LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL SCOPING NOTE

Abington Park Farm

Abington, South Cambridgeshire

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ALONGSIDE NORTH UTTLESFORD GARDEN COMMUNITY

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DOCUMENT DETAILS

Document type:	LVA Scoping Note
Reference:	NC15.196-lva scoping01
Publish date:	15/03/2019
Client:	David Chaplin
Project name:	Abington Park Farm
Project location:	Abington, South Cambridgeshire
Development proposal:	PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ALONGSIDE NORTH UTTLESFORD GARDEN COMMUNITY

Document version record:

version	notes	written by	date	checked by	date
DRAFT		CJ	14/03/2019	NC	14/03/2019
FINAL		CJ	15/03/2019	NC	15/03/2019

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1. Introduction

1.1 This report sets out landscape and visual appraisal scoping findings in relation to the proposed development of approximately 1000 dwellings on the land relating to Abington Park Farm.

1.2 It is intended to assess the viability of development in terms of landscape and visual considerations, to inform the South Cambridgeshire Call for Sites / Local Plan site selection process.

1.3 In principle this is a review of the sensitivity and capacity of the landscape in this area to accommodate development of this nature. In addition, this report makes recommendations about the appropriate zoning, shaping, form and mitigation such that a development here would be best assimilated into the landscape.

1.4 This proposal may not have been promoted if it were not for the traction being gained by the North Uttlesford Garden Community (NUGC). The NUGC looks to allocate the land immediately to the south of the site for a mix of 5,000 homes, employment, together with community, education, recreational, health and retail facilities. If the NUGC proceeds this would fundamentally change the context of the land relating to Abington Park Farm.

1.5 In the context of the NUGC, this site seems worthy of consideration for the provision of additional homes within the South Cambridgeshire district. It may also perform an important function by providing potential for a northern access point to the A11 for both the Abington Park Farm land and the NUGC.

2. Baseline context

<u>The site & setting</u>

2.1 The site forms part of a pronounced range of chalk hills on the leading edge of the higher plateau farmland of the South Cambridgeshire & Essex boarder. These chalk hills extend across a large tract of southern England and in this location they are visually prominent forming a line along the southern edge of the Cambridge lowlands. They are smooth, rolling hill forms with shallow dry soils and sparse vegetation cover. The land use and land cover pattern is dominated by a large scale open arable farming landscape. Settlement on the chalk hills is sparse and is largely restricted to isolated farmsteads. Larger settlement in the region tends only to occur on high ground where it is away from the open leading edge of the chalk hills, or on low ground in the valley bottom. This contributes to the distinctive rural landscape quality of the chalk hill line in this area.

2.2 This particular hill range sits with the Cambridge lowlands to the north-west, but also lies between the River Granta at Great Abington to the north, and the River Cam or Granta at Great Chesterford to the south. As a result of this topography it is a prominent component of the landscape in views occurring in locations to the north-east, west and south-west.

2.3 To the north of the Abington Park Farm land is the former Land Settlement Association's Estate at Great Abington. This is an estate of small holdings established in the late 1930s just south of Gt Abington. Today it is a mix of residential properties, with glasshouses and some small scale agricultural production.

2.4 The A11 runs immediately along the site's western boundary. There is an access road alongside the Brent Ditch that leads from

Abington Park Farm, north west to an unnamed road alongside the A11. Heading south, this road becomes a slip road providing direct access to the A11. To the north it runs parallel to the A11 and provides access to the A11 northbound as well as the Abingtons.

2.5 The NUGC raises the prospect of dramatic change to the setting of the land at Abington Park Farm. The land at Abington Park Farm sits immediately to the north of the NUGC. For the purposes of this study, it is therefore assumed that the land to the south of the site would be developed as set out within the NUGC masterplan.

Designations

2.6 Policy status and designations identified below are those which may be helpful in the identification of landscape and visual receptors and in relation to judgements concerning the relative value to assign to them.

2.7 There are no national landscape designations across the site. The site is outside of the South Cambridge Green Belt, which is located approximately 1.5km to the north of the proposal site and to the north of the A505.

2.8 The site does not contain a Conservation area, or any Listed Buildings. Nearby Conservation Areas are focused on the centre of the rural villages such as at Babraham, Great Abington, Hildersham, Pampisford and Linton. The closest Listed Buildings to the site are a cluster of Grade II Listed Buildings Hinxton Grange, Stables and Coach House, (List entry Number: 1318208 & 1128074), located approximately 700m to the west of the site beyond the A11.

2.9 Park Farmhouse (Grade II, List entry Number: 1322523) is geographically closer to the site at 540m south of the site's southern boundary, however it is wholly contained within the proposed residential area of the NUGC.

2.10 Brent Ditch is scheduled as an ancient monument (List entry Number: 1006929) and is assumed to be an Anglo-Saxon earthwork built around the 6th and 7th Centuries. The structure generally appears as a low ditch in a wooded area with earth works at approximately 2 to 3m high. The ditch is broken by the A11, with the southern section running into the site, leading south east from the A11 towards Abington Park Farm. The northern section continues north west towards Pampisford Hall.

2.11 Pampisford Hall is located approximately 1km to the north west of the site on the far side of the A11. The grounds of Pampisford Hall are a Grade II* Registered Park and Garden.

2.12 Statutory ecological / habitat designations contained within the site are Hildersham Wood and Bush Park. Both are areas of Ancient Woodland. Hildersham Wood is also a Special Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Landscape character

2.13 The site lies within National Character Area (NCA) 87 – East Anglian Chalk. Some relevant references in the listed key characteristics for this area are:

- *'The underlying and solid geology is dominated by Upper Cretaceous Chalk, a narrow continuation of the chalk ridge that runs south-west–north-east across southern England,*

continuing in the Chilterns and along the eastern edge of The Wash. The chalk bedrock has given the NCA its nutrient-poor and shallow soils.

- *Distinctive chalk rivers, the River Rhee and River Granta, flow in gentle river valleys in a diagonally north-west direction across the NCA.*

- *The rolling downland, mostly in arable production, has sparse tree cover but distinctive beech belts along long, straight roads. Certain high points have small beech copses or 'hanger', which are prominent and characteristic features in the open landscape. In the east there are pine belts.*

- *Archaeological features include Neolithic long barrows and bronze-age tumuli lining the route of the prehistoric Icknield Way; iron-age hill forts, including that at Wandlebury; impressive Roman burial monuments and cemeteries such as the Bartlow Hills; a distinctive communication network linking the rural Roman landscape to settlements and small towns, such as Great Chesterford; the four parallel Cambridgeshire dykes that cross the Chalk: the Anglo-Saxon linear earthworks of Devil's Dyke, Fleam Dyke, Heydon/Bran Ditch and Brent Ditch; ridge-and-furrow cultivation remains of the open field systems of the earlier medieval period; and large numbers of later moated enclosures, park lands created, sheepwalks, arterial routes and nucleated villages that emphasise the land use change of this period.*

- *Settlement is focused in small towns and in villages. There are a number of expanding commuter villages located generally within valleys. Letchworth Garden City is a nationally significant designed garden city.'*

2.14 The Landscape East regional landscape character assessment study places the site straddling across the Wooded Village Farmlands and the Chalk Hills and Scarps landscape character types. The Wooded Village Farmlands occupies the plateau top, with the Chalk Hills and Scarps LCT forming the downslopes.

2.15 The overall description given for the Wooded Village Farmlands is:

- *A gently rolling, elevated arable landscape with ancient woodland blocks and small, nuclear villages. Often an open landscape with long distance views, although woodland contains views particularly around settlements.*

2.16 The overall description given for the Chalk Hills and Scarps is:

- *Prominent chalk hills, in places forming a distinct edge, elsewhere incised by dry valleys to create a rounded rolling landform. Often well wooded with long distance views, this is a large scale landscape with an ordered pattern of fields and woodlands.*

2.17 The Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines 1991 identifies 8 landscape character areas for Cambridgeshire, with the site lying within Character Area 2: Chalklands.

2.18 The Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines describe the Chalklands Character Area as;

- *'The complex history of settlement and the impact of people on the landscape over the centuries is particularly apparent in this part of the County. Roman roads, Anglo-Saxon earthworks, large fields, modern roads and developments are all interlinked. The region was mostly too dry for early settlement. However, this dryness and light vegetation meant that it was ideal for communications and it is traversed by a major prehistoric and historic highway, the Icknield Way.'*

- *'The area was used for sheep farming well into the nineteenth century, leading to the creation of botanically rich grasslands which now only survive in well-protected locations.'*

- *'a broad-scale landscape of large fields, low mechanically trimmed hedges and few trees. The eastern part of this area has a number of woodlands and shelter belts which help to break up the long distant views and give some form and character. Certain high points have small beech copses or 'hangers' which are prominent and characteristic features in the open landscape.'*

2.19 The Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines identifies a number of principles for landscape improvement and management in the Chalklands character area that are relevant to the site;

- *1. Planting new beech hangers: could be placed on suitable, carefully sited knolls, hilltops and scarp-tops; these would form focal points to reinforce the local chalkland landscape character.*

- *2. Management and creation of chalk grasslands: the majority of the grasslands should remain open and uncluttered. The promotion of species-rich grassland on thin chalk soils would provide visual and wildlife value. Road verges should also be managed to promote plant diversity and interest.*

- *3. Management of existing shelter belts: these should be restocked to encourage young tree growth and fill gaps.*

- *4. Planting new mixed woodlands and shelter belts: carefully sited to enclose large tracts of rolling farmland and emphasise landforms (see Farmland Models A4b and A5).*

- *6. Hedgerows: selected hedgerows should be reinforced, or managed for particularly significant impact, based upon their visual and wildlife potential. Historically significant hedgerows should be carefully conserved, and new hedges planted to emphasise the existing landscape.*

- *7. Footpath corridor improvements: the Roman Road is an important route across the chalk landscape. Planting small woodlands at selected locations such as hill tops or to frame views, as well as carefully managing the existing rich flora, would enhance the route. A similar approach could be adopted for other footpaths in the area, concentrating on a small number of linked corridors (see Farmland Model A7).*

- *9. Conservation of the linear dykes: selective removal of scrub growth and re-establishment of sheep grazing, if possible, would enable the massive scale of these historic earthworks to be appreciated and promote chalk grass and flora communities. Some areas of scrub should be retained for habitat and visual diversity. The significance of the dykes in*

the landscape could be reinforced by managing adjacent strips of agricultural land as grassland or scrub.

2.20 Uttlesford District Council's landscape character assessment (Chris Blandford Associates 2006) identifies the land to the south of the site as being within Landscape Character Area A1 – Cam River Valley.

2.21 Key characteristics recorded for the Cam River Valley character area are:

- *Rolling, open landscape of chalky boulder clay with wide views from higher ground.*
- *Well vegetated riverbanks with shrubs, trees and water meadows along the winding narrow river corridor.*
- *Large-scale downland reflecting late enclosure, with rectilinear field pattern.*
- *Low hedges and few trees mainly in small copses.*
- *Ancient town of Saffron Walden.*
- *Dispersed settlements on valley sides connected by busy B roads.*

2.22 The Cam River Valley is described as:

- *The Cam River Valley extends from the Cambridgeshire-Essex boundary south to Newport where the M11 and the B1383 roads converge. It is a broad rolling landscape that drains the River Cam and its tributaries, Debden Water and Wicken Water. The eastern slopes are dominated by the historic settlement of Saffron Walden, with its imposing church. This side of the river valley is characterised by large farms and small villages connected by small lanes. In contrast, the western slopes are more diverse, with small quiet villages, and many busy roads. The eastern slopes are a large-scale landscape of primarily arable fields, with some grazing pastures.*

Landscape value

2.23 The value attributed by society to different landscapes may be indicated by national or local designations. In the absence of, or as supplement to such designations, a list of criteria or factors considered likely to confer value on a landscape includes: landscape condition, scenic quality, wildness and tranquillity or other perceptual interest, rarity and representativeness, heritage or ecological interest, recreational use, and cultural associations.

2.24 In terms of the site's visual and physical character, it is not exceptional at a local level and contains no features or characteristics that are not commonly found in the surrounding context. That being said, the Chalk Scarp slopes on the Cambridge leading edge of the higher plateau farmland form a prominent feature of this landscape and should therefore be considered of some greater value than the surrounding farmland.

2.25 The landscape context of the site is relatively attractive and quite distinctive countryside on the Cambridge/Essex border. However, it is not designated or recognised at any level of policy.

Visual Context

2.26 Visual receptors:

- Houses that would be adjacent to the south within the NUGC.
- Residents in Abington Park Farm properties.
- Users of local PRoW, both within and near to the site.
- Residents of properties on the southern edge of the adjacent former Land Settlement Association's Estate at Great Abington.
- Road Users on the A11.
- Users of local country roads.

2.27 There are two sections of Public Footpath contained within the site, Footpath Great Abington 3/4 and Footpath Great Abington 3/3. Footpath 3/4 is a continuation of the Footpath that heads north through the NUGC. Within the NUGC this Footpath would make its way through areas of open space, between residential properties and alongside estate roads. Once within the site, it heads north across the arable farmland towards Abington Park Farm before heading east towards and eventually alongside Hildesham Wood. Footpath 3/3 heads north from Footpath 3/4 across the arable plateau and down the chalk scarp towards the former Land Settlement Association's Estate at Great Abington.

NUGC

2.28 The Vision for the North Uttlesford Garden Community is to deliver:

- A new thriving local centre, offering retail, employment and community facilities.
- 5,000 high quality homes, delivered through connected 21st century villages.
- New primary schools and a new secondary school.
- Community parks, recreation and amenity space.
- New allotments and orchards.
- A sports hub.
- New, sustainable transport links.

2.29 The NUGC is proposed on the land immediately to the south of the land at Abington Park Farm It would occupy the arable farmland to the north of Great Chesterford and to the east of the A11. At approximately 460ha it will comprise a series of linked villages, spreading across the Plateau tops, ridges, valleys and countryside edges of the arable countryside that currently surrounds Park Farm.

3. Review of initial findings / feasibility issues

3.1 What particular constraints / sensitivities have we found:

- The Chalk Scarp slopes are estimated to have gradients on average of 1 in 12, and in places much steeper. These sloping

sides of the hills are visually prominent and form ground where development would be most visible and harsh in the scene.

- As a Scheduled Monument, suitable consideration should be given to The Brent Ditch as not to either damage or interfere with the setting of this heritage asset, but to retain it as a positive feature within any development proposal.

- Potential for coalescence with the adjacent former Land Settlement Association's Estate at Great Abington.

3.2 What opportunities / capacity for development are presented:

- The existing landscape elements within the land surrounding Abington Park Farm provide the opportunity to develop a meaningful mitigation strategy that encloses the development proposals, anchoring the new settlement to the upper plateau.

- There are opportunities to increase connectivity between the existing woodland blocks and tree belts within the site, as well as providing areas of parkland and new woodland scape planting on the development fringes.

- Areas of public open space can also be positively provided for within the development parcels.

- The proposals offer the opportunity to provide a landscaped edge to the NUGC that is above and beyond what has currently been identified on the NUGC masterplan. New woodland belts and parkland on the edge of the development blocks would create an attractive transition to the surrounding arable farmland whilst providing screening and softening of the development proposals.

- Development of the land surrounding Abington Park Farm provides the opportunity to bring forward proposals that are in keeping with the NUGC vision without compromising the developability of the NUGC itself. In fact there may be advantages of the two together over and above other matters, such as improved permeability and access. The plateau landform surrounding Abington Park Farm is similar in character to that on which the NUGC is proposed and similar design measures and mitigation principles that are identified for the NUGC would also be successful here.

4. Development concept plan

4.1 To help visualise the Abington Park Farm proposals alongside the NUGC and to illustrate initial thoughts on opportunities for appropriate zoning, shaping, form and mitigation a development concept plan has been produced (see fig.6). The following aspects of the development concept plan have been incorporated in response to context and in the interests of landscape and visual considerations:

- Location of new built form.

    - Built form should be away from the chalk scarps and kept up on the plateau.
    - Built form should be alongside the NUGC site as to ensure the proposals form a logical extension to this new community.

- Built form should (where possible) use existing tree belts, woodland blocks as a guide to development parcels. These blocks form strong visual barriers that would ack as effective mitigation measures.
- Where built form extends beyond existing vegetation blocks, new additional mitigation planting should be planted to form strong defensible boundaries to the site.
- Areas of parkland at the periphery of new built form to provide a gentle transition to the surrounding arable farmland.

- Reduce the potential for coalescence and preserve the rural character of the adjacent former Land Settlement Association's Estate at Great Abington.

  - Arable farmland to the north of the proposal site should be retained to provide a suitable offset to the adjacent former Land Settlement Association's Estate at Great Abington. This is intended to reduce effects of coalescence and preserve the rural character of this settlement.

- Preserve Hildersham Wood SSSI.

  - Suitable provision should be included within any layout to maintain an appropriate offset to this designated site. Tree belts and open space should be included immediately alongside to provide a soft green buffer.

- Mitigation planting.

  - New tree belts and hedgerows should be used to help contain and anchor the proposals to the site. The proposals provide opportunities for new planting to connect areas of existing woodland and tree belts within the site. Bush Park and Hildersham Wood are both areas of Ancient Woodland.

- Access.

  - A new point of access could be provided to the A11. Currently there is an access road alongside the Brent Ditch that leads from Abington Park Farm, north west to an unnamed road alongside the A11. Heading south, this road becomes a slip road providing direct access to the A11. This existing access road could be widened to facilitate access to the proposals, however consideration would have to be given to the Brent Ditch which is a Scheduled Monument. There are also risks that intensifying this access may bring about a degree of visual harm.

- Approach.

  - Parkland, hedgerows, blocks of woodland. Agricultural land retained as transition space around fringes of the development.

- Connectivity.

  - Where possible connections (vehicular and pedestrian/cycleways) should be made to the adjacent NUGC site. Opportunities exist to connect areas of open

space and Green Infrastructure and should be sought within any forthcoming layout.

5. Landscape effects

5.1 Landscape receptors:

- Fabric of the site / elements.
- Local landscape character.
- Wider landscape character.

5.2 The development concept plan illustrates that a development could be accommodated here without any direct loss of any notable landscape features such as trees or hedges. The principle sources of impact therefore relate to the addition of new urban built form and the effects this may have on perceptions of the local landscape character and the landscape setting of the NUGC settlement.

5.3 Although the site currently appears as undeveloped greenfield land, the site's location immediately alongside the NUGC changes the baseline position. The NUGC includes built elements such as substantial amounts of new housing, sports provision, employment land and open space. In the consideration and appraisal of potential landscape effects this alternative development scenario should be regarded as part of the baseline conditions, representing a potential change to the site regardless of the progress of housing development on the site.

5.4 In terms of potential landscape effects, there are some landscape sensitivities to development of the site and also some more accommodating aspects.

5.5 The proposed development would be recognised in the local landscape to the south of the former Land Settlement Association's Estate at Great Abington as an intensification of the built form of the NUGC. It would also be an addition of built form in relation to the character of the A11. There would likely be some appreciation of built form from within the low lying land to the west and north/west of the A11.

5.6 Beyond the site itself, the changes in the local landscape would affect a relatively small area of outlying countryside to the south of the former Land Settlement Association's Estate at Great Abington and the development would recede behind boundary vegetation as the landscape scheme of the development establishes. This site also sits well in the landscape on the edge of the NUGC with good degrees of containment provided by the existing woodland blocks within the site, as well as sitting comfortably in relation to the backdrop of existing vegetation and other development in the vicinity.

5.7 The proposals form a logical urban extension to NUGC.

6. Visual Effects

6.1 Visual receptors:

- Houses that would be adjacent to the south within the NUGC.
- Residents in Abington Park Farm properties.

- Users of local PRoW, both within and near to the site.
- Residents of properties on the southern edge of the adjacent former Land Settlement Association's Estate at Great Abington.
- Road Users on the A11.
- Users of local country roads.

6.2 Only from immediately adjacent properties within the NUGC and from the section of the A11 passing the site would there be any notable degree of visual intrusion. The effect on private properties would not be harmful in planning terms and the effect on the visual amenity experience of the A11 would be contained and would not be harmful beyond this immediate point on the road. There would be some views from the A1301 and the A505, but these would likely be glimpses and broken up by existing on site planting and proposed on site mitigation planting.

6.3 The countryside to the east of the site would not be notably influenced by this new addition to the village. In wider views from the east of the site the layering of vegetation across the farmland and across the site makes views of the proposals unlikely. However, the proposals would be seen at some distance. This would most likely give an appreciation that the settlement but not lead to any notable degree of harm.

6.4 For those public rights of way that pass through the site, and alongside, there will of course be a fundamental change in visual outlook and context. The previous direct outlook to farmland would be replaced with outlook into development; the context would change from farmland fields in a largely rural setting to that of spaces within a housing estate. For the most part these are indicated within open spaces and functional streets. It should be possible for all public rights of way through the development to be attractively retained, albeit within a development scenario rather than in farmland. The development framework set out on figure 6 indicates how the rights of way across the site can be incorporated.

7. Conclusions

7.1 This report demonstrates that alongside the NUGC the land at Abington Park Farm provides an opportunity for delivering a significant quantity of housing without causing high levels of additional landscape and visual harm.

7.2 The proposals form a logical urban extension to NUGC and development constrained to the top of the chalk scarp and not extending down onto the sloping sides of the area, has the capacity to form a development that respects and perhaps even celebrates the chalk hills feature. With careful planning, and some attention to structural planting around the development, it may be possible for such a development to be largely hidden from outlying views and where visible it could appear as an isolated hill top feature.

7.3 This study therefore finds that the Abington Park Farm land has good capacity to accommodate a substantial extension to the NUGC development that would not only be in keeping with the NUGC but would also assist with integration of the northern South Cambridgeshire edge of this development into the countryside.

7.4 The additional benefit of a northern access route is also understood to be a significant benefit.

APPENDIX A

Summary of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Theory

a1. The principles, approaches and terminology of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment practice is set out in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd edition)[1].

a2. There are two fundamental components to LVIA:

- The assessment of landscape effects, i.e. the effects on the landscape as a resource or collection of resources (grouped and described as landscape receptors); and
- The assessment of visual effects, i.e. the effects on views and visual amenity as experienced by people (grouped and described as visual receptors).

a3. In relation to the assessment of landscape effects the following factors should be taken into account:

- The size or scale of change in the landscape;
- The geographical extent over which the landscape effect will be felt;
- The duration and reversibility of the effects;
- The ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the changes with regard to maintaining the baseline condition or in relation to the aims of adopted landscape policy or strategies; and
- The value or status of the landscape receptor as indicated by landscape designations and/or an appraisal of recognised qualitative criteria.

a4. For the assessment of visual effects the following factors are relevant considerations:

- The occupation or activity of people at a particular location and the extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focussed on views and visual amenity;
- The value attached to those views, perhaps indicated by planning designations, literary references or simply the numbers of people benefitting from the view; and
- The scale of change in the view, the prominence of the change, the duration and reversibility of the effect.

[1] GLVIA3, 2013, by the Landscape Institute and IEMA

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APPENDIX B

Published landscape character assessment extract(s)

www.gov.uk/natural-england

NATURAL ENGLAND

National Character Area profile:

87. East Anglian Chalk

Supporting documents

Introduction & Summary | Description | Opportunities | Key facts and data | Landscape change | Analysis

Introduction

As part of Natural England's responsibilities as set out in the Natural Environment White Paper[1], Biodiversity 2020[2] 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)

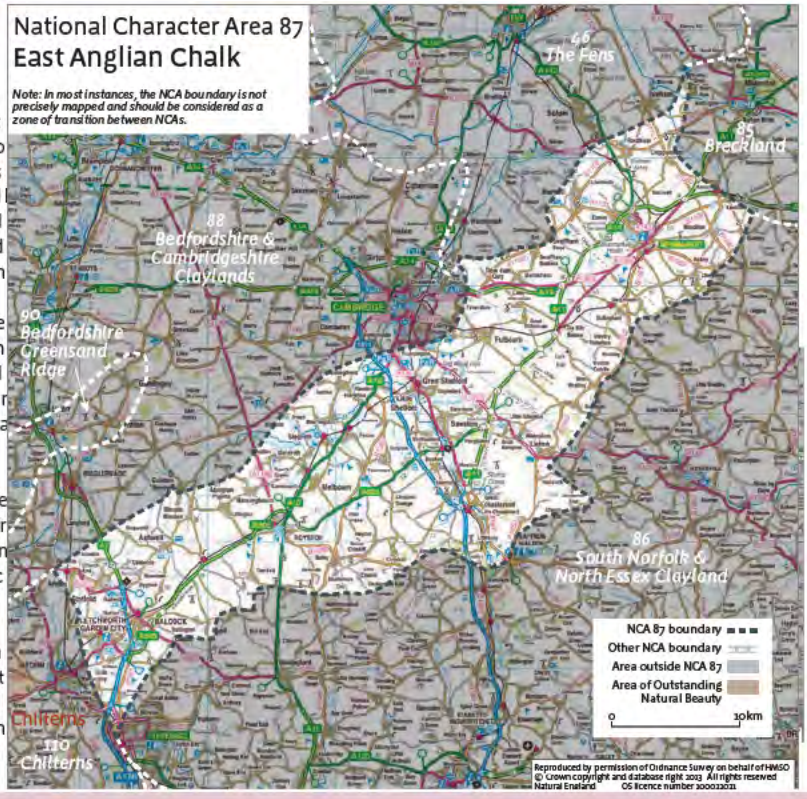
Summary

The East Anglian Chalk National Character Area (NCA) is charact narrow continuation of the chalk ridge that runs south-west–no southern England. The underlying geology is Upper Cretaceous covered in a surface deposit of ice and river-deposited material l the last ice age. This creates a visually simple and uninterrupted smooth, rolling chalkland hills with large regular fields enclosed hedges, with few trees, straight roads and expansive views to th

The vast majority of its landscape is open countryside, under ce Sustainable farming practices are required to help to manage th and support wildlife in the wider countryside. It is an open land on hill tops are visually distinct and characteristic. The smooth, r hills are dissected by the two gentle valleys of the rivers Granta a converge to form the River Cam just south of Cambridge.

The porosity of the area's Chalk geology is one of its most notice is largely absorbed through tiny, connected pores and natural fr of lying on the surface and forming rivers, lakes and ponds. Rain through the thin chalk soils and slowly replenishes the strategic chalk aquifer below.

Historically, sheep rearing and corn production have shaped th to the creation of botanically rich grasslands, which are now oft fragmented. Large-scale cereal production dominates the pred agricultural landscape, and care must be taken to ensure that th maintained to support a viable and sustainable future for farmi



National Character Area profile:

87. East Anglian Chalk

Supporting documents

Introduction & Summary | Description | Opportunities | Key facts and data | Landscape change | Analysis

Statements of Environmental Opportunity

- **SEO 1:** Maintain sustainable but productive agricultural land use, while expanding and connecting the chalkland assemblage of semi-natural grasslands, for example by sensitive management of road verges and extending buffer strips along field margins, to benefit soil and water quality, reduce soil erosion, strengthen landscape character and enhance biodiversity and pollinator networks.

- **SEO 2:** Conserve the regionally important East Anglian chalk groundwater resource, by working in partnership to ensure that an integrated catchment-scale approach is secured for its enhanced long-term management, including the chalk streams, for the benefit of biodiversity, landscape character and recreational experience.

- **SEO 3:** Conserve and promote the landscape character, geodiversity, historic environment and historical assets of the chalklands, including the open views of undulating chalkland, large rectilinear field pattern and linear ditches, strong equine association and the Icknield Way prehistoric route. Improve opportunities to enhance people's enjoyment of the area while protecting levels of tranquillity.

- **SEO 4:** Conserve the settlement character and create or enhance sustainable urban drainage systems and green infrastructure within existing and new developments, particularly in relation to the urban fringe and growth areas such as south-east Cambridge, to provide recreation opportunities, increase soil and water quality and enhance landscape character.

Looking towards Cambridgeshire claylands and modern transport routes from Therfield Heath.

Description

Physical and functional links to other National Character Areas

The East Anglian Chalk of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Suffolk and north-west Essex forms a narrow continuation of the chalk ridge that runs south-west–north-east across southern England, continuing in the Chilterns National Character Area (NCA) and along the eastern edge of The Wash. The northern boundary is clearly defined by the base of the north-west-facing chalk scarp slope, around the southern limit of Cambridge and along the fenland edge. From the higher ground to the south-east there are wide panoramas across the Bedfordshire Claylands NCA and the adjoining Fens NCA. To the north-east, sandy soil is blown over the Chalk, exerting a shared 'breck' character with the neighbouring Brecks NCA, visible in characteristic knarled Scots pine hedgerows. To the south and east it is bounded by the overlying chalky boulder clay of the South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland NCA, which includes Saffron Walden. The Wadlow Wind Farm, north of Balsham in Cambridgeshire, is a prominent feature along the boundary between the two NCAs.

The chalkland landscape is united with the rest of the East Anglian NCAs as a major food producer, with arable farming being the predominant land use. The smooth, rolling chalkland hills are dissected by the two gentle valleys of the rivers Granta and Rhee, which converge flowing westward into the River Cam just south of Cambridge. The Rhee begins at Ashwell Springs in Hertfordshire, running north then east 19 km through the farmland of southern Cambridgeshire. The longer tributary, the Granta, starts in Essex and flows north into the East Anglian Chalk NCA near Saffron Walden. The underlying chalk aquifer provides functional links between these areas and the population of East Anglia, whose water the aquifer supplies.

Gallops, near Newmarket showing rectilinear field pattern, enclosed by tall hedges and currently species-poor grassland.

The East Anglian Chalk NCA is traversed by a major prehistoric routeway, the Icknield Way, which links the Peddars Way and The Ridgeway National Trails. Important strategic railways and road transport links still exist, including the M11, A14, A505 and A10 (Ermine Street).

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Key characteristics

- The underlying and solid geology is dominated by Upper Cretaceous Chalk, a narrow continuation of the chalk ridge that runs south-west–north-east across southern England, continuing in the Chilterns and along the eastern edge of The Wash. The chalk bedrock has given the NCA its nutrient-poor and shallow soils.
- Distinctive chalk rivers, the River Rhee and River Granta, flow in gentle river valleys in a diagonally north-west direction across the NCA.
- The chalk aquifer is abstracted for water to supply Cambridge and its surroundings and also supports flows of springs and chalk streams; features associated with a history of modification include watercress beds, culverts and habitat enhancements.
- The rolling downland, mostly in arable production, has sparse tree cover but distinctive beech belts along long, straight roads. Certain high points have small beech copses or 'hanger', which are prominent and characteristic features in the open landscape. In the east there are pine belts.
- Remnant chalk grassland, including road verges, supports chalkland flora and vestigial populations of invertebrates, such as great pignut and the chalkhill blue butterfly.
- Archaeological features include Neolithic long barrows and bronze-age tumuli lining the route of the prehistoric Icknield Way; iron-age hill forts, including that at Wandlebury; impressive Roman burial monuments and cemeteries such as the Bartlow Hills; a distinctive communication network linking the rural Roman landscape to settlements and small towns, such as Great Chesterford; the four parallel Cambridgeshire dykes that cross the Chalk: the Anglo-Saxon linear earthworks of Devil's Dyke, Fleam Dyke, Heydon/Bran Ditch and Brent Ditch; ridge-and-furrow cultivation remains of the open field systems of the earlier medieval period; and large numbers of later moated enclosures, park lands created, sheepwalks, arterial routes and nucleated villages that emphasise the land use change of this period.
- Brick and 'clunch' (building chalk) under thatched roofs were the traditional building materials, with some earlier survival of timber frame. Isolated farmhouses built of grey or yellowish brick have a bleached appearance.
- Settlement is focused in small towns and in villages. There are a number of expanding commuter villages located generally within valleys. Letchworth Garden City is a nationally significant designed garden city.
- In and around the wider area of Newmarket, stud farms impose a distinctive geometric, enclosed and manicured pattern to the landscape.
- The NCA is traversed by the Icknield Way, an ancient route that is now a public right of way. Roads and lanes strike across the downs perpendicularly and follow historical tracks that originally brought livestock to their summer grazing. Today major roads and railways are prominent landscape characteristics of the NCA.

Wandlebury Hill Fort from the air in 1980. The wooded concentric earth bank can be clearly seen.

East Anglian Chalk today

The East Anglian Chalk of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Suffolk and north-west Essex forms a narrow continuation of the chalk ridge that runs south-west–north-east across southern England, continuing in the Chilterns and along the eastern edge of The Wash.

This is a visually continuous, open landscape, with occasional long views over the lower land to the north and west. The valleys of the rivers Granta, Rhee and Cam have a contrasting small-scale intimacy that is enhanced by small woods, pasture and wetland vegetation. The river flow changes seasonally, nearly drying up completely in summer. Chalk rivers and their aquifers have long provided drinking water for East Anglian residents. The porous chalk results in limited surface water, but there are springlines where surface topography intercepts the aquifer or where groundwater emerges at less permeable horizons, such as the Totternhoe Stone at Ashwell. The clean spring water of the chalk has also had an influence on local industry, reflected in the local paper- and parchment-making tradition and frequent watercress beds.

Arable farming, as well as sheep grazing, have been significant since the prehistoric period; their importance has ebbed and flowed, as in the other chalk and limestone plateaux and downs of southern England. The smooth, rolling chalkland hills were historically grazed by sheep but the land use is now dominated by large-scale cereal production. The large fields are enclosed with low thorn, and characterised by often 'gappy' hedgerows and few trees. There is very little grazing pasture or livestock except within the small river valleys. Medieval deserted settlements testify to the shrinkage of arable cultivation after the 14th century, and there is an abundance of archaeological sites dating from the Neolithic Period. Also prominent are Anglo-Saxon linear dykes (Devil's Dyke,

Racehorses setting off for morning exercise near Newmarket.

Fleam Dyke and Brent Ditch), consisting of earthbanks with an adjacent ditch, which span the chalkland from the fen edge east of Cambridge to the wooded edge on the higher claylands. Devil's Dyke is 11 km long, 6 m high and 4 m wide. A fourth, Heydon/Bran Ditch near Fowlmere, has been almost completely lost to agriculture over time.

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Roads are often lined with shelterbelts of beech, particularly to the eastern end, and these, together with hill-top clumps and copses, offer a little diversity. In the transitional area bordering the Brecks, pine belts begin to take over from beech. Ancient woodland and spring-fed meadows also feature here.

A significant influence around the southern edge of Newmarket has been that of horse-racing and stud farms, which have brought localised wealth and a manicured appearance to the landscape. The horse-racing industry has created a geometric grid, as the fences and shelterbelts of the stud farms provide a more enclosed pattern. This gives a well-wooded character within an area that extends in a broad sweep from the south-west (Six Mile Bottom) around to Moulton in the east.

On the fen edge in the north of the NCA is Chippenham Fen, an important wetland. Most sites of biodiversity interest today are remnants of the once-extensive chalk grassland scattered throughout the natural area. The largest survivors are managed grasslands: the gallops at Newmarket and Royston; and the golf courses of the Gog Magog Hills and Therfield Heath. Fragments occur on roadside verges, in chalk pits such as Cherry Hinton, and along sections of the ancient linear dykes, Roman roads and disused railway lines.

Invertebrates such as the chalkhill blue butterfly are still associated with grasslands, but populations have generally declined with habitat fragmentation. Blue Lagoon is an old chalk and clay pit at Arlesey which has filled with water, but the surrounding land has become good semi-natural grassland. In the arable landscape there are still hotspots for the arable weeds ground pine and Venus' looking-glass. In the Whittlesford area, the hollows formed by ground ice in periglacial conditions support grass-poly and fairy shrimp, one of the few British populations. There are still areas that support good populations of farmland birds, for example grey partridge around Royston, but generally there is a decline, for example in species such as turtle dove and skylark.

The village cores have a traditional appearance, with houses constructed of brick or 'clunch' under thatched roofs. Clunch is a soft chalk or limestone that hardens when dry but is prone to weathering erosion. To the east of Newmarket the villages tucked into the more undulating terrain are often Georgian, built of red brick and flint with slate, pegtile or thatched roofs. Further south there is a transitional zone around Saffron Walden (in the South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland NCA) onto the till, which supports a series of small attractive villages such as Barley, Barkway and the Chishills. Settlement has expanded as a result of significant 20th-century development. Letchworth Garden City is a planned garden city.

The chalklands are traversed by the prehistoric routeway, the Icknield Way, which is now a long-distance footpath offering recreational opportunity for locals and for seasoned ramblers, linking the Peddars Way and The Ridgeway National Trail. In *The Icknield Way*, nature writer Edward Thomas wrote about this ancient route. Grassland along the Icknield way is a stronghold of great pignut. The Fleam Dyke and Roman Road Walk is a 40-kilometre waymarked route, incorporating two of Cambridgeshire's ancient linear sites.

Race days at Newmarket, and Duxford, now part of the Imperial War Museum, are significant leisure attractions, bringing thousands of visitors, many from long distances, while the iron-age hill fort at Wandlebury is now much-used locally for picnics and wildlife walks. A Cambridge student's memory of visits to Wandlebury Ring and the Gog Magog Hills is described by E.M. Forster in *The Longest Journey.*

Historically, the Chalk has been a significant source of raw materials for building purposes. Today, chalk is extracted for agricultural lime, as at Great Wilbraham, and notably for industrial whiting fillers at Steeple Morden quarry.

The landscape through time

During the Upper Cretaceous this area was dominated by marine environments. Locally, Cretaceous Gault Clay and Upper Greensand are overlain by the Chalk which forms the characteristic ridge of the NCA. The Chalk was deposited in a shallow, warm sea that covered much of Europe from 94 to 66 million years ago. It is made up of the calcareous microscopic remains of plankton and includes remains of fossils, such as ammonites, and characteristic flint nodules. After its deposition and uplift, and following the retreat of the Cretaceous seas, the Chalk was significantly eroded during the ice ages with the advance and retreat of ice during the Anglian glaciations, some 400,000 years ago. Glacial action 'bulldozed' large masses of chalk to form the chalk ridge to the west and east of Royston. During the most recent glaciations the area was not ice covered but was tundra-like during which time the dry valleys and swallow holes of the Chalk and the patterned ground of the nearby Brecks were formed.

In the post-glacial period, 'early man' would probably have cleared the more lightly forested area on the chalk escarpment. Fossil pollen records show significant changes from about 6,000 bp as the wildwood was cleared and pastoral farming became more widespread, leading to the open, treeless downland.

Spring-fed prehistoric settlements developed on the chalk downs (such as at Ashwell, Melbourn and Steeple Morden), on the terraces of the Cam valley and around exploitation sites where flint nodules used for tool making (for example at Duxford and Thriplow) were exposed in the upper strata of the Chalk. Neolithic and bronze-age ceremonial and funerary monuments are widespread across the Chalk (for instance at Therfield Heath), attesting to their long-term

Trees growing on Wandlebury hill fort and surrounding land seen from a 1946 aerial photograph.

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use for settlement and agriculture. Although distributed more widely across the chalklands, the Cam valley became a focal point for larger-scale iron-age and Roman settlements, such as at Great Chesterford (similar to the modern A11 route), where the rivers and new roads forged further connections, linking older routes with the new settlements on the clay plains or gravel terraces. Ermine Street, the London *(Londinium)* to York *(Eburacum)* road, passed by the Chalk-based settlement at Royston, before crossing the clays to the north to reach Godmanchester. Four great linear dykes (Devil's Dyke, Fleam Dyke, Brent Ditch and Heydon/Bran Ditch) were built by the Saxons to control movement along the Icknield Way between the 5th and 7th centuries ad.

Medieval moated sites, park lands and nucleated villages are distinctive features of medieval settlement on the Chalk, many of which are preserved in the grounds of later country estates (for example Barrington, Sawston and Fulbourn), and many are also Scheduled Monuments.

The light chalk soils were well suited to arable farming, which contracted in the 14th and 15th centuries. Extensive unenclosed downland pasture remained until the late 18th century, but from this period an increasing area was enclosed and returned to the plough. Dry heaths were burnt before cultivation in the area around Dullingham, as described by agricultural writer Arthur Young in 1805. The cleared areas would have either become grazing land or been cropped. As productivity fell, the fields were abandoned and allowed to revert to woodland or they became pasture. On the chalky soils, calcareous grassland would have developed, with sheep preventing the return to woodland. An increasing use of manure from yard-fed cattle and of artificial fertilisers characterised the 19th and early 20th centuries. Isolated white- or yellow-brick farmhouses were built on the hill tops, mainly in the 19th century, reflecting this period of agricultural growth.

Settlement occurred along the sides of the river valleys, where small villages were founded, such as Linton. Sheep farming survived well into the 20th century; since then agricultural land has been used to grow barley and other high-value crops such as flax and oilseed rape despite the thin, poor soils.

The clean spring water of the chalk has had an influence on local industry, such as watercress beds and the paper industry at Sawston. Much local chalk and 'clunch' quarrying took place, particularly at villages on the fen edge, for example at Steeple Morden. Until recently Barrington quarry provided huge quantities of chalk and clay for cement making, and Cherry Hinton provided builder's lime and also the chalk 'clunch' used to build Cambridge.

Cambridge, outside this NCA but of influence, developed as an internationally significant university city in the medieval period, not substantially expanding out of its medieval boundaries until the 19th century; and a market was established at Newmarket in the 13th century (hence the name). Horse-racing's history in Newmarket can be traced back to at least the reign of King James I. With its paddocks and gallops, it has been a centre of racing and horse-breeding excellence since the early 17th century. By the early 18th century the thoroughbred racehorse was the aristocratic status symbol par excellence and people crowded to the racecourse on top of the rolling downland. (The embankment, or vallum, of Devil's Dyke, which divides the July and Rowley Mile courses, provides a viewing platform.)

Horse-racing and golf courses have safeguarded chalk grasslands, but species diversity has been lost. Great bustard was last seen nearly 200 years ago and used to breed near Newmarket. Although chalk grassland is present today, the number of individual species it supports is reduced; for example, the chalkhill blue butterfly is in decline.

In the 20th century villages have maintained a historic core but some, especially those with a railway station, have become commuter villages, such as Foxton and Meldreth. Letchworth Garden City, the world's first garden city, was established in the 20th century, and other towns grew substantially in the latter part of that century.

Cambridge is one of the fastest-growing cities in Western Europe and its expanding southern developments in the greenbelt influence the built-up character of this area. The railway across the south Midlands linking East Anglia with the West Country by way of the cities of Cambridge and Oxford was closed amid great controversy in the 1970s.

Since the 1950s, tranquillity has declined around the urban centres and - the transport routes, especially around the M11, A505 and A10. Several wind farms have been built in the last five years which have a visual impact on the landscape.

Post-war enlargement of fields by hedgerow removal saw the creation of open fields, particularly concentrated in Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire, although some places, such as Bygrave, were never enclosed. The area is still important for arable weeds, including grass-poly and Venus' looking-glass; with the intensification of agriculture in the last 50 years there has been a large decline in species numbers.

The NCA has experienced dramatic land use changes in past and recent times. These changes have influenced the present nature, location and extent of the wildlife resource. There is recognition of the importance of the remnant habitats, sometimes confined to roadside verges; the small scale of these sites makes management – and therefore maintenance of biodiversity value – very difficult.

Fleam dyke, one of the four ancient defensive earthworks preventing access to East Anglia.

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Ecosystem services

The East Anglian Chalk NCA provides a wide range of benefits to society. Each is derived from the attributes and processes (both natural and cultural features) within the area. These benefits are known collectively as 'ecosystem services'. The predominant services are summarised below. Further information on ecosystem services provided in the East Anglian Chalk NCA is contained in the 'Analysis' section of this document.

Large-scale arable production: view taken near Newham.

Provisioning services (food, fibre and water supply)

- **Food provision:** As a result of the prominence of Grade 2 agricultural land, cereals dominate the arable production and wheat is the main crop. Oilseeds and malting barley are also significant crops.

- **Water availability:** Although this is a dry landscape it is an important catchment, as the underlying chalk aquifer supplies have been generally assessed as being 'over-licensed' or 'over-abstracted'.1 The majority of the water supply to Cambridge comes from these chalk strata aquifers south of the city. Low flows and the cessation of flows, caused by water abstraction and drought, affect watercourse habitats and adjacent habitats in the NCA. Spring-fed fens and mires also suffer from low flows and the absence of flows at times of the year due to abstraction and drought.

Regulating services (water purification, air quality maintenance and climate regulation)

- **Regulating soil erosion:** The chalk soils over most of the NCA have a low carbon content. Soil erosion is identified as an issue in this catchment; the most vulnerable areas are on the steep slopes under arable production, particularly at times when there are high-intensity downpours when crops are establishing, or during harvesting. Prevention involves increasing green cover crops such as extending grasslands on field margins and slopes.

- **Regulating water quality:** The surface water chemical status of the River Granta, the River Cam and the New River is good. In the north-east and the south of the NCA the groundwater chemical status is poor, while in the south-west of the NCA the groundwater chemical status is good.

- **Regulating soil quality:** Some 57 per cent of the NCA has high-quality Grade 2 agricultural soils. Cultivation practices need to address the low organic content of soils, such as by extending grasslands where appropriate and ensuring that nutrient inputs are carefully managed, adhering to nitrate vulnerable zone guidelines.

Cultural services (inspiration, education and wellbeing)

- **Sense of place/inspiration:** Sense of place is provided by the low-lying chalk ridge that forms the easterly extension of the Chilterns, creating a visually simple and uninterrupted landscape of smooth, rolling chalkland hills, with light-coloured soils in winter and cereal crops in summer. The prominence of the horse-racing industry at Newmarket is reflected in the manicured appearance of the landscape. A sense of inspiration includes a Cambridge student's memories of visits to Wandlebury Ring and the Gog Magog Hills as described by E.M. Forster in *The Longest Journey*.

- **Sense of history:** The history of the landscape is evident in the landscape-scale earthwork features, including the iron-age fort at Wandlebury and the defensive structures of Devil's Dyke, Therfield and Fleam Dyke. In addition, a wealth of Romano-British and late iron-age settlement remains (for example at Great Chesterford and Baldock). Aspects of history likely to be most evident to the general public include the large-scale earthworks related to the Icknield Way, the Cambridgeshire dykes and the impressive prehistoric burial monument earthworks along it, while some sections of the Roman roads and the dykes are well-supported Local Nature Reserves (for example Worsted Street, Devil's Dyke and Fleam Dyke). Medieval moated manorial earthworks, historic and traditional buildings, nucleated villages, historic farmsteads and grand houses, many of which are open to the public, form a mosaic of interest in the historic environment of the chalklands.

Worsted Street, Roman road, clearly seen from an aerial photograph.

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- **Recreation:** Race days at Newmarket and air shows at Duxford attract a significant number of visitors from the UK and from abroad. Newmarket is renowned for its horse-racing, while Duxford airfield forms part of the Imperial War Museum. Recreational opportunities are provided by nearly 850 km of rights of way, including some of ancient origin (for example Icknield Way and Worsted Street Roman Road), but there is only just over 200 ha of open access land. Therfield Heath is periodically host to kite-flying festivals.

- **Biodiversity:** Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designation protects more than 1,000 ha of habitat. The majority of habitats lowland calcareous grassland, but much of this is fragmented and sometimes confined to roadside verges. It is difficult to manage small and/or linear sites (such as Roman roads) to retain the biodiversity value of chalkhill blue and great pignut. Chalk streams and fens or spring-fed marshes (for example Fowlmere, Thriplow and Shepreth L-Moor SSSI) are of importance in this NCA, but modification and over-abstraction have led to a decline in the ecological value of the streams.

- **Geodiversity:** The Chalk produces water that is naturally mineral rich, sediment free and of a stable temperature and as such supports specialised chalk stream ecology. A series of important nature reserves are located along the springline at the base of the chalk scarp, notably at Chippenham, Fulbourn and Fowlmere. Barrington Chalk Pit cuts down through the Lower Chalk into the phosphatic Cambridge Greensand and underlying Gault Clay. Barrington Chalk Pit exposes sediments to the warm interglacial Ipswichian, deposited between the Anglian and Devensian glaciations, and has yielded a diverse Pleistocene fossil mammal fauna including hippopotamus, rhinoceros, elephant, lion and hyena. These sites, together with the other locally important sites, help us to understand the changing environments and life of the region.

Chalkhill blue butterfly feeding on knapweed, on a small remnant grassland site.

Statements of Environmental Opportunity

SEO 1: Maintain sustainable but productive agricultural land use, while expanding and connecting the chalkland assemblage of semi-natural grasslands, for example by sensitive management of road verges and extending buffer strips along field margins to benefit soil and water quality, reduce soil erosion, strengthen landscape character and enhance biodiversity and pollinator networks.

For example, by:

- Encouraging resource-efficient farming where risks are identified and can be managed to reduce negative impacts. For example, arable reversion should be targeted in areas of high soil erosion risk and fertiliser use minimised where infiltration into the aquifer is rapid.
- Conserving and maximising the soil resource, aiming particularly to avoid deterioration of soils with high Agricultural Land Classification grades.
- Encouraging sheep grazing on biodiverse grasslands to bring benefits to biodiversity and sense of place. Advise longer growing periods between grazing and increase sward diversity in leys to improve root penetration and soil stability.
- Seeking opportunities for restoration and creation of low-input and unimproved grassland and creation of buffer strips for wildlife where appropriate within catchments in the National Character Area (NCA). This will reduce run-off and provide improvements in water availability from the rivers and the main aquifer, as well as providing networks of habitats for pollinators.
- Optimising benefits for farmland birds and rare arable plants by maintaining stubble and cultivated and uncropped field margins to provide winter food and safe nesting habitats.
- Lowering the nutrient input and ensuring grazing or cutting after flowering by the horse-racing industry. This could significantly expand the species-rich grassland area.
- Establishing a resilient ecological network, identifying and addressing gaps and building core areas, particularly in relation to chalk grassland and flood plain habitats.
- Promoting and enhancing management of road verges for high-quality grassland habitat.
- Exploring and realising opportunities for restoration and creation of favourably managed wetland habitats along the flood plains of the rivers Cam, Granta and Rhee.

Chalk grassland roadside verge with remnant grassland flora.

SEO 2: Conserve the regionally important East Anglian chalk groundwater resource, by working in partnership to ensure that an integrated catchment-scale approach is secured for its enhanced long-term management, including the chalk streams, for the benefit of biodiversity, landscape character and recreational experience.

For example, by:

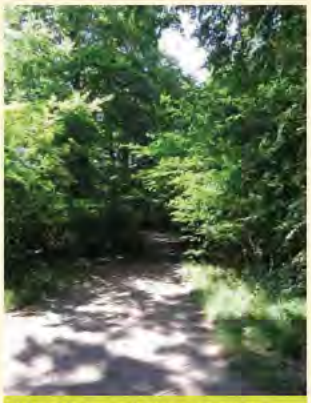
- Working in partnership with water companies across the water supply network area to replace or prevent/limit damaging abstraction and consumption, including engaging water consumers about negative impacts of unsustainable abstraction on East Anglian chalk streams.
- Exploring opportunities for the expansion of semi-natural wetland habitats along the flood plains of the rivers Cam, Granta and Rhee, including reedbeds next to watercourses to act as nutrient sinks.
- Engaging communities in better understanding of the relationship between geodiversity, the underlying aquifer, water quality and availability, and soils and the natural processes that limit available resources.
- Creating grassland buffer strips running across slopes within catchments to reduce sediment and nutrient run-off into adjacent watercourses, thereby improving the quality of the rivers and their flood plains. Also restore river character, for example pollarding willows.
- Maintaining and restoring semi-natural habitats and woodlands to intercept and infiltrate surface water down into the aquifers.

Looking from the open chalk landscape near Gazely towards the more wooded Brecks NCA.

SEO 3: Conserve and promote the landscape character, geodiversity, historic environment and historical assets of the chalklands, including the open views of undulating chalkland, large rectilinear field pattern and linear ditches, strong equine association and the Icknield Way prehistoric route. Improve opportunities to enhance people's enjoyment of the area while protecting levels of tranquillity.

For example, by:

- Protecting and appropriately managing the historic environment for its contribution to local character and sense of identity and as a framework for habitat restoration and sustainable development, and enhancing biodiversity.
- Managing and conserving the area's heritage assets as an integral part of its distinctive landscape, while recognising the potential for undiscovered remains, including those revealed through agricultural change.
- Minimising and – where possible – eliminating risk to Scheduled Monuments and nationally significant archaeology, including through arable reversion, shallow cultivation or minimum tillage agriculture, and encouraging uptake of agri-environment schemes to fund such work.
- Maintaining, developing and improving the rights of way network and access to sites and areas of interest.
- Raising the profile of the strategic importance of the Icknield Way by promoting it as the link between the existing Peddars Way and The Ridgeway National Trails.
- Engaging with communities and owners of historic features in celebrating and conserving the historic environment, including developing skills in historic environment conservation and traditional building skills and conservation.
- Ensuring that the distinctive elements of the chalk landscape, flowing water and rural scene are conserved and managed to retain and enhance the strong sense of place.
- Encouraging and supporting traffic-calming measures and non-car travel at popular countryside destinations, to improve tranquillity and recreation experiences generally.
- Working with the horse-racing industry and major landowners of historic properties to expand the area of species-rich grassland through appropriate management techniques.
- Encouraging geo-conservation, working with local geology groups and geologists, connecting with the Chalk East initiative and strengthening the link between geodiversity and the character and landscape of the NCA.
- Promoting the use of white and yellow brick and thatch in the north and west and red brick and flints in the east as traditional building materials. Encourage local councils to grant planning permission for small-scale extraction of chalk 'clunch' for repairing historic buildings and building new structures of conservation value.



Icknield Way, prehistoric routeway as seen today.

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SEO 4: Conserve the settlement character and create or enhance sustainable urban drainage systems and green infrastructure within existing and new developments, particularly in relation to the urban fringe and growth areas such as south-east Cambridge, to provide recreation opportunities, increase soil and water quality and enhance landscape character.

For example, by:

- Avoiding or minimising further erosion of tranquillity by ensuring that development is appropriate to the setting and incorporates suitable measures, such as tree planting or green buffers.
- Supporting, creating and improving links between recreational assets and settlements, particularly where growth is planned.
- Improving green infrastructure within settlements and through new development, particularly in relation to urban fringe and growth areas such as south-east Cambridge, by providing accessible greenspace and potentially creating new biodiverse grasslands.
- Targeting the development of sustainable urban drainage systems and greenspace within urban centres to filter pollutants. This will be increasingly important as building continues to expand the commuter villages and towns.
- Conserving and enhancing historic earthworks and routes that evidence past settlement by scrub removal. This will also provide access to and enhance biodiversity corridors, for example Icknield Way, Worsted Street and Fleam Dyke.
- Encouraging further provision of cycle routes and, exploring the feasibility, in the long term of new rail routes.
- Engaging with communities and owners of heritage features in celebrating and conserving the historic environment, including developing skills in historic environment conservation, historic landscape management and conservation.
- Exploring opportunities to enhance the setting, interpretation and visitor facilities of heritage assets, for example the historic dykes and other earthwork monuments.

Wooded Village Farmlands

Summary

Overall description:
A gently rolling, elevated arable landscape with ancient woodland blocks and small, nuclear villages. Often an open landscape with long distance views, although woodland contains views particularly around settlements.

Location:
Located in southwest Cambridgeshire and along the western edge of the East Anglian plateau between Stevenage and Bury.

Physical environment

Landform:
Elevated, gently rolling landscape typically associated with broad glacial plateaux.

Natural / water features:
Minor streams drain this landscape creating shallow depressions, or valleys amongst the arable landuse. Occasional field ponds.

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character:
Clusters of small to medium sized ancient woodlands connected by a network of primary hedgerows. Good survival of primary habitats (> 6%) of which a considerable proportion is designated (> 3%).

Primary land use :
Arable land use.

Tree cover:
A wooded landscape with many ancient woodlands and frequent hedgerow trees (oak and ash).

Cultural pattern

Historic features:
Green lanes, trackways, moats, churches and deserted villages are a feature of this landscape, reflecting a more populated past. A scattering of small to medium sized parklands are also a recurring feature.

Enclosure pattern:
A mixture of small scale, sub-regular and sinuous fields (often with tall hedgerows) alongside areas of planned geometric fields, reflecting the late enclosure of former commons and waste.

Settlement pattern:
Low density small nuclear villages, often arranged around a central village green, with occasional outlying farms often set in fields away from road. Minimal 20th expansion of settlement.
Building materials include timber framed and rendered cottages, often with thatched roofs.

Historic development :
The majority of fieldscapes in this landscape are derived from the late enclosure of common fields. There are also areas of earlier enclosure, some of which may have been derived from assarting.

Perceptions

Tranquility:
Peaceful and rural character.

Views:
Elevation and openness means this landscape offers some long ranging views across lower lying areas. Woodland screens views in places creating more intimate feel particularly around settlements.

Chalk Hills and Scarps

Summary

Overall description:
Prominent chalk hills, in places forming a distinct edge, elsewhere incised by dry valleys to create a rounded rolling landform. Often well wooded with long distance views, this is a large scale landscape with an ordered pattern of fields and woodlands

Location:
Located in a narrow band running through the central part of the East of England, extending from Hertfordshire, through Bedfordshire, to south Cambridgeshire and west Suffolk.

Physical environment

Landform:
Comprises an elevated rolling chalk landscape exhibiting a rounded, rolling 'downland' topography, with localised steep-sided scarp slopes.

Natural / water features:
Free draining land with frequent dry valleys, some of which contain small seasonal watercourses that are often not visually obvious.

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character:
Much calcareous grassland found in this landscape, especially on shallow soils on steeper scarp and valley slopes (eg. Warden and Galley Hills). Lowland mixed woodland (often ancient comprising ash/beech/hazel) is also a predominant habitat type.

Primary land use :
Predominately arable land use, with permanent pasture and woodland on steeper slopes.

Tree cover:
Ancient semi-natural beech, lime and sycamore woods on summits and slopes, with more recent woodland blocks and shelterbelts around Newmarket.

Cultural pattern

Historic features:
Historic features such as tracks (eg. Icknield Way) and hill forts occur throughout this area.

Enclosure pattern:
A medium to large scale, regular field pattern defined by hedgerows, with post and wire fences on steeper slopes. Fields show a mix of rectilinear & sinuous patterns reflecting the process of planned surveyor enclosure from common fields.

Settlement pattern:
Low density settlement, rural in character comprising discrete historic villages and a scattering of large farms. General absence of settlement on steeper scarp slopes. Urban

development associated with larger towns impinges on this landscape.
To be completed at a later date.

Historic development :
This is a landscape almost entirely dominated by late enclosure of former arable fields and common grazing. Some other enclosures are recorded and appear to represent early piecemeal enclosure of common fields.

Perceptions

Tranquility:
A rural landscape which can feel empty and unpopulated in places.

Views:
A simple, open landscape, affording long distance, panoramic views.

Chalklands:Babraham.

AREA 2: CHALKLANDS

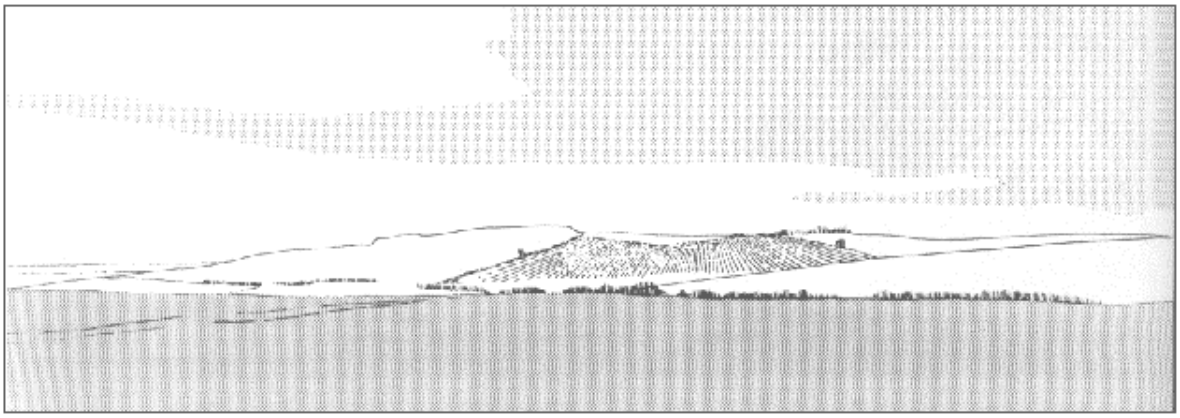
The complex history of settlement and the impact of people on the landscape over the centuries is particularly apparent in this part of the County. Roman roads, Anglo-Saxon earthworks, large fields, modern roads and developments are all interlinked.

The region was mostly too dry for early settlement. However, this dryness and light vegetation meant that it was ideal for communications and it is traversed by a major prehistoric and historic highway, the Icknield Way. Its importance as a highway also gave it strategic value. In the Iron Age it was controlled by Wandlebury hill fort and in Anglo-Saxon times by the three great linear dykes which span the chalkland from the fen edge east of Cambridge to the wooded edge on the higher claylands (a fourth 'Bran Ditch' near Fowlmere has been almost completely destroyed).

These artificial elements overlie the smooth rolling chalkland hills. The hills are dissected by the two gentle valleys of the Granta and the Rhee, which converge to form the river Cam just south of Cambridge.

The area was used for sheep farming well into the nineteenth century, leading to the creation of botanically rich grasslands which now only survive in well-protected locations.

CHALKLANDS Before
A denuded, intensely arable landscape



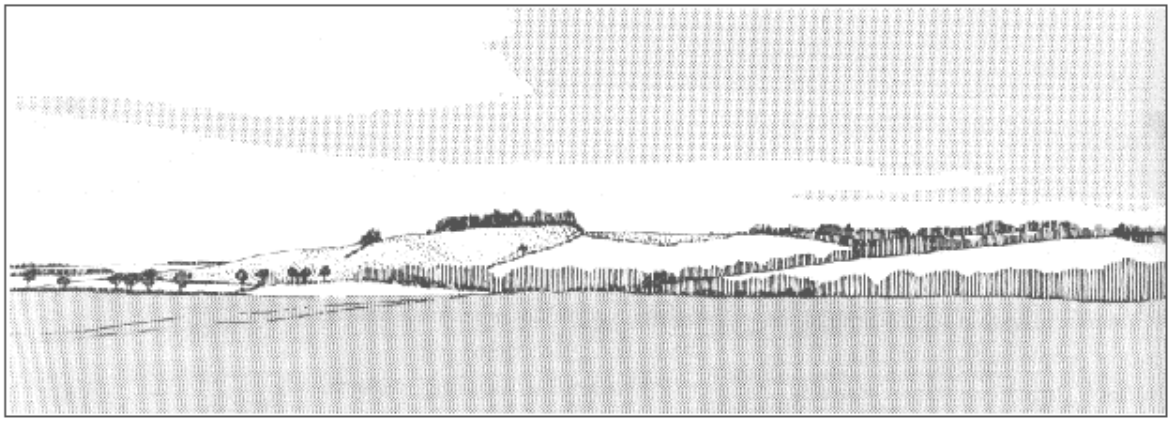
CHALKLANDS After

Smooth, rolling profile to rising ground.

Wooded escarpment emphasises landform.

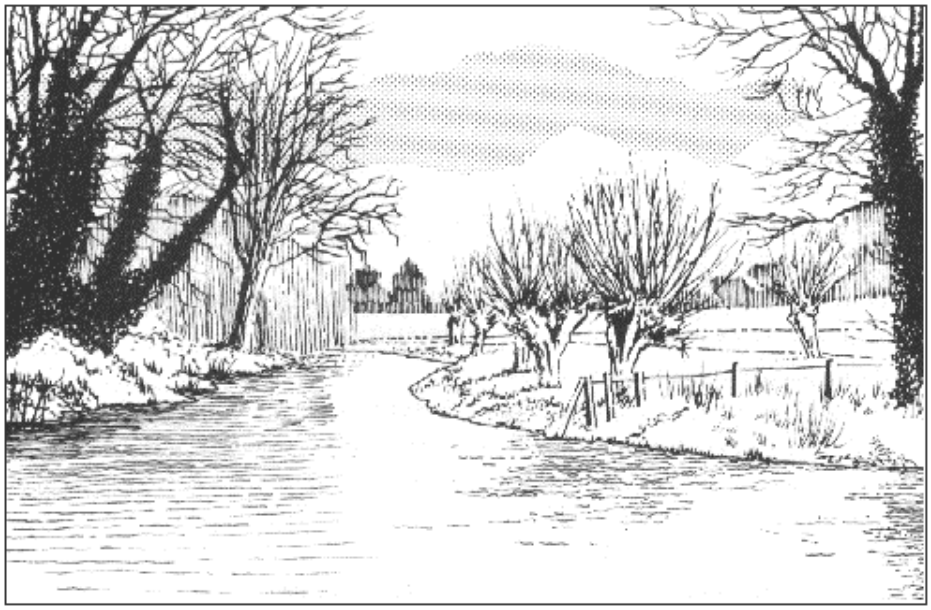
Beech hanger forms strong focal point on brow of hill.

Good hedgerows and woodlands emphasise rolling landform and give sense of scale.



The majority of the chalkland is devoted to growing cereal crops, despite the frequently poor, thin soils. It is a broad-scale landscape of large fields, low mechanically trimmed hedges and few trees. The eastern part of this area has a number of woodlands and shelter belts which help to break up the long distant views and give some form and character. Certain high points have small beech copses or 'hangers' which are prominent and characteristic features in the open landscape.

The essentially geometrical field pattern resulting from the downland hedge enclosure is further subdivided in an area to the south-west of Newmarket. Here the relatively modern growth and prosperity of the racehorse industry has imposed a distinctive pattern of small, tree-lined paddocks, which imparts a well-wooded character to the area. This has arisen from the need to provide shelter from cold winds and driving rain and also visual enclosure, to avoid external movements frightening the young horses. The stud farms are expanding away from the immediate surroundings of Newmarket, and no doubt their landscape pattern will also follow.



A rich and characterful river corridor; classic lowland landscapes can be recreated with the right design and management skills

PRINCIPLES FOR LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT AND MANAGEMENT IN THE CHALKLANDS

The future pattern is for a large-scale landscape defined by rolling hills, large fields, bold shelter belts, sweeping masses of woodland and occasional beech hangers.:

1. **Planting new beech hangers:** could be placed on suitable, carefully sited knolls, hilltops and scarp-tops; these would form focal points to reinforce the local chalkland landscape character.
2. **Management and creation of chalk grasslands:** the majority of the grasslands should remain open and uncluttered. The promotion of species-rich grassland on thin chalk soils would provide visual and wildlife value. Road verges should also be managed to promote plant diversity and interest.
3. **Management of existing shelter belts:** these should be restocked to encourage young tree growth and fill gaps.
4. **Planting new mixed woodlands and shelter belts:** carefully sited to enclose large tracts of rolling farmland and emphasise landforms (see Farmland Models A4b and A5).
5. **Creation of landscape corridors along river valleys:** the valleys of the Rivers Granta, Rhee and Cam have a distinct small-scale intimacy which contrasts well with the surrounding chalklands. Small woods and wetland meadows could be supplemented with copses, lines of willows to be pollarded, and areas of marginal and aquatic vegetation (see Farmland Model A6).
6. **Hedgerows:** selected hedgerows should be reinforced, or managed for particularly significant impact, based upon their visual and wildlife potential. Historically significant hedgerows should be carefully conserved, and new hedges planted to emphasise the existing landscape.
7. **Footpath corridor improvements:** the Roman Road is an important route across the chalk landscape. Planting small woodlands at selected locations such as hill tops or to frame views, as well as carefully managing the existing rich flora, would enhance the route. A similar approach could be adopted for other footpaths in the area, concentrating on a small number of linked corridors (see Farmland Model A7).

8. Road corridor improvements: the M11 has had minimal planting to soften its impact on the landscape. The planting of selected embankments and adjacent field margins with native trees and shrubs would provide interest for those using the road as well as helping to integrate the road with the surrounding countryside.

9. Conservation of the linear dykes: selective removal of scrub growth and re-establishment of sheep grazing, if possible, would enable the massive scale of these historic earthworks to be appreciated and promote chalk grass and flora communities. Some areas of scrub should be retained for habitat and visual diversity. The significance of the dykes in the landscape could be reinforced by managing adjacent strips of agricultural land as grassland or scrub.

10. Newmarket stud farms: new investment in the expansion of stud farms is causing significant change. Shelter belts should be planned on less rigid lines and should respond more to the local landforms, hedges, copses and roads. The shelterbelts should be planted with native tree and shrub species for visual and wildlife benefits.

PLANT SPECIES GUIDELINES FOR THE CHALKLANDS

Beech hangers

Fagus sylvatica (beech)
Plus occasional additions of species from 'mixed woodlands' below.

Mixed Woodlands

Fagus sylvatica (beech)
Dominant mainly on shallow chalk soils where it may form large stands; smaller groups in more diverse woods.
Fraxinus excelsior (ash)
dominant; mixed woods.
Tilia cordata (small-leaved lime)
less common.
Carpinus betulus (hornbeam)
less common.
Prunus avium (wild cherry)
less common.
Taxus baccata (yew)
Small groups.
Corylus avellana (hazel)
dominant shrub, understorey, edges, glades, scrub.
Acer compestre (field maple)
glades, near edges.
Crataegus monogyna (hawthorn)
near edges, mixed thickets.
Sambucus nigra (elder)
occasional, understorey and edges.
Ligustrum vulgaris (wild privet)
occasional, edges.
Viburnum lantana (wayfaring tree)
occasional, edges.

Note: beech should be planted in single species groups of at least 500 sq. m. when used in woodland block; do not use in random mixes.

Hedgerows, woodland edges and scrub

Crataegus monogyna (hawthorn)
Corylus avellana (hazel)
Prunus spinosa (blackthorn)
Acer campestre (field maple)
Rosa canina (dog rose)
Ligustrum vulgaris (wild privet)
occasional.
Viburnum lantana (wayfaring tree)
occasional.

Trees in hedgerows/avenues

Fraxinus excelsior (ash)
dominant, hedgerows.
Fagus sylvatica (beech)
mostly avenues; some hedgerows.
Acer campestre (field maple)
sub-dominant, hedgerows.

Avenues – all as single species, not mixed.
Hedgerows – mixed.

7.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OF UTTLESFORD DISTRICT

7.1 General

7.1.1 This section of the report provides the detailed 'profiles' of Landscape Character Areas within Uttlesford District, structured as follows:

- Location of character area (map)
- Boundaries of character area (map)
- Photograph
- Key characteristics
- Overall character description
- Visual characteristics
- Historic land use
- Ecological features
- Key planning and land management issues
- Sensitivities to change
- Proposed landscape strategy objectives
- Suggested landscape planning guidelines
- Suggested land management guidelines

The profiles should be read as a whole when used to inform decision making. Where Landscape Character Areas fall within two or more adjacent District/Borough areas included in this Study report, the same profile has been included within the respective section. In such instances, a cross-reference is noted in the respective Character Area profile(s). Reference should also be made to other studies for neighbouring authority areas including:

- South Cambridgeshire District/Cambridgeshire County Studies
- Hertfordshire County Landscape Character Assessment Studies

7.1.2 The following Landscape Character Types and Areas have been identified within Uttlesford District (see Figure 7.1), and are described in the following sections:

A - River Valley Landscapes

A1 - Cam River Valley
A3 - Stort River Valley
A5 - Pant River Valley
A6 - Upper Chelmer River Valley

B - Farmland Plateau Landscapes

B1 - Ashdon Farmland Plateau
B2 - Hempstead Farmland Plateau
B3 - Bumpstead Farmland Plateau
B7 - Debden Farmland Plateau
B8 - Thaxted Farmland Plateau
B10 - Broxted Farmland Plateau
B11 - Lindsell & Bardfield Farmland Plateau
B12 - Hatfield Forest Farmland Plateau
B13 - Rayne Farmland Plateau
B14 - Roding Farmland Plateau
B15 - Pleshey Farmland Plateau

B16 - Felsted Farmland Plateau

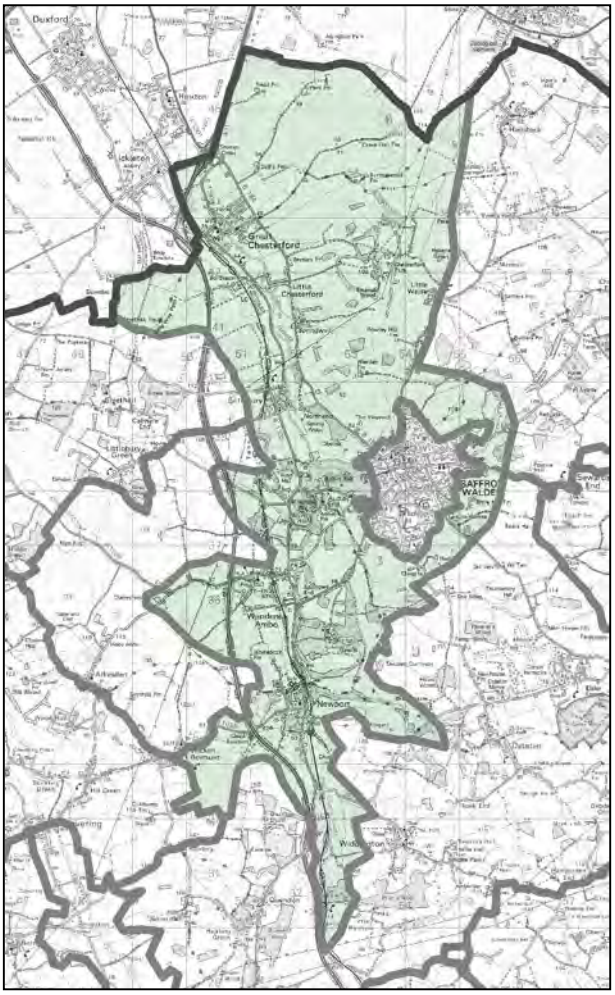
H - Chalk Upland Landscapes

H1 - Elmdon Chalk Upland
H2 - Arkesden Chalk Upland
H3 - Langley Chalk Upland
H4 - Berden and Farnham Chalk Upland

A1 CAM RIVER VALLEY

Key Characteristics

- Rolling, open landscape of chalky boulder clay with wide views from higher ground.
- Well vegetated riverbanks with shrubs, trees and water meadows along the winding narrow river corridor.
- Large-scale downland reflecting late enclosure, with rectilinear field pattern .
- Low hedges and few trees mainly in small copses.
- Ancient town of Saffron Walden.
- Dispersed settlements on valley sides connected by busy B roads.



Overall Character

The Cam River Valley extends from the Cambridgeshire-Essex boundary south to Newport where the M11 and the B1383 roads converge. It is a broad rolling landscape that drains the River Cam and its tributaries, Debden Water and Wicken Water. The eastern slopes are dominated by the historic settlement of Saffron Walden, with its imposing church. This side of the river valley is characterised by large farms and small villages connected by small lanes. In contrast, the western slopes are more diverse, with small quiet villages, and many busy roads. The eastern slopes are a large-scale landscape of primarily arable fields, with some grazing pastures. Dense blocks of trees, including some ancient woodland, punctuate the western slopes where the field boundaries are typically organic in shape. The M11, the railway line and the B1383 run north–south through the

western slopes of the Cam River Valley. Disused clay pits and chalk pits can be seen in places on the lower slopes. On the eastern slopes, the settlement pattern is dispersed, with isolated farmsteads and nucleated villages such as Little Walden and Little Chesterford. Colour-washed thatched or mellow red brick houses are found throughout the valley which enhance its visually rich heritage, and there are some outstanding old barns. Great Chesterford is a larger village, with business parks and significant commercial areas. Field pattern is regular, bounded by gappy hedgerows, drainage ditches and occasional trees. Views from the higher ground are often framed by distant patches of woodland and scattered copses. The narrow course of the River Cam meanders within its floodplain between Great Chesterford and Shortgrove Bridge. The river corridor is fringed by trees which delineate its shape within the patchwork of pasture and plantation woodlands that line the valley floor. Audley End - an outstanding Jacobean manor set in its eighteenth century Capability Brown landscape park is a distinctive area of local character. In the upper reaches, arable farmland covers steep slopes descending almost to the river's edge. The village of Littlebury, with its picturesque setting along the River Cam and its historic houses in many shades of colour-washed plaster, also possesses the former King's Mill - an old watermill that bridges the river behind the village.

Visual Characteristics

- Attractive panoramic views from the eastern slopes to western valley slopes framed by distant blocks of trees.
- Views of towns and villages from higher ground.
- Valley sides descend quite steeply from rolling arable fields to the river and its tributaries and dramatic views are possible from the ridges.
- Large ancient town of Saffron Walden, and its distinctive church spire can be seen from many directions due to its position on the higher slopes.
- Intimate views on the lower slopes of wooded river valley floor.
- Intimate scale of villages and towns contrasts with large-scale modern agriculture.
- Hedgerow loss is visible in the landscape.
- Urban fringe settlement often not well integrated into the landscape.

Historic Land Use

Evidence of historic land use within the Character Area is dominated by large common-fields of the Cambridgeshire and Midland type, which developed here, a field-type that is rare in the rest of Essex. Some of these were enclosed by agreement in the early post-medieval period, the remainder being enclosed in the 18th and 19th centuries, partially as a function of the parliamentary enclosure act. The main historic landscape features include:

- The valley of the River Cam which forms a natural routeway through the ridge.
- A series of parks - Shortgrove, Audley End and Chesterford - which are strung out along the river valley itself and on the valley slopes.
- Winding lanes, dispersed hamlets and greens, with ancient woodlands on the higher ground.

Ecological Features

This Character Area is dominated by widespread arable agriculture surrounding settlements. However, the area does contain 16 sites of nature conservation value. These include:

- Debden Water SSSI) (220 hectares) - comprising open water and lake side habitats.
- Eight CWSs comprising ancient and semi-natural woodland including Burton Wood, Paddock Wood and Emanuel Wood, Spring Wood, Westley Wood, London Jock Wood, Brakey Ley Wood and part of Pounce Wood.
- Eight CWSs comprising pasture or road verges with unimproved grassland or fen including Little Walden Road Quarry, Byrd's Farm Lane, Ashdon Road, Audley Park Pastures, Audley End Park Wall, Spring Hill Fen, Newport Churchyard and Crave Hall Meadow.

Key Planning and Land Management Issues

- Potential for erection of new farm buildings, which would be conspicuous on the skyline.
- Potential pressure for increased use of narrow and minor lanes especially during peak tourist periods.
- Potential pressure from urban expansions on the edges of Great Chesterford and Saffron Waldon.
- Potential pressure for increased use of narrow and minor lanes due to development of Chesterford Park.
- Pressure from potential expansion of villages within adjacent character areas infringing upon the generally open character of the area.
- Potential further decrease in hedgerows and tree cover due to agricultural practice.
- Potential for pollution of the River Cam from fertiliser and pesticide run-off from surrounding valley side and farmland plateau areas.
- Potential decrease in hedgerows and tree cover due to pressure from adjacent agricultural land use.
- Potential loss of riverside marshland and pastures due to agricultural encroachment.
- Visual intrusion of potential road expansion linked to pressure of traffic on minor roads, especially during busy tourist periods.
- Intrusion on tranquillity with potential of increasing traffic on minor roads due to proposed development at Chesterford Park.

Sensitivities to Change

Sensitive key characteristics and landscape elements within this character area include the patchwork pattern of pasture and plantation woodlands, which would be sensitive to changes in land management. The open skyline of the valley slopes is visually sensitive, with new development potentially being highly visible within panoramic inter and cross-valley views. Intimate views from lower slopes to the wooded river valley floor and views to the valley sides from adjacent Landscape Character Areas are also sensitive. Historic integrity is relatively strong with a dispersed historic settlement pattern and several winding lanes, greens and ancient woodlands. Several important habitats for wildlife and biodiversity are scattered throughout the area (including 16 County Wildlife sites and an open water SSSI). Overall this character area has relatively high sensitivity to change.

Proposed Landscape Strategy Objectives

Conserve **-** seek to protect and enhance positive features that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.

Suggested Landscape Planning Guidelines

- Conserve and enhance the landscape setting of settlements.
- Maintain cross-valley views.
- Consider the landscape pattern and structure of large woodland areas and the role that they have in the composition of views to and from the area.
- Ensure that new woodland planting is designed to enhance landscape character and that species composition reflects local character.
- Ensure any new development on valley sides is small-scale and that it responds to historic settlement pattern, form and building materials.
- Encourage the re-use of redundant agricultural farm buildings, especially red brick or black timber-framed and boarded barns.

Suggested Land Management Guidelines

- Develop strategies to deal with peak flows of traffic in tourist season, particularly near Audley End.
- Conserve and enhance existing hedgerows and restore where possible.
- Establish arable field margins.
- Conserve and manage areas of ancient woodland as historical landscape and nature conservation features.
- Consider the visual impact of new farm buildings on the valley slopes and encourage the planting of tree groups around visually intrusive buildings.

NIGEL COWLIN
Landscape Planning & Design

FIGURES

NIGEL COWLIN
Landscape Planning & Design

KEY:

- Abington Park Farm land
- North Uttlesford Garden Community land

LOCATION MAP

Abington Park Farm
Abington
South Cambridgeshire

NC15.196-lva scoping01 15/03/2019

FIGURE 1.

0km 0.5km 1km 1.5km 2km 2.5km

Scale 1 : 25,000 @ A3

NIGEL COWLIN
Landscape Planning & Design

KEY:

- Abington Park Farm land
- North Uttlesford Garden Community land

Aerial photography imagery © 2019 Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky Image © 2019 Google. Image collection date: 2008

0km 0.5km 1km 1.5km

Scale 1 : 12,500 @ A3

N

SITE CONTEXT AERIAL PHOTO

Abington Park Farm
Abington
South Cambridgeshire

NC15.196-lva scoping01 15/03/2019

FIGURE 2.

NIGEL COWLIN
Landscape Planning & Design

KEY:

- Abington Park Farm land
- North Uttlesford Garden Community land
- Greenbelt
- Special Landscape Area (defunct Uttlesford designation)
- Conservation Area
- Registered Park & Garden
- Shelduled Ancient Monument
- Grade I Listed Building
- Grade II* Listed Building
- Grade II Listed Building
- Protected Lanes (Essex)
- SSSI
- Ancient Woodland
- Boundary between Uttlesford & South Cambridge

N

DESIGNATIONS MAP

Abington Park Farm
Abington
South Cambridgeshire

NC15.196-lva scoping01 15/03/2019

FIGURE 3.

0km 0.5km 1km 1.5km 2km 2.5km

Scale 1 : 25,000 @ A3

NIGEL COWLIN
Landscape Planning & Design

KEY:

- Abington Park Farm land
- North Uttlesford Garden Community land

- 125 - 130m
- 120 - 125m
- 115 - 120m
- 110 - 115m
- 105 - 110m
- 100 - 105m
- 95 - 100m
- 90 - 95m
- 85 - 90m
- 80 - 85m
- 75 - 80m
- 70 - 75m
- 65 - 70m
- 60 - 65m
- 55 - 60m
- 50 - 55m
- 45 - 50m
- 40 - 45m
- 35 - 40m
- 30 - 35m
- 25 - 30m

N

LANDFORM ELEVATION MAP

Abington Park Farm
Abington
South Cambridgeshire

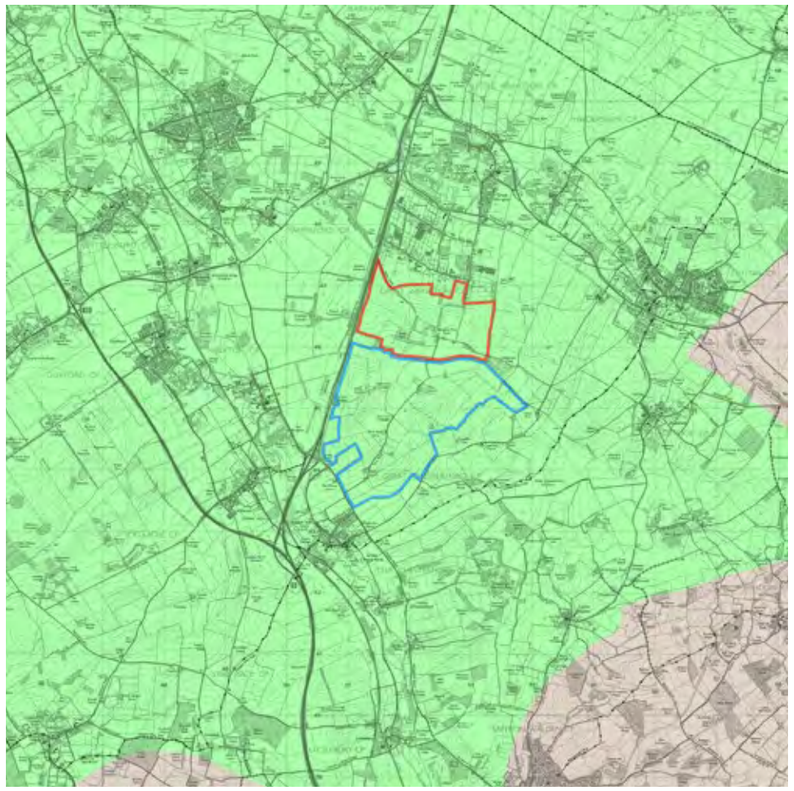
NC15.196-lva scoping01 15/03/2019

FIGURE 4.

0km 0.5km 1km 1.5km 2km 2.5km

Scale 1 : 25,000 @ A3

NATIONAL CHARACTER AREAS

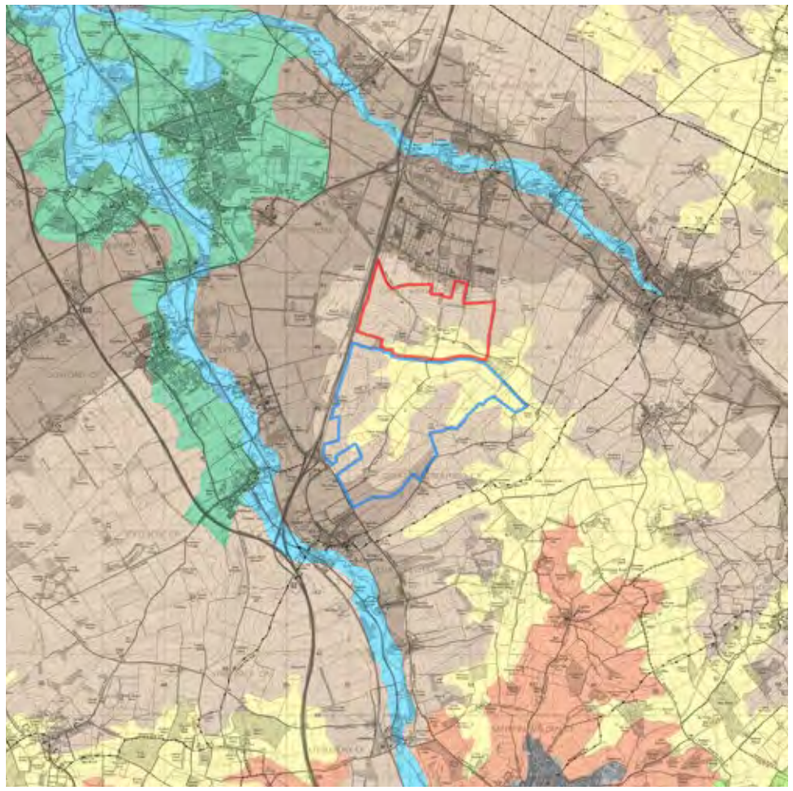


KEY:

87 East Anglian Cha k

86 South Suffolk & North Essex Clayland

EAST OF ENGLAND LANDSCAPE FRAMEWORK



KEY:

Wooded Village Farmlands

Chalk Hills & Scarps

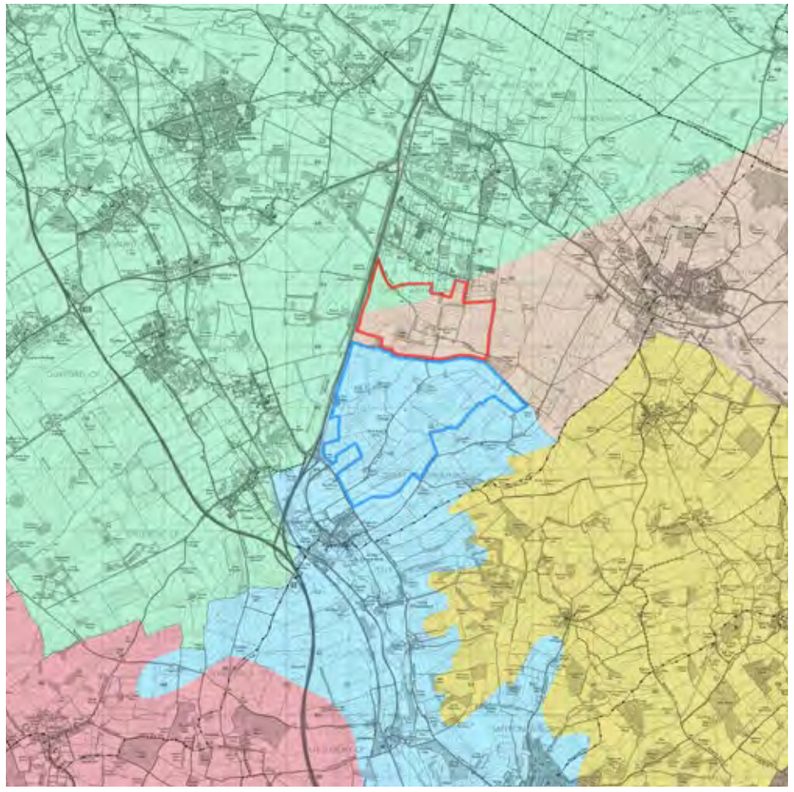
Lowland Village Chalklands

Lowland Village Farmlands

Settled Chalk Valleys

Valley Meadowlands

ESSEX & CAMBRIDGESHIRE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER



KEY:

CAMBRIDGE LCAs

Chalklands

South-East Clay Hills

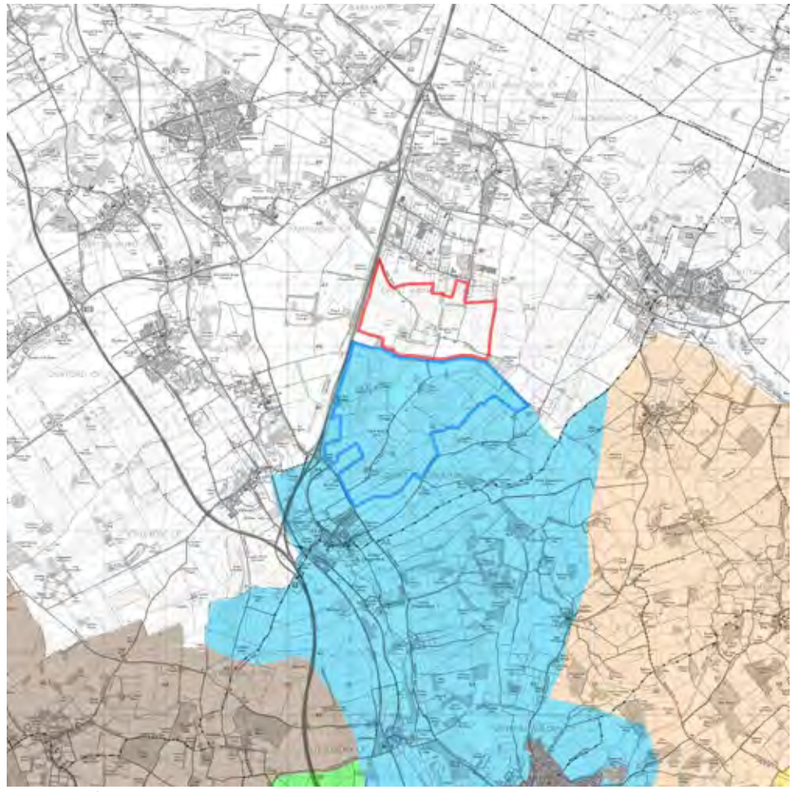
ESSEX LCAs

C1 Cam Valley

A1 Essex Chalk Farmland

B2 North Essex Farmland

UTTLESFORD LANDSCAPE CHARACTER



KEY:

A1 Cam River Valley

H1 Elmdon Chalk Upland

B1 Ashdon Farmland Plateau

N

0km 1km 2km 3km 4km 5km

Scale 1 : 100,000 @ A3

NIGEL COWLIN
Landscape Planning & Design

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER MAPS

Abington Park Farm
Abington
South Cambridgeshire

NC15.196-lva scoping01 15/03/2019

FIGURE 5.

NIGEL COWLIN
Landscape Planning & Design

KEY:

- Abington Park Farm land
- North Uttlesford Garden Community land
- Parkland
- Woodland
- Public open space
- New hedgerows
- Development parcels
- Potential points of access

Hedge with standards to provide filtered views to new road

Railway Plantation

Hinxton Belt

Strategically scattered tree planting (could be offered as advanced planting)

Round Plantation

Hinxton Grange

Existing hedgerows incorporated within layout

Dismantled Railway

ROMAN ROAD

Brent Ditch

South Grove

Chalky Road

GREAT ABINGTON CP

Woodland to reinforce and link existing trees

Parkland buffer

Existing PRoW retained and enhanced

Bush Park

Abington Park Farm

Wooded planting to link existing woodlands

Internal green infrastructure semi-formal and urban characteristic

Continuation of green space from NUGC

Field Farm

Field Farm Cottages

Park Farm

Dismtd Rly

47

46

45

0km 0.5km 1km

Scale 1 : 10,000 @ A3

N

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN

Abington Park Farm
Abington
South Cambridgeshire

NC15.196-lva scoping01 15/03/2019

FIGURE 6.