

Name.....Date .....

Organisation.....Tel.....Email.....

NB Please complete the sections in the questionnaire that are of interest to you and return by 7/3/07 to:  
**The Landscape Partnership, Greenwood House, 15a St Cuthbert's Street, Bedford, MK40 3JG**  
Tel:01234 261315, email: [ruth.sismey@bedford.tlp.uk.com](mailto:ruth.sismey@bedford.tlp.uk.com)

**Introduction**

Each part of England is different; it has a particular sense of place. Landscape Character Assessment is an established and systematic method of identifying the local characteristics of an area and proposing ways that local distinctiveness can be reinforced and managed to maintain or improve diversity and quality within the landscape. Over recent years the Landscape Character Assessment approach has been used throughout much of England to provide planning guidance through a consistent framework. A study has been commissioned by Milton Keynes Council to provide a Landscape Character Assessment of the rural part of the authority to provide part of the evidence based approach to the emerging Local Development Framework.

The initial aim of the study is to build up a picture of the local landscape within a geographical framework of landscape character areas. Following initial work by the Council's consultants, (The Landscape Partnership), Draft landscape character areas have been proposed for the rural areas of the authority. Defining these areas has involved a combination of desk study (covering aspects such as geology, soils, land use, ecology and historic environment) and field work (to test the desk study and also to identify other important visual, perceptual and aesthetic characteristics).

The attached sheets and plan have been produced at this interim stage in the development of the Landscape Character Assessment for Milton Keynes Council when the views of a wide range of Stakeholders are sought. We would value any comments or information that you have to guide the development of the Landscape Character Assessment descriptions and to thereby enrich the study. We appreciate that there is wealth of information available through local stakeholders. Please feel free to add comments to reflect your local and detailed knowledge of the areas.

The value of the landscape to the local population is an important aspect of the study. Question 8 provides the opportunity to provide a measure of value to each character area within the context of the wider Milton Keynes environment. For the purposes of this study a 5 point scale has been used as follows: Significantly below average, below average, average, above average & significantly above average. Please indicate a value for the character area as a whole rather than reflecting any single features within it and if possible give reasons for the value you have given.

The study will also propose a number of guidelines for each area. These will reflect landscape change both past and present and help direct the management of the existing landscape as well as providing guidance on the sensitivity of the landscape to change and its potential capacity to accept development. Where there is insufficient space on the sheets please provide additional comments on additional paper.

**General Question**

**Draft Landscape Character Areas**

With reference to the attached map do you think that the main landscape areas have been correctly identified within the authority? Are there any more areas or potential sub divisions? (NB It should be noted that the boundaries between character areas may sometimes be reasonably clear whereas in other locations they may be a zone of more gradual transition).

## **1. Yardley Ridge**

### **Key Characteristics**

#### **1a Yardley Chase Fringe**

- Gently undulating plateau landscape
- Large mixed woodlands closely related or linked to the extensive woods in Yardley Chase
- Large arable fields and clipped hedges
- Extensive views to the south

#### **1b Hanslope Plateau**

- Plateau landscape
- Large mixed woodlands now relatively disconnected
- Large arable fields and clipped hedges
- Areas of pasture and smaller fields closer to the settlements
- Minimum isolated settlement
- Extensive views to the south

### **Distinctive Features**

#### **1a Yardley Chase Fringe**

- ?

#### **1b Hanslope Plateau**

- Hanslope Park (+ flood lighting at night)
- Hanslope church spire
- M1 cuts through area

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6. What are the main recreational and accessibility features of the area? Are there any gaps?
7. What are the important perceptual or aesthetic factors of the area (e.g. visual impact of development, tranquillity, noise)

8. What relative value would you give the specific character area in the context of all the surrounding landscape around Milton Keynes? (Circle one )

Significantly below average  Below average  Average  Above average  Significantly above average

What aspects contribute to the value you have given?

9. What do you think have been the main changes in the landscape character area in recent years and what forces for change do you anticipate in the future?

10. What specific guidelines would you suggest to guide the management/enhancement and or development of the area?

## 2. Ouse Valley

### Key Characteristics

#### 2a Ouse Valley Floor West

- Narrow floodplain with open fields and mature thorn
- Riparian willows and poplars
- 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
- Areas of pasture on slopes and flood plain
- Associated areas of higher ground on urban fringe overlooking valley
- Isolated settlement, but urban areas prominent in close proximity
- Historic and industrial archaeological features of interest

#### 2c 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
- Restored mineral sites
- Limited linear recreational along valley and few crossing points
- Tranquil character
- Absence of visual detractors
- Limited settlement

#### 2d Ouse Valley Northern Slopes

- Gently sloping valley sides
- Occasional secondary valleys provide local enclosure
- Large scale arable fields with low clipped hedges
- Occasional stone walls and stone 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 interface with Milton Keynes
- Historic parklands
- Limestone villages
- Historic associations with William Cowper and John Newton

#### 2e Ouse Valley Southern Slopes

- Gently sloping valley sides
- Occasional secondary valleys provide local enclosure
- Large scale arable fields with low clipped hedges
- Paddocks in association with village margins
- Low proportion of woodland and hedgerow trees
- Panoramic views over meandering valley
- General absence of visual detractors
- Historic parklands
- Limestone villages
- Heavily wooded skyline of Yardley Ridge in views to the north across the valley

**Distinctive Features**

**2a Ouse Valley Floor West**

- Picnic site on island site

**2b Ouse Valley Urban Fringe**

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

**2c Ouse Valley Floor East**

- Mills and mill races
- Tyringham Park and Bridge and Lodges
- Olney Church – spire St Peter and St Pauls
- Emberton Country Park
- Pockets of ridge and furrow

**2d Ouse Valley Northern Slopes**

- Historic Market town of Olney
- Weston Underwood & Weston Park
- Cowper's Alcove
- Gayhurst House, Park and Church
- Lavendon Abbey with house fishponds and Park

**2e Ouse Valley Southern Slopes**

- Bury Field/Newport Pagnell Common
- Tyringham Park and Hall

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8. What relative value would you give the specific character area in the context of all the surrounding landscape around Milton Keynes? (Circle one – see front page for note)

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9. What do you think have been the main changes in the landscape character area in recent years and what forces for change do you anticipate in the future?

10. What specific guidelines would you suggest to guide the management/enhancement and or development of the area?

### **3. Tove Valley**

#### **Key Characteristics**

##### **3a Tove Valley Slopes**

- Gently sloping valley landscape
- Large arable fields and clipped hedges
- Areas of pasture concentrated on the lower slopes near flood plain
- Isolated settlement
- Relatively quiet and remote

##### **3b Tove Valley Floodplain**

- Gently sloping valley landscape
- Pasture concentrated on the lower slopes and flood plain
- Meandering river in narrow flood plain corridor
- Relatively quiet and remote

#### **Distinctive Features**

##### **3a Tove Valley Slopes**

- West coast mainline railway
- Castlethorpe village and castle
- Areas of ridge and furrow

##### **3b Tove Valley Floodplain**

- Riparian willows

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## **4. Shenley Claylands**

### **Key Characteristics**

#### **4a Shenley Ridge/Upper Weald**

- Gently undulating plateau towards existing edge of Milton Keynes
- More pronounced ridge to centre of area facing south west with panoramic views
- Mixed agriculture with more pasture to the west and edge of Milton Keynes
- Large woods to the south east
- Some good tall hedges and mature field trees and tree rows providing enclosure
- Limited settlement and scattered farm houses

#### **4b Lower Weald Valley**

- Narrow pastoral valley - tributary of the River Ouse
- Intimate and enclosed valley
- Traditional limestone farms and properties in Lower Weald
- Mixed farming including areas of sheep grazing
- High number of footpaths
- Narrow lanes

### **Distinctive Features**

#### **4a Shenley Ridge/Upper Weald**

- Oakhill Wood
- North Bucks Way Green Lane
- Shenley Den Farm - western facade is eyecatcher facing Whaddon Park

#### **4b Lower Weald Valley**

- Ridge and furrow pasture
- Specimen Trees
- Calverton Place and Park
- Calverton Church
- Manor Farm - stone walls and tithe barns

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## **5. Chicheley/ Crawley Claylands**

### **Key Characteristics**

- Undulating elevated claylands
- Long distance and panoramic views from a number of locations including towards Milton Keynes and Newport Pagnell to the west
- Areas of degradation with large scale field amalgamation and remote empty feel
- Small scale traditional villages located on higher ground
- Some small scale 'Ends' and areas of common
- Organic ancient fields patterns with mixed species hedges
- Scattered pattern of woodlands locally prominent
- Typically large scale arable fields with clipped hedges, mainly to the slopes
- Pastoral land use frequent on the upper land and closer to settlements
- Localised tributary valleys provide some enclosure and intimacy

### **Distinctive Features**

- Chicheley Hall
- Towered village Churches, inc Moulsoe, Astwood, Hardmead and Chicheley
- HV power cables prominent on plateau landform

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## 6. Clayland Fringes

### Key Characteristics

#### 6a Southern Clayland Fringe

- Low lying and gently undulating area of clayland
- Extensive and open views up to the wooded Greensand Ridge
- Predominantly arable land use
- Smaller areas of pasture for horses and stabling
- Extensive views to Milton Keynes
- Mix of villages
- Wide range of urban fringe activities and uses including garden centres , allotments individual industrial premises , theatre, horsiculture etc.
- Limited woodland cover
- Field trees limited except in the vicinity of Woburn Sands
- Locally more intact historic landscape to east of Wavendon

#### 6b Broughton Flat Claylands

- Low lying flat and gently undulating claylands
- Large scale open arable fields
- Strong visual influences from industrial areas of Milton Keynes
- Visual and audible impact of the M1
- Poor condition of boundary hedges, vegetation and structure
- Number of industrial and storage sites with associated infrastructure

#### 6c Ouzel Valley South

- Narrow floodplain in shallow valley bottom
- Grand Union canal
- Meandering river Ouzel
- Small scale landscape with mature trees and hedges
- Mixed urban fringe land uses including recreation, allotments
- Views to urban edge of Milton Keynes – Bletchley

#### 6d Ouzel Valley North

- Narrow floodplain in shallow valley bottom
- Meandering river Ouzel
- Small scale landscape with mature trees and hedges
- Mixed urban fringe land uses including recreation, allotments
- Views to urban edge of Newport Pagnell
- Impact of M1

### Distinctive Features

#### 6a Southern Clayland Fringe

- Smallholdings surrounded by leylandii hedges on Bow Brickhill Road.
- Wavendon Golf Course
- Artificial lakes associates with former ceramic tile site
- Bletchley to Bedford railway line and level crossings
- Wavendon parish church
- Wavendon House and parkland

#### 6b Broughton Flat Claylands

- ?

#### 6c Ouzel Valley South

- Canal bridges
- Lombardy poplars following the canal

**6d Ouzel Valley North**

- ?

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## 7. Brickhills Greensand Ridge

### Key Characteristics

#### 7a Brickhills Greensand Slopes

- High proportion of woodland cover including areas of both deciduous and conifer plantations
- Small areas of original heath habitat
- Small scale patchwork of pasture fields to the lower slopes and open land - grazing land with gappy over mature hedges
- Panoramic views to Milton Keynes to north
- Extensive recreational uses including walking, cycling and riding
- Settlement mainly limited to vernacular buildings in small villages on slopes
- Presence of greensand in local buildings
- Relatively peaceful away from A5

#### 7b Brickhills Greensand Plateau

- High proportion of woodland cover including areas of both deciduous and conifer plantations
- Small areas of original existing heath habitat
- Extensive recreational uses including golf courses, walking, cycling and riding
- Very limited settlement
- Presence of greensand in local buildings
- Relatively peaceful away from A5
- 

### Distinctive Features

#### 7a Brickhills Greensand Slopes

- Bow Brickhill Church
- Small valuable wetlands with acidic bog species

#### 7b Brickhills Greensand Plateau

- Aerial Mast
- Small valuable wetlands with acidic bog species

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