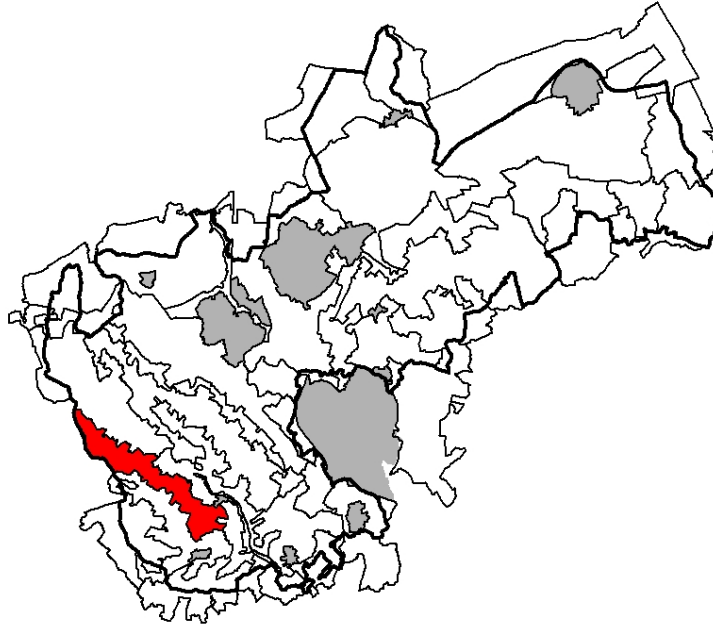
GUIDELINES

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE:

Improve and Restore

- Promote management of ancient woodland to encourage a diverse woodland flora
- Promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and areas of semi-natural habitat and the creation of links between habitat areas
- Promote hedgerow restoration along the lines of historic field boundaries and for the creation of visual links between existing woodland areas
- Promote the use of traditional field hedges in place of post and wire enclosures to new grazing areas
- Protect and preserve the pattern of narrow winding lanes and associated hedge banks, sunken lanes, verges and hedges
- Promote the diversity of hedgerow species and the planting of standard hedgerow trees
- Maintain and extend the rights of way network
- Protect the tranquil nature of Whiteways Bottom by ensuring that no adverse development is permitted

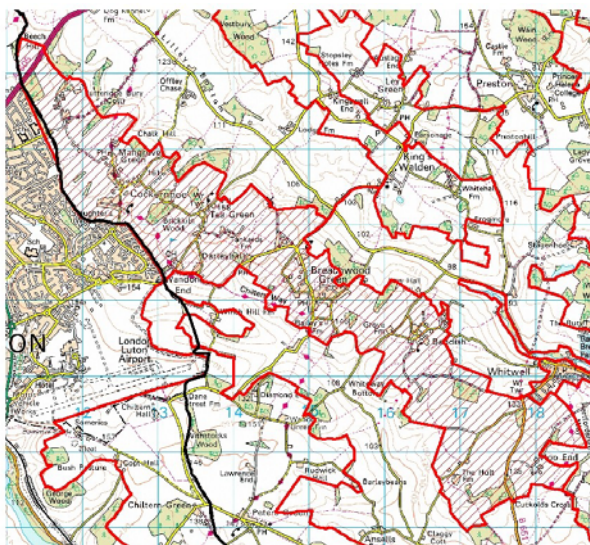
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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

Character Area extends from northeast of Luton (Putteridge Bury College) to Hoo End Farm (north of Kimpton). The area is long and narrow separating the Lilley Bottom Valley to the northeast and Whiteway Bottom Valley to the southwest.



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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Gently rolling plateau ridge landscape. Mainly large arable fields with smaller pockets of grazing around settlements and occasional scattered dwellings. Field pattern degraded. Mature remnant trees, remaining hedgerows of diverse species. Woodlands old, established and some more modern mixed deciduous/evergreen plantations. Strong cultural pattern remains based on layout of lanes and older woodlands.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Gently rolling plateau landform
- Large scale arable fields with scattered farmsteads and dwellings
- Woodland is a mixture of ancient deciduous and recent mixed plantations.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Water tower at Tea Green
- Telecommunications mast at Hoo Park
- Parkland at Putteridge Bury

ASSESSMENT**PHYSICAL INFLUENCES****Geology & soils**

Chalk at depth. Generally free-draining loamy acidic brown soils over glacial drift till. Some brickearth and superficial gravels near Breachwood Green.

Topography

Gently rolling plateau with incised valley to north and south edges.

Degree of slope

Varies typically 1:100.

Altitude range

137m to 167m.

Hydrology

No discernable water courses. Local ponds at Breachwood Green, Tea Green and Mangrove Green.

Land cover and land use

Predominantly arable production with smaller pockets of grazing land adjacent to settlements and farmsteads.

Vegetation and wildlife

Mature remnant hedgerow trees. Remaining hedgerows of diverse species including hornbeam, field maple, oak, ash and some regenerating elm, also hawthorn, hazel and blackthorn.

Ancient woodland sites, such as Thieving Grove, Christmas Wood and Rose Grove, are present within this Character Area. These woodlands contain a variety of tree standards including oak, hornbeam, ash, beech, with areas of coppiced hazel, cherry, ash or maple. The remains of old gravel pits can be found in several of these woodlands. Ancient oak/hornbeam woodlands, partially replanted with conifers are the most frequent woodland type. Several of these woodlands have a ground flora dominated by bluebells in the spring, but other ancient woodland indicator species are also present. Green lanes, such as Long Lane, are also a feature of this Character Area linking the ancient woodlands and are typified by ancient hedgerow communities, which may be acidic in nature.

Remnants of old acidic/neutral grassland remain at Mangrove Green, Tea Green and in paddocks at Breachwood Green and Bendish.

Tubular water dropwort is recorded from a pond at Breachwood Green and dormouse from some coppices.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

In the north of the Character Area lie shrunken village earthworks of medieval date.

Field pattern

The historic agricultural landscape pattern consists of a mixture of pre-18th century irregular enclosure and prairie fields with both post-1950s boundary loss and relict elements. Patches of ancient woodland lie in the south and informal medieval parkland occurs in far north and far south. There are varying sizes of fields, however the pattern is locally degraded, especially where intensive arable production dominates.

Transport pattern

Winding lanes criss-cross the Character Area

Settlements and built form

The historic settlement pattern is sparse characterised by small villages and farms. There are larger settlements at Breachwood Green and Mangrove Green. Generally dispersed scattered farmsteads and clusters of wayside dwellings.

EVALUATION

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

Woodland areas help to provide a cohesive visual integrity to some parts, however, arable areas are bland and featureless. Tranquillity improves further away from the urban fringe of Luton however aircraft noise is an issue.

Rarity & distinctiveness

Character is not uncommon and has many similarities to adjacent plateau landscapes.

VISUAL IMPACT

Luton Airport infrastructure visible from Tea Green.
Luton urban fringe.

ACCESSIBILITY

The Character Area is well served by the local network of footpaths, tracks and public rights of way.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) have undertaken Tier B (Community of Place) consultations. Views of the local community have been sought and contributor's responses to each of the Character Areas will be analysed and a summary of the responses provided by HCC.

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

LC1 Landscape Conservation Area

EVALUATION

CONDITION

Land cover change: Widespread
 Age structure of tree cover: Mature
 Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: Relic
 Management of semi-natural habitat: Not obvious
 Survival of cultural pattern: Declining/Relic
 Impact of built development: Moderate
 Impact of land-use change: High

Matrix Score: **Poor**

ROBUSTNESS

Impact of landform: Apparent
 Impact of land cover: Apparent
 Impact of historic pattern: Insignificant
 Visibility from outside: Locally visible
 Sense of enclosure: Partial
 Visual unity: Coherent
 Distinctiveness/rarity: Frequent

Matrix Score: **Moderate**

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
		ROBUSTNESS		

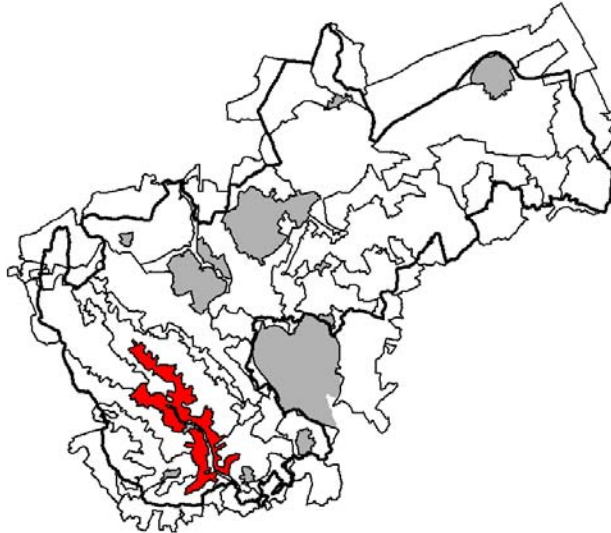
GUIDELINES

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE:

Improve and Restore

- Promote management of ancient woodland to encourage a diverse woodland flora
- Promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and areas of semi-natural habitat and the creation of links between habitat areas
- Promote hedgerow restoration along the lines of historic field boundaries and for the creation of visual links between existing woodland areas
- Promote the use of traditional field hedges in place of post and wire enclosures to new grazing areas
- Protect and preserve the pattern of narrow winding lanes and associated hedge banks, sunken lanes, verges and hedges
- Promote the diversity of hedgerow species and the planting of standard hedgerow trees
- Maintain and extend the rights of way network
- Encourage policies for the planting of woodland along the sub-urban fringe of Luton
- Encourage preparation and implementation of restoration and management plans for parkland landscape at Putteridge Bury

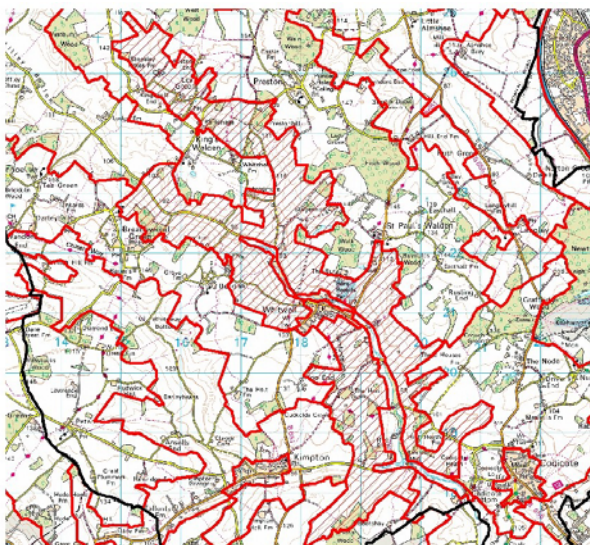
LOCATION



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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

The Whitwell valley comprises two arms that form a confluence north of Whitwell settlement. South of Whitwell the continuity of the valley can be sub-divided into two smaller units either side of the River Mimram (Character Area 204). The northernmost reaches of the valley extend to the southeastern outskirts of Great Offley village. The western arm of the valley extends towards the pinch point at Kings Walden, north of which the valley widens to form Lilley Bottom (Character Area 212).



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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Steeply incised valley sides in a chalk landscape plateau. The upper reaches of the valley are dry. Water springs to the surface west of Stagenhoe Bottom Farm. The valley gradually widens to the south as it incorporates an increasing number of tributaries (usually dry). Woodlands are scattered, irregular in shape and predominantly mixed deciduous and evergreen. The road network follows the valley bottoms with small winding roads connecting the valley sides. Field sizes are generally large and regular in shape, but with more irregular field parcels in the upper reaches north of Frogmore Bottom.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Steep sided valley
- Dominant arable land use
- Scattered woodland parcels of irregular shape
- Locally smaller field parcels on the upper reaches of the valley
- Smaller paddocks and horse grazing associated with local settlements

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Hoo Parkland

ASSESSMENT**PHYSICAL INFLUENCES****Geology & soils**

Generally free draining calcareous or neutral loamy brown soils over Chalk. Valley slopes are overlain by coombe deposits and thin Clay-with-Flints.

Topography

Narrow valley in upper reaches gradually widening to the confluence with the Kimpton valley.

Degree of slope

Typically 1:10 slopes to valley sides.

Altitude range

Valley corridor falls from 140m north of Stopsley Holes Farm to 75m to the west of Codicote.

Hydrology

The Whitwell valley contains the source of the River Mimram. The spring is located 0.5km to the west of Stagenhoe Bottom Farm. Side valleys that feed into the Whitwell valley are mainly dry. (NB The River Mimram is included within Character Area 204).

Land cover and land use

The predominant land use is arable farming.

Vegetation and wildlife

Valley slope woodlands of beech occur at Watkins and Lords Wood and at a few remaining fringes and hedges, where the species are growing in conjunction with hazel and holly. Some less common species such as orchids and adders-tongue fern are present within Watkins//Lords Wood.

Remnants of old neutral alluvial grasslands occur at Stagenhoe Bottom and Valley Farm.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

To the northeast of Whitwell lies St Paul's Walden a 12th century medieval settlement incorporating the parish church of All Saints. To the south lies a cluster of cropmarks including four prehistoric ring ditches, enclosures and linear ditches of unknown date and function. To the northwest of Whitwell lies a documented deserted medieval village; and to the south a medieval moated site, known as Bull Moat, situated within the historic park of Hoo.

Field pattern

The historic agricultural landscape comprises a mixture of prairie fields with post-1950s boundary loss, pre-18th century irregular enclosure, pre-18th century irregular sinuous enclosure, 18th century and later enclosure and ancient woodland. Today there are a high proportion of removed hedges, a predominantly large scale field pattern but with smaller fields on some steeply sloping ground. Smaller field parcels are associated with settlement fringes.

Transport pattern

Combination of primary routes following valley bottoms interconnected by small winding lanes often sunken and rising up the valley side.

Settlements and built form

The historic settlement pattern is characterised by outlying cottages, villages and farmsteads. The Character Area includes the larger settlement of Whitwell and incorporates some associated ribbon development. The scattered farmsteads are further up the valleys. Traditional buildings date from the 17th century. Whitwell High Street contains a c.1700 red brick house of 3 bays and the timber framed Bull Inn.

EVALUATION**VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION**

The valley is a combination of open, undeveloped landscape mainly in the upper valley reaches contrasting with the well settled, partly sub-urban character of the valley bottom. The upper valley sections have a greater sense of remoteness reinforced by the sparse distribution of development.

Rarity & distinctiveness

Landscape type comparatively frequent in the west of the District.

VISUAL IMPACT

More recent ribbon development at Whitwell following the valley bottom and stretching out along the B651 intrudes into the valley setting. Of particular note are the associated pony paddocks and stabling facilities. Higher up the valley the narrower, steeper slopes provide a sense of visual containment. From higher vantage points long distance views are available down the valley.

ACCESSIBILITY

The valley bottom contains the road network with connecting roads following feeder valleys. The Rights of Way network often cuts across the valleys.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) have undertaken Tier B (Community of Place) consultations. Views of the local community have been sought and contributor's responses to each of the Character Areas will be analysed and a summary of the responses provided by HCC.

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

LC1	Landscape Conservation Area
GD 1909	Hoo

EVALUATION

CONDITION

Land cover change: Widespread
 Age structure of tree cover: Mixed
 Extent of semi-natural habitat survival: Relic
 Management of semi-natural habitat: Not obvious
 Survival of cultural pattern: Declining/Relic
 Impact of built development: Low
 Impact of land-use change: Moderate

Matrix Score:	Poor
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ROBUSTNESS

Impact of landform: Apparent
 Impact of land cover: Apparent
 Impact of historic pattern: Apparent
 Visibility from outside: Widely visible
 Sense of enclosure: Open
 Visual unity: Coherent
 Distinctiveness/rarity: Frequent

Matrix Score:	Moderate
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CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
ROBUSTNESS				

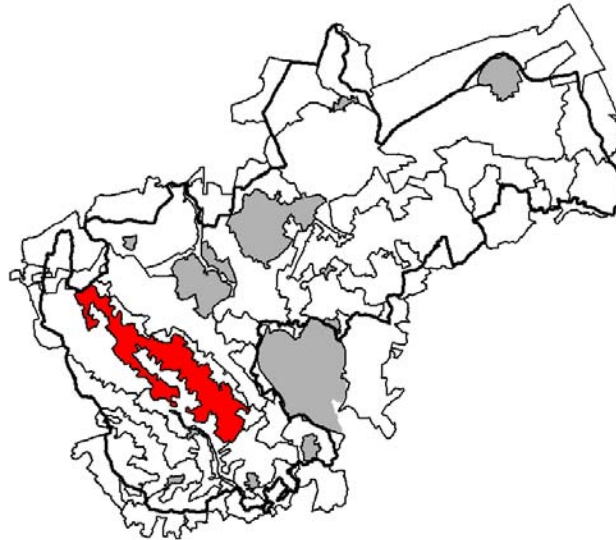
GUIDELINES

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE:

Improve and Restore

- Promote management of ancient woodland to encourage a diverse woodland flora
- Encourage the management of existing and planting of new beech woodland in strategic locations along the sloping valley sides
- Encourage diverse woodland management practice
- Promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and areas of semi-natural habitat and the creation of links between habitat areas
- Promote hedgerow restoration along the lines of historic field boundaries and for the creation of visual links between existing woodland areas
- Promote the use of traditional field hedges in place of post and wire enclosures to new grazing areas
- Protect and preserve the pattern of narrow winding lanes and associated hedge banks, sunken lanes, verges and hedges
- Promote the diversity of hedgerow species and the planting of standard hedgerow trees
- Maintain and extend the rights of way network
- Encourage the preparation and implementation of restoration and management plans for parkland landscape at The Hoo

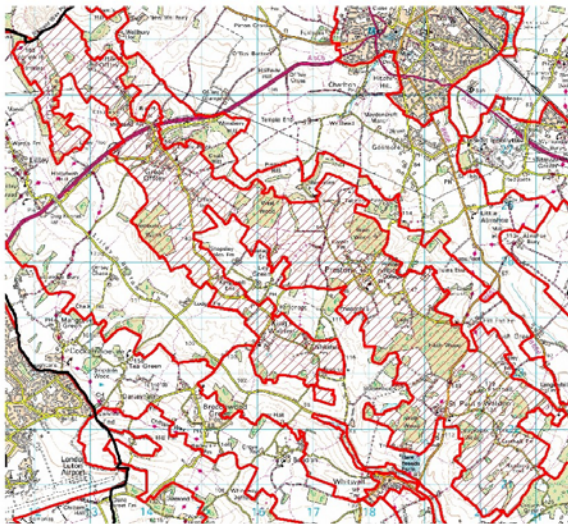
LOCATION



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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

The Character Area extends from Little Offley in the north to Crouch Green (south east of St Paul's Walden). It is long (approx 12.5 km) and comparatively narrow. Edges of the plateau are incised by various dry valleys.



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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Gently rolling upland landscape plateau dissected by incised valleys into smaller but still interlinked network of narrow arms extending from the scarp in

the north to the lower lying but more developed land to the north of Codicote. Generally more open arable land in the north and more complex patterns to the south. Grazing land adjacent to settlements, varying sizes of woodland often visually interlocking to frame views. Field pattern large in arable areas, however, landscape is often crossed by old winding and sunken lanes. Parkland is a distinctive feature. Individual remnant mature hedgerow trees are a frequent feature in the north but remain an integral part of the hedgerows further south where coppice woodland is also common. Generally scattered settlements and farmsteads with occasional larger settlements.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Gently rolling upland plateau landscape
- Large arable areas with smaller parcels of grazing land adjacent to settlements.
- Varying sized blocks of deciduous woodland
- Field pattern generally large scale

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Parkland at the Bury
- Kingswalden Deer Park
- Parkland of Little Offley and Lilley Hoo Drive

ASSESSMENT**PHYSICAL INFLUENCES****Geology & soils**

Acidic Clay-with-Flints and Boulder Clay overlie Chalk except in the northwest where Chalk comes to the surface. Soil are generally free-draining loamy brown soils except where the clay is deep.

Topography

Plateau landscape incised by dry valleys.

Degree of slope

Varies between 1:40 and 1:100.

Altitude range

125m to 180m.

Hydrology

Plateau area drained by local ditches and drains. Numerous small ponds to the south of Great Offley and randomly distributed throughout.

Land cover and land use

Predominantly arable land use with grazing around local settlements. Extensive woodland cover.

Vegetation and wildlife

Ancient moderately acidic oak and hornbeam woodlands centred around Great Offley and Preston are the most ecologically important features of this Character Area. These woods are highlighted as being areas of high biodiversity within the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). Hertfordshire contains a high proportion of the UK's national oak/hornbeam woodlands and these woodlands are afforded further protection by their listing on Annex 1 of the EU Habitats Directive.

Ancient semi-natural woodlands occur frequently with oak and hornbeam being the dormant canopy species. Coniferous replanting has also occurred in places. Maple, birch, cherry and ash may occur as secondary tree standards. Coppicing is frequently evident as a traditional form of woodland management, with hazel and hornbeam being the principal coppice species. Groundflora frequently contains species typical of a long continuity of woodland cover, the so-called 'ancient woodland indicator species' including bluebells especially frequent around Preston.

Hitch Wood is more acidic with bracken. It is a de-scheduled SSSI containing some of the tallest trees in Hertfordshire. Icehouses are present in several of the woodlands and may provide refuge for protected species such as bats. Woodland ponds also occur frequently, and add to the ecological diversity and

Interest. Other important ancient woodland areas include Reynolds Wood and Westbury Wood and Wain Wood and the Warren, which comprise a SSSI recognised for ancient oak/hornbeam communities which occur on boulder clay. Walk Wood partly incorporated into gardens is less acidic and more species rich.

Traditionally managed hay meadows such as Ruisling End Meadow are a scarce commodity, both within this Character Area and within North Hertfordshire as a whole. Wellbury Pit is a disused gravel pit with associated calcareous grassland and scrub communities also containing 'The Wellbury Boulder' – a 'calcrete' boulder of hardened glacial gravel which is of geological interest. Telegraph Hill lies within a key area of chalk grassland recognised as an area of biodiversity within the Hertfordshire BAP.

Hitch Wood is noted for woodland birds including wood warblers. Polecats and buzzards have become re-established, dormice are known in several locations and fallow deer are frequent.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

During the 12th century Bernard de Baliol granted 15 librates of land at Wedelee to the Master and Brothers of the Knights Templars who formed the manor of Temple Dinsley. The original manor house may lie beneath the present Queen Anne mansion. At the time of the Domesday Survey the manor of Offley was of significant size at 8 hides 8 acres. Northwest of Great Offley are two prehistoric sites consisting of a ring ditch and at Lilley Hoo a Bronze Age barrow (also the site of 18th century horse racing). Earthworks near St Paul's Walden represent the remains of medieval house platforms. Medieval settlement sites are situated to the northwest and southeast where the 12th century parish church of All Saints and St. Paul stands.

Field pattern

The historic agricultural landscape is composed of a mixture of 18th century and later enclosure, prairie fields with post-1950s boundary loss, pre-18th century irregular enclosure, post-1950s enclosure and 19th-20th century plantation. Prairie fields with relict elements within lie to the north. There is a concentration of informal medieval parkland (St Pauls Waldenbury and Temple Dinsley designated Historic Park and Gardens) on the perimeter and to the northwest of Offley.

ASSESSMENT

There is also a high frequency of ancient woodland, particularly in the vicinity of Preston and to the southeast. The parish of Offley was enclosed by an award under an Act of 1807 and for Kings Walden the Enclosure Act is dated 1796-7 and the common was closed by an award of 1802. Today there are large scale arable fields in the north of irregular pattern and scale.

Transport pattern

The area is well covered by a network of old winding and often sunken lanes. These disappear to the north of Great Offley. The area is crossed by the A505 dual carriageway running in a cutting.

Settlements and built form

The historic settlement pattern is composed of estates and villages. An example of a village migrating away from its original centre can be found at Great Offley and Little Offley. The 13th century church of St. Magdalene and Offley Place are situated together away from the road and probably formed the focus of the original settlement.

Another example of this can be found at Kings Walden where the original settlement with church attached to the manor house was abandoned in favour of a site along the road where the market would be located. The traditional buildings of the area survive from the 16th century and represent a range of styles. A late Tudor H-plan manor can be found at Little Offley, and Offley Place c.1825 with 17th century brickwork. Westbury Farm is timber framed c.1600, and there are several timber framed 16th and 17th century buildings in the village of Offley including Westbury Farm and the Green Man Inn. Later buildings of interest include the early Georgian house at Temple Dinsley enlarged by Lutyens in 1908 and The Bury at St. Pauls Walden, which underwent considerable Robert Adam and Neo-Elizabethan (1887) additions. The 13th century church of St Mary Magdalene conforms to the trend in building materials for the region by employing flint and stone.

EVALUATION

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

Historic and mature landscape character interspersed with areas of intensive arable production. Small interlocking blocks of woodland framing views.

Rarity & distinctiveness

The integrity and mature character have not been eroded by the intensification of arable production.

VISUAL IMPACT

A number of pylons, water towers and telecommunications masts (Great Offley) are distributed over the Character Area. Impact is only local.

ACCESSIBILITY

The Character Area is well served by the network of lanes and public rights of way.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) have undertaken Tier B (Community of Place) consultations. Views of the local community have been sought and contributor's responses to each of the Character Areas will be analysed and a summary of the responses provided by HCC.

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

- | | |
|-----------|----------------------------------|
| AONB | The Chilterns |
| LC1 | Landscape Conservation Area |
| GD 1098 | Homewood |
| GD 1901 | Ashwell Bury |
| GD 1047 | St Pauls Waldenbury |
| GD 1916 | Temple Dinsley |
| SSSI | Wain Wood and The Warren |
| SAM 20623 | Barrow at Telegraph Hill: Lilley |

EVALUATION

CONDITION

Land cover change:	Widespread
Age structure of tree cover:	Mature
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Scattered
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Good
Survival of cultural pattern:	Declining/Relic
Impact of built development:	Moderate
Impact of land-use change:	Moderate

Matrix Score:	Moderate
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ROBUSTNESS

Impact of landform:	Apparent
Impact of land cover:	Prominent
Impact of historic pattern:	Prominent
Visibility from outside:	Locally visible
Sense of enclosure:	Partial
Visual unity:	Coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Frequent

Matrix Score:	Moderate
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CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
		ROBUSTNESS		

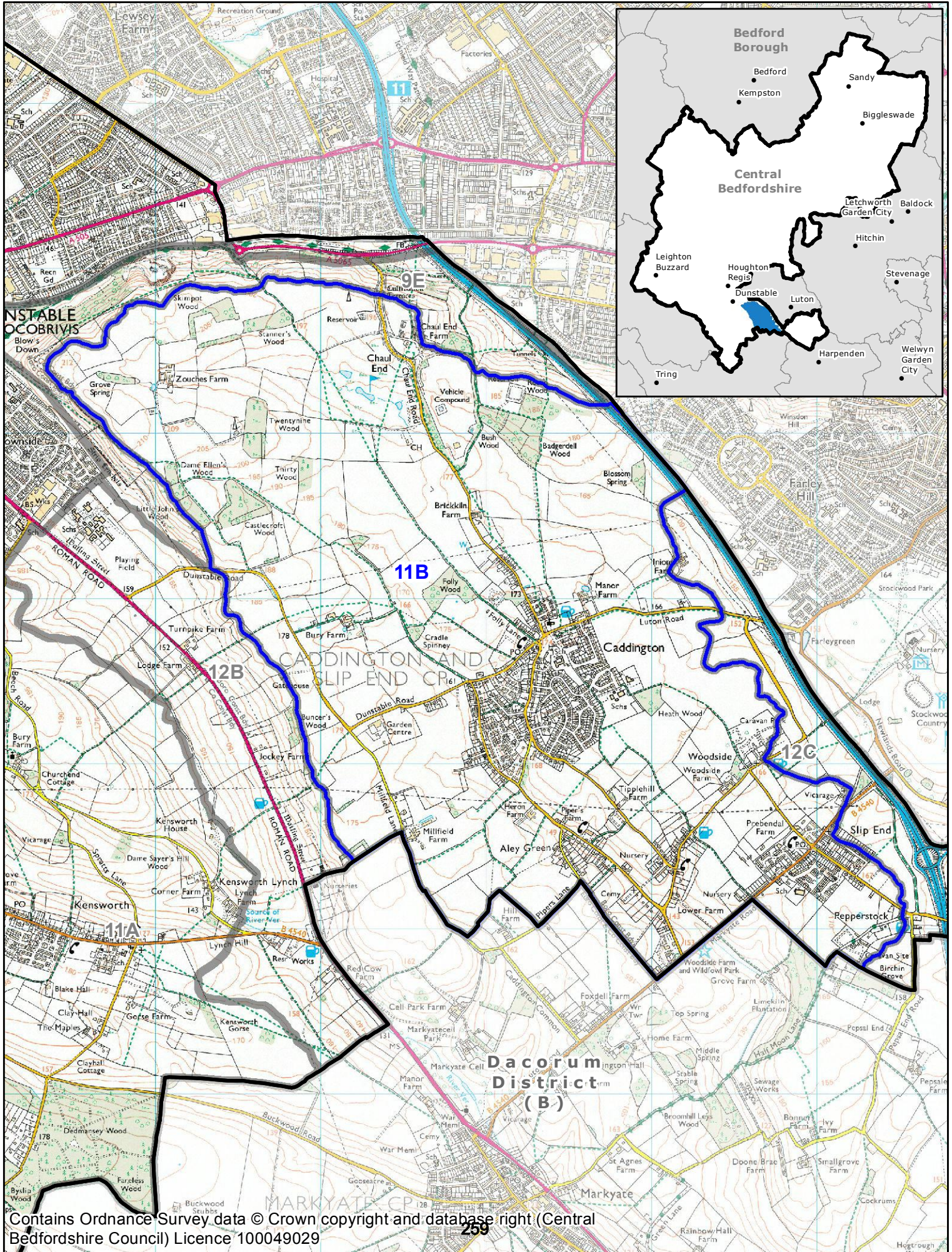
GUIDELINES

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE:

Improve and Conserve

- Promote management of ancient woodland to encourage a diverse woodland flora
- Promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and areas of semi-natural habitat and the creation of links between habitat areas
- Promote hedgerow restoration along the lines of historic field boundaries and for the creation of visual links between existing woodland areas
- Promote the use of traditional field hedges in place of post and wire enclosures to new grazing areas
- Protect and preserve the pattern of narrow winding lanes and associated hedge banks, sunken lanes, verges and hedges
- Promote the diversity of hedgerow species and the planting of standard hedgerow trees
- Maintain and extend the rights of way network
- Encourage the development and implementation of management plans for parkland at the Bury, Kingswalden Deer Park, Little Offley and Lilley Hoo
- Encourage the planting of additional or new oak/hornbeam woodland

11B: Caddington - Slip End Chalk Dipslope



11B Caddington – Slip End Chalk Dipslope

Location and Boundaries

- 11B.1 The landscape character area is part of the *Chalk Dipslope*. It adjoins the escarpment on the southern edge of Dunstable (9e) and extends southwards to the unitary authority boundary near Slip End, continuing into Hertfordshire. To the west and east it is bordered by the *Ver Chalk Valley* (12b) and the dry valley at *Slip End* (12c) with boundaries based on the dramatic change in topography at the tops of the valley side slopes. The north west section of the area is within the Chilterns AONB.

Summary of landscape character: Key characteristics

- 11B.1.1 Part of the Chalk Dipslope extending from the chalk escarpment of the South Dunstable character area (9e) forming the southern edge of the urban area. The north-west part of the area falls within the Chilterns AONB.
- 11B.1.2 A large scale open landscape with a broad plateau landform undulating to form subtle valleys, with a general absence of the distinctive combe valleys that characterise the type.
- 11B.1.3 Predominantly under arable cultivation within large open fields, horse grazing within fenced paddocks are also a feature.
- 11B.1.4 Denuded hedgerow cover with large scale open arable fields, with occasional short flailed scrubby hawthorn hedges, plus occasional mature oaks and ash marking former boundary lines.
- 11B.1.5 Northern part of the area characterised by medium sized deciduous and mixed woodland blocks. Blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland e.g. Badgerdell Wood, Castlecroft Wood, Folly Wood, Stanner's Wood are a key remnant feature and are an important visual element in views.
- 11B.1.6 Limited views to the urban edge of Dunstable with the South Dunstable Chalk Escarpment character area (9e) landform limiting views north, providing a natural container to growth and restricting road access to the area. The area nevertheless has a strong urban fringe character.
- 11B.1.7 Views to Luton and the M1 from eastern part of the area – lighting, traffic noise and a major junction at Slip End.
- 11B.1.8 Settlement at Caddington and Slip End – both expanded modern post war settlements on the plateau top. Caddington includes a village green and historic core centred around the church. Smaller linear development characterises the roads between these settlements.
- 11B.1.9 Scheduled deserted village at Zouches Farm, and its surrounding landscape of irregular enclosures and remnants of ancient woodland.
- 11B.1.10 Individual, often large farm complexes characterise the rural area. Some flint, black weather-board and brick.
- 11B.1.11 Pylon line running across the plateau forms a prominent vertical feature in open views.
- 11B.1.12 Busy roads cross the plateau, north south and east west. Rural lanes are generally not a feature - even narrow lanes are improved and urban in character.
- 11B.1.13 Despite busy urban-fringe character in views from the road corridors the north-west part of the area (given proximity to Dunstable) is largely inaccessible agricultural land with a mix of arable and woodland.

Landscape Character Description

Physical and natural landscape

- 11B.2 With the north-west part of the area falling within the Chilterns AONB, this chalk dipslope landscape is defined by a broad plateau landform. The plateau gently undulates in places to form a series of subtle valleys. The large sweeping dry combe valleys characteristic of the landscape type are absent, although a valley occurs to the south west of Slip End. Here, the sense of elevation characteristic of the plateau is diminished as the land dramatically falls away.
- 11B.3 Arable cropping defines the majority of the land cover, interspersed in places by pockets of horse grazing and such as along Chaul End Road. Fields are bounded by a denuded hedgerow network with occasional short flailed hedges and mature oaks, although roadside hedges in the north of the area provide enclosure (e.g. Charl End Road)..
- 11B.4 There is a distinct difference between the north and south of the landscape – the north generally unsettled and containing a significant amount of deciduous and mixed woodland with the southern half having a notable lack of woodland but containing the main settlements, Caddington and Slip End, plus a handful of hamlets surrounded by small scale fields.



Pylon lines create an urbanising influence on Dunstable Road, Caddington



Denuded hedgerow defining an agricultural field on Manor Road, Caddington

Biodiversity

- 11B.5 Farmland habitats such as arable field margins, modern hedgerows, improved grassland, ponds and road verges are a widespread feature in this character area and support a range of farmland species. There are numerous stands of ancient semi-natural woodland in the area, such as Badgerdell Wood, Castlecroft Wood, Folly Wood, and Stanner's Wood. These comprise a mix of species including oak, ash, beech, birch and wild cherry.

Visual and perceptual character

- 11B.6 Despite urbanising influences such as a line of pylons crossing the plateau, busy roads and improved minor roads, and views to the M1 (from the east of the area) the north-west part of the area is largely inaccessible agricultural land with a mix of arable and woodland.

Cultural pattern and historic character

- 11B.7 This area has produced evidence of human activity from the very earliest times with important finds of *in situ* Palaeolithic material when brickearth was dug by hand in the later 19th and early 20th centuries for the local brickmaking industry.
- 11B.8 Evidence from the Mesolithic to the Roman period has been identified at the north end of the area on the top of the crest above Blows Downs. Further south, Neolithic/Bronze Age flint scatters are

concentrated along the edges of the southeast-flowing valleys in which the underlying chalk outcrops.

- 11B.9 The historic core of Caddington was clustered round a small green in the centre of the parish. Zouches Farm (where the earthworks of a deserted village are scheduled as an ancient monument) and Chaul End to the north may have originated as assart settlements: remnants of ancient woodland survive. The large common at the south of the parish attracted the common-edge hamlets of Aley Green and Woodside.
- 11B.10 Much of the arable land was enclosed early, leaving only Caddington Common and some pockets of open field north of the village to be later subdivided at parliamentary enclosure. As a result the historic field pattern in this landscape area is mostly irregular, except for localised areas of more geometric enclosures. Slip End is a post-enclosure settlement.

Settlement pattern; built character

- 11B.11 Settlement consists of two substantial villages, Caddington and Slip End, both expanded modern post war settlements on the plateau top. Caddington includes a village green and historic core centred around the church. Smaller linear development characterises the roads between these settlements. The distinct linear forms of the hamlets of Aley Green and Woodside derives from their connection with the adjacent common. Individual, often large farm complexes characterise the rural area. Materials include some flint, brick, roughcast and black weather-board.



Houses at Slip End, from Grove Road

Evaluation

Landscape Change

Past Change	Potential Future Change
<p>Erection of tall structures communication masts on the plateau edge close to the escarpment.</p> <p>Construction of Luton Airport – the area is on the flight path; airport parking.</p> <p>High traffic levels and urbanising of roads.</p> <p>Recreation facilities.</p>	<p>Potential for future growth at Caddington and Slip End, as identified through the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>Growth within Luton Borough.</p>

Key positive landscape features/ strategic sensitivities of the landscape

- 11B.1.14 Part of the Chalk Dipslope with relationship to the South Dunstable Chalk Escarpment (9e).
- 11B.1.15 Medium - large woodland blocks including many Ancient Woodlands – forming strong ecological and visual resource.
- 11B.1.16 Ancient irregular field patterns resulting from very early enclosure, contrasting with more recent regular enclosures on the former common and small open fields.
- 11B.1.17 Historic core of Caddington including the church and village green.
- 11B.1.18 The scheduled deserted village at Zouches Farm, and its surrounding landscape of irregular enclosures and remnants of ancient woodland.
- 11B.1.19 Distinctive historic settlement pattern, comprising the historic core of Caddington village, the assart settlements in the north and the linear settlements along the former common edge.
- 11B.1.20 Some recreational access from/to the urban edge via Public Rights of Way.
- 11B.1.21 Value of the area in providing a buffer or rural setting to the Luton-Dunstable conurbation; the scarp acting as a natural containment to growth.

Visual Sensitivity

- 11B.1.22 Open exposed landscape means that any development has the potential to be highly visible. The ridge top connection with the scarp has a higher visual sensitivity as any development here could be highly visible across much of Dunstable and create the impression of a greatly extended urban area.
- 11B.1.23 Views to the ridgelines above the *Ver Chalk Valley 12b* and slopes to *Slip End Chalk Valley 12c*.

Landscape Strategy

The overall strategy for the Caddington – Slip End Chalk Dipslope area is to **renew** landscape elements that have been lost and/or degraded in order to reinstate and strengthen character. There are some opportunities to introduce new landscape elements but the aim should be to reinforce the character of the area as part of the Chilterns Chalk Dipslope. This will include improving the interface of new land uses with the roads to reinforce a rural landscape character. Conservation of the areas of woodland, particularly ancient woodland is a key requirement and there are opportunities for further woodland creation by expanding and linking the existing woodland resource.

Guidelines for New Development

- 11B.1.24 Conserve the integrity of the chalk escarpment and dipslope transition which is a key feature of the Chiltern landscape.
- 11B.1.25 Maintain the rural\urban transition with the sense of this area being distinct from Dunstable despite its close proximity, with the escarpment (9e) providing a natural barrier to southwards extension of the conurbation.
- 11B.1.26 Safeguard the character and separate identity of the historic settlements, and limit further ribbon development that would create the impression of a much larger urban area.
- 11B.1.27 Conserve and enhance core elements of settlement character including the recreation green, church and setting at Caddington which are important in creating a local sense of place.

- 11B.1.28 Monitor change of use of former agricultural buildings and land to industrial or commercial uses and seek to ensure that ancillary changes such as boundaries, lighting, and access respect the rural AONB location.
- 11B.1.29 Monitor demand for formal recreation activities such as golf courses and ensure that golf course management is sensitive to the AONB location and planting involved locally native species.
- 11B.1.30 Monitor demand for construction of further tall structures on the open ridges and plateau areas and consider impacts both within this area and wider visual impact.
- 11B.1.31 Consider opportunities for enhancing the character of the roads and encouraging land uses along the roads to respect the rural (and often AONB) location in choice of screening, planting, fencing etc.
- 11B.1.32 Ensure that highways improvements are sensitive to the particular character of this rural area and avoid unsympathetic traffic calming measures, roundabouts, lighting schemes and excessive signage that can create a more urban character.

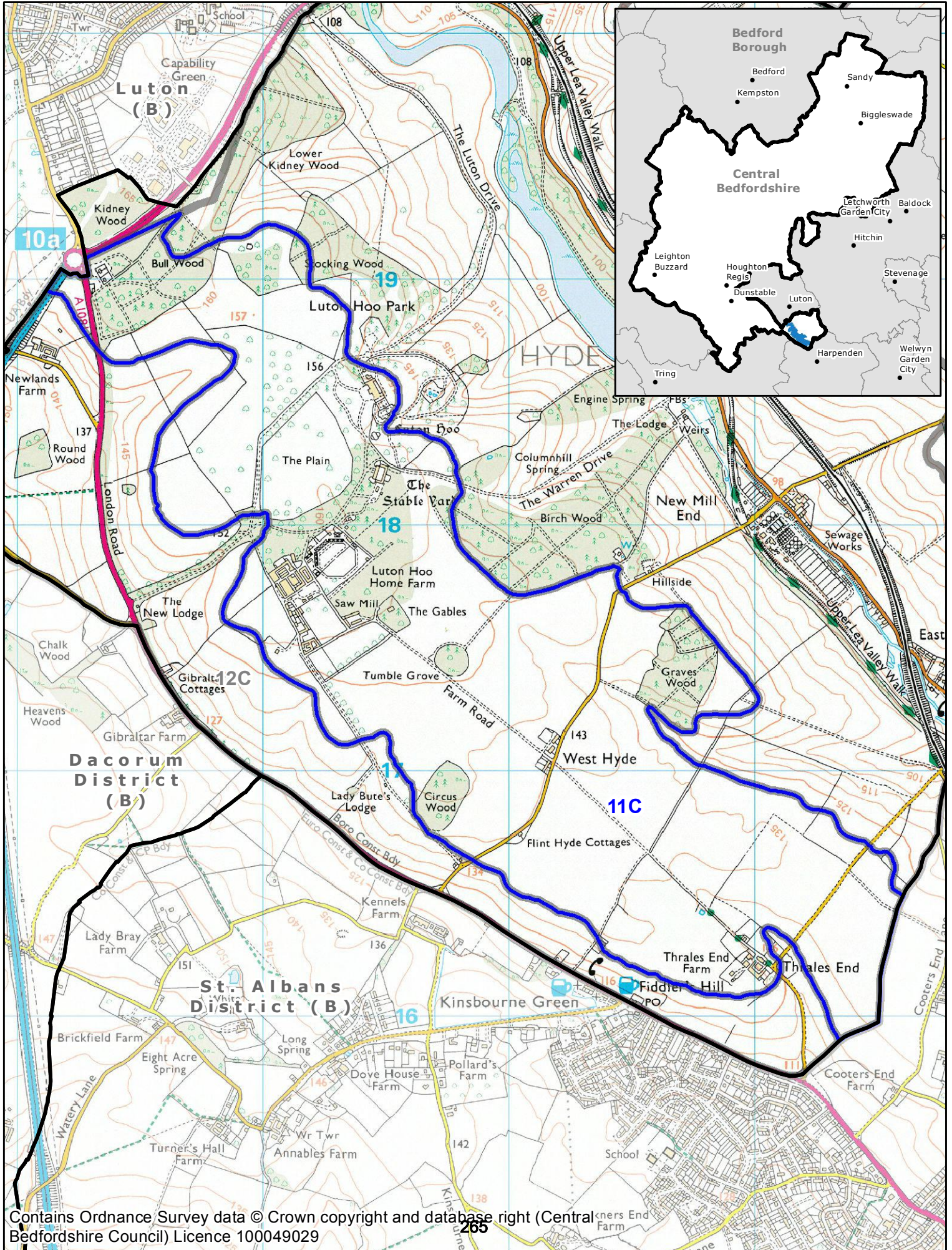
Landscape Management Guidelines

- 11B.1.33 Restore and improve the condition and structure of hedgerow boundaries. The replanting and management of roadside boundaries is a key opportunity. Hedgerow replanting to connect with areas of woodland is also recommended.
- 11B.1.34 Conserve the historic field patterns, preserving the distinction between irregular early enclosure fields, and geometric parliamentary enclosures on the common and former open fields.
- 11B.1.35 Conserve the numerous ancient woodland blocks and ensure an appropriate management strategy (coppice) to enhance ecological interest.
- 11B.1.36 Seek opportunities to enhance the ecological resource through extending and connecting areas of woodland.
- 11B.1.37 Promote appropriate management of horse paddocks relating to boundaries, sward and construction of temporary structures. If horse paddocks are included as part of a new development, ensure that planning conditions allow for appropriate design and associated tree/hedge planting.
- 11B.1.38 Conserve and enhance access and connections from the urban area into the landscape.
- 11B.1.39 Conserve the scheduled deserted village at Zouches Farm, its landscape setting and the surrounding pattern of irregular enclosures and ancient woodland.

Also refer to the following documents:

- Luton and Southern Bedfordshire Green Infrastructure Plan.
- Chiltern's AONB Management Plan
- Chiltern's AONB Design Guide

11C: Luton Hoo Chalk Dipslope



11C Luton Hoo Chalk Dipslope

Location and Boundaries

11C.1 The *Luton Hoo* landscape character area occurs in the south-eastern corner of Central Bedfordshire. It forms part of the *Chalk Dipslope* landscape type and extends as an elevated ridge between the *Chalk Valleys* of the *Lea* (12d) to the west and *Slip End* (12c) to the east. The northern boundary is with the Luton urban area and southern boundary with the county boundary at Hertfordshire. The character area is geographically separated from other landscapes of the same type (*Whipsnade* - 11a, *Caddington – Slip End Chalk Dipslope* 11b, *Luton Airport – Chiltern Green* -11d). In this character area the strong visual relationship with the adjacent *Lea Chalk Valley* together with the presence of the Luton Hoo estate and Stockwood Park create a distinct sense of place.

Summary of landscape character: Key characteristics

- 11C.1.1 Distinct flat, elevated plateau – with height ranging from 130-150m AOD and land sloping gently to the south-east.
- 11C.1.2 Simple, unified landscape with land use divided between the grounds of Stockwood Park, the Luton Hoo Estate and a large scale arable farmed landscape to the south.
- 11C.1.3 Grade II listed Luton Hoo Manor House and associated parkland imparts a designed character on the landscape with prominent views through gateways to striking avenues of beech trees and woodlands.
- 11C.1.4 Stockwood Country Park and Golf Course provides an important recreational resource, on the edge of Luton.
- 11C.1.5 Field boundaries consist of gappy, short-flailed hedgerows with mature standard oak trees indicating old hedgerow lines. In other places boundaries have been completely removed to allow for intensive arable farming as at Thrales End.
- 11C.1.6 Roadside boundaries consist of some intact hawthorn/holly hedges, grass verges and mature standard oak trees. In other places roadside boundaries have been completely removed leaving a much more open landscape.
- 11C.1.7 Numerous woodland blocks (many ancient) intersperse arable land predominantly in the grounds of the Luton Hoo estate e.g. Birch Wood, Bull Wood and Graves Wood.
- 11C.1.8 Strong, visual relationship with the adjacent *Lea Chalk Valley* (12d) and the *Luton Airport - Chiltern Green Chalk Dipslope* (11d).
- 11C.1.9 Predominantly exposed and open with some long ranging views to undeveloped horizons, some wooded. By comparison, views to the north and south are characterised by the urban edge of Harpenden (Hertfordshire) and Luton (e.g. prominent views to the Vauxhall Motor Vehicle Works).
- 11C.1.10 A predominantly unsettled landscape aside from scattered farmsteads and houses located along rural lanes as at Thrales End Farm.
- 11C.1.11 Distinctive vernacular style workers cottages at West Hyde associated with the Luton Hoo estate are characterised by dark brown brick, flint, clay tiles and maroon paintwork.
- 11C.1.12 Luton airport has an audible presence throughout the area.
- 11C.1.13 Views to main road corridors (A505 and A1081) on the edge of Luton.

Landscape Character Description

Physical and natural landscape

- 11C.2 *Luton Hoo* Chalk Dipslope extends as a distinct, flat plateau ridge between the adjacent *Chalk Valley* landscapes of the *Lea* (12d) and *Slip End Chalk Dipslope* (12c). Land use is divided spatially between Stockwood Country Park, large scale arable farming and the Luton Hoo estate – the latter determining much of the character of the landscape imparting a strong designed, managed and well wooded character over the area influencing the distinct vernacular style of workers cottages at West Hyde. Prominent views through gateways to striking avenues of beech trees and woodlands result in a distinct sense of place.

Biodiversity

- 11C.3 This area is dominated by parkland which is largely extensive areas of improved and semi-improved neutral grassland. Improved neutral grassland is of little biodiversity value but can retain archaeological features of interest or be important as foraging areas for birds. The areas of parkland and associated estate land contain old trees, semi-improved grassland, occasional ponds and woodland blocks including ancient woodland such as Graves Wood and Bull Wood.
- 11C.4 Elsewhere arable farmland includes habitats such as arable field margins, ancient and modern hedgerows, improved grassland, ponds and road verges and these support a range of farmland species.

Visual and perceptual character

- 11C.5 Much of the landscape is open and exposed with a strong sense of elevation. Views as a result of this are long ranging across arable fields to undeveloped horizons, some wooded, and to the adjacent Lea Chalk Valley corridor (12d) and *Luton Airport – Chiltern Green Chalk Dipslope* (11d).
- 11C.6 In parts there is a remaining sense of rurality across this landscape, particularly attributed to the presence of surviving mature oak trees and hedgerows contributing to some landscape patterning together with the generally unsettled nature of much of the land. However, this landscape has been subject to much human intervention, interrupted by busy road corridors and the presence of the urban edges of Luton (e.g. prominent views to the Vauxhall Motor Vehicle Works) and Harpenden (Hertfordshire), frequently characterising views to the north and south.



Long ranging views of large arable fields from Thrales End Lane



Green wooded and unsettled slopes viewed from the road at Thrales End Lane

Cultural pattern and historic character

- 11C.7 Due to the extent of parkland and lack of archaeological survey in this area, nothing is known about early human occupation.
- 11C.8 The parish of Hyde was part of the royal manor of Luton at the time of the Domesday Book in 1086. The manor was assessed as having woodland sufficient for 2000 swine, an area of possibly 1250 hectares. It is more likely that this was concentrated on the heavier soils of the clay-with-flints south of Luton, either side of the River Lea, than on the lighter chalk soils to the north.
- 11C.9 While much of the area is dominated by the designed landscapes of Luton Hoo (registered grade II*) and Stockwood Park, the earlier pattern was probably one of irregular assart fields cut out of the woodlands, with perhaps localised areas of common field arable. South-east of the Park, the geometric pattern of roads and fields was laid out after the mid-18th century, either as part of the Park's wider landscape setting or for agricultural improvement.

Settlement pattern; built character

- 11C.10 This is a predominantly unsettled landscape apart from a few scattered farmsteads and houses located along rural lanes as at Thrales End Farm. The small group of workers cottages at West Hyde have a distinctive style associated with the Luton Hoo estate, characterised by dark brown brick, flint, clay tiles and maroon paintwork.

Evaluation

Landscape Change

Past Change	Current and Future Change
<p>Busy traffic impacts on rural roads.</p> <p>Views to development on the edge of Luton e.g. Vauxhall Vehicle Works and the urban edge of Harpenden influence perception of the area as a rural landscape.</p> <p>Audible influences of development at Luton Airport and urban roads and M1 corridor.</p> <p>New road extensions including the A1081 to the south of Luton.</p>	<p>Potential for further incremental development due to the proximity to Luton and Harpenden including Luton Airport.</p> <p>Potential widening of the Midland Mainline/Thameslink line in the adjacent Lea Valley (12D) with impact on noise and views.</p> <p>Development associated with the M1 Junction 10A improvements.</p> <p>Adjacent growth within Luton Borough.</p> <p>Luton- Harpenden greenway – potential Sustrans route</p>

Key positive landscape features/ strategic sensitivities of the landscape

- 11C.1.14 Woodland in the grounds of the Luton Hoo estate including Bull Wood, Graves Wood and Circus Wood create wooded horizons and are an important ecological resource vulnerable to lack of active management.
- 11C.1.15 The designed landscapes of Luton Hoo Manor House and Stockwood Country Park impart a designed, managed character on the landscape, sensitive to changes in management or views to modern development.
- 11C.1.16 Lengths of remnant hawthorn hedges, standard oak trees and scattered mature trees together with new beech tree and hedgerow planting create some good roadside boundaries.

- 11C.1.17 Strong perception of an elevated landform with clear visual relationship with the adjacent Lea River Valley.
- 11C.1.18 The predominantly unsettled character of the landscape due to the presence of large scale parkland estates – with properties associated with the estate landscape following a unified vernacular style.
- 11C.1.19 The function of the area as part of the Chiltern Green greenbelt, separating the urban edges of Luton and Harpenden and providing a rural setting for these areas further enhances the functional importance and sensitivity of the area.

Visual Sensitivity

- 11C.1.20 Wide, open skies and views to undeveloped horizons, both open and wooded.
- 11C.1.21 Strong visual relationship with the Lea Chalk Valley (12d) and *Luton Airport – Chiltern Green Chalk Dipslope* (11d). This is partly due to topography but also to the parkland landscape of Luton Hoo which uses the dramatic landform to provide designed views.

Landscape Strategy

The overall strategy for the Luton Hoo Chalk Dipslope area is to **enhance** the landscape by strengthening the landscape pattern and conserving key features such as the parkland, woodland blocks and views to undeveloped horizons. The aim should be to retain an actively managed rural landscape between the Luton and Harpenden and ensure that activities and infrastructure on the urban edges do not result in the creation of an extended area of urban fringe.

Guidelines for New Development

- 11C.1.22 Consider opportunities for creating further facilities for recreational enjoyment and access from the urban area for example linking Stockwood Park, the Upper Lea Valley walk and Luton Hoo Estate.
- 11C.1.23 Consider opportunities for further woodland planting in the south (in particular to further buffer views to the urban edge of Harpenden) and in relation to large scale infrastructure changes e.g. associated with the M1 upgrading and creation of new junctions.
- 11C.1.24 Ensure that urban edge development or new infrastructure does not result in severance of the area into a series of isolated compartments and seek to ensure that land remains in active agricultural management.

Landscape Management Guidelines

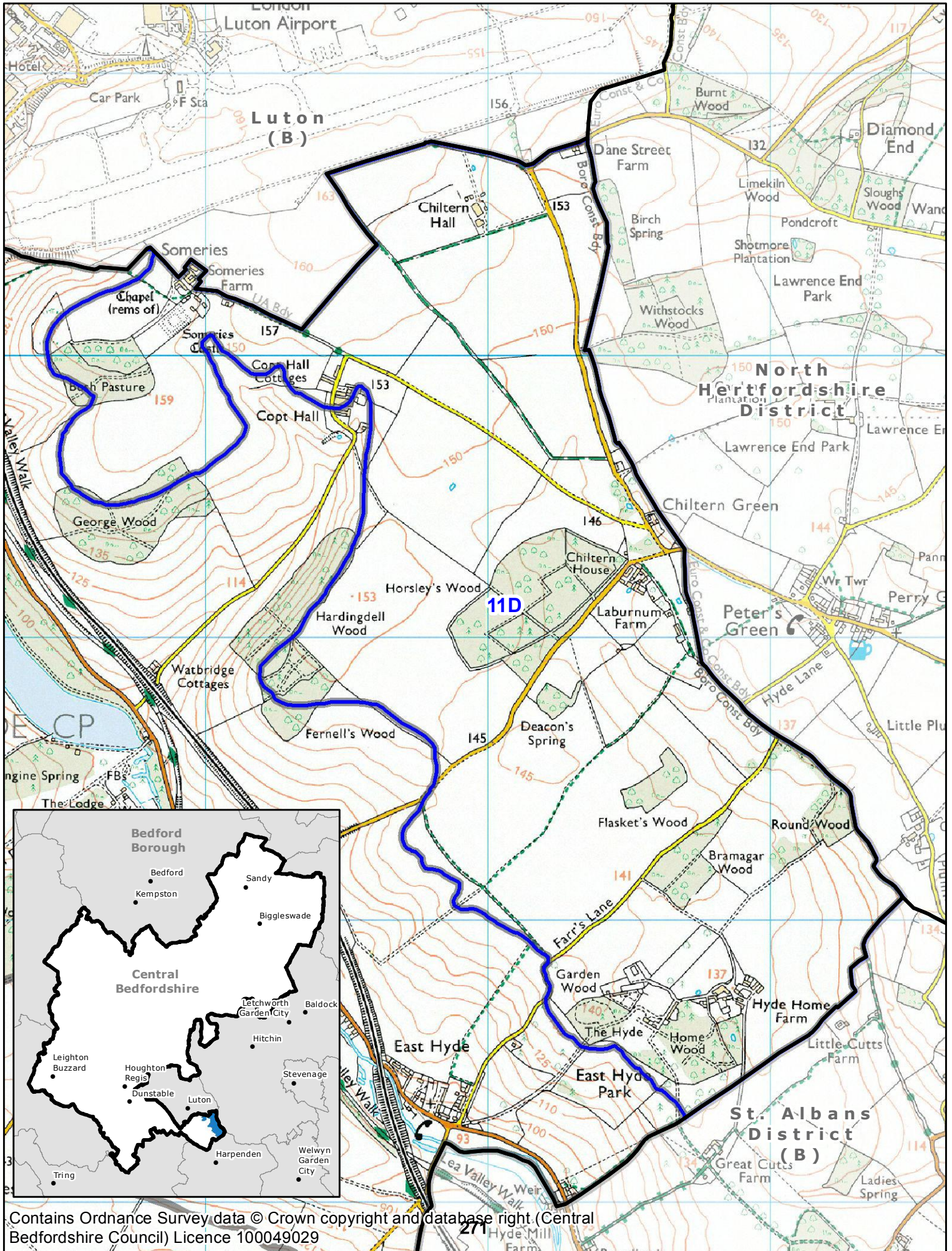
- 11C.1.1 Enhance the condition and structure of hedgerow boundaries by focussing hedgerow restoration between remaining sections so as to strengthen the landscape pattern. This is a key requirement along rural roads, highly visible areas forming the skyline of the Lea Valley, and hedgerows which would enhance connectivity with the woodlands.
- 11C.1.2 Conserve the woodland blocks of Graves Wood, Circus Wood and Bull Wood and consider opportunities for enhancing the ecological resource through extending and connecting areas of woodland whilst ensuring mid-long range views across the landscape and to the adjacent Lea Valley are retained.
- 11C.1.3 Conserve the registered park at Luton Hoo, and its wider designed landscape setting with opportunities for restoration of key landscape features – avenues, planting blocks, gateways, and estate walls. Conserve the intact vernacular character of the estate workers cottages at West Hyde.

- 11C.1.4 Continue to manage Stockwood Park and retain its function as a buffer between the rural landscape and urban edge of Luton. Seek to ensure that the park does not become encapsulated by development.
- 11C.1.5 Conserve the character of the rural roads and limit urbanising influences – widening/kerbing and ensure that traffic management measures are sympathetic to the rural character.

Also refer to the following documents:

- Luton and Southern Bedfordshire Green Infrastructure Plan.

11D: Luton Airport - Chiltern Green Chalk Dipslope



11D Luton Airport – Chiltern Green Chalk Dipslope

Location and Boundaries

- 11D.1 The *Luton Airport-Chiltern Green Chalk Dipslope* landscape character area occurs in the south-eastern corner of Central Bedfordshire, extending from the ridgeline of the adjacent *Lea Chalk Valley* (12d) to the south-east boundary with Hertfordshire. This character area is geographically separated from other landscapes of the same type (*Whipsnade* (11a), *Caddington-Slip End* (11b), and *Luton Hoo* (11c).

Summary of landscape character: Key characteristics

- 11D.1.1 Distinct flat, elevated plateau – with elevation ranging from 125-160m AOD – partially cut by a sweeping dry combe valley extending from Kimpton in Hertfordshire.
- 11D.1.2 A large scale arable landscape with some pockets of sheep pasture, plus horse grazing contained within fenced paddocks surrounding Copt Hall.
- 11D.1.3 Field boundaries consist of degraded and gappy hedgerows with standard oak trees indicating old hedgerow lines. In other places boundaries have been completely removed to allow for intensive farming.
- 11D.1.4 Significant woodland blocks many ancient, interspersing arable land are located in the southern half of the character area e.g. Chiltern Green, Horsley’s Wood, Bramagar Wood, Home Wood, Flasket’s Wood, Round Wood.
- 11D.1.5 Remnant hawthorn hedges, standard oak trees and scattered mature trees occur on field and road boundaries with areas of new tree planting.
- 11D.1.6 A predominantly unsettled landscape aside from scattered farmsteads and cottages, e.g. Laburnum Farm, Copt Hall Farm and Cottages, Chiltern Green located along rural lanes. Properties have a distinctive vernacular style with dark red/brown brick and clay tiles.
- 11D.1.7 Someries Castle, on the south perimeter of Luton Airport, comprises the scheduled remains of a substantial 15th century brick building, with associated garden earthworks.
- 11D.1.8 East Hyde Park and designed parkland.
- 11D.1.9 Strong, visual relationship the adjacent *Lea Chalk Valley* (12d).
- 11D.1.10 Predominantly exposed and open with long ranging views and wide skies. Some enclosed channelled views occur along rural roads flanked by woodland belts, e.g. along the road from Laburnum Farm to New Mill End.
- 11D.1.11 Views are predominantly to undeveloped horizons but are interrupted in places by development at Luton Airport e.g. terminal buildings and air traffic control tower. The airport has a distinctive audible presence across the area.
- 11D.1.12 Important views to the Luton Hoo Manor House on the adjacent ridge of the *Lea Chalk Valley* (12d) and views of the plateau from open, elevated areas along the road from Copt Hall to Chiltern Green.

Landscape Character Description

Physical and natural landscape

- 11D.2 This large scale landscape forms part of the Chalk Dipslope landscape type extending as a distinct, flat plateau ridge with a strong sense of elevation. The north of the character area is particularly open with woodland notably absent. There is a greater sense of enclosure in the south as a result of woodland blocks such as at Chiltern Green interspersing the landscape.
- 11D.3 Despite being dominated by large scale arable crop production, there is a notable surviving network of remnant hawthorn hedgerows, standard oak trees and scattered mature trees together with localised areas of new woodland planting which contribute to a definite landscape pattern. This landscape is generally unsettled aside from scattered farms and cottages.

Biodiversity

- 11D.4 Farmland habitats such as arable field margins, hedgerows (with mature oak standards), improved grassland, ponds and road verges are a widespread feature in this character area and support a range of farmland species.
- 11D.5 Woodlands include ancient semi-natural woodland, such as Chiltern Green, Horsley's Wood, Bramagar Wood, Home Wood, Flasket's Wood and Round Wood, and are dominated by a mix of species including oak, ash, beech, birch and wild cherry. Conifers have been planted on some of the ancient woodland such as Horsley's Wood; and broad-leaved plantations are also occasional. Scrub and secondary woodland has developed in places, especially on the common at Chiltern Green, as a result of lack of management.
- 11D.6 Areas of acid grassland and heathland, including chalk heath, were formerly present on the more acidic Clay-with-Flints soils at sites such as Chiltern Green. These supported typical species such as heather and heath dog violet though very little of this habitat now remains due to scrub growth and agricultural improvement.
- 11D.7 Unimproved neutral grassland would have been a particular feature of the area in the past though much has been lost as a result of agricultural improvement and ploughing. Areas of neutral grassland are still present at Chiltern Green, though this has been affected by agricultural improvement or lack of management. Extensive areas of improved and semi-improved neutral grassland are present at London Luton Airport. Improved neutral grassland is of little biodiversity value but can retain archaeological features of interest or be important as foraging areas for birds. The area of parkland at East Hyde contains old trees and semi-improved grassland. The only open water habitats in the area consist of occasional ponds such as those at Chiltern Green.

Visual and perceptual character

- 11D.8 Views are predominantly long ranging across arable fields to undeveloped horizons, some wooded, and to the adjacent *Lea Chalk Valley* corridor (12d). The view to Luton Hoo Manor House on the opposite facing ridge is a key feature. Urban influences are particularly apparent on the horizon to the north with views characterised by terminal buildings and the prominent air traffic control tower at Luton Airport. More significantly, this development has had a profound audible influence across the extent of the area – associated with the constant taking off and landing of commercial aircrafts - permanently altering the once peaceful, remote character of the landscape.



Long ranging views to undeveloped horizons off Farr's Lane



Open fields with pockets of woodland off Copt Hill Road

Cultural pattern and historic character

- 11D.9 Little is known about early human occupation in this area, except for a Roman settlement which has been recorded north of Luton airport, on the edge of an east-flowing valley.
- 11D.10 The parish of Hyde was part of the royal manor of Luton at the time of the Domesday Book in 1086. The manor was assessed as having woodland sufficient for 2000 swine, an area of possibly 1250 hectares. It is more likely that this was concentrated on the heavier soils of the clay-with-flints south of Luton, either side of the River Lea, than on the lighter chalk soils to the north.
- 11D.11 The distribution of irregular fields indicates that the landscape pattern of the southern part of the area, and the western edge overlooking the Lea valley, was either derived from assarting of woodland (of which several blocks remain), or as a result of early enclosure. Further north, more geometric fields suggest a later survival of common arable fields.
- 11D.12 Chiltern Green, on the county boundary, originated as a common-edge dispersed settlement, set in area of small irregular fields, some of which contain earthworks.
- 11D.13 Someries Castle, on the south perimeter of Luton Airport, comprises the scheduled remains of a substantial 15th century brick building, with associated garden earthworks (scheduled site). The small landscaped park at East Hyde is 18th century in origin.

Settlement pattern; built character

- 11D.14 Buildings are scarce in this area, consisting of some of the modern large scale buildings of London Luton Airport at the far north plus scattered farms and cottages such as those at Laburnum Farm, typically of a vernacular style associated with the Chilterns, of dark red/brown brick with clay tiles.



Vernacular houses in Chiltern Green

Evaluation

Landscape Change

Past Change	Current and Future Change
Strong visual and audible influences of development at Luton Airport.	Further expansion of Luton and, in particular, Luton Airport. Suburbanisation of existing housing as a result of extensions/ alterations and infill due to the proximity to Luton. Potential urban expansion of Harpenden (Hertfordshire) and Luton, increasing pressure on the rural area separating Luton and Harpenden (Chiltern Green greenbelt).

Key positive landscape features/ strategic sensitivities of the landscape

- 11D.1.13 The wider setting to Luton Hoo – part of the designed landscape.
- 11D.1.14 Woodland blocks in the southern half of the character area which creates a strong wooded context and are an important ecological resource.
- 11D.1.15 Remnant hawthorn hedges, standard oak trees and scattered mature trees together with new woodland planting also contribute to the wooded context.
- 11D.1.16 Remnant areas of acid grassland and heathland and unimproved neutral grassland at Chiltern Green.
- 11D.1.17 The unsettled nature of the landscape with just a few properties which are built in the traditional Chiltern vernacular style.
- 11D.1.18 The ruins of Someries Castle and its associated gardens, originally in an isolated tranquil location, have been over-shadowed by the harsh edge and noise intrusion of the adjacent Luton Airport.
- 11D.1.19 The small common at Chiltern Green has been enclosed, but the settlement retains its setting of the surrounding small close and earthworks.
- 11D.1.20 Irregular field patterns in the south resulting from early enclosure, contrasting with more regular enclosures to the north.
- 11D.1.21 Small landscaped park at East Hyde.
- 11D.1.22 Its function as an area of the Chiltern Green green belt, separating the urban edges of Luton and Harpenden further enhances the importance and sensitivity of this area.
- 11D.1.23 Public access, including the Chiltern Way.

Visual Sensitivity

- 11D.1.24 The areas with highest visual sensitivity are those with clear, open views to the slopes and ridgeline of the adjacent *Lea Chalk Valley* 12d.
- 11D.1.25 Wide, open skies and generally undeveloped horizons.
- 11D.1.26 Clear views to the Luton Hoo Manor House on the adjacent ridge of the Lea Valley from areas on the plateau.

Landscape Strategy

The overall strategy for the Luton Airport – Chiltern Green Chalk Dipslope is to **enhance** the landscape of the chalk plateau. It should continue to contribute to a rural gap between Luton and Harpenden with its pattern of agricultural land, hedgerow network, woodland and sparse settlement. Landscape enhancement opportunities include improving the character of the rural road and lanes and renewing elements such as the hedgerow network. There are also opportunities to enhance and continue the planting strategy of new trees along roadside boundaries. Conservation should focus on existing woodland blocks, retaining key 'Chiltern' features such as the distinctive red brick and clay tile building style, conserving historic features such as Someries Castle and reinforcing the distinction between the open plateau/ridges and valleys.

Guidelines for New Development

- 11D.1.27 Conserve the connection between the open plateau and *Lea Chalk Valley* (12d), in particular, sensitive views to and from the Luton Hoo Estate.
- 11D.1.28 Respect views from the Lea Valley to the sensitive, undeveloped ridgeline and views to undeveloped horizons.
- 11D.1.29 Conserve the unsettled character of this area and retain the link between settlement and areas of woodland e.g. Laburnum Farm.
- 11D.1.30 Conserve and enhance the character of the rural roads and lanes. Further urban development at Luton Airport Parkway could result in increased levels of traffic.
- 11D.1.31 Consider opportunities for further woodland planting in the north (such as close to the urban edge at Luton Airport Parkway). This would ameliorate the harsh interface between agricultural land and development.
- 11D.1.32 Seek to provide a strong landscape setting and edge to areas of expansion, in particular, further urban development at Luton Airport Parkway. Ensure that new development is well integrated into the local landscape and relates well to the new settlement edge.
- 11D.1.33 Retain key 'Chiltern' vernacular features such as the distinctive red brick and clay tile building style and ensure that this is appropriately reflected in new development.
- 11D.1.34 Conserve the identity of Chiltern Green and its associated small closes and earthworks.
- 11D.1.35 Conserve the historic field patterns, preserving the distinction between irregular early enclosure fields in the south, and more regular enclosures to the north.
- 11D.1.36 Conserve the parkland at East Hyde.

Landscape Management Guidelines

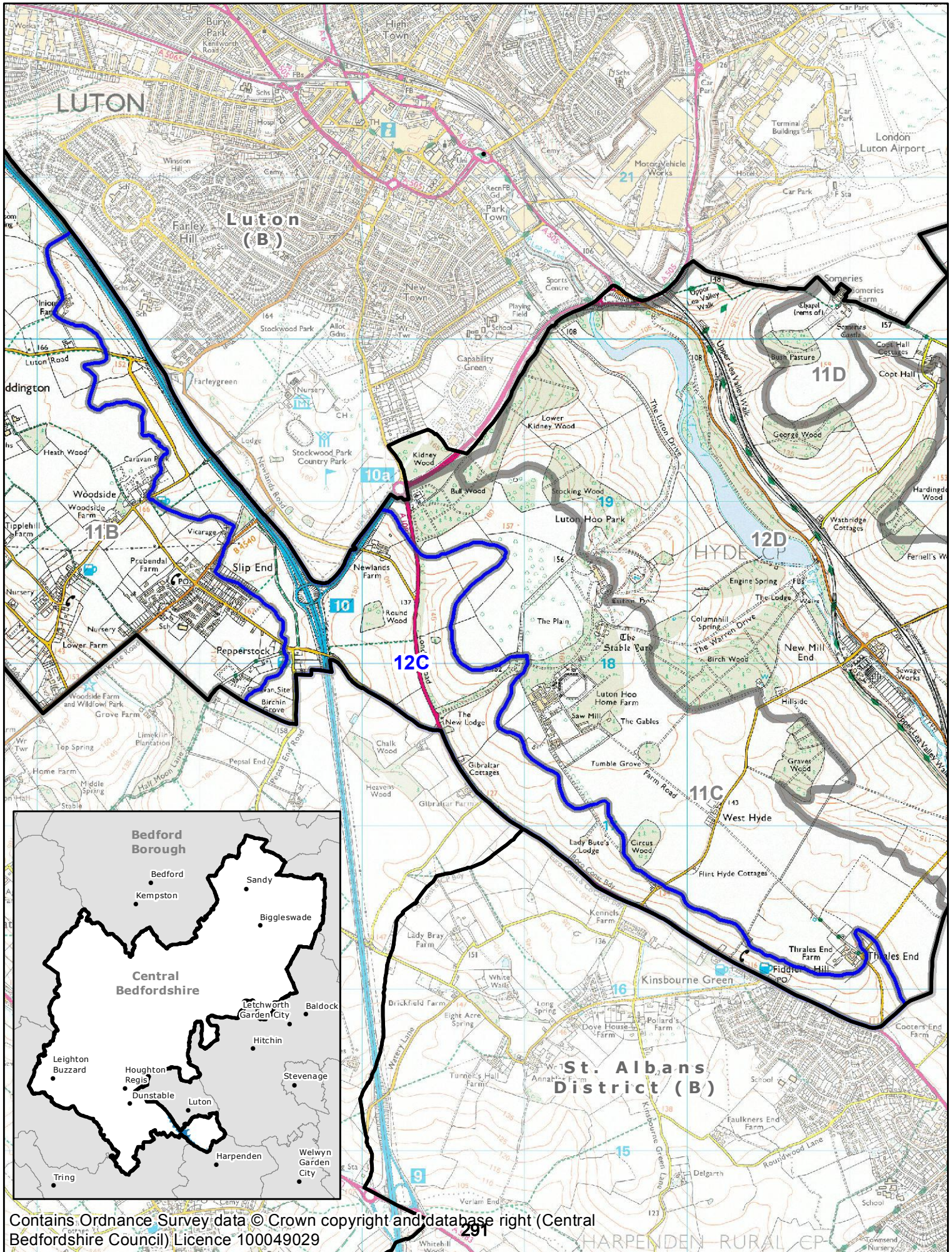
- 11D.1.37 Conserve mature standard trees and lengths of remnant hedgerows. Enhance the condition and structure of hedgerow boundaries by focussing hedgerow restoration between remaining sections so as to strengthen the landscape pattern – this is a key requirement alongside roads.
- 11D.1.38 Continue to plant new trees along roadside boundaries and enhance the condition of road lay-bys.
- 11D.1.39 Enhance the ecological/landscape resource through extending and connecting areas of woodland whilst ensuring mid-long range views across the landscape and to the adjacent Lea Valley are retained.
- 11D.1.40 Conserve the acid grassland and heathland and unimproved neutral grassland at Chiltern Green and seek to enhance and restore/extend these habitats.
- 11D.1.41 Encourage appropriate design of field entrances from the roads and avoid industrial-style steel gates.

- 11D.1.42 Conserve the woodland blocks of Home Wood, Horsley's Wood, Bramagar Wood, Round Wood, Home Wood, Flasket's Wood and Bush Pasture and apply an appropriate management strategy to enhance ecological interest.
- 11D.1.43 Conserve the character of the rural roads and limit urbanising influences – widening/kerbing and ensure that traffic management measures are sympathetic to the rural character.
- 11D.1.44 Safeguard the scheduled monument of Someries Castle and seek to enhance its setting.

Also refer to the following documents:

- Luton and Southern Bedfordshire Green Infrastructure Plan

12C: Slip End Chalk Valley



12C Slip End Chalk Valley

Location and Boundaries

12C.1 This small landscape character area occurs in the south of Central Bedfordshire, with a small part within Luton Borough. The valley extends from the southwest edge of Luton and follows a southeast course to the unitary authority boundary and continues into Hertfordshire. The valley of *Slip End Chalk Valley* forms a distinct character area, cutting through the chalk dipslope. It is geographically separate from the other chalk valleys of the *Gade* (to the west), *Ver* and *Lea* (to the east).

Summary of landscape character: Key characteristics

- 12C.1.1 A medium-scale dry valley forming part of the chalk landscape defining much of southern Bedfordshire. Elevation ranges from 110m on the valley floor - 165m AOD on the crests.
- 12C.1.2 Dominated by primary road corridors: the M1 (including junction 10), A1081 as well as the secondary Newlands Road - all have a strong visible and audible presence.
- 12C.1.3 A number of pylon lines cross the landscape - running the length of the valley floor as well as extending up the valley sides. These dominate the skyline.
- 12C.1.4 Land use predominantly characterised by arable land but with some pockets given over to horse and cattle grazing. Fields are predominantly bound by short-flailed hedges and post and rail fencing. Hedges are both gappy and overgrown in places.
- 12C.1.5 From the valley floor, there is often no perception of being within a valley system however the valley landform is clearly visible from the upper reaches of the slopes and ridge.
- 12C.1.6 A sense of semi-enclosure is provided by woodland belts aligning the A1081. There are some small areas of woodland on the valley sides e.g. Round Wood.
- 12C.1.7 Generally unsettled with the exception of individual farmsteads and a small group of cottages - built form generally comprising dark brown brick and slate. The valley becomes distinctly more settled in the southeast at Kinsbourne Green/Harpenden although this area of development is located on the north facing slope, falling within Hertfordshire.
- 12C.1.8 Recreational character - containing the golf course of Stockwood Park Country Park (that extends into the valley from the adjacent Luton Hoo Chalk Dipslope) and Luton Rugby Football Club - the pitch and sports club occurring adjacent to Newlands Road.
- 12C.1.9 Historic parkland at Stockwood Park - the edge of Stockwood Park Country Park is defined by a low brick wall running along Newlands Road.
- 12C.1.10 Gated and lodged entrance to the Luton Hoo with a prominent tree-lined avenue running up the valley sides, leading to the estate.
- 12C.1.11 Strong urban fringe character at the edge of Luton on the approach from Newlands Road - a number of small pockets of degraded land align the road.
- 12C.1.12 The valley ridges are characterised by open arable fields, settlement edge of Slip End and the woodland/parkland landscape of Luton Hoo, occurring on the adjacent Chalk Dipslope landscapes (11b and 11c).
- 12C.1.13 There are some public rights of way crossing and lining the slopes of the valley - providing connections to the adjacent Chalk Dipslopes.

Landscape Character Description

Physical and natural character

- 12C.2 This is a chalk valley landscape, but one where the distinct valley form has been greatly interrupted due to the dominance of road corridors. These roads, which include the M1 and junction 10 and 10A, have an engineered, urban character and are prevalent in most views and provide a constant source of background traffic noise. Pylons line a number of these routes and dominate the skyline.
- 12C.3 The valley is largely unsettled – containing just one farm and a group of cottages. However, the settlement of Slip End (on the adjacent Chalk Dipslope - 11b) brings small-scale settlement edge character to the valley ridgeline. The character area is delineated by the Central Bedfordshire unitary authority boundary, running along the A1081, and splitting the valley between counties. In reality the valley extends south and east into Hertfordshire where it is dominated by the town of Harpenden.
- 12C.4 Although having a strong urban fringe character (due to adjacent towns of Luton and Harpenden) the majority of the land area is given over to arable farming with some smaller pockets of pasture. A number of hedgerows have been lost and those remaining are frequently gappy or overgrown. Temporary field boundaries are in place marking horse paddocks. Tree cover is limited but the small copse (Round Wood), the edge of Stockwood Country Park and the woodland shelterbelt and tree lined avenue marking the boundary and gated entrance to Luton Hoo Estate, create some enclosure and wooded character. A gas installation unit - delineated by steel fencing and coniferous trees is an incongruous feature.



From Newlands Road, the M1 corridor provides an urban fringe influence in the landscape. Pylon lines are prominent on the skyline.



The tree lined avenue of Luton Hoo Estate, with arable fields and hedgerow boundary in the foreground

Biodiversity

- 12C.5 This is a predominantly dry valley with only seasonally wet ditches present. Unimproved neutral grassland would have been a particular feature of the area in the past though much has been lost as a result of agricultural improvement and ploughing. Areas of unimproved neutral grassland are still present at sites such as Stockwood Park where an acid grassland character is evident (largely within the adjacent character area (11c)). Extensive areas of improved and semi-improved neutral grassland are also present at Luton Hoo Park, although again these are largely within the adjacent character areas (11c and 12d).
- 12C.6 Farmland habitats such as arable field margins, hedgerows, improved grassland, ditches, ponds and road verges are a feature in this character area and support a range of farmland species. Some of the hedgerows are ancient and species rich and contain numerous mature standards of oak, ash and beech.

Visual and perceptual character

- 12C.7 There is a strong urban fringe character to this area, as a result of the influence of the adjacent towns of Luton and Harpenden and primary road corridors which cut through the landscape including the M1 (and junction 10) and the A1081. They have a strong audible as well as visual presence in the otherwise largely unsettled, arable landscape.

Cultural pattern and historic character

- 12C.8 Apart from the perimeter of Luton Hoo (registered grade II*) and Stockwood Park, the historic roads which followed this valley were lined by fields deriving from early enclosure, with sinuous boundaries reflecting the open field furlongs from which they were created.
- 12C.9 South of Luton Hoo these boundaries have been lost through agricultural improvement. The perimeter planting of Luton Hoo still lines the route of the A6, and Stockwood Park's perimeter follows the line of the road which diverges north-west from the A6 and originally followed the valley along Caddington's historic parish boundary. North of Junction 10, the M1 has all but obliterated the historic road line, the irregular early enclosure field pattern, and the historic boundary between Caddington and Luton.
- 12C.10 Round Wood may have been part of the wider designed landscape of Luton Hoo, possibly forming part of the view across the valley from the house.

Settlement pattern; built character

- 12C.11 The area is generally unsettled with the exception of individual farmsteads and a small group of cottages - built form generally comprising dark brown brick and slate. The valley becomes distinctly more settled in the southeast at Kinsbourne Green/Harpenden although this area of development is located on the north facing slope, falling within Hertfordshire.
- 12C.12 Large scale infrastructure in the form of the M1 and associated junction, plus lines of pylons are dominant built features within the valley setting.

Evaluation

Landscape Change

Past Change	Current and Future Change
<p>Stockwood Park golf course extending from the adjacent Chalk Dipslope landscape to the valley sides.</p> <p>Development of the embanked M1 that fragments and dominates the valley.</p>	<p>Potential for further settlement growth at Luton and Harpenden.</p> <p>Further transport/infrastructure improvements linking main settlements. Growth of the wider area, particularly around Luton may further increase traffic on the road network.</p>

Key positive landscape features/ strategic sensitivities of the landscape

- 12C.1.14 The woodland belts abutting the A1081.
- 12C.1.15 Stockwood Park (golf course) extending from the adjacent Chalk Dipslope, bringing a parkland character to the valley, plus edges of Luton Hoo Park.
- 12C.1.16 The largely undeveloped valley sides and ridgeline.
- 12C.1.17 The rural character in the southeast.
- 12C.1.18 The function of the valley which plays an important role in separating the settlements of Luton and Harpenden.
- 12C.1.19 Consistent use of building materials - dark red/brown brick with slate tiles characterising farms and outbuildings.
- 12C.1.20 The public rights of way crossing and lining the valley sides.
- 12C.1.21 Occasional small surviving woodland copses on the valley sides e.g. Round Wood, which has added importance as a possible component of the wider designed landscape around Luton Hoo.

Visual Sensitivity

- 12C.1.22 Views to surviving woodland copses on the valley sides.
- 12C.1.23 The area of open undeveloped valley crest and transition to the chalk dipslope landscape.
- 12C.1.24 Views across the valley associated with the wider designed landscape of Luton Hoo – for example the view across to Round Wood
- 12C.1.25 Views up to the north-eastern valley sides to the parkland landscape of Stockwood Park.

Landscape Strategy

The overall strategy for the Slip End Chalk Valley character area is to **enhance/renew** with distinct opportunities to **recreate** lost features. Landscape enhancement should focus on improving the condition and quality of the existing positive elements, such as the woodland belts aligning the A1081, the hedgerows and the brick boundary wall surrounding Stockwood Park County Park. There are opportunities to recreate features of the valley landscape that have been lost and **introduce new landscape elements** where small areas of agricultural land have fallen into decline e.g. small scale woodland planting.

This small area continues within the adjacent counties and forms part of a wider chalk valley system. The landscape strategy should be co-ordinated and integrated across the catchment as a whole.

Guidelines for New Development

- 12C.1.26 Limit the extension of Luton into the valley along Newlands Road.
- 12C.1.27 Safeguard the perimeters of Luton Hoo Park and Stockwood Park from further encroachment from development or road improvement schemes.
- 12C.1.28 Maintain views to the generally undeveloped valley sides. Additional development would further disguise the valley landform. The aim should be to resist urbanisation of the more sensitive parts of character area to the north of Slip End and manage any extension of Luton in a way that avoids impacts on valley crests (such as at Kinsbourne Green, Thrales End and Slip End) and takes account of existing tree belts.
- 12C.1.29 Prevent further cluttering of the skyline by resisting development of large scale vertical structures such as pylons and masts.
- 12C.1.30 Any new development should respect the consistent use of the dark brick and slate tiling.

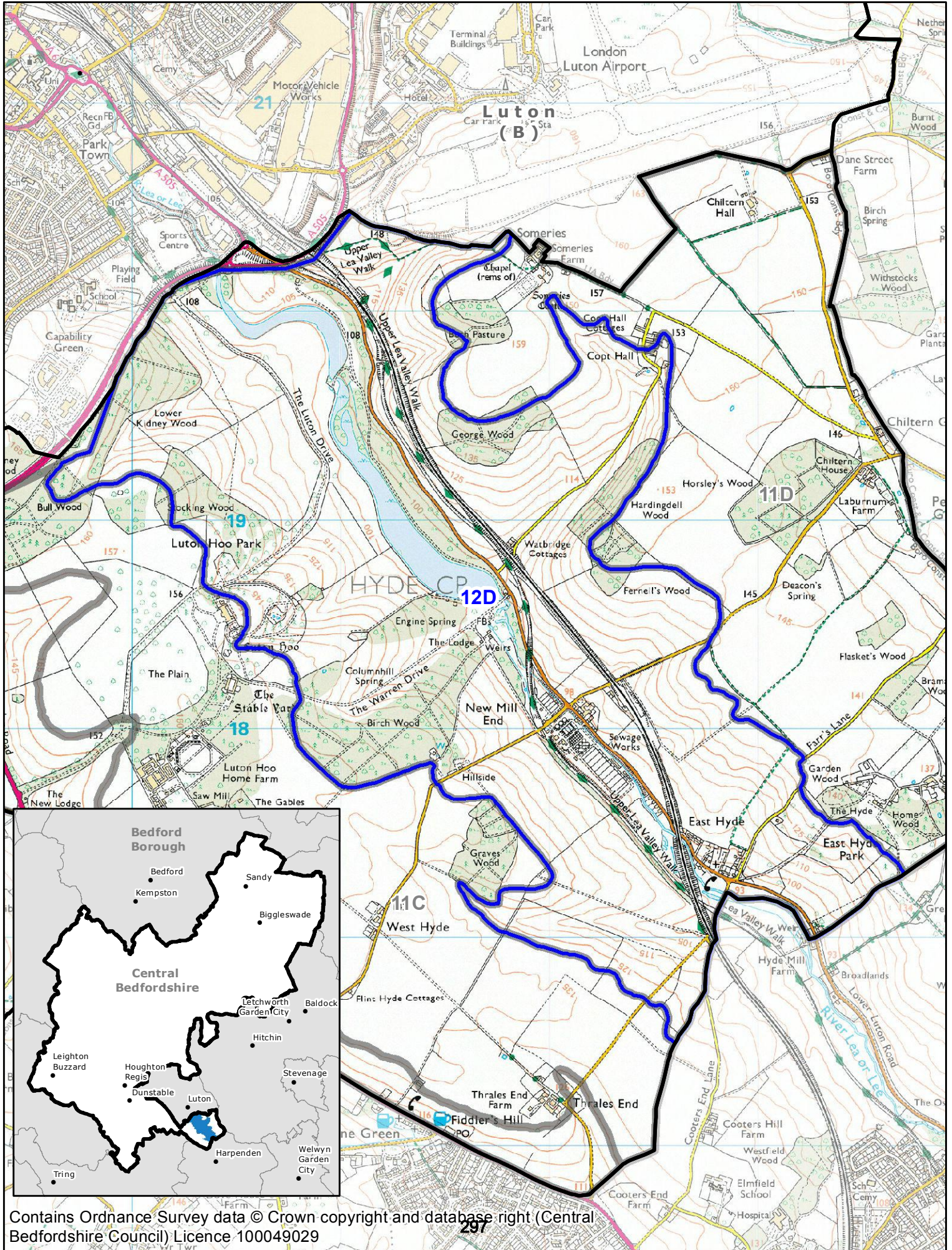
Landscape Management Guidelines

- 12C.1.1 Restore and improve the condition and structure of hedgerow boundaries. This is a key requirement along the road corridors. Renewal of some of the valley side hedgerows would reintroduce a stronger landscape pattern.
- 12C.1.2 Conserve and enhance any surviving remnants of historic boundaries; create new boundaries of similar character where possible.
- 12C.1.3 Consider opportunities to enhance the woodland resource by extending and connecting areas of woodland into the valley. Ensure the design of new planting respects and enhances the wider designed landscape.
- 12C.1.4 Promote active management of pockets of marginal land and explore opportunities for introducing new landscape elements to these neglected spaces e.g. woodland planting.
- 12C.1.5 Restore elements of the parkland landscapes associated with the adjacent historic parks at Luton Hoo and Stockwood Park – in particular seek to restore the boundary wall around Stockwood Park.
- 12C.1.6 Conserve Round Wood so as to retain its significance with the Luton Hoo wider landscape.
- 12C.1.7 Develop a strategy for mitigation the visual intrusion of road corridors cutting through the valley.

Also refer to the following documents:

- Luton and Southern Bedfordshire Green Infrastructure Plan.

12D: Lea Chalk Valley



12D Lea Chalk Valley

Location and boundaries

12D.1 The *Lea Chalk Valley* landscape character area adjoins the south-east edge of Luton, extending south-eastwards to the unitary authority boundary with Hertfordshire. The west and east boundaries are defined, respectively, by the ridgeline with the *Chalk Dipslope* (11c and 11d). The valley forms a distinct cutting through the chalk and is geographically separate from the other arterial river valleys of the Ver and the Gade to the west. The character area is distinguished by its particularly wooded context and the perceptible winding course of the River Lea.

Summary of landscape character: Key characteristics

- 12D.1.1 Valley containing the upper course of the River Lea also containing route of B653 linking Luton and Harpenden and main rail line.
- 12D.1.2 A medium scale valley landform with a narrow valley floor and wide and gently sloping valley sides extending to the ridgeline (c.150m) of the adjacent chalk dipslope landscapes (11c and 11d).
- 12D.1.3 The winding course of the river is perceptible at East Hyde where the floodplain is characterised by wet meadow.
- 12D.1.4 Land use characterised by small scale fields of pasture on the valley floor with medium arable fields on the valley sides. Valley side fields have remnant hedgerows running down the valley slopes.
- 12D.1.5 A complex and fragmented landscape interrupted by regular changes in land use including utilities e.g. Thames Water sewage works and transport links which dominate the valley floor.
- 12D.1.6 Large mixed woodland blocks and shelterbelts e.g. Birch Wood, George Wood, Hardingdell Wood together with the significant extent of ancient woodland in the parkland of the Luton Hoo create a strong wooded context.
- 12D.1.7 Luton Hoo Park imparts a designed character to parts of the valley. Views to Luton Hoo on the adjacent plateau (11c) are afforded from more elevated locations on the valley sides.
- 12D.1.8 Predominantly contained and enclosed along the valley floor by sloping valley sides and woodland, with channelled views along rural roads flanked by woodland belts and hedgerows. From the upper slopes there are semi-enclosed, wider views across open, arable fields into the valley.
- 12D.1.9 Skyline views to the adjacent ridgeline of the Luton Hoo character area (11c) vary from that of an open ridgeline to woodland blocks or to rows of silhouetted trees.
- 12D.1.10 The busy B653 and Midland Mainline railway cut through the Lea valley with a strong visible and audible presence. In particular, the railway embankment encloses views from the valley floor. Large viaduct bridges add a distinct engineered character to the valley and frame views.
- 12D.1.11 Generally unsettled, apart from occasional individual properties of mixed style – some traditional, along the roadside e.g. Watbridge cottages, and the small settlement of East Hyde along the B653.
- 12D.1.12 The Upper Lea Valley Walk provides an important recreational route from Luton's urban area along the Lea River Valley linking into the extensive recreational network of the Lea Valley to the south.
- 12D.1.13 Framed views to the urban edge of Luton along the B653 together with more distant views across to Capability Green industrial business park along the valley side road from Copt Hall to the B653. In general views are buffered by woodland. Quick transition from a semi-rural

to urban environment.

- 12D.1.14 Large parts of the area, in particular within the grounds of Luton Hoo, are inaccessible both physically and visually.

Landscape Character Description

Physical and natural landscape

- 12D.2 The River Lea has carved a distinctive valley through the underlying chalk creating a narrow valley floor with wide and gently sloping sides.
- 12D.3 The valley has a complex and varied landscape character, in particular, there is a notable contrast in land use associated with the upper slopes and the valley floor. The upper slopes are typically characterised by medium scale arable fields and blocks of woodland forming the transition between the slopes of the valley and the adjacent Chalk Dipslope landscape (11d, 11c).
- 12D.4 The valley floor is more complex in character. The winding course of the river is most perceptible at East Hyde where characteristic features of the floodplain including areas of wet meadow and wetland birds are visible and the river divides into of millstream. Elsewhere the river is less apparent and land use is characterised by pockets of pasture and less sympathetic features such as the conspicuous Thames Water Sewage Works, the B653 road corridor – linking the settlements of Luton and Harpenden - and the Midland Mainline railway line featuring landmark railway viaducts. There is a distinct 'designed' quality to the landscape as a result of the wooded grounds of the Luton Hoo Park, the red-brick perimeter walls and gateways lining much of the B653, are a key feature.

Biodiversity

- 12D.5 The River Lea is the only permanent watercourse within South Bedfordshire's chalk valleys. The valley contains associated habitats such as mature willow pollards, willow` and other scrub, and wetland vegetation. The River Lea could support otter, and water vole are known to be present upstream on the River Lea in Luton.
- 12D.6 Semi-improved neutral floodplain grassland is present in the area, though much of the grassland here has been affected by past agricultural improvement and drainage. The majority of the grassland is dry for most of the year but is prone to flooding, though small areas of marshy grassland and other wetland vegetation are present in permanently wet conditions near East Hyde.
- 12D.7 Unimproved neutral grassland would have been a particular feature of the area in the past though much has been lost as a result of agricultural improvement and ploughing. Extensive areas of improved and semi improved neutral grassland are present at Luton Hoo Park. Improved neutral grassland is of little biodiversity value but can retain archaeological features of interest. The large areas of parkland also contain old/veteran trees which provide an important habitat.
- 12D.8 The Lea Valley is distinguished by the presence of ancient semi-natural woodland on the valley sides such as George Wood, dominated by a mix of species including oak, ash, beech, birch and wild cherry. The areas of beech woodland are particularly important as they are an unusual woodland type for Bedfordshire. Conifers have been planted on some stands of ancient woodland.

Visual and perceptual character

- 12D.9 Views within the landscape are varied. The valley floor is typically contained and enclosed by sloping valley sides and large woodland blocks associated with ancient woodland in the parkland of the Luton Hoo and shelterbelts aligning the B653. Views to the urban edge of Luton are generally from a close range and channelled along rural roads as a result of the surrounding woodland belts and hedgerows. In contrast, the valley sides are less enclosed with wider views typically from upper slopes across open arable fields into the valley.
- 12D.10 Skyline views to the adjacent ridgeline of the Luton Hoo character area (11c) vary from that of an open ridgeline to woodland blocks or to rows of silhouetted trees.
- 12D.11 The busy B653 and Midland Mainline railway cut through the Lea valley with a strong visible and audible presence. In particular, the railway embankment encloses views from the valley floor. Large viaduct bridges add a distinct engineered character to the valley and frame views.



The railway passing through the valley and woodland blocks on the valley slope near East Hyde, from Thrales End Lane



The river Lea and floodplain near the B653 and Thrales end lane

Cultural pattern and historic character

- 12D.12 Luton Hoo Park has been a dominant influence on the character of the historic landscape in this area. At its maximum extent in the 18th century, its perimeter included the east slope of the valley, and George Wood. Where the River Lea ran through the Park, it was altered in the 18th century to create a series of artificial lakes.
- 12D.13 South of Luton Hoo Park, the landscape of the valley (which was probably originally an irregular pattern of early enclosure fields) was rationalised in the late 18th/early 19th century by the re-alignment of roads and field boundaries. East Hyde is small planned settlement of this period, perhaps created to re-house people displaced by the expansion of East Hyde Park.
- 12D.14 The Great Northern Railway was built through the valley in 1860, following a slightly different route from the later Midland Railway. It served a station at New Mill End. Its line is now historic landscape feature in its own right.

Settlement pattern; built character

- 12D.15 The valley is predominantly unsettled despite the large number of transport routes which cross the area, and forms a strong contrast with the adjacent built-up urban edge of Luton. Settlement comprises the small planned hamlet of East Hyde together with a number of properties along the roadside. There are in addition occasional scattered farmhouses and halls such as Copt Hall - these properties have mostly retained a traditional character, closely associated with the Chilterns landscape- red brick, clay tiles being the key building materials.
- 12D.16 The valley is predominantly unsettled forming a strong contrast with the adjacent built-up urban edge of Luton.



Luton Hoo viewed from the opposite side of the valley, on Copt Hall Road

Evaluation

Landscape Change

Past Change	Potential Future Change
<p>Thames Water sewage works.</p> <p>Development of the Midland Mainline railway line through the Lea valley.</p> <p>Urban expansion at Luton and Luton airport including the East Luton relief road and residential development.</p>	<p>Potential growth within Luton Borough, in the south and at Luton Airport.</p> <p>Potential of linear development from East Hyde towards Harpenden (Hertfordshire).</p> <p>Further extension of businesses behind main railway line and increasing urban fringe character.</p>

Key positive landscape features/ strategic sensitivities of the landscape

- 12D.1.15 The natural winding course of the River Lea with its associated floodplain characteristics and areas of pasture.
- 12D.1.16 Distinct river valley landform with a narrow valley floor and sloping valley sides.
- 12D.1.17 Extensive wooded areas (some of ancient origin e.g. George Wood) plus trees and tracts of woodland associated with the Luton Hoo Park, which characterise the valley floor and sides and increase the sense of enclosure.
- 12D.1.18 Remaining hedgerows and hedgerow trees running down the valley sides perpendicular to the main road which create the characteristic landscape pattern.
- 12D.1.19 Mature trees on road embankments – exposed roots are liable to weakening and eventual collapse with potential loss of trees leaving a much more open road corridor.
- 12D.1.20 The designed parkland landscape of Luton Hoo Park, including extensive boundary walls and gateway plus woodland planting visible within, and strongly influencing the character of the valley.
- 12D.1.21 The abandoned line of the Great Northern Railway is of interest as a demonstration of the fierce competition of the railway age and is a historic feature in its own right and now a Sustrans route.
- 12D.1.22 Viaduct bridges of the railway.
- 12D.1.23 Predominantly unsettled character.
- 12D.1.24 Recreational access along the Upper Lea Valley Walk from/to the urban edge ; Luton – Harpenden Greenway cycle route provides a link to the urban areas.
- 12D.1.25 Strong semi-rural character over much of the area despite proximity to the urban edge (woodland and land use limits view to Luton). Some inaccessible areas that could be described as peaceful.

12D.1.26 The role of the valley as a semi-rural corridor between Luton and Harpenden.

Visual Sensitivity

12D.1.27 Views to the viaduct bridges.

12D.1.28 Views from within the valley to the extensive walls and the designed parkland landscape of Luton Hoo.

12D.1.29 Views to the wooded valley sides.

12D.1.30 Views to and from the undeveloped ridgeline with the adjacent Chalk Dipslope (11c and 11d) – are also particularly sensitive to the introduction of buildings and tall structures.

Landscape Strategy

The overall strategy for the Lea Chalk Valley character area is to **enhance** the valley system as a whole, with some opportunities to renew/recreate features that have been lost. The aim should be to conserve its semi-rural character and strong contrast with the adjacent urban area of Luton. Landscape enhancement should focus on improving the condition and quality of the existing positive elements of the valley system including the wet meadows, areas of pasture, management of woodlands and restoration of historic features associated with Luton Hoo Park. There are key opportunities to enhance the interface with the transport corridors and sewage treatment works.

Guidelines for New Development

12D.1.31 Conserve the visual connection with the ridgeline of the adjacent plateau landscapes and avoid development along this visually sensitive ridge.

12D.1.32 Conserve the largely unsettled and undeveloped valley sides. Further incremental urban development along the road corridor and up towards the higher land of the valley sides would not be appropriate.

12D.1.33 Conserve sensitive views to Luton Hoo from the valley sides.

12D.1.34 Conserve the semi-rural character by ensuring that development does not expand along the B653 maintaining the rural\urban transition between the edge of Luton and the Lea River Valley.

12D.1.35 Monitor the development of businesses behind the railway line, ensuring their appropriateness in terms of scale and boundary treatment.

12D.1.36 Consider enhancement of sewage treatment works boundary.

12D.1.37 Ensure the use of traditional building materials for new development e.g. dark brick, slate roofs and ensure appropriate boundary treatment.

12D.1.38 Conserve and enhance access and connections from the urban area into the landscape, notably the Upper Lea Valley walk.

12D.1.39 Ensure new boundary or woodland planting respects and enhances the wider designed landscape around Luton Hoo Park and East Hyde Park.

12D.1.40 Consider opportunities for the creation of woodland along the Midland Mainline/Thameslink railway embankment and to buffer noise and visual intrusion.

12D.1.41 Conserve the mature roadside trees, in particular along the B653 and consider opportunities for further planting.

12D.1.42 Ensure appropriate and sensitive treatment of boundaries, in particular avoid industrial style boundary fencing that impacts on the rural quality of the river valley.

12D.1.43 Conserve the former line of the Great North Railway.

12D.1.44 Retain 'peaceful' areas of the landscape – in particular within the grounds of Luton Hoo.

Landscape Management Guidelines

- 12D.1.45 Conserve and enhance the character and quality of the wet meadow grazing landscape on the floodplain and valley floor of the River Lea and consider opportunities to extend the area of pasture.
- 12D.1.1 Restore the historic features associated with the Luton Hoo Park which have a very visible presence within the area. Restoration of boundary walls and gateways with appropriate building materials is a priority.
- 12D.1.2 Enhance the character of the road corridors and limit urbanising influences - widening/kerbing and ensure that traffic management measures are sympathetic to the rural character.
- 12D.1.3 Enhance the condition and structure of the hedgerow boundaries, by focussing hedgerow restoration between remaining sections so as to strengthen the landscape pattern - in particular those perpendicular to the river valley ascending up the valley sides and those linking into areas of woodland. The restoration and management of hedgerows along the road corridor is a further priority.
- 12D.1.4 Monitor extraction of water from the River Lea and seek to ensure high water quality and water flows.
- 12D.1.5 Conserve the well-wooded character of the valley, in particular conserve the woodland blocks of George Wood, Birch Wood, Hardingdell Wood, Graves Wood and apply an appropriate management strategy to enhance ecological interest. Consider opportunities to extend and connect areas of woodland by hedgerow restoration or woodland creation.

Also refer to the following documents:

- Luton and Southern Bedfordshire Green Infrastructure Plan.