



Site Context Photograph 13: View south-east from Footpath, SF/006

This panorama is not to scale. For contextual information only

90° Horizontal field of view extract

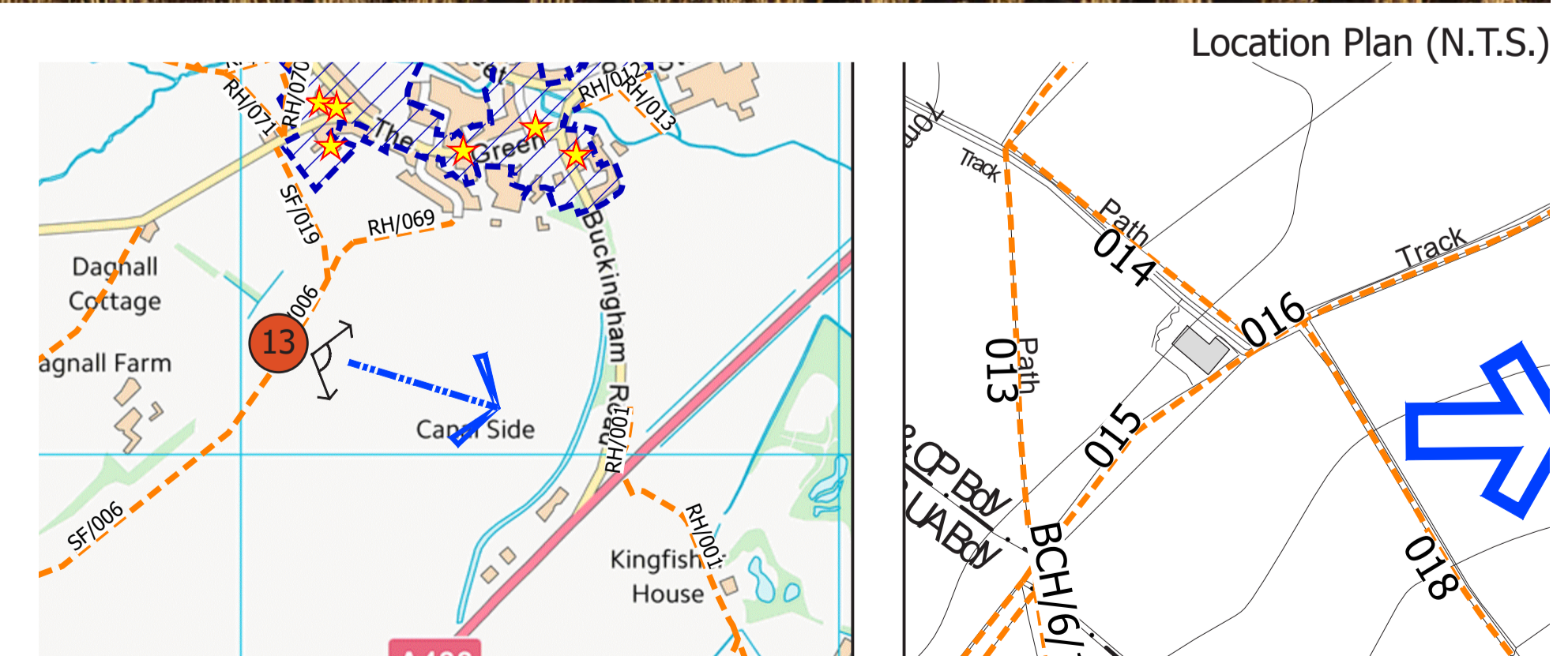


Easting / Longitude: 476120 / 52.045706°
 Northing / Latitude: 239168 / -0.891488°
 Elevation: 82 (AOD)
 Distance to the Site: 3.03km

Date Taken: 13/09/2024
 Camera: Canon 6D (Full Frame Sensor)
 Lens: 50mm fixed lens

Visualisation Type: Type 1 Annotated Viewpoint Photograph
 Enlargement Factor: 100%
 Projection: Cylindrical

Drawn By: DW
 Checked By: IK
 Approved By: PC





Site Context Photograph 14: View south-east from Footpath, RH/048 at Hanger Lodge

This panorama is not to scale. For contextual information only

90° Horizontal field of view extract

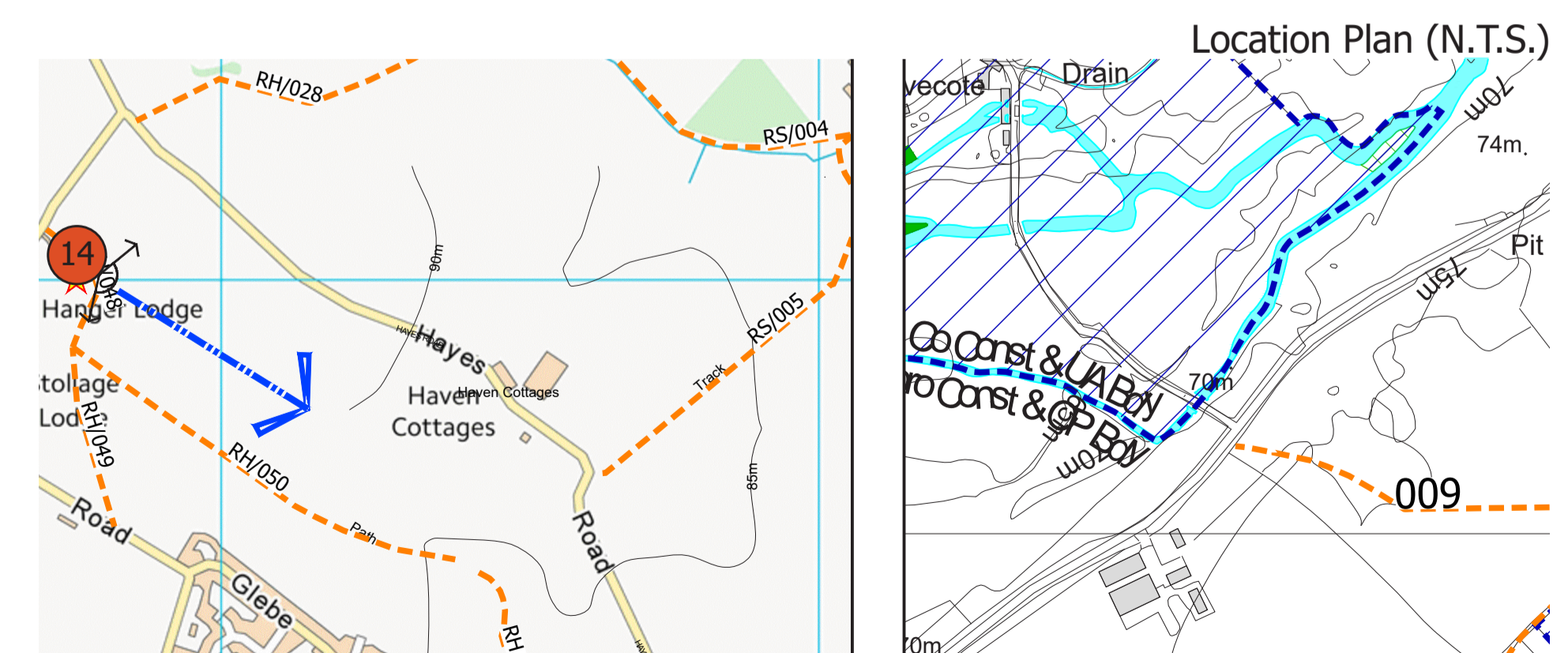


Easting / Longitude: 475793 / 52.062336°
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 Elevation: 96.8 (AOD)
 Distance to the Site: 4.01km

Date Taken: 13/09/2024
 Camera: Canon 6D (Full Frame Sensor)
 Lens: 50mm fixed lens

Visualisation Type: Type 1 Annotated Viewpoint Photograph
 Enlargement Factor: 100%
 Projection: Cylindrical

Drawn By: DW
 Checked By: IK
 Approved By: PC





Introduction

As part of Natural England's responsibilities as set out in the Natural Environment White Paper,¹ Biodiversity 2020² and the European Landscape Convention,³ we are revising profiles for England's 159 National Character Areas (NCAs). These are areas that share similar landscape characteristics, and which follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries, making them a good decision-making framework for the natural environment.

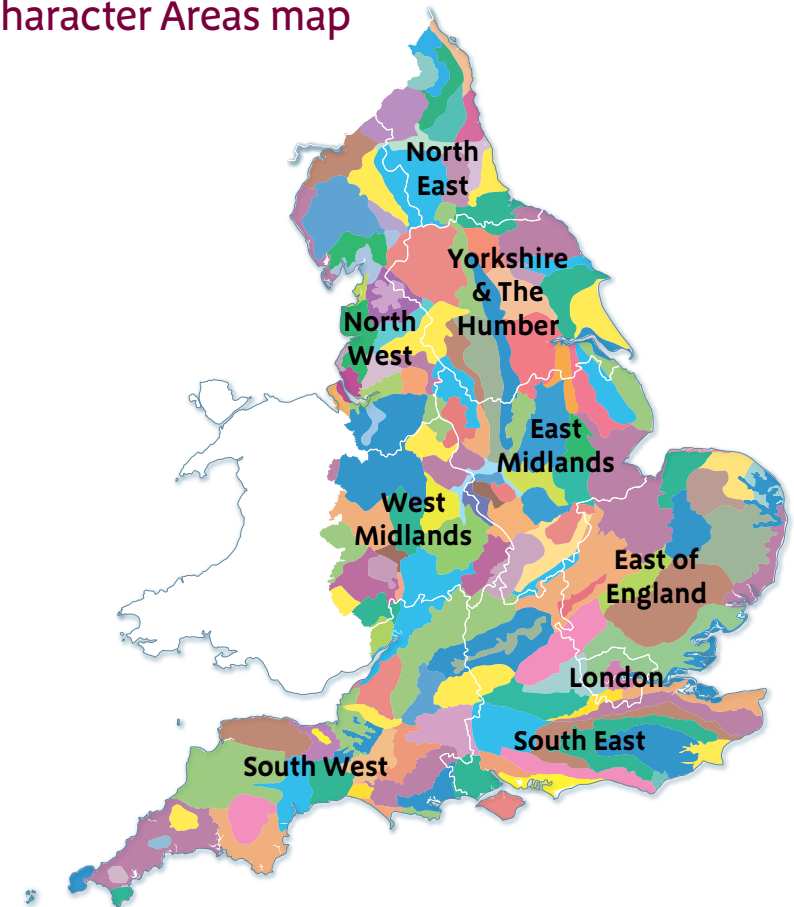
NCA profiles are guidance documents which can help communities to inform their decision-making about the places that they live in and care for. The information they contain will support the planning of conservation initiatives at a landscape scale, inform the delivery of Nature Improvement Areas and encourage broader partnership working through Local Nature Partnerships. The profiles will also help to inform choices about how land is managed and can change.

Each profile includes a description of the natural and cultural features that shape our landscapes, how the landscape has changed over time, the current key drivers for ongoing change, and a broad analysis of each area's characteristics and ecosystem services. Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEOs) are suggested, which draw on this integrated information. The SEOs offer guidance on the critical issues, which could help to achieve sustainable growth and a more secure environmental future.

NCA profiles are working documents which draw on current evidence and knowledge. We will aim to refresh and update them periodically as new information becomes available to us.

We would like to hear how useful the NCA profiles are to you. You can contact the NCA team by emailing ncaprofiles@naturalengland.org.uk.

National Character Areas map



- ¹ The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature, Defra (2011; URL: www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.pdf)
- ² Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services, Defra (2011; URL: www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13583-biodiversity-strategy-2020-111111.pdf)
- ³ European Landscape Convention, Council of Europe (2000; URL: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/176.htm>)

Summary

The Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands National Character Area (NCA) is a broad, gently undulating, lowland plateau dissected by shallow river valleys that gradually widen as they approach The Fens NCA in the east. Within it, but distinct from it, is the Bedfordshire Greensand Ridge, a contrasting narrow and elevated outcrop of Greensand, with its associated habitats on acidic soils such as grassland, heathland and woodland. Views of the Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands NCA and its large-scale arable farmland can be seen in most directions, from the elevated ground of the Yardley Whittlewood Ridge, Bedfordshire Greensand Ridge, East Anglian Chalk and Chilterns NCAs.

The NCA contains the Forest of Marston Vale – one of 12 Community Forests in England – and to the south, around Luton, a small proportion of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). While predominantly an arable and commercially farmed landscape, a wide diversity of semi-natural habitats are also present within the NCA, including a number of internationally important and designated sites that support a range of species – some rare and scarce – and offer opportunities for people to have contact with the natural environment. The River Great Ouse and its tributaries meander slowly and gently across the landscape.

The Marston Vale and Peterborough areas have been subject to extensive clay extraction for brick making. Subsequent restoration has provided opportunities for recreation and biodiversity aided by new woodland planting and other green infrastructure initiatives. Extensive quarrying of sand and gravel within the river valleys has also left its mark with a series of restored and flooded waterbodies that benefit biodiversity and recreation.

The majority of the Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands NCA is sparsely populated. Settlements are generally located along the river valleys and more recently along major road and rail corridors. A feeling of urbanisation is brought by the numerous large towns, including Milton Keynes, Bedford, Cambridge, Huntingdon and Peterborough, and major transport routes, including the M1, A1 and A14 and the Midlands and East Coast mainline railways.

Tranquillity within the NCA has declined, affected by visual intrusion, noise and light pollution from agriculture, settlement expansion and improvements in road infrastructure. Mineral extraction and landfill activities, particularly within the Marston Vale and around Peterborough, have affected local tranquillity. Many areas, however, retain a rural feel and there are numerous opportunities for nearby urban communities to enjoy quiet, informal recreation.

A sense of place and history provided by the area's rich geology and archaeology as well as historic features such as Stowe House, Wimpole Hall, Wrest Park, Bletchley Park, the Cardington Hangars, the Grand Union Canal and the post-industrial landscapes of the brickfields.

is

[Click map to enlarge; click again to reduce](#)

[Click map to enlarge; click again to reduce](#)

Key ecosystem services include food provision, including unique genetic diversity found in local varieties of fruit; and the ability of the area's rivers and wetlands to provide water, regulate water quality and flow, as well as providing benefits for biodiversity and recreation. The NCA faces significant challenges around accommodating levels of future growth and managing water resources, both within the NCA and the impacts that this can have further downstream in other NCAs while, at the same time, protecting and enhancing its character and increased demand for leisure and recreation.



View of the Bedfordshire Claylands with Bedfordshire Greensand Ridge in the distance.

Statements of Environmental Opportunities:

- **SEO 1:** Maintain and manage a sustainable and productive claylands arable landscape, while managing, expanding and linking woodlands, hedgerows and other semi-natural habitats to benefit biodiversity, improve soil and water quality, and ameliorate climate change by promoting good agricultural practice.
- **SEO 2:** Protect aquifers and enhance the quality, state and structure of the River Great Ouse, its valley and tributaries, habitats, waterbodies and flood plain by seeking to enhance their ecological, historical and recreational importance while taking into account their contribution to sense of place and regulating water flow, quality and availability.
- **SEO 3:** Plan and create high-quality green infrastructure to help accommodate growth and expansion, linking and enhancing existing semi-natural habitats. Regenerate the post-industrial landscapes of the Marston Vale and Peterborough to improve and create new opportunities for biodiversity, recreation, timber and biomass provision while strengthening sense of place, tranquillity, resilience to climate change, and people's health and wellbeing.
- **SEO 4:** Protect, conserve and enhance the cultural heritage and tranquillity of the Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands NCA, including its important geodiversity, archaeology, historic houses, parkland, and Second World War and industrial heritage, by improving interpretation and educational opportunities to increase people's enjoyment and understanding of the landscape.

Key characteristics

- Gently undulating, lowland plateau divided by shallow river valleys that gradually widen as they approach The Fens NCA in the east.
- Underlying geology of Jurassic and Cretaceous clays overlain by more recent Quaternary glacial deposits of chalky boulder clay (till) and sand and gravel river terrace deposits within the river valleys. Lime-rich, loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage predominate, with better-drained soils in the river valleys.
- The River Great Ouse and its tributaries meander slowly across the landscape, and the River Nene and the Grand Union Canal are also features. Three aquifers underlie the NCA and a large manmade reservoir, Grafham Water, supplies water within and outside the NCA.
- Brickfields of the Marston Vale and Peterborough area form distinctive post-industrial landscapes with man-made waterbodies and landfill sites. Restoration of sand and gravel workings has left a series of flooded and restored waterbodies within the river valleys.
- Variable, scattered woodland cover comprising smaller plantations, secondary woodland, pollarded willows and poplar along river valleys, and clusters of ancient woodland, particularly on higher ground to the north-west representing remnant ancient deer parks and Royal Hunting Forests.
- Predominantly open, arable landscape of planned and regular fields bounded by open ditches and trimmed, often species-poor hedgerows which contrast with those fields that are irregular and piecemeal.
- Wide variety of semi-natural habitats supporting a range of species – some notably rare and scarce – including sites designated for species associated with ancient woodland, wetland sites important for birds, great crested newt and species of stonewort, and traditional orchards and unimproved grassland supporting a rich diversity of wild flowers.
- Rich geological and archaeological history evident in fossils, medieval earthworks, deserted villages and Roman roads. A number of historic parklands, designed landscapes and country houses – including Stowe House and Park, Kimbolton Park, Croxton Park, Wimpole Hall and Wrest Park – combine with Bletchley Park, Second World War airfields, the Cardington Airship Hangars and brickfields to provide a strong sense of history and place.
- Diversity of building materials including brick, render, thatch and stone. Locally quarried limestone features in villages such as Lavendon, Harrold and Turvey on the upper stretches of the River Great Ouse.
- Settlements cluster around major road and rail corridors, with smaller towns, villages and linear settlements widely dispersed throughout, giving a more rural feel. Small villages are usually nucleated around a church or village green, while fen-edge villages are often in a linear form along roads.
- Major transport routes cross the area, including the M1, M11, A1, A6, A5 and A14 roads, the East Coast and Midlands mainline railways, and the Grand Union Canal.
- Recreational assets include Grafham Water, the Grand Union Canal, Forest of Marston Vale Community Forest, Chilterns AONB, woodland and wetland sites, an extensive rights-of-way network and two National Cycle Routes. The cities of Cambridge and Peterborough and several of the historic market towns in the NCA are popular tourist destinations.

Statements of Environmental Opportunity

SEO 1: Maintain and manage a sustainable and productive claylands arable landscape, while managing, expanding and linking woodlands, hedgerows and other semi-natural habitats to benefit biodiversity, improve soil and water quality, and ameliorate climate change by promoting good agricultural practice.

For example, by:

- Managing the arable landscape to retain the value of food provision through employing sustainable farming practices.
- Working with local farmers, landowners and managers to promote best practice such as the appropriate management of hedgerows, reducing herbicide and pesticide use, buffering field margins and woodland edges, and retaining winter stubble to support farmland birds and pollinators.
- Promoting good soil management to avoid compaction and maintain good soil structure.
- Encouraging the conservation and management of existing woodlands and the replacing of introduced species with native species, as well as undertaking new tree and woodland planting to link existing sites in order to enhance biodiversity and recreational opportunities.
- Seeking opportunities to develop biomass production through active woodland management and promote and stimulate local markets for wood products, biomass and wood fuel to support sustainable timber production.
- Ensuring that populations of wild deer are managed to reduce damage caused to the natural regeneration of trees and woodland.
- Preparing and implementing plans to control or limit the spread of new pests or disease – for example, ash die-back.
- Extending where appropriate the semi-natural vegetation cover, especially on steeper slopes where the Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands National Character Area (NCA) meets the

Bedfordshire Greensand Ridge, Chilterns, and East Anglian Chalk NCAs, to improve soil quality and reduce run-off and erosion.

- Enhancing and expanding the network of semi-natural habitats through targeted environmental enhancements, including ponds, hedgerows, hedgerow trees and species-rich grasslands (such as areas found along road verges, green lanes and field margins) to support biodiversity.
- Encouraging the appropriate management and expansion of traditional orchards, bringing them back into active management to conserve their genetic diversity, biodiversity value and cultural heritage; and promoting and encouraging local markets for locally grown orchard produce.



Species-rich roadside verges and hedges.

SEO 3: Plan and create high-quality green infrastructure to help accommodate growth and expansion, linking and enhancing existing semi-natural habitats. Regenerate the post-industrial landscapes of the Forest of Marston Vale and Peterborough to improve and create new opportunities for biodiversity, recreation, timber and biomass provision while strengthening sense of place, tranquillity, resilience to climate change, and people's health and wellbeing.

For example, by:

- Supporting the creation and expansion of native woodlands, orchard, parkland, grasslands, and hedgerows to improve habitat connectivity within the landscape and provide increased benefits for biodiversity and recreation.
- Ensuring that areas of designated land remain in favourable condition, and improving their condition where possible.
- Promoting awareness of, and providing advice to landowners and managers on, managing habitats of biodiversity interest.
- Supporting initiatives that include well-planned green infrastructure that will increase people's access to and contact with the natural environment to benefit their health and wellbeing.
- Creating new woodland as appropriate on urban fringes to help screen and integrate new developments, and provide biodiversity and green infrastructure benefits.
- Managing recreational sites to accommodate visitor pressure and demand without conflict between different users, and without causing adverse effects on the natural environment.
- Maintaining, extending and promoting the use of the National Cycle Routes and the rights-of-way network.
- Conserving and managing traditional orchards, hedgerows, parkland, and ancient and veteran trees for the benefit of fauna (such as specialist invertebrates dependent on dead or decaying wood, pollinators and pest regulators).
- Protecting and conserving existing traditional orchards from inappropriate development and changes in land use.
- Retaining and enhancing the contrast in landscape character between the clay plateau and river valleys, aiming to maintain and enhance the balance between urban and rural landscapes.
- Preventing inappropriate development and promoting the use of local building stone to maintain the character of villages and historic buildings.
- Ensuring that any new developments incorporate well-designed green infrastructure, to include improved access and recreation opportunities for local communities and visitors.
- Supporting the work of the Forest of Marston Vale Community Forest to regenerate the area and repair the landscape, using trees and woodland to provide social, economic and environmental benefits.
- Supporting the work of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to conserve and enhance the landscape and special qualities of the AONB.
- Ensuring that geodiversity sites continue to be protected, monitored and managed.
- Ensuring that mineral extraction sites are restored to contribute to local landscape character and offer opportunities to enrich people's understanding of landscape, and enhance biodiversity, recreation and geodiversity.

Milton Keynes Council

Milton Keynes Landscape Character Assessment

Final report

Prepared by LUC

May 2022

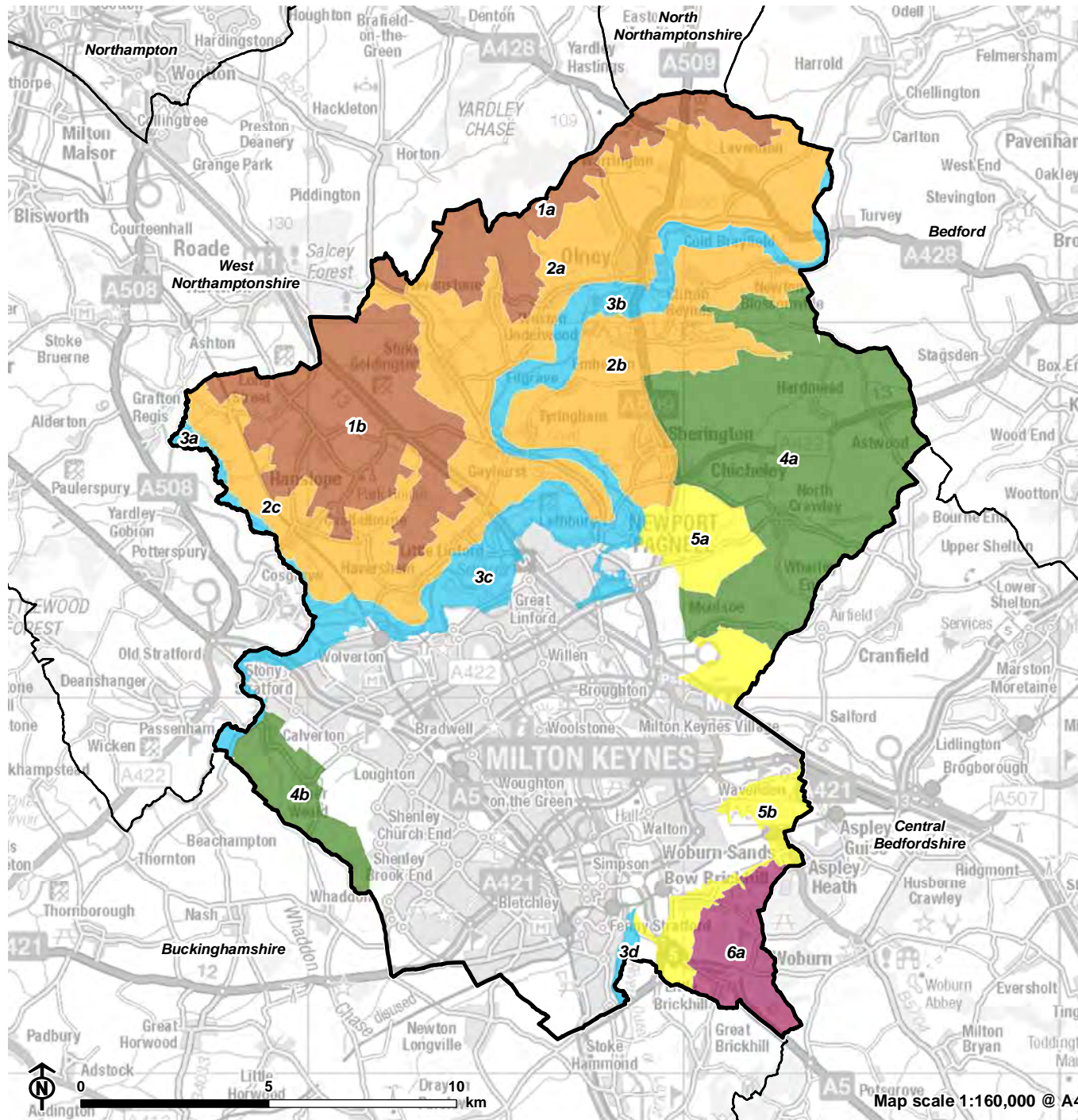





Milton Keynes Council

Milton Keynes Landscape Character Assessment

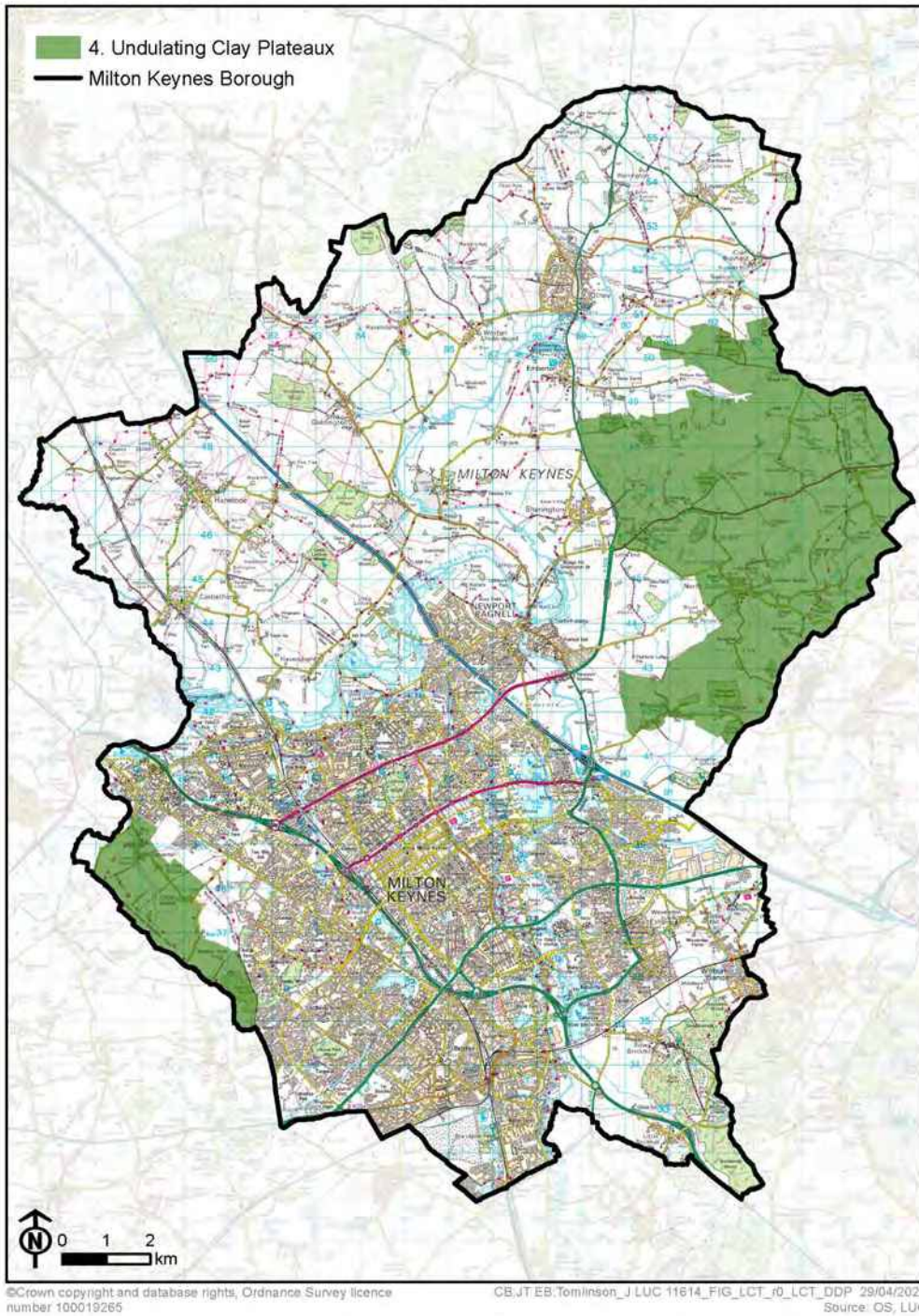
Version	Status	Prepared	Checked	Approved	Date
1.	Pilot	A Knight	K Davies	R Knight	20.10.2021
2.	Draft report	A Knight A Breen	K Davies	K Davies	18.02.2022
3.	Final draft report	A Knight	K Davies	K Davies	29.04.2022
4.	Final report	A Knight	K Davies	K Davies	20.05.2022

Figure 4.2: Landscape Character Areas



-  Milton Keynes Borough
-  Neighbouring local authority
- Landscape Character Area (by type)**
-  1. Wooded Wolds
 - 1a. Yardley Chase Wooded Wolds
 - 1b. Gayhurst and Stokepark Wooded Wolds
-  2. Undulating Valley Slopes
 - 2a. Ouse Northern Undulating Valley Slopes
 - 2b. Ouse Southern Undulating Valley Slopes
 - 2c. Tove Undulating Valley Slopes
-  3. River Floodplains
 - 3a. Tove Floodplains
 - 3b. Ouse Floodplains
 - 3c. Ouse Lakes and Parkland Floodplains
 - 3d. Ouzel Parkland Floodplains
-  4. Undulating Clay Plateaux
 - 4a. North Crawley Undulating Clay Plateau
 - 4b. Weald Undulating Clay Plateau
-  5. Clay Vales
 - 5a. Lower Ouzel Clay Vale
 - 5b. Upper Ouzel Clay Vale
-  6. Wooded Greensand Ridge
 - 6a. Brickhill Wooded Greensand Ridge

LCT 4: Undulating Clay Plateaux



Landscape Character Areas

The Undulating Clay Plateaux LCT is subdivided into two LCAs:

- 4a: North Crawley Undulating Clay Plateau
- 4b: Weald Undulating Clay Plateau

Location and summary

The Undulating Clay Plateaux LCT comprises a low plateau located to the west and east of the urban edge of Milton Keynes city. The eastern and western boundaries follow the borough boundary. LCA 4a comprises the plateau between the Ouse valley to the north and west, the M1 to the south, and the Bedford and Central Bedfordshire borders to the east and south-east. LCA 4b abuts the Western Expansion Area of Milton Keynes.

This is a sparsely settled distinctly rural agricultural landscape, even in areas in close proximity to Milton Keynes city. It comprises a broad, gently undulating plateau, dissected by shallow river valleys, that stretches across the borough, from Buckinghamshire County in the west to Bedford and Central Bedfordshire in the east.



An elevated agricultural landscape with sparse settlement and extensive views across the borough and beyond. Ridge and furrow earthworks can be seen in the foreground.

Key Characteristics

- A gently undulating clay plateau, rising above the Ouse valley, ranging from 80m to 105m AOD. Underlain by mudstone, siltstone, sandstone, with some areas of argillaceous rocks. Glacial till deposits result in mixed clay, silt, sand and gravel soils.
- Small tributaries of the Ouse cross the landscape, including the Calverton and Chicheley Brooks, creating a rolling landform.
- Small, isolated blocks of broadleaved woodlands are scattered across the landscape, many recorded as priority habitat deciduous woodland and as ancient woodland, or plantations on ancient woodland.
- Large-scale arable fields dominate in LCA 4a, while there is a higher proportion of smaller pasture fields in LCA 4b. Fields are bound by hedgerows, with mature hedgerow trees.
- Limited settlement is concentrated in historic villages, often formed around manorial estates including Calverton and Astwood, with many listed buildings. Isolated historic farmsteads are also found across the landscape.
- A few minor roads cross the landscape, lined by hedgerows. The landscape is crossed by a number of PRoW, including the Milton Keynes Boundary Walk.
- The elevated plateaux allow expansive open views across the LCT and surrounding countryside. The plateaux provide a rural backdrop to urban areas of Milton Keynes city.
- A rural landscape, with limited development and dark skies in the east away from Milton Keynes city. The Petsoe Manor Farm wind turbines and electricity pylons are visually intrusive in this open landscape.

Physical and natural characteristics

■ A gently undulating plateau, which rises from the Ouse valley. It is elevated above much of the surrounding landscape and generally sits above 80m AOD. The plateau is bisected by a number of small tributaries of the River Ouse, including the Calverton Brook and Chicheley Brook. These watercourses have created shallow ridges and valleys, which make the undulation in the landscape more pronounced.

■ This LCT is predominantly underlain by clay, with the Kellaways Formation and Oxford Clay Formation predominant, although there are pockets of land underlain by the Great Oolite Group sandstones, limestones and argillaceous rocks. Glacial till drift deposits cover most of the LCT, leading to calcareous clayey soils that are slowly permeable and seasonally waterlogged, although there is also some loam or silt content. The soils provide land that is generally graded 3 (moderate-good), with some small areas of grade 4 (poor).

■ Small woodlands and copses are scattered across the LCT with little connectivity. Much of the woodland is recorded as priority habitat deciduous woodland, and of ancient origin, including Brandon's Wood and Dollars Grove. Many of the larger woodlands are recorded as PAWS, including Moulsoe Old Wood and Oakhill Wood, which contain conifer and beech, which are not in keeping with the landscape character. Woodland cover in LCA 4b once formed part of the wider medieval royal hunting ground of Whaddon Chase. Wildlife Corridors follow the Chicheley Brook and Oakhill Wood.

■ Land use is mixed, with the majority of the landscape in the east under arable cropping (LCA 4a), and sheep and cattle grazing more common in the west (LCA 4b). Hedgerow boundaries are generally intact, although there is some reinforcement with post and wire fencing.



Hedgerow-lined arable field with isolated woodland near Chicheley.

Historic and cultural characteristics

■ Field sizes and patterns vary across the landscape, but mostly commonly includes regular Parliamentary enclosures (that was further sub-divided soon after legal enclosure in the 18th and 19th centuries) and large-scale prairie fields in LCA 4a, particularly around Hardmead and Hurst End.

There are also earlier enclosures, including pre-18th century irregular enclosures (found around Shenley Dens Farm in LCA 4b, and around Chicheley in LCA 4a) as well as medieval assarts (where fields were created from woodland) around Shortwoods, Parrages Wood and Seven Acre Covert. Ridge and furrow earthworks are present in pasture fields, particularly around Calverton.

The earlier enclosures have created a hedgerow structure with taller hedges and large hedgerow trees including hawthorn and elm, with some mature tree rows including oak and ash.

The settlement pattern comprises small historic villages, many of which are associated with historic estates and manors, such as at Calverton and North Crawley, both of which are designated with Conservation Areas. The towered village churches are locally distinctive landmarks, including at Moulsoe and Calverton.

The local vernacular comprises brick and timber frame reflecting the availability of these materials on the clay plateau, rather than the limestone more common in the Ouse valley. However, Lower Weald, the largest hamlet in LCA 4b, contains a number of traditional limestone buildings with thatch and tile roofing.



The distinctive church tower at the historic village of Calverton.

Outside of the villages there is very limited 20th century development, with settlement confined to individual farms and isolated properties.

The LCT is accessed by a number of minor lanes which are lined by good quality hedgerows. There is a good network of PRoW connecting the settlements and providing access into the wider countryside, including the Milton Keynes Boundary Walk.

Visual and perceptual characteristics

The undulating plateaux rise gently to ridges that offer panoramic views across the landscape, such as Shenley Ridge in LCA 4b and at Wharley End along the boundary with Central Bedfordshire in LCA 4a. The plateaux, elevated above the surrounding landscape, provide a rural backdrop to Milton Keynes city.

Despite proximity to Milton Keynes city this is a tranquil rural landscape, with some areas of dark night skies. There are limited visual detractors, although pylon routes cross the edges of the LCT, and wind turbines at Petsoe Manor are visible across much of the LCT and surrounding landscape.



Electricity pylons and the Petsoe Manor wind farm are prominent visual detractors in LCA 4a.

Landscape evaluation

Landscape qualities

- The open elevated plateaux, with an intact agricultural character that provides an intact rural setting to Milton Keynes city.
- The deciduous woodland copses, some of ancient origin, trees and hedgerows that support biodiversity and provide carbon capture.
- The small streams that cross the LCA and help control flooding downstream.
- The varied field patterns of irregular pre-18th century enclosure and regular Parliamentary enclosure bound by hedgerows that provide interest and time depth.
- The general absence of development, with an intact settlement pattern of historic estates and villages with buildings constructed from local materials that provide a connection to history, cultural identity and aesthetic value.
- The open character of the landscape allowing uninterrupted views from ridges on the plateaux across the surrounding landscapes that provide visual interest and a sense of place.
- The network of PRow, including the Milton Keynes Boundary Walk, that connect the settlements and wider countryside, and provide recreational value and contribute to well-being and health.

Landscape condition

■ The Undulating Clay Plateaux LCT is a largely rural landscape, which has retained its agricultural character despite proximity to Milton Keynes city. Fragmentation of historic field patterns and hedgerow field boundaries reduces the condition in some areas. There is limited connectivity between semi-natural habitats, and woodland management is not obvious. Tranquillity is disrupted by the urban edge of Milton Keynes city, and modern influences on the landscape are the major road corridors of the A509 and A442, electricity pylon routes, and the wind farm near Petsoe Manor Farm.

Forces for change

■ Key forces for change include:

- Changes in agricultural practices to large scale arable cropping with consequent field boundary loss which has fragmented the landscape pattern.
- The increasingly limited connections between semi-natural habitats, with scattered woodlands and fragmented hedgerows.
- Potential changes in flora and increase in pests and diseases as a result of climate change, with ash die back becoming increasingly apparent in the local landscape.
- Changes in water quality entering the streams and watercourses and loss of riparian vegetation due to harsh maintenance regimes, agricultural intensification and drainage works.
- Expansion of built development on the urban edge of Milton Keynes city at Western Expansion Area and Milton Keynes East affecting the rural character of the landscape, increasing traffic and resulting in changes to roads and land uses in the area, as well as levels of tranquillity.
- The uncluttered rural skylines are vulnerable to large scale or intrusive development, such as the wind turbines near Petsoe Manor Farm, and there may be pressure for future infrastructure development.
- Proposed Air Park development at Cranfield Airport (within Central Bedfordshire) may impact on views from the LCT and levels of tranquillity and dark night skies.
- Noise from roads which cross the landscape, particularly the A509 and A442, and the nearby M1, locally impacting landscape tranquillity.

Landscape strategy

The landscape strategy for the Undulating Clay Plateaux LCT is to retain the rural character of the farmland landscape, created by a combination of rolling arable landscape with small historic villages linked by rural lanes, with long views across surrounding countryside. The rural backdrop provided to Milton Keynes city should be retained, while ensuring a sense of separation between Milton Keynes city and the agricultural landscape.

Guidance

Landscape Management

- Manage and increase the biodiversity of agricultural fields by creating uncultivated margins to arable fields or converting some arable land to permanent pasture.
- Conserve and strengthen the traditional landscape pattern and structure, as well as increasing biodiversity interest through the maintenance or restoration of hedgerows with native species.
- Retain and enhance the biodiversity of watercourses and their associated habitats, by minimising water pollution from agriculture through sensitive land management practices, including restoration of buffer strips along watercourses.
- Increase the extent of native deciduous woodland/tree cover, particularly to link existing small deciduous woodlands, copses and hedgerows, using locally occurring, climate resilient, species.
- Consider opportunities for green infrastructure enhancement linking into adjacent boroughs, particularly in relation to Whaddon Chase which extends into Buckinghamshire County, as set out in the Milton Keynes Green Infrastructure Strategy¹⁵.
- Encourage progressive conversion of conifer or beech plantations within existing woodlands to indigenous broadleaved tree and shrub species.
- Manage and monitor invasive native or harmful species in woodlands and the impact of pathogens, pests and diseases as a result of climate change.
- Protect the valued recreational use of the landscape (PRoW), further enhancing opportunities for informal access and enjoyment through well maintained linked routes through farmland, as identified in the Green Infrastructure Opportunities Mapping¹⁶.
- Protect and enhance heritage assets within the LCT, including listed buildings and historic parklands e.g. at Chicheley. Retain ridge and furrow earthworks under existing pasture.

Development Management

- Conserve the rural character of the landscape, ensuring it continues to play a role in providing a rural setting for Milton Keynes city.
- Retain framed views to local landmark buildings, including the church towers at Moulsoe and Calverton.
- Conserve the distinctive vernacular of historic buildings and their rural settings, including within the Calverton and North Crawley Conservation Areas. Ensure key views within and from the villages referenced in the Conservation Area Appraisals are retained.
- Retain the characteristic settlement pattern of historic villages, avoiding out of scale residential developments. Reference the pattern of local buildings materials and local identity in any new development or boundary treatments.
- Encourage sensitive management of new development, ensuring the existing villages retain a sense of separation from new development on the edge of Milton Keynes city.
- Ensure any renewable energy generation is compatible with the guidance above, and with guidance set out in the MK Renewable Energy Landscape Sensitivity Assessment¹⁷. Renewable energy should be in scale with the landscape where possible, acknowledging that wind turbines may transcend the scale of existing features in the landscape.

¹⁵ AECOM, Milton Keynes Green Infrastructure Strategy (2018)

¹⁶ <https://bucks.mknep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Green-Infrastructure-Opportunity-Zone-09.pdf>

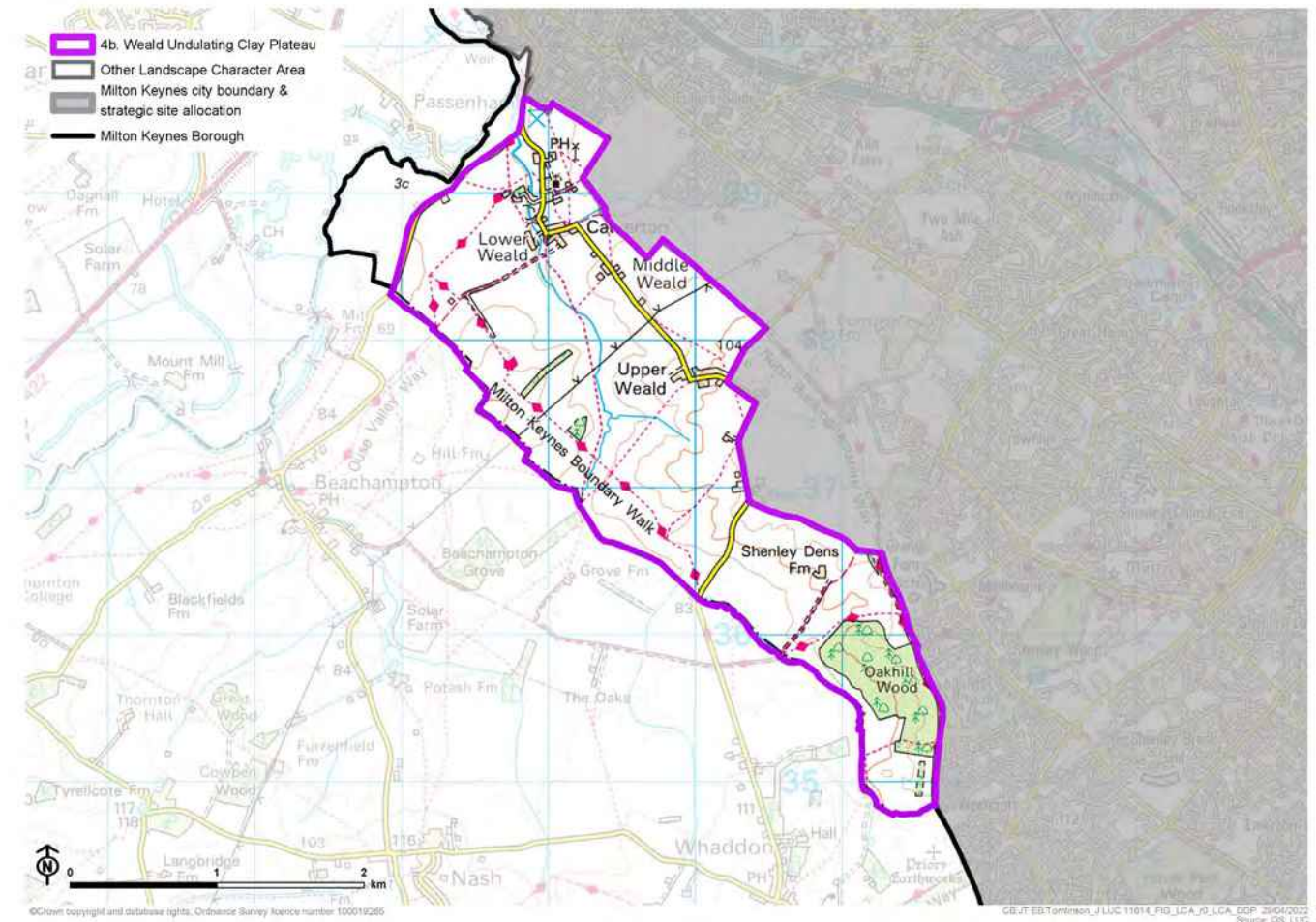
¹⁷ Gillespies, Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine and Solar PV Development (2016)

Electricity infrastructure associated with renewable energy generation should be efficiently planned to minimise the number of lines required, routing in accordance with the Holford Rules¹⁸.

- Manage the existing PRow network, and consider opportunities for extending it, particularly where this can tie-in with wider initiatives to promote and enable sustainable transport in association with the extensions to Milton Keynes city.
- Ensure a strong landscape structure to the adjacent parkland areas within the Western Expansion Area and Milton Keynes East, providing a landscape buffer to soften the impact of residential areas on adjacent landscapes.

¹⁸ <https://www.nationalgrid.com/sites/default/files/documents/13795-The%20Holford%20Rules.pdf>

4b: Weald Clay Plateau



Location and unique characteristics

■ Weald Undulating Clay Plateau LCA lies on the western edge of the borough, adjacent to the Western Expansion Area of Milton Keynes city. The plateau is incised by the Calverton Brook, a small tributary of the Ouse, which has created a steep sided valley in the centre of the LCA.

■ Woodland cover is mainly concentrated at Oakhill Wood, which once formed part of the wider medieval royal hunting ground of Whaddon Chase. It is now a mixed coniferous plantation, with a central block of oak and hazel coppice, and is forms part of the North Bucks Way Wildlife Corridor. There are smaller linear woods along the Milton Keynes Boundary Walk, recorded as priority habitat deciduous woodland and riparian woodland follows the course of the Calverton Brook.

■ Small areas of priority habitat traditional orchard are recorded at Calverton Place and Lower Weald. Unimproved species-rich calcareous grassland is found at a disused quarry on the northern boundary and is designated as the Old

Limestone Quarry LWS. The Ouse Valley and Whaddon Chase Biological Opportunity Areas extend into the north and south of this LCA.

■ Land use is predominantly pastoral, most commonly for sheep grazing. Hedgerows are generally in good condition, although there is some reinforcement with post and wire fencing. Horse grazing in some parts of the landscape contributes a slightly unmanaged character.

■ The LCA has a uniform field pattern of Parliamentary enclosure that was further sub-divided soon after legal enclosure in the 18th and 19th centuries. Shenley Dens Farm in the south has a field pattern of pre-18th century irregular enclosure, and examples of ridge and furrow are evident on the valley slopes of Calverton Brook.

■ Settlement is confined to the hamlets of Lower, Middle and Upper Weald (collectively known as Calverton) – Lower and Middle Weald are designated as the Calverton Conservation Area. There are a number of listed buildings, including Calverton House, a Grade II listed Georgian country

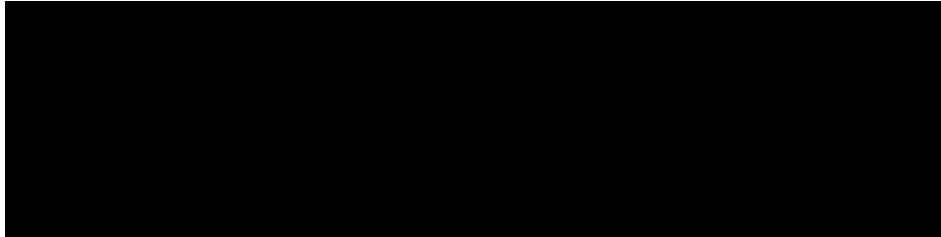
house set within a distinctive parkland landscape, and the late 15th or early 16th century stone Calverton Manor House (Grade II*).

■■■■ The Grade II listed Shenley Dens Farm, on the ridge north of Oakhill Wood, is now derelict. It is part of the historic landscape associated with the Whaddon Estate, within Buckinghamshire County.

■■■■ The LCA still retains a strong sense of separation from Milton Keynes city, despite the recent development of the Western Expansion Area. The valley landform along the Calverton Brook creates an enclosed character, while there are extensive views across the Aylesbury Vale to the west and to wooded horizons to the north from higher ground. Electricity pylons and noise from the A5 to the north are intrusive modern elements which detract from the rural character.

To:

Project/File:



Landscape and Visual Comparative study of West of Fairfields, Milton Keynes and Shenley Dens, Milton Keynes

1. Stantec's specialist Landscape Planning and Design Group (Stantec) has been commissioned by Catesby Estates Ltd to provide a landscape and visual comparative study of the West of Fairfields Site (WF Site) versus the proposed allocation in Shenley Dens (SD Site), both located at the western edge of Milton Keynes. This note should be read with reference to the West of Fairfields Landscape and Visual Appraisal (West of Fairfields LVA), October 2024 which provides greater detail on the WF Site.
2. The WF Site comprises two parcels: Parcel A to the north-west and Parcel B to the south-east and are located, to the north-west of Calverton Lane and to the north-east of the settlements of Lower Weald, Middle Weald and Upper Weald. Both parcels of the WF Site lie on the plateau landform north-east of the Calverton Brook valley.
3. The SD Site comprises one larger parcel formed of approximately 10 no. agricultural fields and is situated to the south-east of Whaddon Road, to the north-east of the Calverton Brook, north-west of Oakhill Wood, south of the Milton Keynes Western Expansion Area and the existing settlement edge of Milton Keynes to the east. The fields are bound by hedgerows which contain some hedgerow trees. Shenley Dens Farm lies near the centre of SD Site.
4. In terms of published character assessments, both sites are located the same National Character Area (NCA 88: Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands) and Local Landscape Character Area (LCA 4b: Weald Clay Plateau)¹.
5. As identified in the West of Fairfields LVA, the western edge of the city of Milton Keynes is situated on the plateau. The upper extent of the valley landform demarks a clear transition point in character between the plateau influenced by existing and ongoing development in Milton Keynes; and the Calverton Brook valley, which is a distinctive landform, strongly rural in character and provides a robust physical containment to the city. The transition in landform is accentuated by the Calverton Road corridor, which is flanked by vegetation and features a linear settlement that follows the route. Therefore, this landform transition marks a logical edge to the City of Milton Keynes. This ridgeline extends on a north-west to south-east axis extending from WF Site Parcel B and along the northern extents of SD Site to reach an elevation of approximately 119 m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) in the vicinity of Oakhill, south-east of both

¹ Milton Keynes Landscape Character Assessment (2022).

Reference: Landscape and Visual Comparative study of West of Fairfields, Milton Keynes and Shenley Dens, Milton Keynes

Sites. This becomes more pronounced in the vicinity of the SD Site and is identified in the LCA as the 'Shenley Dens Ridge'.

6. The northern extents of the SD Site lie at the edge of this plateau landform whilst the south-western extents of the SD Site slopes down forming the south-west facing upper valley slopes and the valley floor, extending to the Claverton Brook.
7. Both parcels of the WF Site lie on the plateau landform to the north-east of the Calverton Brook valley, which slopes gently to the north, towards the valley of the Kiln Farm Brook which flows east-west into the Calverton Brook valley.
8. Therefore, although part of the SD Site conforms with the prevalent landform pattern which supports the existing settlement pattern of Milton Keynes (including the Western Expansion Area), the south-western extents of the SD Site extends beyond the plateau edge, down the valley slopes and onto the valley floor of the Calverton Brook, extending to meet the watercourse, thereby surpassing this logical natural boundary and furthermore be oriented towards the wider countryside. Development of the SD Site would therefore be at odds with the existing settlement pattern of Milton Keynes and the future settlement pattern of the Western Expansion Area and may appear to 'spill over' the natural containment provided by the edge of the plateau. Although on the plateau, the WF Site does slope gently toward the north, these slopes are, however, oriented toward existing development in Milton Keynes.
9. The WF Site, whilst currently comprising agricultural land, lies in an area that is increasingly subject to urbanising influences, as noted in published character assessment and sensitivity studies. Conversely, the SD Site, although situated adjacent to the existing settlement edge of Milton Keynes to the north-east, is likely to have a limited visual and perceptual connection to the existing settlement in Milton Keynes due to the dense intervening vegetation, including mature tree hedgerows on either side of the North Buckinghamshire Way and the change in landform sloping away from the existing settlement edge (albeit this would need to be verified on the ground). It is therefore likely to have a more rural character.
10. The field pattern in the WF Site is typical of the local landscape character area, comprising a uniform pattern of parliamentary enclosure fields bounded by generally intact boundaries with some post and wire reinforcement. However, the fields around Shenley Dens Farm are highlighted in the LCA assessment as having '*a field pattern of pre-18th century irregular enclosure*' and these early enclosures having a '*hedgerow structure with taller hedges and large hedgerow trees*'. It also acknowledges the area in the vicinity of Shenley Dens Farm is '*part of the historic landscape associated with the Whaddon Estate, within Buckinghamshire County*'. These heritage associations with the landscape and the strong structural role of the hedgerow boundaries are likely to elevate the landscape value of the SD Site. A small area of Ridge and furrow (as mentioned in the LCA) is present within the WF Site; however, this can be mitigated by retaining this area as open space.
11. In visual terms, the West of Fairfields LVA concluded that, owing to the extent of structural vegetation in the Site vicinity, notably along the plateau edge, flanking Calverton Road, there is limited visibility of the Site from the surrounding area. Glimpsed, longer-distance views are obtained from the western side of the Calverton Brook valley and on gently rising land to the north of the River Ouse. However, the WF Site is typically not readily perceptible in these views, as it is obscured by existing vegetation. The vicinity of the WF Site is seen in the context of the existing development on the plateau in Milton Keynes. Given that the ongoing expansion of Milton Keynes towards the plateau edge, the city is perceptible from the wider landscape beyond the valley to the south-west; the development of the WF Site, would therefore result in minimal additional influence on the wider landscape. This can be mitigated by the reinforcement of vegetation along Calverton Road.

Reference: Landscape and Visual Comparative study of West of Fairfields, Milton Keynes and Shenley Dens, Milton Keynes

12. Conversely, the sloping northern fields of the SD Site are likely to be readily distinguished in views from the local landscape owing to their landform and large-scale character (subject to a full LVA including on-the-ground verification). The visibility of the SD Site in local views is further reinforced in local landscape character assessments, which note that Shenley Dens Farm has a '*strong visual relationship with Whaddon Hall*' within the nearby (non-registered) historic parkland estate. Built form on these upper valley slopes is therefore likely to be visually prominent in views from the local landscape to the south-west. Although lined by some riparian vegetation, the route of the Claverton Brook on the south-western SD Site boundary offers limited physical or visual separation from the wider, undeveloped landscape.
13. All baseline documents relating to the **Special Landscape Area (SLA)** remain unchanged from those assessed as part of the West of Fairfields LVA², which form part of the Milton Keynes City Plan evidence base. The majority of the WF Site lies within the Calverton Clay Plateau Candidate SLA, as does the entirety of the SD Site.
14. The West of Fairfields LVA queries the necessity for an SLA designation and, if adopted, the extent of the SLA designation. It questions the emphasis of the SLA Special Qualities, which relate to 'the open elevated plateau' rather than the Calverton Brook Valley landform; especially noting that within the full evaluation, the description of the SLA indicate that the 'special' part of the candidate SLA relates to the valley landform. SLA Special qualities largely relate to features in the valley or on the valley slopes, including the woodlands, streams, historic estates, views (albeit from the upper valley slopes, not ridges) and the majority of the PRow network in the area. The key part of the Candidate SLA, therefore, appears to be beyond the point of landform transition, including the Weald hamlets of Calverton and the valley to the south-west, which has a more rural character.
15. As mentioned above, a large extent of the SD Site is clearly beyond the landform transition of the plateau, and within the valley landform, the part of the Candidate SLA which presents the majority of the special qualities of the local landscape designation. In addition to being beyond the plateau, the SD Site is also crossed by the Milton Keynes Boundary Walk, which is acknowledged as part of the special qualities of the Candidate SLA. If the SD Site were developed, it would sever connectivity to the south-easternmost part of the SLA at Oakhill Wood. It would also alter the continuity of the SLA designation, excluding part of the valley from the designation.
16. The SLA appraisal notes that the Shenley Dens Farm, the Grade II listed Farmhouse, is derelict and therefore a detracting feature of the candidate SLA. It further notes '*Oakhill Wood and its surroundings was once part of the medieval hunting ground of Whaddon Chase, which also provides time-depth*' indicating its cultural heritage in reference to the landscape of this area which includes the SD Site. Although the SD Site is not the most intact part of the Candidate SLA, if the designation is adopted, the management guidelines set out in the SLA appraisal will present opportunities to strengthen the character of this part of the candidate SLA, which can be implemented regardless of whether the Site is developed.

Reference: Landscape and Visual Comparative study of West of Fairfields, Milton Keynes and Shenley Dens, Milton Keynes

17. Although the **Milton Keynes City Plan (Regulation 19)**³ has been published since the West of Fairfields LVA was completed, the wording of policies relating to the Sites has only undergone minor alterations from the Regulation 18 version previously referenced. The Milton Keynes City Plan (Regulation 19) identifies Shenley Dens as a draft Strategic City Extension Site, supported by Policy GS19. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) Report⁴ identifies the deliverability status of the SD Site to be 'deliverable and developable', and the WF Site to be 'developable'. The SHELAA notes that in terms of suitability the WF Site '*is not connected to any settlement boundary*' whereas the for the SD Site it states that '*the site would be a greenfield extension to the urban area of Milton Keynes ... The site can be accessed and links to the existing Western Expansion Area*'. Notwithstanding the transport links, in landscape and visual terms both sites are in the vicinity of the Western Expansion Area. However, in terms of settlement pattern and existing topography, as noted above, the WF Site is oriented towards Milton Keynes and has stronger visual and topographical links to the existing settlement pattern of Milton Keynes in comparison to SD Site, which slopes down to the Calverton Brook and is oriented towards the wider countryside and disrupting the natural containment of Milton Keynes.
18. In summary, the WF Site, although not included as a proposed allocation, would be a more logical extension to the city of Milton Keynes. The WF Site would allow the existing settlement pattern of the city (and proposed pattern of the Western Expansion Area) on the plateau to be maintained and would utilise the transition in landform to the Calverton valley as a natural containing feature to the edge of the city, unlike the SD Site, which spills over the pronounced ridgeline into the Calverton valley. The WF Site is already subject to urbanising influences, and for reasons detailed above, its inclusion within the SLA has been challenged within the West of Fairfields LVA. Conversely, the SD Site lies in an area that is likely to have a more rural character with long-reaching views across the wider undeveloped landscape as well as with heritage associated with reference to Whaddon Estate and pre-18th century hedgerow structure. This area clearly lies within the proposed SLA area, and regardless of the necessity of this designation, exhibits several of the valued attributes identified within the SLA.

Stantec UK Limited

³ Milton Keynes City Plan (Regulation 19) for Consultation (October 2025).

⁴ Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) Report (2025)

PROJECT: West of Fairfield. DATE: 19/12/2025
333102886

SUBJECT: MK CITY PLAN 2050 - TRANSMITTAL ID: 00001
REGULATION 19
REPRESENTATIONS - WEST
OF FAIRFIELDS (WEAEL)

PURPOSE: For your use VIA: Info Exchange

FROM

NAME	COMPANY	EMAIL	PHONE
Connor Sheffield	Stantec UK		

TO

NAME	COMPANY	EMAIL	PHONE
ncp.engagement@milton-keynes.gov.uk		ncp.engagement@milton-keynes.gov.uk	

REMARKS: Dear Sir/Madam,

On behalf of Catesby Estates, please find attached representations in response to the Milton Keynes Regulation 19 City Plan 2050 consultation regarding our client's site at West of Fairfield (otherwise known as Western Expansion Area Expansion Land).

This submission contains the following documents:

- 333102886 A3 CS West of Fairfield WEAEL Reg 19 Representations Cover Letter
- Appendix 1 – Site Location Plan
- Appendix 2 – Design Concept
- Appendix 3 – 333102886 A3 SKB CS Regulation 19 Representations Forms West of Fairfield
- Appendix 4 – West Milton Keynes LVA Final – LN-LP-01 Site Context Plan
- Appendix 4 – West Milton Keynes LVA Final – LN-LP-02 Topography Plan
- Appendix 4 – West Milton Keynes LVA Final – LN-LP-03 Landscape Character
- Appendix 4 – West Milton Keynes LVA Final – LN-LP-04 Site Appraisal Plan
- Appendix 4 – West Milton Keynes LVA Final – LN-LP-05 ZTV Plan
- Appendix 4 – West Milton Keynes LVA Final – LN-LP-06 Visual Appraisal Plan
- Appendix 4 – West Milton Keynes LVA Final – Site Appraisal Photographs
- Appendix 4 – West Milton Keynes LVA Final – Site Context Photographs
- Appendix 5 – L&V Comparative Study Shenley Dens v West of Fairfield

Please confirm that this representation has been received and that they have been registered as having been 'duly made'

If you would like further clarification, or to discuss further, please do get in touch using the details on the letter sent via file transfer.

Transmittal

DATE: 19/12/2025
TRANSMITTAL ID: 00001

Kind regards,

Connor

DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS

QTY	DATED	TITLE	NOTES
1	07/10/2024	Appendix 1 - Site Location Plan.pdf	
1	07/10/2024	Appendix 2 - Design Concept.pdf	
1	08/10/2024	Appendix 4 West Milton Keynes LVA-Final.pdf	
1	07/10/2024	Appendix 4 Published Landscape Character Assessment Extracts.pdf	
1	03/10/2024	Appendix 4 LN-LP-01 Site Context Plan-A1.pdf	
1	03/10/2024	Appendix 4 LN-LP-02 Topography Plan-A1.pdf	
1	03/10/2024	Appendix 4 LN-LP-03 Landscape Character-A1.pdf	
1	03/10/2024	Appendix 4 LN-LP-04 Site Appraisal Plan-A3.pdf	
1	08/10/2024	Appendix 4 LN-LP-05 ZTV Plan -A1.pdf	
1	08/10/2024	Appendix 4 LN-LP-06 Visual Appraisal Plan-A1.pdf	
1	03/10/2024	Appendix 4 Site Appraisal Photographs.pdf	
1	08/10/2024	Appendix 4 Site Context Photographs.pdf	
1	19/12/2025	333102886 A3 CS West of Fairfields WEAEL Reg 19 Representations Cover Letter FINAL.pdf	
1	19/12/2025	Appendix 3 333102886 A3 SKB CS MK Regulation 19 Representations Forms West of Fairfields.pdf	
1	19/12/2025	Appendix 5 333102886_L&V Comparative Study Shenley Dens v West of Fairfields FINAL.pdf	

COPIES:

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