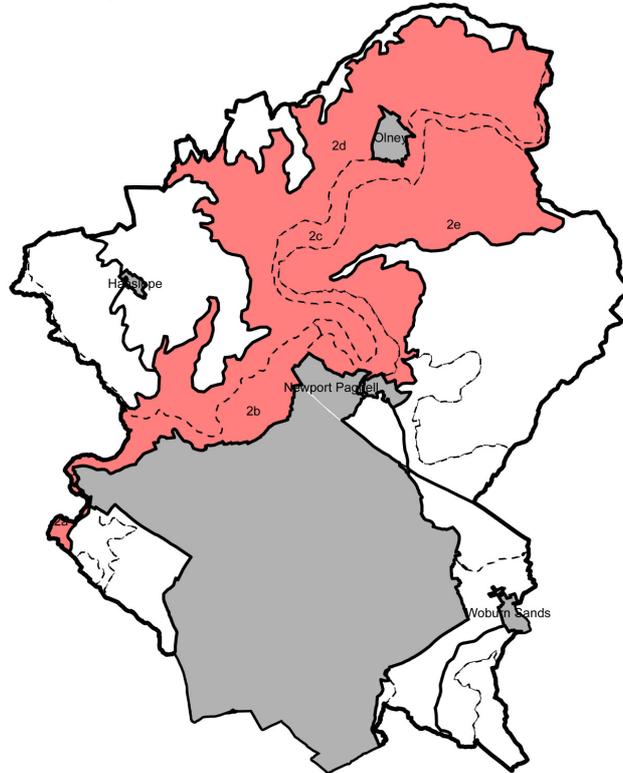


2. Ouse Valley

Summary Page

Location

This area follows the course of the River Ouse from the Northamptonshire boundary at Passenham near Stoney Stratford north-eastwards past Wolverton and Olney and up to the Bedfordshire border at Turvey.



Character Summary

This stretch of river valley forms part of the River Great Ouse, which flows from its source near Brackley in Northamptonshire for 150 miles to enter The Wash at King's Lynn. Along the stretch within Milton Keynes the Ouse occupies a broad valley with gentle slopes. The character area can be divided into the five following sub areas that together make a coherent landscape unit:

- a. Ouse Valley Floor West – a narrow corridor of the Ouse running from Stoney Stratford upstream to the boundary with Aylesbury Vale District. This is part of a wider flood plain that extends into Northamptonshire around the hamlet of Passenham. Much of this area has consent for future mineral extraction.
- b. Ouse Valley Urban Fringe – the western section of the Ouse Valley skirts the northern edge of Milton Keynes and the settlements of Stoney Stratford, Wolverton and Newport Pagnell. This length of the valley has been significantly affected by extensive mineral extraction carried out in the building of Milton Keynes. However a new landscape is now emerging including lakes and important wildlife and recreational after uses.
- c. Ouse Valley Floor East – the sinuous valley floor of the rural Ouse Valley that runs from Newport Pagnell in the south to Turvey and Bedfordshire in the north. This stretch of the river is relatively undisturbed containing a number of floodplain meadows along its course and represents the strongest unifying factor and core of the Ouse Valley.

- d. Ouse Valley Northern slopes – the northern slopes of the rural Ouse Valley corridor between Haversham and Turvey comprise extensive largely open arable landscapes punctuated with traditional limestone villages and offering fine panoramic views
- e. Ouse Valley Southern slopes — the southern slopes of the rural Ouse Valley corridor between Newport Pagnell and Turvey comprise extensive largely open arable landscapes punctuated with traditional limestone villages and offering fine panoramic views

Key Characteristics

2a Ouse Valley Floor West

- Narrow floodplain with open fields and mature hawthorn
- Riparian willows and poplars
- Weir and converted mills
- Ditches and wire fences within flood plain
- Riverside walks to north of area with footbridges

2b Ouse Valley Urban Fringe

- Meandering river in flood plain corridor with riparian vegetation
- Extensive restored mineral sites including lakes and semi natural vegetation
- Considerable recreational use including linear park
- Areas of pasture both on slopes and flood plain
- Associated areas of higher ground overlooking valley
- Isolated settlement, but urban areas prominent in close proximity
- Historic and industrial archaeological features of interest

2 c Ouse Valley Floor East

- Narrow and sinuous valley floor
- Open field patterns with ditches and wire fences
- High proportion of grazing
- Riparian character along the river
- Few restored mineral sites
- Limited access adjacent to the river and few crossing points
- Tranquil character
- Absence of visual detractors
- Settlement mainly restricted to historic mills

2 d & e Ouse Valley Northern & Southern slopes

- Gently sloping valley sides
- Secondary valleys provide local enclosure
- Large scale arable fields with low clipped hedges
- Occasional stone walls to fields boundaries and limestone in fields
- Paddocks in association with village margins
- Low proportion of woodland and hedgerow trees
- Panoramic views over meandering valley
- General absence of visual detractors and limited impact from built urban development
- Historic parklands
- Limestone villages
- Historic associations with William Cowper and John Newton
- Heavily wooded skyline of Yardley Ridge to the north

Distinctive features

2 a Ouse Valley Floor West

- Picnic site on island site

2 b Ouse Valley Urban Fringe

- Grand Union Canal including Iron Viaduct over the Ouse
- Wolverton Mill
- Wolverton deserted medieval village
- West coast main line railway viaduct
- M1 corridor

2 c Ouse Valley Floor East

- Mills and mill races
- Tyringham Park, Bridge and Lodges
- St Peter and St Pauls - Olney Church
- Emberton Country Park

Ouse Valley Northern & Southern slopes

- Historic market town of Olney
- Weston Underwood & Weston Park
- Cowper's Alcove
- Gayhurst House, Park and Church
- Lavendon Abbey and fishponds
- Bury Field -Newport Pagnell Common
- Tyringham Park and Hall
- Pockets of ridge and furrow

Assessment

Geology and Soils

The geology of the River Ouse floodplain is formed on river alluvium with the overlying soils being stoneless clays and in places calcareous in nature with seasonally high groundwater (predominantly Fladbury 1 Association with pockets of Thames Association). On the valley slopes the soils are more varied. The majority of the slopes consist of calcareous clayey or loamy soils that are well drained but can be shallow or fragmented, overlying Jurassic limestone or clay (Aberford and Moreton Associations). Towards the base of the slopes, however, there can be slowly permeable and seasonally waterlogged loamy soils over clay and overlying river terrace drift or clay shale (Bishampton 2 and Oxpasture Association). Towards the tops of the slopes soils can also be slowly permeable and seasonally waterlogged, but tend to be calcareous clayey soils over chalky till (Hanslope Association) or Jurassic and Cretaceous clay (Evesham 2).

Topography

The Ouse Valley is very broad with gentle valley slopes allowing extensive views across and along the valley. The River itself meanders through the bottom of the valley in a relatively narrow band of flat floodplain and flood meadows. There are localised steeper escarpments or 'bluffs' close to the valley floor around e.g. west of Clifton Reynes and Weston Road Olney which provide some dramatic elevated views across and along the floodplain. There are also some locally steeper slopes in the secondary tributary valleys that join the main valley.

Degree of Slope

In general, the Ouse Valley slopes have an average slope of approximately 1 in 50 or less. There are locally steeper areas along the valleys of tributaries, with slopes of up to 1 in 8, and in the locations where bluffs are found the slopes can be 1 in 6 or steeper. Along the river corridor the fall is minimal.

Altitude Range

The River Ouse falls from approximately 63m AOD north west of Milton Keynes to below the 45m contour on the eastern boundary of the authority. The valley slopes rise from around the 45m contour to approximately the 100m contour, with the southern slopes being slightly higher than the northern slopes.

Hydrology

The main feature of the area is the slow flowing and meandering River Great Ouse. Seasonal flooding within the flood plain is a frequent feature of the landscape in the winter and spring. This section of the river is not navigable with a number of sluices at Newport Pagnell, Olney and Lavendon Mill. There are also a variety of streams and springs that rise up near the top of the valley slopes and run down to join the main river channel. Sand and gravel extraction has occurred along much of the river, but particularly in the section north of Milton Keynes and more locally at Emberton. This has resulted in the creation of numerous large lakes within the valley bottom, some of which are now nature reserves and wildfowl centres, while others are used as recreational facilities with fishing and sailing being available. Along these sections the river is less of an obvious unifying feature but is locally marked by mature and pollarded willows and riparian vegetation.

Land cover and land use

Within the meandering floodplain to the east much of the land is pasture supporting sheep and cattle on irregular small to medium sized open fields divided by drainage ditches, post and wire fences and isolated over mature hawthorn hedges. However there are locations where the arable cultivation reaches down to the riverbank and in other locations there are recreational uses such as playing fields at Olney.

Within the Urban Fringe sub area north of Milton Keynes land uses comprise a relatively complex mosaic of small to medium scale mixed land uses. These include pasture, parkland

and various restored mineral workings containing lakes, scrapes, wetlands and a range of scrub and plantation planting e.g. at Stony Stratford and Linford Lakes. A few of the mineral sites e.g. Hartigans at Newport Pagnell still requires appropriate restoration. Further mineral extraction is underway near Passenham and north of Manor Farm Wolverton with the restoration plans including the creation of wet woodland.

Land use on the valley slopes is predominantly arable comprising wheat, barley and rape in large regular fields. There are smaller areas of grazing some on remnant ridge and furrow typically nearer the settlements and a few equestrian centres which support paddocks. The arable landscape is generally exposed and locally the structure is in poor condition e.g. west of the M1 above Little Linford. Woodland cover on the slopes is generally limited to smaller copses, but includes a few larger isolated woods close to the plateau edge e.g. at Hollington Wood and Newton Wood/Clifton Spinney.

Biodiversity

Some of the floodplain contains National Priority BAP habitats e.g. flood plain grazing marsh. Vegetation along the river corridor includes a number of fine willows and black poplars which mark the course of the river and a few plantations of cricket bat willow e.g. at Newton Blossomville. Flocks of over wintering wildfowl including an increasing numbers of swans are a feature of the floodplain. Kingfishers are also a feature of the Ouse around Olney. The various restored mineral sites have increased the wildlife value and there are also an increase in number of birds of prey including Red Kite, Raven and Buzzard, which is related to the adjacent wooded areas to the north.

On the slopes hedges are generally low and clipped with few field trees being often gappy between fields but better along the minor lanes where a number are species rich. Woodland cover is limited to smaller copses and woods and areas associated with parklands and settlements. Some of the woodlands are ancient e.g. Hollington Wood near Emberton, which is known for its fine display of bluebells in May. Most of the other woods on the slopes probably have their origin as coverts. Quarry Hall Farm, Lathbury, boasts a petrified tree that is of particular note.

Historical and Cultural significance

The Ouse Valley contains evidence of Bronze Age activity including a number of barrow cemeteries e.g. at Tyringham. The River Ouse marked the boundary between Danellaw and Wessex with Olney being included within Danelaw. Castles dating from 11th and 12th centuries were built in the valley at Wolverton and Newport Pagnell. Many of the parish boundaries, which date from Saxon times, were drawn to include a mix of higher land, valley slopes and a section of flood plain meadows to enabling seasonal grazing and a river frontage.

Within the Urban Fringe sub area there are areas of historic interest including small parklands on the shoulders of higher ground to the south including Manor Farm and Wolverton House where specimen oak lime and wellingtonias contribute to the local character. There are areas of remnant ridge and furrow pasture associated with areas of permanent pasture and in proximity to the parklands and the deserted medieval village at Wolverton.

Within the rural eastern section of the Ouse Valley there are a number of historic houses and parklands. Gayhurst Court dates back to the 16th century with the present house being built for William Moulsoe and Sir Everard Digby, (later hung for his part in the Gunpowder Plot) between c.1567-1603. The house was subsequently altered a number of times including by William Burgess 1859-72 for Lord Carrington. The grounds (GradeII) which originally extended to c.300ha include St Peters Church, (built in the classical renaissance style), two connecting pools and the Newport Road lodge latterly the Sir Francis Drake Public House. It is rumoured that Capability Brown was involved in laying out the grounds before 1763 however the Repton 'Red Book' provides evidence of his proposals for the grounds including the tree

lined 'Sweet Digsby's Walk' which leads under the Newport road via a gothic subway down to the Ouse.

Recent changes have seen a reduction in cattle and the loss of tanneries in the villages.

Tyringham Park (GradeII*) occupies a position partially within the flood plain. The present house was designed by Sir John Soane (1793-c1800) for William Praed. The treed parkland generally attributed to Repton contains further Soane structures including a fine pair of lodge gates and an impressive bridge over the Ouse. The Parish church is also located in the parkland. The formal gardens to the rear of the house which include pavilions, loggias and pools were remodelled by GF Rees and Edwin Lutyens in the early 20th century.

The 'Wilderness' was a further parkland at Weston Underwood however only a few elements remain e.g. The Alcove. There are strong associations in the Ouse Valley with the poet William Cowper who lived at Olney and Weston and whose writings included frequent references to the local landscape e.g. The Task and The Poplar Field,

'The poplars are felled, farewell to the shade
And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade:
The winds play no longer and sing in the leaves,
Nor Ouse on his bosom their image receives'.

Field Pattern

The Ouse Valley comprises a range of historic field patterns but with local concentrations. The area between Newport Pagnell and Olney contains a many pre 18th century enclosure fields together with some 20th century prairie fields on the valley slopes. East of Olney this mix is added to by more 18th and 19th century parliamentary enclosure with straighter boundaries. There are also areas of assarted enclosure on the higher ground east of Hollington Wood indicating a more wooded character in the past. Some of the field boundaries are locally marked by limestone walls however they are not generally in good condition. Pockets of ridge and furrow are found within the area. It is considered that some of these features could have been created by steam plough rather than traditional ox drawn means since the furrows are relatively straight and the inventor of the steam plough came from Wolverton. There are a number of enclosed meadows that follow the line of the Ouse. Buryfield at Newport Pagnell, is a large area which has held with common holders rights since the Middle Ages.

Transport Pattern

The Ouse Valley corridor is relatively tranquil for much of its course, although it is locally crossed by the A509 at Olney, A428 at Turvey, the B526 at Newport and the M1 and A5 north of Milton Keynes. A number of the minor roads and rights of way follow the side slopes of the valley from where there are some of the best views. The Grand Union canal weaves into and out of the area passing through the adjacent urban landscapes at Wolverton before crossing the River Ouse on the 'Iron Trunk' aqueduct near Cosgrove. Nearby there are a number of redundant section of canal from previous attempts to cross the valley by a series of locks. Historic bridges at Newport Pagnell, Olney and Turvey are also of note. The West Coast mainline railway crosses the Ouse valley at Wolverton on an impressive brick viaduct. The disused railway between Northampton and Bedford crosses the valley at Olney.

Settlement and Built form

The picturesque qualities of the valley landscape are emphasised by the associated limestone villages located to both the southern and northern slopes most of which have Conservation Areas. The warm limestone is the predominant building material with the buildings roofed in thatch, slates or red tiles. Notable examples are Ravenstone, Newton Blossomville and Clifton Reynes. Weston Underwood contains a number of fine stone houses and distinctive stone piers at the village entrance. Clock towers at Emberton and Filgrave also create local landmarks. A number of the villages have good examples of sympathetic conversions and

new build using local materials and styling. Away from the villages settlement is generally limited to the occasional isolated farmhouse or mill used for grinding corn or papermaking.

The small market town of Olney is distinguished by its wide High Street lined by fine town houses and the parish church of St Peter and St Paul's marking the end of the settlement which creates a fine landmark throughout much of the Ouse Valley. Historic bridges at Newport Pagnell, Tyringham and Turvey are also of note. The second half of the 20th century has resulted in considerable areas of residential and commercial development at Newport Pagnell, Olney and Wolverton which all have an impact on the adjacent rural areas.

Useful Links

Stoke Goldington historical society <http://www.mkheritage.co.uk/sga/docs/frameset.html>

English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens Gayhurst and Tyringham

Evaluation Page

Visual and Sensory perception

The Ouse Valley landscape has a strong integrity, which is unified by the sinuous and meandering course of the River Ouse. With the exception of the crossing points of the M1 and the A5 the valley has a tranquil character particularly to the north of Newport Pagnell. Despite the openness of the valley slopes there are few visual detractors in the landscape. This enables uninterrupted panoramic views across and along the valley from a number of locations including Chicheley Hill, Swan's Way near Gayhurst Wood, on the Filgrave Road near A509 and from B5388 approaching Olney. There are also frequent views up to the adjacent plateau areas including the wooded ridge of Yardley Chase and more intimate views such as from Cowpers Alcove towards Emberton. Closer to the River there are a number of locations where from local escarpments there are elevated views over the floodplain e.g. from Clifton Reynes. In addition the consistently high quality of the villages, landmark churches and the parklands at Tyringham and Gayhurst make this a balanced and attractive landscape.

The detractors that are present are mainly found within the urban areas and include industrial units at Wolverton and Olney and the new Olney School campus. The vegetated edge establishing throughout the Ouse Valley Linear Park and restored mineral sites to the north of Milton Keynes help to soften the impact of the adjacent built development. The HV electricity pylons which cross the valley to the east near Lavendon also have an adverse visual impact on the rural character.

Recreational Opportunities

The Ouse Valley provides important opportunities for recreation. The Ouse Valley Way follows the valley however it follows a circuitous route often detached from the river e.g. between Olney and Tyringham and from New Bradwell. The route is only partially signed. The Three Shires Way also passes through the area. Further facilities in the Urban Fringe sub area include the Ouse Valley Park, Linford Lakes (with the Hanson Environmental centre), and Cosgrove Leisure Park (partially within Northamptonshire) together with the Grand Union Canal, which is popular for canal boats and walking. A new Country park will also be created in conjunction with the Stantonbury Park Farm development. Emberton Country Park is a popular Country Park close to Olney providing opportunities for sailing, fishing, bird watching and mobile and static camping facilities. The riverside footpaths at Olney and the linking footpath to Clifton Reynes is a popular recreational route. The valley is also popular for cycling, walking and horse riding

Community Views

Time depth perspective

'Sweet Digby's Walk, cool shade in summer-time.
Leads through an archway to the peaceful Ouse,
Where boat and fishing rod supply the taste
Of those who seek the meditative charms
To memory dear of sylvan river scene.'

From William Cowper's poem about Digby's Walk, Gayhurst:

Evaluation Matrix

2a Ouse Valley Floor West

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER	WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG	
Impact of landform* Impact of landcover* Historic pattern* Visibility from outside Sense of enclosure Tranquillity Distinctiveness/rarity	Insignificant Insignificant Insignificant Widely visible Open/exposed Discordant Frequent	Apparent Apparent Apparent Locally visible Partial Moderate Unusual	Dominant/Prominent Dominant/Prominent Dominant/Prominent Concealed Contained/confined Tranquil Unique/rare	
Totals * Prime condition categories if tie	1	6	0	
CONDITION	POOR	MODERATE	GOOD	
Landcover Change Age Structure of Tree Cover* Extent of semi-natural habitat survival* Management of semi-natural habitats Survival of cultural pattern (fields and hedges) Impact of built development* Visual unity <i>* Prime condition categories if tie</i>	Widespread Overmature Relic Poor Declining/Relic High Incoherent	Localised Mature Scattered Not obvious Interrupted Moderate Coherent	Insignificant Mixed Widespread/ linked Good Intact Low Unified	
Totals * Prime robustness categories if tie	1	2	4	
MATRIX	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
		Strength of Character		

Landscape Strategy = Conserve and Strengthen

Sensitivity

Ecological – Mainly Very Low with some Moderate

Cultural – Mainly Low with some High

Visual –Low

Tranquillity –Very Low

Evaluation Matrix

2b Ouse Valley Urban Fringe

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER	WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG	
Impact of landform* Impact of landcover* Historic pattern* Visibility from outside Sense of enclosure Tranquillity Distinctiveness/rarity	Insignificant Insignificant Insignificant Widely visible Open/exposed Discordant Frequent	Apparent Apparent Apparent Locally visible Partial Moderate Unusual	Dominant/ Prominent Dominant/ Prominent Dominant/Prominent Concealed Contained /Confined Tranquil Unique/Rare	
Totals * Prime condition categories if tie	0	4	3	
CONDITION	POOR	MODERATE	GOOD	
Landcover Change Age Structure of Tree Cover* Extent of semi-natural habitat survival* Management of semi-natural habitats Survival of cultural pattern (fields and hedges) Impact of built development* Visual unity <i>* Prime condition categories if tie</i>	Widespread Overmature Relic Poor Declining/ Relic High Incoherent	Localised Mature Scattered Not obvious Interrupted Moderate Coherent	Insignificant Mixed Widespread/ linked Good Intact Low Unified	
Totals * Prime robustness categories if tie	3	1	3	
MATRIX	Good	Strengthen and	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
Condition	Moderate	Improve and	Improve and	Conserve and
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and	Restore condition to
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Strength of Character		

Landscape Strategy = Conserve and Strengthen

Sensitivity

Ecological – Disturbed

Cultural – Disturbed

Visual – Mainly Low with some Moderate

Tranquillity –Very Low

Evaluation Matrix

2c Ouse Valley Floor East

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER	WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG	
Impact of landform* Impact of landcover* Historic pattern* Visibility from outside Sense of enclosure Tranquillity Distinctiveness/rarity	Insignificant Insignificant Insignificant Widely visible Open /exposed Discordant Frequent	Apparent Apparent Apparent Locally visible Partial Moderate Unusual	Dominant/ Prominent Dominant/ Prominent Dominant/ Prominent Concealed Contained/confined Tranquil Unique/ Rare	
Totals * Prime condition categories if tie	1	2	4	
CONDITION	POOR	MODERATE	GOOD	
Landcover Change Age Structure of Tree Cover* Extent of semi-natural habitat survival* Management of semi-natural habitats Survival of cultural pattern (fields and hedges) Impact of built development* Visual unity <i>* Prime condition categories if tie</i>	Widespread Overmature Relic Poor Declining/Relic High Incoherent	Localised Mature Scattered Not obvious Interrupted Moderate Coherent	Insignificant Mixed Widespread/ linked Good Intact Low Unified	
Totals * Prime robustness categories if tie	0	3	4	
MATRIX	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
Condition	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
	Weak	Moderate	Strong	
	Strength of Character			

Landscape Strategy = Safeguard and manage

Sensitivity

Ecological – Moderate

Cultural – High

Visual –Low

Tranquillity – Moderate

Evaluation Matrix

2d Ouse Valley Northern slopes

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER	WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG	
Impact of landform* Impact of landcover* Historic pattern* Visibility from outside Sense of enclosure Tranquillity Distinctiveness/rarity	Insignificant Insignificant Insignificant Widely visible Open /exposed Discordant Frequent	Apparent Apparent Apparent Locally visible Partial Moderate Unusual	Dominant/Prominent Dominant/ Prominent Dominant/Prominent Concealed Contained/confined Tranquil Unique/rare	
Totals * Prime condition categories if tie	3	3	1	
CONDITION	POOR	MODERATE	GOOD	
Landcover Change Age Structure of Tree Cover* Extent of semi-natural habitat survival* Management of semi-natural habitats Survival of cultural pattern (fields and hedges) Impact of built development* Visual unity <i>* Prime condition categories if tie</i>	Widespread Overmature Relic Poor Declining/Relic High Incoherent	Localised Mature/Young Scattered Not obvious Interrupted Moderate Coherent	Insignificant Mixed Widespread/Linked Good Intact Low Unified	
Totals * Prime robustness categories if tie	0	7	0	
MATRIX	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
Condition	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Strength of Character		

Landscape Strategy = Improve and Conserve

Sensitivity

Ecological – Low

Cultural – Low

Visual – Moderate

Tranquillity – Moderate

Evaluation Matrix

2e Ouse Valley Southern slopes

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER	WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG	
Impact of landform* Impact of landcover* Historic pattern* Visibility from outside Sense of enclosure Tranquillity Distinctiveness/rarity	Insignificant Insignificant Insignificant Widely visible Open /exposed Discordant Frequent	Apparent Apparent Apparent Locally visible Partial Moderate Unusual	Dominant/Prominent Dominant /Prominent Dominant/Prominent Concealed Contained/confined Tranquil Unique/rare	
Totals * Prime condition categories if tie	3	3	1	
CONDITION	POOR	MODERATE	GOOD	
Landcover Change Age Structure of Tree Cover* Extent of semi-natural habitat survival* Management of semi-natural habitats Survival of cultural pattern (fields and hedges) Impact of built development* Visual unity <i>* Prime condition categories if tie</i>	Widespread Overmature Relic Poor Declining/Relic High Incoherent	Localised Mature/Young Scattered Not obvious Interrupted Moderate Coherent	Insignificant Mixed Widespread/Linked Good Intact Low Unified	
Totals * Prime robustness categories if tie	0	7	0	
MATRIX	Good	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
Condition	Moderate	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	Poor	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Strength of Character		

Landscape Strategy = Improve and Conserve

Sensitivity

Ecological – Mainly Low with some Very Low

Cultural – Mainly Moderate with some Low

Visual – Mainly Moderate with some Low

Tranquillity – Mainly High with some Very High

Guidelines

Countryside Management

Generally

- Promote the continued and extended use of the area for quiet recreation
- Maintain and strengthen the distinction between the valley slopes and the central floodplain
- Identify, retain and manage key viewpoints to appreciate the valley setting and its component parts
- Improve right of way signage including long distance routes so it is clear but appropriate to the location, using local materials where possible
- Promote traditional methods of hedgerow management including coppicing, laying and gapping up
- Protect the open character of the valley and the panoramic views from visually intrusive development in the countryside and in adjacent urban areas
- Promote the creation of a cycle path along the River Ouse from Milton Keynes to Bedfordshire.
- Conserve, enhance and promote the restoration of the historic parklands having particular concern for protecting their immediate and wider settings
- Improve rights of way connections from urban and rural settlements to the right of way network promoting new links where absent
- Promote and improve the interpretation of the Ouse Valley Way
- Prepare a planting strategy to minimise the visual impact of the main transport corridors including the M1 and A5

2 a & 2 c Ouse Valley Floor West & East

- Protect existing flood meadows from ploughing, grassland improvement or further mineral extraction
- Encourage continued management of flood meadows by grazing and promote the floodplain as a target location for incentive payments
- Improve the management of old meadows and pastures by ceasing fertiliser and herbicide application and introducing sensitive grassland management such as late hay cutting or low density livestock grazing
- Promote improvements to the river, water edge and pond habitats to encourage increased biodiversity value through marginal planting and localised bank profiling and sympathetic maintenance of drainage ditches
- Promote the management of riparian vegetation including floodplain pollards, new specimens including Black Polar and where appropriate more extensive areas of wet woodland
- Encourage reversion of arable to pasture within floodplain

- Promote the use of ditches and hedges in place of post and wire as a means of stock enclosure
- Maximise opportunities from the restoration of mineral extraction sites for recreation, rights of way and biodiversity
- Encourage the increased use of the river for recreation
- Promote the creation of additional public bridging points e.g. Ravensden Mill linking to Filgrave

2 b Ouse Valley Urban Fringe –

- Promote continued management of planting within restored mineral sites to develop a diverse mixed age woodland community that retains a balance between screening recreation, wildlife and public safety
- Identify and support improved visitor facilities for recreation sites in the valley
- Increase access linkages to the Ouse Valley Way and Ouse Valley Linear Park from the existing and proposed urban areas

2 d & 2e Ouse Valley Northern & Southern slopes –

- Promote retention, restoration and planting of hedges and the addition of hedgerow trees within the open landscape to provide additional structure while still retaining vistas across the valley. Pattern to follow historic field boundaries where possible
- Promote extension of uncropped or grass field margins to enhance biodiversity linkage following existing and proposed rights of way where possible
- Promote the creation of new ponds and the retention / enhancement for wildlife of existing ponds
- Identify and promote planting to mitigate existing visually intrusive development on the edge of settlements
- Promote organic farming and availability of crops for local uses
- Promote the removal of inappropriate coniferous species in woodlands and hedges and replacement with native broadleaves

Guidelines in relation to development

- Restrict built development in the area retaining the primary role for agriculture and recreation to the east of the M1
- Protect the historic setting and structure of the villages including views to the villages and the retained open spaces within them
- Where built development or restoration is considered appropriate indigenous building materials or equally visually acceptable alternatives should be used to maintain and enhance the character of the existing villages
- Prevent development that could detract from local landmarks including village churches and views from historic locations e.g. Cowpers Alcove

- Proposed development within or adjacent to the Ouse Valley should be accompanied by a landscape and visual assessment as part of any planning application
- Prevent built development in the floodplain
- Where mineral extraction is proven to be essential support the creation of wet woodland for restoration in appropriate locations e.g. the Floodplain Forest at Wolverton to provide a mosaic of habitats and public access.