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Landscape Character Assessment
for the
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

PART 1:
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Final Report
September 2004



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides information on the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's (RBWM) landscape character. It has been prepared following a detailed landscape character assessment carried out by LDA Design which commenced in June of 2003. It has been undertaken on behalf of the RBWM's Planning Policy Unit, in line with the Countryside Agency's most up-to-date guidance on Landscape Character Assessment (LCA).

The LCA has been carried out in two stages: the 'characterisation' stage involved a systematic and objective process of identifying the key characteristics and components which contribute to the 'local distinctiveness' of the Royal Borough's landscape, it is this work which is detailed in this document (Part 1 of the RBWM's LCA); and the 'evaluation' stage, which was the judgment stage aimed at identifying the forces for change in the landscape and the formulation of strategies and guidelines to counter this change. This is included in Part 2 of the RBWM's LCA.

The landscape types and areas described in this document, along with their supporting key characteristics and descriptions, are intended to raise awareness and understanding of the special qualities of the landscape within the Royal Borough. They also form the basis for Part 2 of the RBWM's Landscape Strategy and Guidelines Report (Final Draft, August 2004).

Previous drafts of Parts 1 and 2 of the LCA have gone out to consultation, both to Communities of Interest (governmental and non-governmental organisations with an interest in the landscape of the Royal Borough such as adjoining local authorities, statutory agencies and local interest groups) in January 2003 - February 2004, and Communities of Interest and Place (such as local communities and business) in April - May 2004. A full description of the consultation process that supported the development of the LCA for the Royal Borough is provided within the RBWM Consultation Statement for the project which is available from the Planning Policy Unit. Through this public consultation general verification of the Characterisation work included within this document was obtained, alongside consensual agreement on the evaluation work included within Part 2 of the LCA. This final draft report has now, therefore, been updated to incorporate those general and detailed comments made through the consultation process and as such supercedes all previous drafts.

The Final Drafts of both Part 1 and Part 2 are intended to be used as technical reports in support of the review of the development plan.

QUALITY ASSURANCE - APPROVAL STATUS

This document has been prepared and checked in accordance with BS EN ISO 9001: 2000

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Landscape of the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead

- 1.1.1 The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead stretches across the Thames valley floodplain from just south of Marlow and the Chiltern Spur in the north to include Ascot and Sunningdale in the South. Covering just under 200 square kilometres, it lies 12 miles west of Greater London and comprises of diverse urban and rural landscapes including over 400 km² of National Trust land and almost 2,000 km² of land owned by the Crown estate. The River Thames and adjacent hinterland delineates the northern and eastern boundaries of the borough before threading eastwards to Staines and Chertsey. Along this historic routeway the main settlements of Maidenhead, Eton and Windsor are found. The population is currently at approximately 134,000.

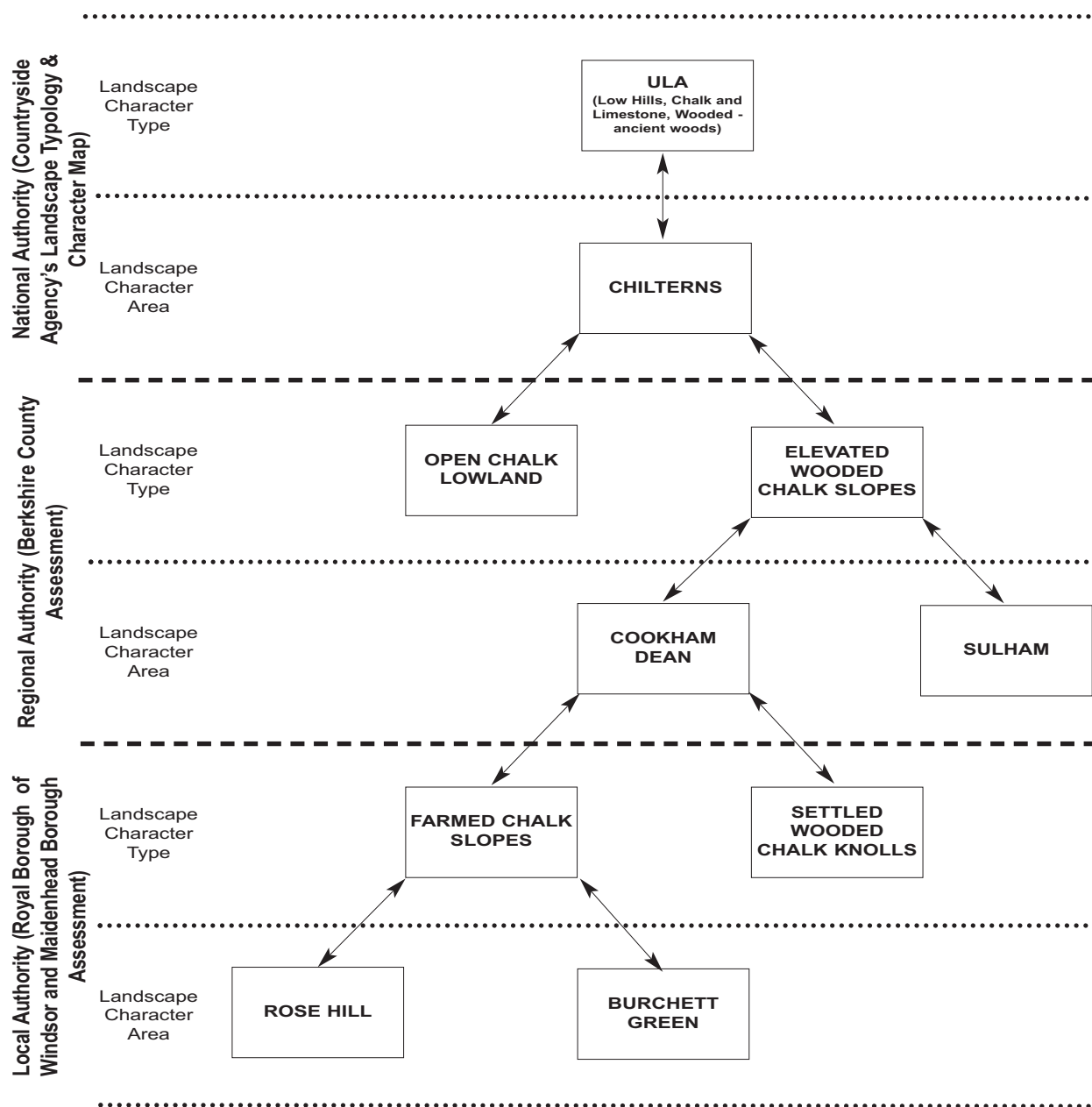
1.2 Landscape Character Assessment

Hierarchy of Assessment

- 1.2.1 Landscape character assessment (LCA) is the process of dividing the landscape into 'areas' of distinct, recognisable and consistent common character, and grouping areas of similar character together in generic 'types'. Classification can be carried out at any scale and so can provide information on the extent and distribution of different types and areas of the landscape from the national to the local scale. Classification provides the central framework on which subsequent judgments about landscape character are based.
- 1.2.2 The Countryside Commission's (now Countryside Agency) work on Landscape Character at a national level, and subsequent production of the Character Map of England in 1996, provides a consistent national framework for county and borough wide landscape character assessment work. The Agency's work came about because it was recognised that there was a need for a new approach to landscape assessment which would look at the whole of England's countryside rather than specific designated areas only. A general description of the landscape and the features that define each of the distinctive areas of the Character Map of England (159 in total) were published in regional 'volumes' along with other supporting information on what differentiates one area from another, how its individual character has arisen, and how it is changing. The study was undertaken at a scale of 1: 250,000.
- 1.2.3 The emerging National Landscape Typology for England, also led by the Countryside Agency, aims to develop the approach of the Character Map of England by providing a consistent framework for the identification and naming of landscape types across the country. The typology identifies 75 generic landscape types, made up of 1758 polygons within the framework of the 159 countryside character areas. Each type is attributed with a three letter code which identifies its physiographic, landcover and cultural attributes.

- 1.2.4 Both these studies form valuable starting points for the landscape character assessment of the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead. Figure 1 shows the location and extent of the character areas and types which fall within the borough at a national level.
- 1.2.5 The Countryside Character Area 110 'Chilterns' includes the northern portion of the borough, from the River Thames down to the Bath Road (A4 (T)). The remaining areas of the borough fall within Countryside Character Area 115 'Thames Valley' with the exception of the southern tip of the borough (south of the A329) which is included in Countryside Character Area 129; Thames Basin Heaths. The character descriptions and other supporting information for these areas are included in Appendix 1 (extracts from Volume 7: South East & London).
- 1.2.6 The national typology work shows that the grain of the landscape within the borough is more complex than that which might be suggested by the national character areas. Appendix 2 provides the explanatory text to these landscape character type 'codes'.
- 1.2.7 The Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (October 2003) provides assessment work at the county level for landscape management and planning, and as such has informed the Berkshire Structure Plan (Deposit Draft Incorporating Proposed Modifications) revised in March 2004. The study was undertaken at a scale of 1:50,000.
- 1.2.8 Figure 2 shows the location and extent of the character areas which fall within the borough, as identified within the Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment. This county study identified 8 types and 11 areas from the 5 types and 3 areas from the national level assessments. Relevant extracts from this document are included in Appendix 3. This study forms the framework within which the Royal Borough's assessment 'nests' at a scale of 1:25,000.
- 1.2.9 The Royal Borough's LCA provides the finer grain to this county level work, directly addressing the emerging Berkshire Structure Plan Policy 1.10 in which '...the district-level assessments will identify the landscape character in more detail (detail which is often inevitably absent at a strategic scale) and allow the Unitary Authorities to further develop more detailed management strategies that best suit the condition and quality of each area. These studies will act as a guide to local plans and development control by indicating the particular local character of the landscape which development proposals should respect...'.
- 1.2.10 The borough abuts Buckingham and Surrey County boundaries on its eastern and southern sides. The following documents have therefore been reviewed in terms of wider character assessment that has been undertaken;
- The Future of Surrey's landscape and woodlands, Surrey County Council (1997) (The Thames Floodplain, River Thames and Thames Basin Heath character types are adjacent to the borough boundary).
 - The Landscape Plan for Buckinghamshire (part 1 Landscape Character Assessment) identifies the Valley Floodplain Zone (Z11) adjacent to the borough boundary.

Flow Diagram 1: An example of the Landscape Character Assessment spatial hierarchy showing the relationship between landscape character types and areas of different assessments



- 1.2.11 The borough assessment also takes into account landscape character assessments undertaken in adjacent districts, the boundaries of which are approximately shown on Figure 2;
- Wokingham District Landscape Character Assessment, Prepared on behalf of Wokingham District Council by Land Use Consultants (May 2003) - Undertaken at a scale of 1:25,000; and
 - Bracknell Forest Borough Landscape Strategy, Prepared on behalf of Bracknell Forest Borough Council by Babbie (No date given) - Undertaken at a scale of 1:25,000.
- 1.2.12 The hierarchy of the assessments relevant to the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead is shown in Flow Diagram 1.

Riverine Landscape Character Assessments

- 1.2.13 Two landscape assessments were undertaken of the Thames Valley between Datchet and Chertsey for the flood study of this area which was undertaken by the NRA in the late 1980s and early 1990s. These describe both the 'macro' landscape of the river valley and the 'micro' landscape of the river channel itself. These assessments concluded that the landscape character of the floodplain is dictated by land use rather than landform. They identified three broad types of landscape character at the macro scale; agricultural landscapes; disturbed landscapes; and specific land uses and urban areas. The micro assessment identified seven discrete sections of the river which reflected variations in the adjacent land uses and the configuration of the river. This has been taken into consideration during the development of the characterisation work for the boroughwide character assessment.
- 1.2.14 In addition to the various landscape assessments that have been undertaken for the River Thames area, the NRA produced the Thames Environment Design Handbook in 1992. This is a reference manual for all those concerned with the design and management of the River Thames infrastructure and heritage. This includes a broad classification of the River Thames from Lechlade to Teddington into landscape character zones. Those relevant to this study are Goring to Maidenhead and Maidenhead to Walton.

1.3 Objectives and Applications of the Study

- 1.3.1 The principal objectives of the study are;
- To identify and describe the landscape character types and landscape character areas within the Royal Borough, thus describing local distinctiveness;
 - To summarise the key characteristics associated with each landscape type to provide the principles to guide future landscape change;
 - To identify how the landscape within the borough is currently changing, what the causes of these changes are, and the pressures for change in the future;

- To make qualitative judgments on the strength of character and condition of the key characteristics within the landscape;
- To identify the requirements, and mechanisms, for the conservation, restoration, enhancement or creation of the key characteristics within the landscape types;
- To consider the justification and function of the Area of Special Landscape Importance, Setting of the Thames and Landscape Enhancement Area designations within the current Adopted Development Plan;
- To consider the justification and function of any new local designations;
- To provide a rigorous landscape character assessment for adoption as Supplementary Planning Guidance; and
- To promote public awareness of landscape character within the Royal Borough and, through consultation, obtain broad consensual support for the assessment work.

1.3.2 The main applications for this study will be;

- To inform policy formulation during the current review of the development plan;
- To inform decision making in the development control process;
- To inform the Council's Urban Capacity study;
- To provide a framework for the closer examination of urban fringe areas, particularly their ability to accommodate change in the form of new development, particularly housing development;
- To contribute to any future landscape capacity study of the borough;
- To contribute to any future input into a sustainable appraisal, and state of the environment reporting;
- To provide the basis for any future landscape management strategy for the Royal Borough, and enable better informed decisions on landscape management; and
- To contribute to the Council's biodiversity and habitat action plans as part of Local Agenda 21.

1.4 Methodology

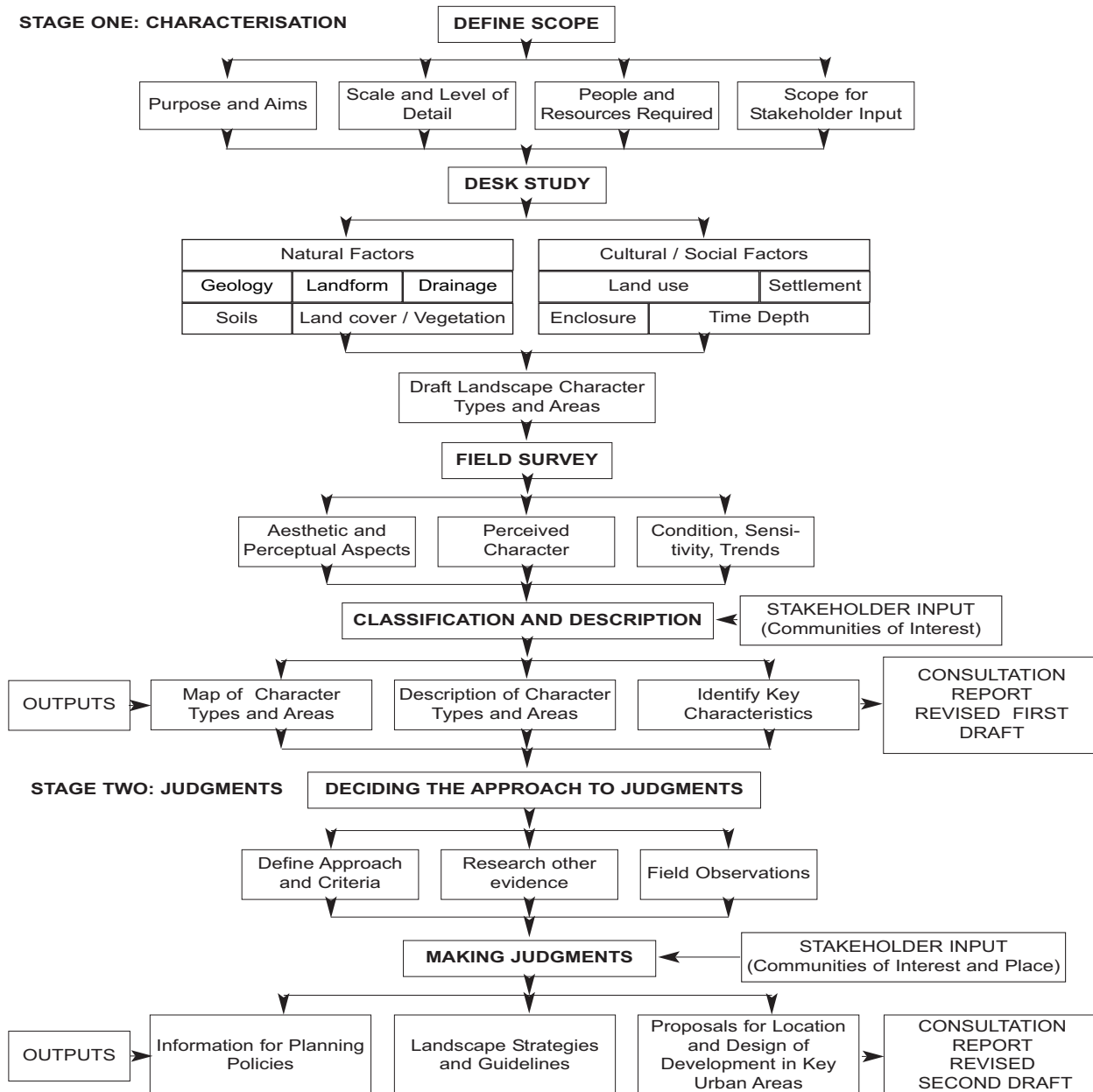
1.4.1 The study has been undertaken in accordance with the methods promoted by the Countryside Agency as set out in the Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland 2002.

1.4.2 Landscape character assessment draws an important distinction between two stages;

- The relatively value-free process of characterisation; and
- The subsequent making of judgments based on knowledge of landscape character.

1.4.3 Flow Diagram 2 (overleaf) illustrates the LCA Methodology.

Flow Diagram 2: Showing the Landscape Character Assessment methodology for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead



1.4.4 Stage 1 (The Characterisation Stage) of the landscape character assessment process is included within this (Part 1) document. This relatively value-free stage of the process is concerned with identifying, classifying and describing areas of distinctive character, and has included 4 main stages:

- Defining the Scope
- Desk Study
- Field Survey
- Classification and Description

1.4.5 Stage 2 (The Evaluation Stage) of the landscape character assessment process is included within Part 2 of the LCA. This more subjective stage of the process is concerned with the making of professional judgments on the strength of the landscape's character and the condition of its constituent parts as well as the formulation of guidelines to positively manage change in the future.

Defining the Scope

1.4.6 The scope for the project was defined by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (Planning Policy Unit) in April 2003. The purpose and aims of the study were identified at this stage, and in accordance with good practice, the scale and level of detail of the study; the level and timing of stakeholder involvement; and the required outputs.

1.4.7 The brief for the study specifically excluded an analysis of the built up areas of the Borough such as Windsor or Maidenhead. Built up areas were defined as areas excluded from the Green Belt as shown within the Royal Borough's development plan. The smaller villages and hamlets within the Green Belt are therefore included within the study. They are considered as an integral part of the wider landscape character of the borough. As yet no specific townscape or urban character assessment has been undertaken of the built up areas of the borough.

Desk Study

1.4.8 This stage involved the collation, review and mapping of a wide range of information sources which could have a bearing on the character of the landscape within the Royal Borough. The following sources of information were reviewed:

- Physical; geology, landform, vegetation (Land Cover data), hydrology (Local Environment Agency Plans) and other published information;
- Ecological; natural heritage (ancient woodlands and grasslands within the Grassland Inventory), nature conservation designations (such as Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Wildlife Heritage Sites), Biodiversity Action in Berkshire, Habitat Action Plans and other published information;

- Historical/Cultural; Conservation Areas, Conservation Area Appraisals, English Heritage's Register of Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, settlement patterns and other published information; and
- Planning; landscape designations (Green Belt, Areas of Special Landscape Importance, Setting of the Thames, Landscape Enhancement Areas, Tree Preservation Orders and Public Rights of Way), Berkshire Structure Plan, Minerals and Waste Local Plans for Berkshire.

- 1.4.9 A bibliography of referenced information, including web based information, which informed the desk study for the LCA , is included at the end of this document.
- 1.4.10 Where available in GIS format the information has been used to produce map overlays to assist in the characterisation process. This work is included in Appendix 4.
- 1.4.11 The desk study drew on all the information detailed above to produce a draft landscape classification. This aimed to identify patterns in the landscape and thus divide the Royal Borough into areas of distinct, recognisable and consistent common character which could then be tested and validated in the field. In accordance with best practice the draft landscape classification identified landscape types (at a scale of 1:25,000), which are generic and share common combinations of geology, landform, vegetation and human influences such as Estate Parkland and Character Areas, which are single and unique, discrete geographical areas of a landscape type such as Windsor Castle. A hierarchical approach was therefore maintained within the assessment process.

Field Survey

- 1.4.12 The field survey work for the study was primarily undertaken in August 2003 by pairs of landscape professionals. The draft classification was tested using systematic and rigorous surveying techniques in accordance with good practice. A tailor made field survey database held in a lap-top computer was used in the field to record and collate information. Detailed character assessment surveys were undertaken at over 60 survey points across the borough. At each location the landscape characteristics, aesthetic/perceptual qualities, condition, strength of character and forces for change were recorded. The field survey sheet which forms the basis of the survey work is included in Appendix 5 and the location of the survey points shown in Appendix 4 (Map 10).The surveyors also undertook a wider analysis of the landscape while travelling through the landscape by recording significant landforms, landmarks and proposed fine-tuning to the classification boundaries on Ordnance Survey base sheets at a scale of 1:25,000 (hence the terming of this LCA as being at a scale of '1:25,000').
- 1.4.13 A comprehensive photographic appraisal of the borough was also undertaken at this time to record specific landscape features, elements and landmarks within localities, to illustrate panoramic views across the landscape and the relationship between landscape types/areas, as well as recording survey points.

Classification and Description

- 1.4.14 On completion of the field survey work the output of the characterisation process was refined and finalised based on all the information collected (draft character types and areas with mapped boundaries). This was followed by the preparation of clear descriptions of their character, based on the physical, historical and human influences that have shaped them. The key characteristics of the landscape that contribute to its character were then compiled for ease of reference.
- 1.4.15 Landscape character types are distinct and generic types of landscapes that are relatively homogeneous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different areas in different parts of the borough, but wherever they occur they share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation and historical land use and settlement pattern. For example open chalk farmland or settled farmed floodplain are recognisable and distinct landscape character types.
- 1.4.16 By comparison, landscape character areas are single and unique. They are discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape type. So taking the settled farmed floodplain example, Bisham and Hurley, Cookham, Eton and Datchet would be separate landscape areas. Each has its own individual character and identity, even though it shares the same generic characteristics with the other areas of the same settled farmed floodplain type.
- 1.4.17 The terminology used for the naming of landscape types and areas drew on guidance given by the Countryside Agency. At a district level types are often named by combinations of landform and landcover, and sometimes settlement. Areas are unique and are therefore given names that are geographically specific. In all cases the aim was to find a name which conveys some sense of what the character of the landscape is like.

1.5 Structure of the Report

- 1.5.1 This report represents Stage One (Characterisation) of the LCA process for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
- 1.5.2 Chapter 2: Evolution of the Landscape; identifies the natural and human forces which combine to create the landscape character within the borough that we see today.
- 1.5.3 Chapter 3: The landscape character of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead; the main body of the report. It contains a description of each landscape type with their key characteristics and supporting relevant background information. This is then followed by a further supplementary description (and additional key characteristics where relevant) for each landscape area.

2.0 EVOLUTION OF THE LANDSCAPE

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The landscape of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead has been shaped by various natural processes and human activities over thousands of years. The underlying geology of the region has a fundamental influence on the outward appearance of the landscape but, increasingly, human activities rather than natural processes are influencing patterns in the landscape.

2.2 Physical Influences

Geology

- 2.2.1 As is the case in all landscapes it is the combination of geological formations and natural weathering processes that create the basic geological features that are seen as part of the landscape today. The nature of the underlying geology also directly influences drainage and soil characteristics which in turn drive the overlying nature of the vegetation and land uses which they sustain.
- 2.2.2 The solid and drift geology for the borough is shown in Appendix 4 (Map 4.1). The underlying solid geology is chalk from the Cretaceous period of the Mesozoic era (circa 97 million years before the present (BP)). This indicates that a slow marine transgression (an advance of the sea across a former land area) occurred across the borough at this time resulting in the deposition of calcareous material. The chalk is predominately that of the Upper Chalk formation which is characterised by very pure white chalk with some flint.
- 2.2.3 During the early part of the Tertiary period (Palaeogene) some 65 million years BP this chalk strata underwent a series of uplifting and folding events which resulted in the creation of the London Basin and the extensive chalk outcrops of the Chiltern Hills.
- 2.2.4 These chalk formations are visible within in the northern part of the borough where the chalk escarpment (formed through progressive weathering by the Thames watercourse) and plateau have a strong influence on the character of the landscape. The chalk dip slope of the plateau slopes gently south eastwards from pronounced chalk 'knolls'. The evidence of dry valleys (or Coombes) within these chalk areas suggests that also during the tertiary period the landscape was subject to the actions of permafrost, or a varying water table, which has left hydrological erosion patterns on the landscape where there are no longer, or ephemeral, water bodies.
- 2.2.5 Minor chalk outcrops also have localised influences on landscape character within other parts of the borough, most notably the chalk outcrop which forms the prominent hill on which Windsor Castle is located.

- 2.2.6 The subsequent re-establishment of sea levels, again in the tertiary period, (and therefore marine transgression once more across the borough) resulted in the deposition of marine sands and mudstones over the chalk. The principal deposits of these were a series of strata termed the Lambeth Group which includes the Reading Beds. Over this the Thames Group of marine mudstones were subsequently laid, which includes the London Clay and Bagshot Beds.
- 2.2.7 The London Clay formation forms a band running east to west across the central areas of the borough. The flatter agricultural landscapes in this area are characteristic of this underlying geology and the use of London Clay for brick production is evident within the local vernacular for the Maidenhead (and wider) area.
- 2.2.8 In the southern part of the borough, around Sunningdale and Ascot, London Clay is overlain by the Bagshot Formation (which includes the Bagshot Beds) which is mainly marine sand. This free draining material has resulted in the development of heathland landscape in these areas.
- 2.2.9 Above this 'solid geology' within the borough lie deposits of 'drift' material. Drift material is that material which has relatively recently been deposited from glacial or fluvial processes.
- 2.2.10 Much of the drift material found within the Royal Borough is alluvial formed on the Thames floodplain during the last 10,000 years (the Holocene epoch of the Quaternary Period). The alluvium principally comprises silt and clay which is interspersed with seams of sand and gravel that give rise to the extraction industries (gravel workings) in the floodplain.
- 2.2.11 Human activity in the form of woodland clearance and cultivation of the uplands, starting in the Neolithic period and continuing through the Iron Age and Roman period to the current day, has also contributed to the formation of these 'drift deposits' within the floodplain and the sedimentation in the river valleys.

Soils

- 2.2.12 Soil is a product of its parent material (the underlying geology), as well as relief, climate, and to a smaller extent, vegetation, over time. The soils found in the Royal Borough vary from argillic brown earths within the Thames floodplain and northern parts of the borough, stagnogley soils within central areas and podzols/brown sands and gley podzols in the south.
- 2.2.13 The agricultural capacity of a soil has been mapped by the Department of the Environment, Fisheries and Agriculture so as to assist in development planning decisions. This is termed the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC). The classification provides a method for assessing the quality of farmland to enable informed choices to be made about its future use within the planning system. The most versatile and productive soils are Grade 1, 2 and 3. Grades 4 and 5 are of poorer quality. Map 7 in Appendix 4 shows the extent of the land categories which fall within the borough. It should be noted that the subdivision of Grade 3 into subgrades 3a and 3b were not available to inform the study, however for the purpose of consistency it has been assumed throughout this study that those areas falling within the Grade 3 category are of good quality.

Hydrology

- 2.2.14 The main river catchments in the borough are the Thames and Colne. In addition, parts of the borough are within the catchments of the Wey and Loddon. The River Thames is the principal water course within the borough. It has driven the nature and pattern of settlement, trading and industry within this landscape for thousands of years and is the 'raison d'être' for many of the features that are seen within the borough today.
- 2.2.15 It runs west to east from Hurley along the northern boundary of the borough before turning south at Datchet to Old Windsor where it leaves the borough towards Egham and Staines. From a height of 30m AOD to approximately 15m AOD across a distance of approximately 30km the river gently flows and meanders through its floodplain and the built up areas of Cookham Rise, Maidenhead, Bray Wick, Windsor and Datchet. The profile of the river is heavily modified in these settlements where flood defence bankworks contain the river and limit access to it. Beyond the built up areas the river profile is commonly more sympathetically defined by native riverside vegetation. However on-going bank management is required to limit the natural process of bank erosion (and that caused by river traffic) and the subsequent loss of riverside features.
- 2.2.16 Aside from the very notable exception of the River Thames other significant natural waterways are not common features within the Royal Borough's landscape. Smaller streams are features within the clay landscapes across the central areas of the borough and within the vicinity of Windsor Great Park.
- 2.2.17 Man-made channels are a feature of the River Thames floodplain. Of particular significance is the Maidenhead, Windsor and Eton Flood Alleviation Scheme (MWEFAS) otherwise known as the Jubilee River. Although much of the 'river' is beyond the borough boundary, in Buckinghamshire, this engineered feature has had a fundamental impact on the hydrology of the floodplain landscapes within the vicinity of Maidenhead, Windsor and Eton since its completion in 2002. The new 11.6km long man-made channel leaves the main River Thames at Boulter's Weir, North Maidenhead and runs west past Taplow and then east of Dorney, Eton Wick and Eton before linking back into the Thames at Black Potts Viaduct, Windsor. As part of the alleviation scheme flood banks (or walls) have also been constructed upstream in Cookham, where they are visible as engineered banks at the junction of the High Street with The Causeway common, and north of Maidenhead Court. The flood bund at this location, although not clearly visible feature within the landscape, follows the line of the Green Way footpath south of White Place Farm. Both features serve to protect substantial areas from flooding, areas which are, as a consequence, now subject to development pressure.
- 2.2.18 Other significant channels in the borough include The Cut and New Cut. Man-made ornamental lakes and ponds are features within the landscape, but have a localised influence on landscape character. There are indications at a local level that sedimentation of these features, through an absence of farm management, is leading to their loss.

- 2.2.19 Groundwater resources within the borough include the Chalk, the principal aquifer, and the Reading Beds below the London Clay. Some beds within the Lower Cretaceous may be locally significant. The perched watertables in some of the Terrace Gravels found within the floodplain deposits (Quaternary strata) are also a major aquifer.
- 2.2.20 Water abstraction within the Royal Borough is primarily from the River Thames, although the Thames floodplain gravels are also an important source of potable water. As part of the water management infrastructure for the borough sewage treatment works are found at Hurley, Maidenhead, Ham Island and Ascot.

Mineral & Waste

- 2.2.21 The sand and gravel of the Thames valley floodplain is one of the Royal Borough's primary resources. However, many areas are already worked-out or effectively sterilised by development. In the past some use has been made of other formations and lithologies, and clays are now in demand for the lining and sealing of landfill sites to protect aquifers and rivers from leachate pollution. Chalk and clay, though locally exploited in the past, are not considered to be major mineral resources in the borough now. There has been renewed interest in the area for hydrocarbon exploitation, including the Windsor structure in particular.
- 2.2.22 The rich alluvial deposits found within the floodplain primarily comprise of silt and clay with seams of sand and gravel. These seams have been commercially extracted in many locations, particularly within the locality of Wrasbury in the south east of the borough. This has left a legacy of man-made waterfilled pits and reservoirs which are now primarily used for recreational reasons, as marinas, water sport centres or informal nature reserves.
- 2.2.23 The principal areas of active mineral working within the borough are found north of Maidenhead, around Bray and within the Horton/Wraysbury area. These areas are also where permitted sites are concentrated (sites with existing planning permission to extract sand and gravel). Having extracted for minerals, sites have frequently been used for solid waste disposal, which can raise other environmental concerns.
- 2.2.24 Most of the borough's waste is currently sent for disposal in landfill sites. By far the greatest generator of waste is the construction industry (63.8% of waste generated in Berkshire) followed by Households (18.5%). However, landfill void space continues to be used up at a faster rate than it is being created. In addition, current practices are wasteful of resources and fail to deal with waste arisings in the most environmentally sound manner. A radical change in waste practice is developing through the Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire which in turn is implementing the Government's 'Waste Hierarchy' advocated in the White Paper 'Making Waste Work' (December 1995). This places emphasis on minimisation and the efficient use of re-usable resources.

Natural Heritage

- 2.2.25 The Royal Borough has a rich natural heritage. The most extensive habitats in the borough are deciduous woodland and farmland habitats. However the grassland, wetland and heathland habitats are important for their ecological interest although they constitute much less of the general coverage of natural habitats in the borough.
- 2.2.26 English Nature has developed a national map of Natural Areas (NAs) in parallel with the Countryside Agency's Character Map of England work, which aims to provide a framework for an integrated approach to nature conservation. Natural Areas are sub-divisions of England and are identified as being unique on the basis of their physical, wildlife, land-use and cultural attributes. The borough is covered by the London Basin and Chilterns Natural Areas.
- 2.2.27 The more recent conservation agenda for natural heritage within the borough was established by the Wildlife Action 21 document produced in 1999. It is the first stage in Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) development and the source of much of the preceding ecological background information given within this section.
- 2.2.28 Further detailed information on the nature of habitats and important associated species within the borough are given in the relevant description of the landscape type. However for the purpose of clarification the following definitions are given:
- 2.2.29 Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are identified by the UK government under the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds. They are of international significance and are designated to conserve the habitat of certain rare or vulnerable birds and migrating birds that regularly occur on the site. Water bodies in the south east of the borough, namely Wraysbury No. 1 Gravel Pit SSSI, Wraysbury Reservoir SSSI and parts of Wraysbury and Hythe End Gravel Pits SSSI, form part of the South West London Water Bodies SPA, and in addition Chobham Common is part of a potential Thames Basin Heaths SPA.
- 2.2.30 Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is an area designated under the EC Habitats Directive. They are therefore of international significance as they make a contribution to the status of various habitats and species which are considered of European/international nature conservation importance. Those SACs found within the borough are candidate SACs (cSACs) which are currently under consideration for this designation. Windsor Forest and Great Park is a candidate SAC.
- 2.2.31 RAMSAR sites are sites that are internationally important wetlands (especially as Waterfowl habitat) designated following the Convention of Wetlands at Ramsar, Iran in 1971. Under the Convention the Government is committed to designate 'Wetlands of International Importance' (Ramsar sites) and to use the wetlands within its territory wisely. Wraysbury No. 1 Gravel Pit SSSI, Wraysbury Reservoir SSSI and part of Wraysbury and Hythe End Gravel Pits SSSI are designated as a Ramsar site along with a number of other waterbodies located to the east within Surrey.

- 2.2.32 RAMSAR, SPAs and SACs are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) thus protected by 'domestic versions' of international legislation.
- 2.2.33 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are sites of national importance designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 by English Nature in England. Sites may be designated to protect wildlife, geology or landforms. Most SSSIs are privately owned or managed. About 40% are owned or managed by public bodies such as the Forestry Commission, Ministry of Defence and The Crown Estate, or by the voluntary conservation movement. There are currently 9 SSSIs in the borough, representing a variety of habitats. The most extensive is Windsor Forest and Great Park SSSI, which covers ancient beech and oak woodlands, woodland pasture, acid grassland, heathland and ponds.
- 2.2.34 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are owned or controlled by local authorities and some, but not all, are SSSIs. Local authorities consult English Nature on all new proposals for LNRs in England. There are 6 LNRs in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
- 2.2.35 All the conservation designations mentioned above are statutory, and would therefore require consultation with English Nature for any operation to be undertaken within the boundary of the designation.
- 2.2.36 Wildlife Heritage Sites (WHSs) are identified and designated by the Royal Borough as part of the development plan process. They aim to protect locally important habitats and as such are a way of ensuring that the existing local nature conservation sites are taken into account when considering relevant planning applications. There are approximately 133 WHSs in the borough, covering all types of habitat found locally. Although these designations are non-statutory, that is it is not an automatic requirement to consult English Nature on operations within WHSs, consultation would be required if any habitat supported protected species.

Woodland Habitat

- 2.2.37 There is estimated to be more than 2,400ha of woodland in the borough, representing approximately 12% of the total borough area (compared to 14.5 at a county level). However this habitat is fragmented with very few large woods.
- 2.2.38 Ancient woodland - that is woodland where the woodland cover has been continuous since the year 1600 AD - and ancient semi-natural (replanted) woodland are of particular borough wide interest because of their inherent ecological richness. The long continuity of the woodland cover on ancient woodland sites has led to the development of unique assemblages of flora and fauna and they are therefore important for biodiversity. In addition, these sites are often rich in archaeological and heritage features relating to the past management of the site. However the majority of these ancient woodland sites are undesignated and less than 5ha in area. They now form small scale 'farm' woodlands and linear features in the landscape. The largest continuous

stands of woodland exist within the Windsor Forest and Great Park areas. Beyond this woodlands are common features within the landscape surrounding Ascot and Sunningdale, and in the west and north of the borough particularly in the Winter Hill/Ashley Hill Forest area. Their characters vary in specie composition and size;

- 2.2.39 The borough has several important beech woodland areas which are both nationally and locally important. They are dominated by beech, with a variety of other trees and prime examples of this habitat can be found in parts of Windsor Forest and Great Park SSSI or Bisham Woods SSSI.
- 2.2.40 Oak woodland is both widely distributed across the borough as well as throughout Berkshire, and the locally important oak on clay woodland type is dominant in the borough, such as at Great Thrift Wood SSSI.
- 2.2.41 Woodland pasture and park land with veteran trees form an internationally important habitat type within the Royal Borough. This habitat occurs mostly on (former) old estates, contains a large number of ancient, commonly pollarded trees (especially pedunculate Oak and Beech) and is home to many rare flora and fauna. Acid grassland is often associated with woodland pasture, Windsor Forest and Great Park SSSI being a good example.
- 2.2.42 More recent 'new' woodland within the borough includes secondary and coppice woodland, and forestry plantation. Secondary woodland has grown up on areas that were previously (or temporarily) not wooded. As these woodlands are younger, they do have the diversity of species associated with ancient woodland. They are however important for biodiversity, and with time their importance will grow with their increasing diversity. Secondary woodland in the borough consists of the same types of woodland described above under ancient semi-natural woodland. The woodlands around South Ascot are a good example of a secondary woodland.
- 2.2.43 Coppice woodland, although found in a number of locations within the borough and potentially important in biodiversity terms (if the woodland is well managed), is not a common woodland type (and therefore landscape feature) within the locality.
- 2.2.44 Forestry plantations were usually planted with non-native species. This resulted in some of the less diverse of woodland types. There are however some species, such as gold crest, that thrive in these plantations. More recently, more and more native species are being introduced in plantations.
- 2.2.45 Newly planted woodlands are features in the landscape within some locations in the Borough, particularly as combined with the newly established or expanded estates or equestrian facilities.
- 2.2.46 The woodland resource of the borough is therefore extensive. There are more than 60 statutory and non-statutory designated woodland sites within the borough including internationally important sites of ancient woodland, wood-pasture, parkland, and ancient (veteran) trees.

- 2.2.47 Important UK Biodiversity Action Plan 'priority species' associated with these woodlands in the Borough include birds such as the Bullfinch, Nightjar, Woodlark, Song Thrush and Spotted Flycatcher, mammals such as the Dormouse and Pipistrelle Bat and invertebrates such as the Heart Moth, Light Crimson Underwing, *Melanotus punctolineatus* (a click beetle) and the Pearl-bordered Fritillary.

Farm land Habitat

- 2.2.48 Most of what is called countryside within the borough is farmed, with different grades of intensity. Because farming takes up such a large amount of land, many plants and animals are linked to farm land. Traditionally farms were self sustaining, incorporating a mixture of types of land use. The key habitat types from a biodiversity point of view are grazing meadows, hay meadows, flood meadows, ponds, ditches, small coppice woods, hedges and arable field margins. Within Berkshire as a whole the Wildlife Trust has stated that intensively farmed land covers 70,000ha of the county.
- 2.2.49 Since the second world war increasing pressure has been applied to farmers to produce food in larger quantities and at less cost. As a result, farming has become more and more intensive, which has led to the loss of diversity of grasslands and the decline and sometimes disappearance of many farm land plants and animals.
- 2.2.50 Most arable weeds have been lost through spraying with pesticides or mechanical operations. However 'weeds' can be leftovers from the last years crop, but more often are native plants that thrive in the conditions created by tilling the soil. Set-aside land and uncultivated field margins are often the last refuges for these plants and form wildlife corridors.
- 2.2.51 Hedgerows were used in the past to mark boundaries and to stop animals from straying. Fences have largely replaced hedges for these purposes now, and farm machinery has resulted in the need for larger fields to improve efficiency. The result of this has been the loss of hedgerows.
- 2.2.52 Species rich hedgerow are important; they form an additional habitat for many woodland birds, often support species typical of ancient woodland and they are of landscape, historical and archaeological interest. They form wildlife corridors between other habitats and help to slow down the erosion of soil.
- 2.2.53 There are (understandably) no designated sites within this habitat type. There are nevertheless important UK Biodiversity Action Plan 'priority species' associated including birds such as the Bullfinch, Skylark, Corn Bunting, Song Thrush and Grey Partridge, mammals such as the Brown Hare and Pipistrelle Bat and plants such as the Broad-fruited Cornsalad, Cornflower, Red Hemp Nettle and Spreading Hedge Parsley associated with this habitat.

Grassland Habitat

- 2.2.54 Most grassland in Britain, and indeed the borough, is species-poor improved grassland. Nationally, 95% of flower-rich meadows and pastures have been lost to development and through the application of fertilisers. Unimproved or semi-Unimproved grassland today only represents a small proportion of grassland in the borough. There are three distinct grassland types in the borough; neutral pastures and meadows, chalk grassland and acid grassland.
- 2.2.55 Neutral pastures and meadows are typically enclosed and are made up of a mixture of grassland types. They include unimproved dry and wet grasslands on neutral soils. Bray Meadows SSSI is a typical example of high quality, unimproved dry grassland. Remnants of this habitat can also be found in the verges of roads throughout the borough.
- 2.2.56 The chalk grassland habitat type is mostly made up of nationally important sheep's fescue/meadow oat grass grassland. It is short and rich, with a high density in plant species which attracts invertebrates such as butterflies. An important site in the borough is Cock Marsh SSSI on the northern slopes of Winter Hill near Cookham.
- 2.2.57 Acid grassland is usually associated with heathland, but in the borough it can occur on its own. Acid grassland is not as species rich as the other types mentioned. It is dominated by sheep's fescue and includes herbs like sheep's sorrel. It is an important habitat for lichens, mosses and ferns and good examples can be found in parts of Windsor Forest and Great Park SSSI.
- 2.2.58 The Berkshire Lowland Unimproved Grassland Habitat Action Plan states that there is 38% of the neutral grassland resource in the County (43.9ha) within the borough and 3.4% (6ha) of the chalk grassland - confined entirely to Cock Marsh SSSI. Windsor Forest and Great Park SSSI is one of the only 3 recorded sites for acid grassland in Berkshire.
- 2.2.59 There are more than 30 statutory and non-statutory designated grassland sites within the Royal Borough, including internationally (Windsor Forest and Great Park cSAC) and nationally important sites. Important UK Biodiversity Action Plan 'priority species' associated with this habitat include birds such as the Grey Partridge and Skylark, the Brown Hare and invertebrates such as *Harpalus dimidiatus* (a ground beetle) and the High Brown and Marsh Fritillaries.

Wetland Habitat

- 2.2.60 There are various types of wetland in the borough. They range from the mighty Thames corridor to little streams and ditches with associated grassland, reservoirs, gravel pits and ponds. These habitats are important for a variety of species, especially invertebrates, waterfowl and fish.

- 2.2.61 The Thames river valley is made up of a large variety of habitats, including (predominately) improved grassland, wet grassland, valley and floodplain woodlands. In the borough the nationally important habitat type; wet grassland is especially important. Wet grasslands are typically dominated by a mixture of grasses, wild flowers and rushes, and include flood and water meadows. The ditches associated with these grasslands are also very important. For example the Green Way corridor is a complex of ditches, cuts and streams which supports a healthy population of water voles.
- 2.2.62 The River Thames, which flows along the borough border for about 35km, forms an important habitat in itself, and has many important sites on its banks and islands including Cock Marsh SSSI and Bray Pennyroyal Field SSSI. The other rivers and/or their catchments found in the borough are the Colne, Wey and Loddon.
- 2.2.63 An important feature of the Thames are the wooded islands, which provide refuges for a wide variety of river birds. The backwaters also contain features such as pools and riffles, which were formerly common on the river and are favoured by a variety of specialist plants and animals.
- 2.2.64 Centuries of digging for gravel have left their mark on the borough in the form of gravel pits. Reservoirs, created to satisfy the demand for water in London, can be found in the east of the borough, as can former sewage lagoons.
- 2.2.65 The open water, water depth, reservoir or pit bottom, islands and bank vegetation all make up different habitats for the different stages in the life-cycles of invertebrates and birds. Succession is easy to observe on recently worked out gravel pits and is one reason for the importance of this habitat in nature conservation terms. Together these bodies of water, and the 'scrubby' areas around them, provide a rich habitat for a great variety of wildlife.
- 2.2.66 Ponds are scarce in the borough; most have been neglected or filled in for agricultural use or development. However, many new ponds have been created as detailed above.
- 2.2.67 Designated wetland habitats within the borough include more than 30 statutory and non-statutory sites, covering areas of international (Wraysbury and Hythe End Gravel Pits pSAC/RAMSAR and SSSI) and national (Cock marsh, Great Meadow Pond and Great Thrift Wood SSSIs) conservation interest.
- 2.2.68 Important UK Biodiversity Action Plan 'priority species' associated with these wetlands in the borough include the Bittern, Common Scoter and Reed Bunting birds, mammals such as the Otter and Water Vole, Great Crested Newts and invertebrates such as the Double Line, Glutinous Snail and Shining Ramshorn Snail.

Heathland Habitat

- 2.2.69 Lowland heathland habitat constitutes a small percentage of landcover in the borough. There is only 4.5ha (1.4% of the County's current heathland resource) and it is confined to two sites, Windsor Great Park (it is not known whether this habitat is included in the proposed designated area) and Ascot Racecourse (which is a Wildlife Heritage Site). Although representing a relatively small proportion of both the borough and the heathland resource of the County these sites form part of an important complex of heathland sites in the south of England. Put together, the Berkshire heathlands are important on a national and European scale.
- 2.2.70 Dry heathland is nationally important. It occurs on acid, well drained soils and is dominated by heather and gorse species. Good quality heathland contains a varied heather layer, with some scattered trees, scrub areas of bare ground, gorse, wet heath, bogs and open water.
- 2.2.71 Important UK Biodiversity Action Plan 'priority species' associated with heathland in the borough include the Nightjar and Woodlark birds, the Sand Lizard and the *Amara famelica* (a ground beetle) and *Anisodactylus nemorivagus* (also a ground beetle).

2.3 Human Influences

Cultural Heritage

- 2.3.1 The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead has a diverse and rich landscape character which is a product of not only the physical factors detailed above but also human activities over time. In fact the landscapes seen within the Royal Borough today have been strongly influenced by human activity since the end of the last ice age (circa 10,000 BC) although there is little in the way of evidence from these earlier times visible in the borough today. Changes in land management and the expansion of development in recent times have had, in particular, fundamental effects on the character of the landscape that we see in the borough to day.
- 2.3.2 The borough was formed in 1974 with the reorganisation of local government in Berkshire. Apart from Windsor and Maidenhead, the Borough comprises 14 villages and parishes which can be contrasted with the 19 manors in existence in AD1000. This did not include Windsor or Maidenhead which were later medieval foundations. Windsor is first recorded as a borough in 1130 AD, but was not granted a charter of incorporation until 1466 when Edward IV made compensation for emparking 200 acres of the town's common land. Maidenhead became incorporated in 1582 by charter of Queen Elizabeth I.

Prehistoric to Roman Times circa 500,000 - AD 410

- 2.3.3 Finds from Palaeolithic (circa 500,000 - 8,000BC) and Mesolithic (circa 8,000 - 4,000BC) are relatively limited in comparison to later periods. It is thought that these late and post glacial hunter gatherer populations occupied the river valleys on a seasonal basis, building temporary structures. These hunter-gatherer, herd follower people made simple stone implements especially from flint, giving up the herd-hunting practices of the Palaeolithic times to develop semi-permanent settlements by the Mesolithic period. Mesolithic communities represent the first significant agents for landscape change, as it is believed that areas of the dense woodland that covered the landscape were burnt to create clearings to encourage and attract grazing animals such as red deer.
- 2.3.4 The introduction of farming during the Neolithic Period (circa 4,000 - 2,500BC) brought with it the development of an economy wholly or partly dependent on the cultivation of crops and the domestication of animals. Evidence of such activity can be seen at Horton where neolithic field systems are apparent in the landscape. These early farmers would have begun to exploit the woodland for hunting, foraging and timber. Initially small areas would have been cleared for the cultivation of wheat and barley. Once cleared, however, the soils in the different geological zones would not all have been able to sustain cultivation to the same extent and would have become depleted of soil nutrients over time resulting in a change in the nature of soils and their recolonising vegetation. Early clearance and cultivation could therefore have had significant and possibly irreversible impacts on the landscape. Human activity is thought to have been mainly on the free draining gravels and sands bordering the River Valleys.
- 2.3.5 By the Bronze Age (circa 2,500 - 750BC) there were settlements such as at Bray on the Thames, where a round house and other post-built structures were located within fields and enclosure boundaries, possibly representing a family farmstead. Metal working technology, along with new types of flint-tool and pottery design, were introduced from Europe at the start of this period. Cereal crops and stock rearing remained the main stays of the economy, although changes in social organisation were reflected in the increased number of ceremonial and burial sites which many archaeologists now see in the context of ritual landscapes. Burial practices also evolved, the use of cremations and round barrows replacing the chambered tombs and long barrows of the Neolithic.
- 2.3.6 The Iron Age (circa 750BC - AD 43) saw the introduction of iron working, along with a number of new other technologies, to Britain from the continent. Population growth led to competition for land and the development of a more territorial society, hillforts and defensive enclosures being clear manifestations of this in the landscape. Hillforts themselves are defensible and symbolic, occupying both strategic and prominent locations for maximum effect.
- 2.3.7 Berkshire lay in the territory of the Atrebates tribe at this time. The river valleys were occupied with a structured system of small settlements, often in rectangular or round enclosures surrounded by fields and approached by trackways. The higher plateau gravels and chalkdowns were also settled.

- 2.3.8 An extensive trading network between southern England and the Roman world is indicated by the coins and fragments of pottery found. By the end of the Iron Age coinage had begun to be used and links between the Atrebates and Rome are implied by the introduction of coins showing Roman influence, a hoard of which was discovered at Waltham St Lawrence.
- 2.3.9 In 43AD the area which is now the Royal Borough was conquered by Rome and a process of Romanisation began which included the development of towns, road networks and the importation of the Roman administrative system. This, and associated economic changes, brought about alterations in settlement patterns and lifestyles which are still reflected in the landscape of the region today. There were no principal Roman towns located within the Royal Borough. The borough fell half way between Londinium (London) to the east and Calleva Atrebatum (Silchester) to the west. The Roman road linking the two crossed the Thames at Staines. A further road is supposed to have linked Silchester to Verulamium (St Albans). This can be traced as far as the Thames crossing near Cookham, though no trace of it has been found on the Berkshire side. This road may have linked the area of dense settlement around Weycock Hill temple near Waltham St Lawrence to the larger urban centres.
- 2.3.10 The incorporation of the area which is now Windsor and Maidenhead, into the Roman empire, resulted in an intensification of agricultural production due to population expansion and urban growth. Many of the 'Celtic' fields on the Berkshire Chalk, previously thought to be a survival of an Iron Age pattern may have been established between the first and third centuries AD. The formation of Lynchets, or terraces, on the Downs, in the early Roman period is further evidence of the intensification of arable agriculture in comparison to the Iron Age, when the Downs appear to have been used primarily for pasture. However, there is also evidence for considerable continuity of the rural landscape from the Iron Age into Roman times.
- 2.3.11 These changes are also reflected in rural settlement patterns in the Windsor and Maidenhead area. Many Roman rural settlements had Iron Age precursors and life probably changed little between these periods for the majority of the rural population. Three main types of settlement have been distinguished: villas or villa estates; substantial farms; and small rural dwellings. In east Berkshire a wide range of settlement types from villages to isolated farmsteads are known. There was dense settlement on the chalk with some nucleation, for example around the religious complex at Weycock Hill, near Waltham St Lawrence. Villas and villa estates were concentrated on the higher, well drained chalk or sands and gravels of the Reading Beds, with fewer known on the gravel terraces of the Thames Valley. No villas are known on the London Clay, possibly because the settlement pattern was different, with small holdings rather than larger estates, or perhaps because these areas generated insufficient profit. Villas were the seats of wealthy agricultural estates. The term covers a wide range of buildings from simple farmhouses to grandiose buildings. Wetter areas appear to have seen little occupation but were probably linked to the villa estate economy, being used as summer pasture by settlements located on adjacent arable land.

Medieval Times A410 - AD1500

- 2.3.12 Shortly after the decline of Roman control in Britain, the Angles, Jutes and Saxons began to invade and settle in England (the Saxon Period 410 AD - 1066 AD). The transition from Roman Britain to Saxon England was a slow, uneven and largely undocumented process with its roots in the 4th century AD. Saxons settled along the Upper Thames gravels, for example at Wraysbury there is much evidence of shifting Saxon settlement on the floodplain. Animal husbandry was indicated to be a major component of late Saxon life at this site, but also arable cropping and the exploitation of fish and waterfowl from surrounding watercourses. (The Domesday Book records that there were four fisheries at Wraysbury.) There is also evidence for manipulation and management of rivers in Saxon times within the Thames Valley such as at Bray and Cookham.
- 2.3.13 Saxon land charters may also have formalised earlier land divisions at this time by the creation and management of field boundaries. However it is burial sites which are often the main evidence for activity in the early Anglo-Saxon period. Notable landscape features to arise from the Saxon period were the churches and monastic sites. At a time when the majority of buildings were simple thatched structures, these stone buildings would have gained symbolic permanence in the landscape.
- 2.3.14 When the Danes arrived within the area which is now the Royal Borough in 870, they would have found Saxon towns established at Old Windsor and Cookham, and possibly a smaller settlement at White Waltham. With the exception of Old Windsor there is almost no archaeological evidence for these sites.
- 2.3.15 The Norman Conquest, of 1066, led to the replacement of Saxon landowners with a Norman feudal aristocracy, but this does not seem to have had a dramatic impact on the locality of the borough. Motte and bailey castles were visible expressions of the need for continuing military control of the landscape. Old Windsor lying on the floor of the Thames Valley was not an easily defensible site so William I built himself an earth and timber motte and bailey castle on a chalk ridge 3km upstream from the royal Saxon residence of Old Windsor. The new Windsor castle was started in 1070, the site has remained in the Crown's possession ever since.
- 2.3.16 The Domesday Book, established to record land ownership to allow taxation of all the population, shows that in 1086 the King was the largest landholder in the county, owning substantial estates previously held by Edward the Confessor, Queen Edith and her brother Harold II. In 1086 the Domesday Book records the population of the county as 6,160. At this time the peasant population farmed the land in communal open fields and as common pasture.
- 2.3.17 Overlying the manorial landholdings was the Forest system. This developed in the 12th century and included much of East Berkshire as part of the Royal Forest of Windsor. Royal Forests had their own royal jurisdiction applied through Forest Law. Within the royal forests were village communities and cultivated lands. Forests, which included woodland, heathland, arable and pasture, as well as settlements, did not necessarily belong to the King, but Forest Law gave the

Crown rights to exploit woodland resources, in particular to keep deer and have them hunted. The king also appointed officials (their posts often being hereditary) to administer the Law in Forest Courts. There was wide spread disafforestation after 1227 leaving only a reduced Windsor Forest.

- 2.3.18 The recession in the 14th century, and the Black Death, led to major changes in land holding. Shortages in labour led to estate lands increasingly being leased, either in their entirety as large farms, or divided into smaller units, and many labour services were commuted to money payments, a process offering some former manorial tenants a route to wealth and gentry status.

AD1500 - Modern Times

- 2.3.19 The Roman road system fell into disuse and eventual decay after the collapse of Roman authority during the 5th century and throughout the early Saxon period many local trackways were constructed, some conforming to Roman standards. However, it was not until the later medieval period that the King's Highway (also known as the Bath Road) was built as a major link between London and Bristol (now the A4). This was the first road to charge a toll along its length in Berkshire, and many subsequent 'Turnpike Trust' roads were set up between 1750 and 1780 such as the Maidenhead to Twyford (1718) and Maidenhead to Henley Bridge. Toll houses were often erected next to turnpikes. Today few survive, most have been converted for modern uses such as the one that can be seen on the Hatfield Road at Bisham.
- 2.3.20 Before the advent of the railways, the main method of transporting bulk cargoes such as grain, manure, stone or coal was by inland navigation. In the Royal Borough there were examples of three categories of inland navigation: navigable rivers, canalised rivers and canals. The River Thames has been navigable from above Abingdon to the sea since before 1600.
- 2.3.21 With the arrival of the railways, demand for commercial transport on the inland waterways declined and finally ceased in the 1950s, although growth of pleasure cruising has kept them open. The development of railways in the borough were dominated by the Great Western Railway (GWR) which pushed its way westwards along the Thames Valley, reaching Taplow in 1838 and Reading in 1840, with Maidenhead Bridge providing the rail rivercrossing. Branch lines were then laid to Windsor. The London and South Western Railway (LSWR) reached Windsor from its own line at Staines.
- 2.3.22 Until the middle part of the twentieth century, water power was considered a major resource especially for grinding grain. From the medieval period onwards, the Thames supported many mills which were involved in a variety of industrial processes. The use of water-wheels by the cloth making and fulling industries was common throughout Berkshire before 1800. Water power was also used in breweries and iron foundries.
- 2.3.23 The potential development of the Royal Borough as a heavy industrial centre has always been limited by the lack of raw materials, such as coal and iron, but several industries grew up to support the farming community, namely brewing, tanning and cloth making. In addition a number of small iron and brass foundries became established during the 19th century.

- 2.3.24 Bricks were initially used in the 15th century as an infill for timber framed buildings. There were large brickworks at Pinkneys Green, Maidenhead and Knowl Hill. During the Second World War the production of local bricks almost ceased and the industry in the Borough has never recovered.
- 2.3.25 Up to the Second World War the borough's economy was still largely based on agriculture and the industries detailed above. Enabled by the changes in technology that took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century many of the traditional industries became redundant and small light industrial units began to appear, to cater for the new specialist markets, particularly the electronic and computer industries.

Present Day Influences

- 2.3.26 The landscape is constantly evolving as changes in lifestyle and technology influence the way we use and manage the land. Current forces for change, as briefly detailed below, will continue to influence the subtle interplay between the physical, historic and present day landscape elements which combine to create the borough's local distinctiveness. A detailed assessment of the forces for change in the borough are given in Part 2 of the Landscape Character Assessment.

Agriculture and Land Management

- 2.3.27 Post war agricultural intensification within the borough has had a profound affect on the agrarian landscape, transforming it to the working landscape that we see today. The loss of hedgerow vegetation, expansion of the arable field network and use of agrochemicals has resulted in a less diverse environment dominated by larger farmsteads.
- 2.3.28 However UK farming is now in recession which is having a number of fundamental landscape and environmental consequences. It is anticipated that the restructuring of the agricultural economy, assisted by changes in rural policy to counter the down turn in the industry, will see an increasing polarity in farming with, on the one hand, large farm units seeking to increase production through achieving economies of scale and, and on the other, land coming out of production and becoming used for other purposes. For example the relative wealth of the borough's population and the attractive nature of the landscape of the Royal Borough has began to result in an increase in the recreational uses of the locality, for example, for horse paddocks and golf courses. The challenge will therefore be to ensure that changes in the agricultural economy secure positive management of valued landscape features and attributes, rather than allow these changes to remain unchecked.
- 2.3.29 The principal mechanism currently in place to assist with the changes that are occurring in the rural areas of the borough is through the England Rural Development Plan (ERDP) which puts in place measures outlined in the European Commission's Agenda 2000. The plan is administered through the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Rural issues are also being brought to the forefront of the political agenda by the review of Planning Policy Guidance Note 7 - The Countryside - Environmental Quality and Economic and Social

Development (PPG 7), which includes a review of agricultural policy. Policy included in the new Planning Policy Statement 7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (PPS 7) is now looking to integrate conservation, sustainability and production objectives.

- 2.3.30 The aim of the ERDP is to assist the adaptation and development of rural areas, economies and communities, and the conservation and improvement of the rural environment. Schemes that provide funding for countryside initiatives, which are supported by the ERDP, include Agri-environment schemes (for example the Countryside Stewardship Scheme) and woodland creation and management schemes (such as the Woodland Grant Scheme and Farm Woodland Premium Scheme). Following recent review and consultation these agri-environment schemes are shortly to be replaced. DEFRA's Environmental Stewardship Scheme will build on the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Organic Farming scheme approaches while the England Woodland Grant Scheme will replace the Woodland Grant Scheme. The aim of the changes is to develop a revised structure for agri-environment schemes in England that will enable the scheme to contribute effectively to solving current and future environmental issues, and in particular (in the context to this study) is the contribution these schemes are proposing to make to supporting local landscape character objectives.
- 2.3.31 Farm diversification is also a feature of modern day agriculture and a change visible in the Windsor and Maidenhead landscape. Farm building conversion for business and leisure uses can result in a lack of land management and generation of rural traffic.

Urban Expansion

- 2.3.32 By virtue of its location, the borough has been subject to considerable pressure for development, be it for residential, industrial or commercial purposes. Initially, the stimulus was the River Thames itself, which provided a water supply, cheap transport and a source of energy. In recent times, the development of the railway, the motorway network (M4 and M25) and Heathrow Airport, along with the proximity of London, has perpetuated the area's comparative advantages. Development has largely been within the Thames floodplain. Service and high tech industries have in particular been attracted into the area due to its good communications and transport facilities, proximity to London and attractive countryside to the west. There has been a 'knock on' requirement for housing to support the industrial and service growth of the area.

Transport and Infrastructure

- 2.3.33 As with much of England the main period of road expansion within the borough was between the 1960s and 1990s. Before this the borough's network of lanes and routeways had remained largely unchanged since the middle ages. The M4 motorway corridor was completed in the borough in 1971 and the A404(M) and A308(M) followed. Further large scale infrastructure schemes are unlikely to impact the Royal Borough in the short to medium term. However more piecemeal rural road scheme 'improvements' are continuing to 'standardise' the character of the road network in the borough and increase the introduction of urbanising elements into the landscape such as lighting, signage and road widening.

Recreation and Tourism

- 2.3.34 Tourism is an important commercial activity within the Royal Borough which has an influence on its landscape character. The visitor attractions of Windsor Castle and its Great Park, Legoland and Ascot Racecourse, have an international as well as regional and local appeal.
- 2.3.35 More informal recreation is found within the rural areas of the wider landscape. Recreational boating facilities are found along the length of the River Thames within the borough but are particularly focused in the stretch of the waterway between Maidenhead and Windsor, and around Hurley, where boat yards, marinas and visitor moorings are commonly visible as part of the riverscape. The rural villages of the Cookham area and the water sports centres at Wraysbury provide a wealth of water based recreation opportunities and add to the ambience these localities. Away from the Thames riverside, walking, cycling and horseriding are popular pursuits.

Mineral Extraction and Waste Management

- 2.3.36 The Floodplain Terrace Deposits, which are of principal interest to the extraction industry, are mainly confined to the immediate vicinity of the River Thames. The principal areas of active mineral extraction working are at Bray and Dorney Lake (Buckinghamshire). There are existing permitted sites north of Maidenhead and south of Cookham Dean and between the M4 - A 304(M) motorway corridors south of Maidenhead. There are also smaller areas of land with planning permission for extraction near Waltham and White Waltham, and Bowsey Hill.
- 2.3.37 Waste management is largely through landfill within the borough. However the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire (Adopted 1998) illustrates the need to diversify facilities, along with other initiatives, in the future.

2.4 Cultural Associations

- 2.4.1 The landscapes of the Royal Borough have inspired authors, poets, artists and musicians. Many are well known and of national or international importance. Others are less well known outside the district and have their work displayed and published locally. All have contributed to a greater appreciation and understanding of the landscapes found within the borough, and their significance within the nation's 'collective consciousness'.

Windsor Castle

- 2.4.2 Central to this is the symbolic importance of Windsor Castle, the official residence of the Queen and the House of Windsor. The first painter to seize the potential of Windsor as a subject was Paul Sandby, who became known as 'the father of English watercolour'.
- 2.4.3 However it was the greatly influential English landscape painter J.M.W. Turner (1775 - 1851), renowned for his vibrant and dynamic paintings of natural light with lovely atmospheric sunrise watercolours, whose painting of 'Windsor Castle' set within the rich agrarian Thames landscape which has been so influential at expressing the striking qualities of the Castle within its landscape setting across the world.

- 2.4.4 As a young artist, Turner was certainly aware of views of the castle from the local area, which were owned by some of his earliest patrons. Windsor appeared in the background of several of Turner's most important oil paintings, but the painting of Windsor Castle is the only time he made it the principal subject of a watercolour. The expanse of clear, calm water in the foreground, suffused with the glow of a pale yellow sunset, suggests that the monarch presides over a tranquil and well-ordered kingdom.

Artist, Writers and Poets

- 2.4.5 For hundreds of years artists, writers and poets have visited and settled in the district and have been inspired by the landscape, its traditions and people. Others have been raised in the district and have returned to the landscape for inspiration time and again. Of the most renowned are:
- 2.4.6 *Stanley Spencer*; Perhaps the most famous painter associated with the Royal Borough is Stanley Spencer (1891-1959) who used the rich rural landscapes of the Cookham area as a setting for many of his works. A painter of portraits, landscapes and imaginative, visionary, quirky works with a Biblical flavour, much of his work was set in his native Cookham, Berkshire. He studied at the Slade School of Fine Art, 1908-12, where he was awarded a Scholarship in 1910 and won the Summer Composition Prize two years later. He exhibited at Roger Fry's Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition, 1912. During service in the Army in World War he was commissioned to paint a picture for the Imperial War Museum. He was to serve as an official war artist during World War II, painting ship-building work at Port Glasgow, Scotland. After the war Spencer travelled on occasion in Europe, although his work remained essentially his own, in the English-eccentric tradition.
- 2.4.7 His work is held in many international collections, including the Tate Gallery, London, and a Stanley Spencer Gallery was opened in Cookham, three years after he died at Taplow, Buckinghamshire.
- 2.4.8 *Kenneth Grahame*; the writer of *The Wind in the Willows*, although born in Edinburgh in 1859 was brought up in Cookham Dean in Berkshire and educated at St Edward's School, Oxford (1868-75). He created the character of Toad to amuse his son Alistair, but it was not until 1908 that he published "*The Wind In The Willows*", which had its origins in letters he had written to Alastair, and owed much inspiration to the Thames riverside of that area. The book was not an immediate success, but would achieve wider popularity thanks to the 1930 stage version, "*Toad of Toad Hall*" by A. A. Milne (1882-1956), whose "*Winnie-the-Pooh*" (1926) was created for his own son Christopher Robin.
- 2.4.9 *Corden Family of Painters*; William Corden, who lived at 8 High Street, Datchet was one of the family of painters to the Queen. The first, William Corden senior, was court painter to George IV, William IV and Queen Victoria. Born November 28th, 1797, in Ashbourne, Derbyshire, he served his apprenticeship at the China Works, Derby. He first started painting landscapes on china but turned to figure subjects. Then he became interested in enamel painting on metal and gained patronage at the Court for enamels of the Royal Family. He was sent by the Prince Consort to Coburg to copy Royal portraits of his family at Castle Rosenau. He died in 1857.

- 2.4.10 His son, William Corden junior was born at Derby in 1819 and died in Newbury in 1900. He lived with his father at Datchet and travelled with him to Coburgh. During his lifetime he painted nearly 400 pictures for Queen Victoria. Victor Corden, the son of William Corden junior also painted for the Royal family.
- 2.4.11 There are many Corden paintings depicting Datchet, including a large one dated 1857, of the interior of the old church which was pulled down except for the chapel. There is also a painting of figures crossing the flood water on the Green by a temporary bridge entitled The way to the Church (1887), and one of Sir R. Harvey's Harriers' meetings outside the Manor Hotel in 1874. These paintings are considered a valuable record of mid-Victorian Datchet.

2.5 The Royal Borough's Historic Landscapes

- 2.5.1 Some landscapes and their features that are seen in the Royal Borough today are clearly vestiges of past landscapes (as illustrated within the Human Influences section of this report), in a similar way that historic villages remain as evidence of past village life. These historic landscapes would have had different characteristics and features from those seen in their place today. Some, although often having been managed or altered by human activity (for farming or forestry for example), are perceived to be in their 'natural' state such as woodlands and heathlands. Other historic landscapes have more obviously been influenced by human activity and are clearly 'designed' landscapes (commonly associated with wealthy estates). They are more recent design expressions of aesthetic or cultural movements of their day, reflections of moral philosophy or artistic styles of their time. The significance of the royal seat at Windsor in the political and social history of the nation has resulted in the Royal Borough becoming a focus for the landed gentry for many generations, and as a consequence the borough is particularly rich in designed landscapes which make a crucial contribution to its character.
- 2.5.2 The Windsor Forest area is an example of a landscape that contains historic features that would once have formed part of a much earlier rural scene, that is the medieval Royal Hunting Forest of Windsor which once stretched across East Berkshire in the twelfth century. Although much reduced from its twelfth century extent, the large tracts of continuous woodland found within the Windsor Forest area today probably display similar landscape characteristics to those of areas of managed forest found within the 12th century Royal Hunting Forest. However the historic forest would also have been comprised of a mosaic of cultivated lands, common pasture and village communities, as well as forest. Although actual relics from the 12th century forest are understood to be uncommon within the wider landscape of the Windsor area, some Veteran Trees within Windsor Great Park are thought to date back to this time.
- 2.5.3 In comparison historic designed landscapes, in the form of gardens and parkland, are commonly found across the borough as part of the many estates found within the locality, primarily due to the presence and proximity of the Royal Court at Windsor. These landscapes have often evolved over time and been influenced by changing ownership, political and social fashions, and are therefore commonly complex mixes of various garden design styles.

- 2.5.4 Pre-17th century gardens were normally restricted to monastic and pleasure gardens constructed for royalty and the nobility. The most renowned pre-17th century garden in the Royal Borough is the Moat Garden at Windsor. However from the 17th century, as trade expanded and technical advancements were made, the wider aristocracy had increasing wealth to spend on leisure pursuits such as gardening. It is therefore from this time that designed landscapes were extensively created within the Borough as part of the pleasure grounds to estates.
- 2.5.5 During the 17th century stately parks and gardens were commonly inspired by the ideas of the Italian renaissance as increasing trade and wealth lead to contact with classically inspired gardens found on the continent. These 'Stuart and Commonwealth Gardens' were formal, ordered and included features such as fountains and statues of characters from classical antiquity. A good example of such a garden can be found at Cliveden, Taplow. Contact with Europe also resulted in the introduction of French and Dutch ideas, and gardens with these influences tended to be geometric in style.
- 2.5.6 In the late 17th century William and Mary, Protestants from the Dutch royal house, took the English throne from Charles II in 1688. As a consequence gardening was influenced by the still formal, but less grandiose and more intimate, Dutch style. Plants were collected from all over the world with hot houses and orangeries constructed for the more tender plants. Tree planting became increasingly fashionable in both parks and gardens, and the formal style of gardens extended into the countryside, for example the Long Walk and Queen Ann's Ride were laid out around this time. The renowned nurseryman Henry Wise, an influential designer of this period, as well as laying out Queen's Ann Ride also undertook work at Windsor Castle (on the Maastricht Garden) and Cranbourne Lodge during this time.
- 2.5.7 The 18th century saw the slow decline of the geometric garden and a new landscape fashion emerge termed the 'English Landscape Style'. This style emphasised irregularity and idealised nature. This shift from geometric designs favoured for centuries beforehand, was made possible by economic change and the growth of estates, allowing landowners the opportunity to manipulate the appearance of the landscape and display the extent of their possessions. The English Landscape Style also coincided with political moves for liberty, democracy and a curb of the absolute power of the monarchy, which to many was echoed in the strict, rigid patterns of the geometric garden style. Many of the parkland landscapes found within the Crown estate, and elsewhere in the borough, therefore originate from or were embellished during, this phase of garden design development - for example at Moat Park, Cumberland Lodge and Cranbourne Lodge in Windsor Great Park, where many of the parkland features that are seen today (in the form of avenues, woods and copses) are a legacy of this period.
- 2.5.8 Throughout the 18th century landscape gardening was greatly influenced by the idea of making the landscape into a series of pictures with an emphasis on the beauty of nature, the settings for the garden buildings, contrasts between light and shade, groves, lawns and natural looking areas of water. Indeed, landscape paintings, particularly by Claude Lorrain and Nicholas Poussin, were eagerly collected and used as an inspiration for landscape designs.

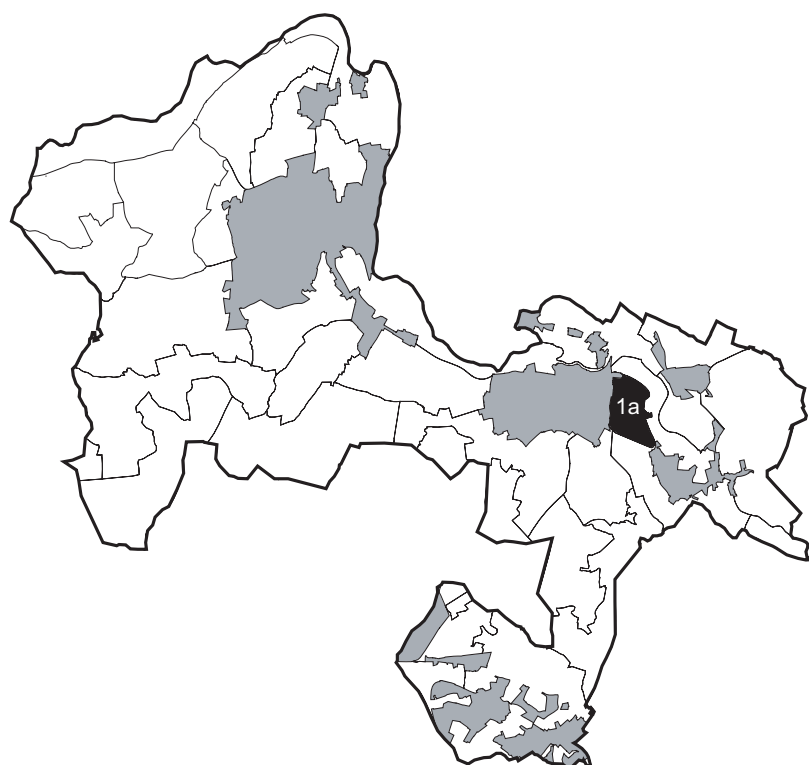
- 2.5.9 William Kent initially introduced irregularity into the landscape and Gothic buildings alongside classical ones. He was one of the first designers to imitate paintings in the landscape. However, it was Lancelot 'Capability' Brown who was, in the latter half of the 18th century, the foremost gardener of his day. Brown created more simplistic landscapes of natural slopes and serpentine shapes. It was in this historic context therefore that the Duke of Cumberland created the Obelisk Pond near Savill Gardens, and Henry Flitcroft, Virginia Water, the largest artificial lake of its day.
- 2.5.10 The Picturesque movement at the end of the 18th century was a reaction against Brown's smooth and supposedly dull imitation landscapes. It was argued that landscape design should be inspired by the type of rugged natural scenery suitable for painting, rough in texture and vegetation, wild, dramatic and awe inspiring. Within these gardens, the visitor was led through a series of carefully chosen routes to show the Picturesque wilderness to best effect. Humphrey Repton was influenced by some of the Picturesque ideas and dominated the late Georgian period although he also worked with the principles established by Brown. Frogmore Gardens were laid out in the informal Picturesque style by William Price for Queen Charlotte in the late 18th century.
- 2.5.11 The transformation of England into an industrial and increasingly urban society in the 19th century saw fundamental changes in garden and parkland styles. Technological progress included advances in heating and glassmaking techniques, and the invention of the lawn mower. Garden designs took inspiration from the past or from gardens of other countries. Landscape parks still dominated the countryside but their appearance was altered by the planting of newly introduced species, especially conifers, to form arboretums for example.
- 2.5.12 J C Loudon was the foremost Victorian writer on gardening advocating the 'gardenesque' approach to planting by which he meant that each individual plant should be displayed to its best advantage. His plant centred approach flourished in newly planted arboreta and public parks. In towns, public parks laid out for philanthropic reasons and social health reasons were becoming increasingly elaborate, with bedding schemes and water gardens, and space for sporting activities.

3.0 THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER OF WINDSOR & MAIDENHEAD

- 3.0.1 The Windsor and Maidenhead landscape has evolved over thousands of years as the result of complex interactions between the physical, natural and cultural factors identified in the previous chapters. 14 distinct landscape types and 32 discrete character areas have been identified within the borough's landscape, these are shown on Figure 3.
- 3.0.2 The location and extent of each generic landscape type and its component character areas are shown at the beginning of each section along with key characteristics for the landscape type, typical views of the landscape and an introductory description. Further detail of the physical, human and historic influences which have shaped the character of the landscape type is then given. Additional information on further key characteristics and detailed relevant information to the discrete character areas follows the landscape character type. If the landscape type is unique within the borough and therefore only found in one character area the information given for the landscape type is also that for the character area.
- 3.0.3 As detailed in the methodology, survey mapping work was undertaken in the field at 1:25,000 scale and then transferred into a digital format. Boundaries generally indicate transitions between landscape types or character areas, and are rarely seen as marked changes on the ground, unless otherwise stated.

Broad Type	Landscape Type	Landscape Character Area
Parkland	Estate Parkland	1a Windsor Castle
Parkland	Open Parkland	2a Windsor Great Park (North)
Parkland	Farmed Parkland	3a Windsor Riverside
	3b Old Windsor	
	3c Windsor Great park (South)	
	3d Windsor Great park (West)	
Parkland	Wooded Parkland	4a Windsor Forest
Farmland	Open Chalk Farmland	5a Littlewick Green
Farmland	Open Clay Farmland	6a Braywoodside
Farmland	Wooded Clay Farmland	7a Shurlock Row
Farmland	Settled Farm Sands and Clays	8a Waltham
	8b Ockwells	
	8c Holyport	
	8d Fifield & Oakley Green	
Farmland	Settled Wooded Chalk Knolls	9a Warren Row
	9b Cookham Dean	
	9c Winter Hill	

Broad Type	Landscape Type	Landscape Character Area
Farmland	Settled Wooded Sands	10a Sunningdale & Sunninghill
	10b Ascot Heath	
	10c South Ascot & South Sunningdale	
	10d Chobham Common	
Farmland	Farmed Chalk Slopes	11a Rose Hill
	11b Burchett Green	
	11c Cookham Rise	
Heathland	Wooded Heathland	12a Windsor Great Park (East)
Floodplain	Settled Farmed Floodplain	13a Bisham and Hurley
	13b Cookham	
	13c Eton	
	13d Datchet	
Floodplain	Settled Developed Floodplain	14a Summerleaze
	14b Bray	
	14c Horton & Wraysbury	



Landscape Character Areas

1a Windsor Castle

3.1 ESTATE PARKLAND

3.1.1 Key Characteristics

- Historic buildings of great architectural interest and cultural significance
- Unique historic designed landscape resulting from 800 years of consistent land management under Crown ownership and areas of landscaped pleasure gardens, both of which are included within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.
- Strong sense of historical continuity and Royal patronage as a result of historic features in the landscape (such as veteran trees) and a common vocabulary of landscape elements
- Unified and yet diverse landscape with inspiring and exhilarating qualities
- Access controlled by gate houses and lodges of 19th century origin
- Stunning views of Windsor Castle raised on a prominent chalk outcrop
- Parkland trees (some of which are veteran trees) either form drives and treed avenues that traverse the landscape, or stand in open parkland
- More intimate and enclosed landscape from Windsor Great Park ('the park proper')
- Physical and visual access into the landscape is controlled by stone boundary walls, vegetation and hedgerows in combination with ditches

3.1.2 Characteristic Tree Species

- Oak, Lime, Ash (Horse Chestnut non-native)



Windsor Castle



Albert Lodge, Albert Road (A308)



Frogmore House

Description

- 3.1.3 The Estate Parkland landscape type/area is a unique designed landscape of inspiring and breathtaking quality. There is a strong sense of historical significance, continuity and 'patronage'. The focus to this parkland area is the magnificent sandstone facade of Windsor Castle, England's premier castle and official residence of the Queen, which dominates the landscape of the Home Park and is the largest occupied castle in the world. It sits perched dramatically on a chalk promontory above the River Thames watercourse and is visible within the landscape from many miles around as is the North Slope, a grassed or wooded escarpment of defensive significance, which falls steeply down to the Thames river floodplain along the northern side of the castle confines, contrasting with it.
- 3.1.4 The Home Park parkland is a private, mature and historic landscape largely laid to permanent pasture and grazed by sheep and cattle. The maintenance of traditional land management gives it a unified character. A network of drives traverse it, many of which radiate from the Castle confines and some are flanked by avenues of veteran oak trees. Views within this landscape are contained by the rising landform of the chalk dipslope (the South Slopes) and mature parkland trees giving a more intimate and enclosed character from the wider parkland landscapes in the Great Park. The boundary of the estate varies in character, from stone estate walls to combinations of ditches and hedgerows.
- 3.1.5 This landscape provides the setting for the Royal residence of the colonnaded Frogmore House (17th-18th century), as well as numerous Royal recreation facilities and farming interests. The majestic house is framed by collections of exotic trees, such as mature cedars and faces onto manicured lawns and the serpentine ornamental Frogmore Lake. Its wider setting is formed by informal Picturesque-style pleasure grounds. Artificial mounds (spoil from the creation of the lake), provide interest within this flat landscape, and control views within the vicinity of the house of various built and natural features such as the Royal Mausoleum.

Boundaries and adjacent landscape types

- 3.1.6 The Estate Parkland landscape type and area encompasses the area within the immediate context of the nationally important Windsor Castle, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). It includes Home Park, Frogmore House and Gardens, the private Royal pleasure gardens, the parkland and working gardens within the immediate context of the Castle. The built edge of Windsor defines its western boundary. Albert Road (A308), forms the southern boundary. The northern and eastern boundaries follow the line of the North Slope, Coronation Avenue and Datchet Road (B3021).
- 3.1.7 This ornamental, sometimes manicured landscape, contrasts with the more open parkland of the Great Park (termed the 'park proper') and the wider farmed parkland areas, which are the working landscapes that would have traditionally supported the castle's requirements.
- 3.1.8 The area remains the private grounds to Windsor Castle and is managed by the Royal Household in conjunction with the Crown Estate.

Physical Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.1.9 The landscape of The Home Park is generally flat, at a level of 20m AOD to 25m AOD. This is with the exception of the chalk promontory on which Windsor Castle sits in the north west of the type/area. The land then rises up gently from 20m AOD to 45m AOD (the chalk dipslope termed the South Slope) to a steep north facing chalk scarp (termed the North Slope) which forms an arch shape to the east and south of the Castle. There are also man-made features and earthworks within the vicinity of Frogmore House.
- 3.1.10 The underlying geology of the area is varied. London Clay is found to the south and Reading Bed sands in the centre. There are also localised areas of alluvial drift floodplain material.
- 3.1.11 The Agricultural Land Classification identifies the potential agricultural productivity of the soils to be Grade 3 (relatively productive) with the northern edge of the site classed as Grade 4 (marginal). Improved grassland, calcareous grassland and setaside grassland can be identified through land cover data as well as areas of built form relating to Home Farm.
- 3.1.12 The man-made ornamental lake at Frogmore House is the principal water feature in this landscape.

Ecological Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.1.13 There are no nature conservation designations within the Home Park area. None of this area falls within the Windsor Forest and Great Park SSSI. However the historical continuity of the site for Crown use and the maintenance of traditional land management practices within the type makes it likely that many of the landscape features, such as the mature veteran trees and areas of unimproved grassland, would be of considerable ecological interest.
- 3.1.14 The grassland habitats found in this type are predominately improved although areas of calcareous grassland can be found in some areas, such as on the North Slope.

Human Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.1.15 The continual development of the Home Park area from the 12th century for Crown use has resulted in a mature unified landscape with a common language of landscape features. The patronage of the landscape by the Royal household is clear from the consistency seen in the styles, details and materials used for gatehouses, estate boundary walls and signage, and in the way the land has been managed.
- 3.1.16 There are two working farms within the Home Park (Shaw Farm and Prince Consort's Home Farm) which keep both cattle and sheep. Livestock is controlled using timber post and rail and electric fencing.

- 3.1.17 The Home Park also contains private recreational facilities such as a Golf Course and Tennis Courts, the Royal gardens (now lawn and pasture) and numerous working farm buildings.
- 3.1.18 The Three Castles recreational footpath follows the line of the Long Walk from Windsor Castle to Albert Road. There are no further public rights of way through the area although Home Park is occasionally open to the public.
- 3.1.19 The boundary of the Home Park, outside of the Castle and Windsor areas, are predominately defined by two rows of mature hawthorn hedges with a considerable ditch in between.

Historical Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.1.20 Historical influences on the character of the landscape are of paramount importance in the Estate Parkland landscape type (and area). The entire area is included in the Windsor Castle and Great Park Registered Historic Park and Garden, and is centred around the prominent round tower of Windsor Castle. The eastern castle enclosure, containing a terraced formal garden designed by Sir Jeffery Wyattville in the mid 19th century, projects into the Home Park while its western half (containing the Moat Garden of 15th century origin) projects into the town of Windsor.
- 3.1.21 The royal park is of medieval origin and therefore contains veteran, mainly oak, trees (the avenues of Elm being lost from Dutch Elm disease in the 1960s). Consistent land use and tree management has insured their survival.
- 3.1.22 The Home Park has been created and altered by successive royal influences and the styles of the time. For example in 1680 Charles II planted the Great Avenue of (what was) Lime trees to link Windsor Castle to the grounds of Windsor Great Park. The picturesque gardens at Frogmore Gardens were laid out in the 1790s for Queen Charlotte with advice from William Price on the site of an earlier 18th century formal garden. They were developed further by Queen Victoria.
- 3.1.23 The fate of the town of Windsor has always been closely linked with the castle and today attracts many visitors along with it. The centre of Windsor is designated as a Conservation Area. Its medieval core (focused on the Castle and Peascod Street) includes many buildings of interest predominately of rendered and stucco or red or yellow stock brick, with the western and southern areas of the town having developed since the beginning of the 20th century.

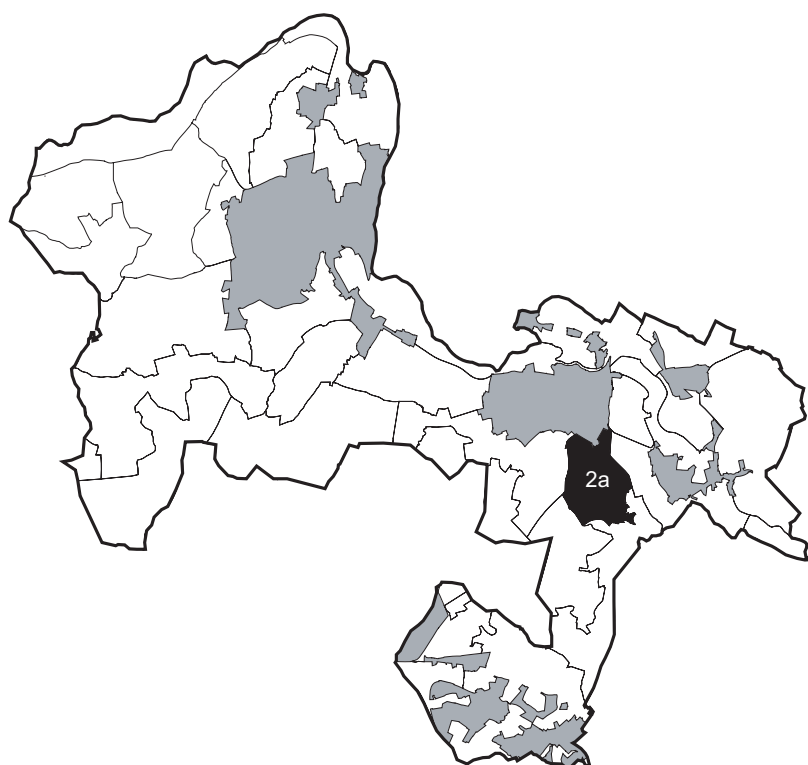
1a Windsor Castle

Key Characteristics (in addition to type)

As above

Description

As above



Landscape Character Areas

2a Windsor Great Park (North)

3.2 OPEN PARKLAND

3.2.1 Key Characteristics

- Windsor Great Park 'park proper', a designed historic landscape, which is included within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens
- Strong sense of historical continuity and Royal patronage as a result of historic features in the landscape (such as veteran trees and the 'park pale') and a common vocabulary of landscape elements such as signage and boundary treatments
- Relatively large and simple landscape with a strong pattern of expansive grassland areas (horizontal element) and parkland trees (vertical elements), and an absence of boundaries, which is exhilarating
- Mature oaks, some of which are veteran trees, within an open parkland setting
- Permanent improved and unimproved pasture with cattle and deer grazing
- Rides and Avenues
- Gently sloping flat landform
- The focus for recreational activity and formal events within the park
- Stunning near and long distance views of Windsor Castle, some of which are framed by treed avenues
- Views and noise of vehicular and aviation traffic

3.2.2 Characteristic Tree Species

- Oak, Hawthorn (Horse Chestnut and Plane: non-native)



Queen Anne's Gate, Sheet Street Road (A332)



Windsor Castle from The Long Walk



Review Ground, off Sheet Street Road (A332)



Windsor Castle from The Long Walk



Sheet Street Road (A332)



Windsor Great Park

Description

- 3.2.3 The open parkland of Windsor Great Park is a flat to gently undulating pastoral landscape grazed by deer and sheep. The parkland has its origin in the medieval deer park which extended across much of east Berkshire from this area, and as such has a uniquely unified yet simple managed character. A strong sense of patronage of the landscape is conveyed by the common vocabulary seen in signage details, surface or boundary treatments, and in land management. The grassy slopes extend for long distances and the absence of boundaries and the extent of access to the countryside is exhilarating for walkers, cyclist and riders alike. This is with the exception of temporary electric stock fencing in some areas. Mature parkland trees of ancient origin and treed avenues of horsechestnut and planes radiate out from Windsor Castle and are strong vertical elements, in an otherwise generally flat landscape, which block and contain views through the parkland and to Windsor Castle. The open grassland is also punctuated by smaller deciduous copses, some of which are also of ancient origin. Small ponds and streams are found within the copses or the wider landscape as treelined watercourses. Compacted ground tracks traverse the Park and are heavily used by visitors. Access is controlled into this parkland by a series of gate houses and lodges. Its extent is loosely defined by the park pale earth work which originally formed the boundary to the deer park.
- 3.2.4 The landscape has contrasting aesthetic characteristics. For example differential mowing and grazing regimes result in areas of rougher and smoother textural qualities, and although the landscape is generally open it can feel more intimate and enclosed when in the vicinity of the mature parkland trees.
- 3.2.5 This landscape forms the setting for events in the park. It is also the focus for tourism. Views (and noise) of traffic on the A332 and planes on the flightpath to Heathrow detract from this otherwise rural landscape.

Boundaries and adjacent landscape types

- 3.2.6 The Open Parkland landscape type and area encompasses the open parkland of Windsor Great Park nearest to Windsor, which is publicly accessible. This area is to the south east of Windsor Town and includes the Review Ground, part of Queen Anne's Ride, The Gallop and The Long Walk. The boundary to the east is drawn where woodland on the rising ground of Snow/Spring Hill begins to form a continuous canopy. To the west the boundary of this landscape type is defined by the extent of the rough grazing land, and to the south the increased numbers of woodland copses, fewer parkland trees and a greater incidence of arable cropping differentiates this type/area from the wider areas of the Farmed Parkland landscape type. However, the transition is gradual.
- 3.2.7 It shares similar characteristics to both the Estate Parkland and Farmed Parkland landscape types. In fact the whole of this landscape type, with the exception of the north west corner adjacent to the urban edge of Windsor, is surrounded by the Farmed Parkland landscape type.

Physical Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.2.8 The Open Parkland landscape type is a predominately flat landscape with very gentle undulations between 25m AOD and 40m AOD. The landscape generally falls from south west to north east.
- 3.2.9 The underlying geology of the area is London Clay. The soils are generally of Grade 3 quality with the most productive soils in the eastern areas.
- 3.2.10 Small streams and ponds are common within this landscape such as Battle Bourne and Rush Pond, and are often indicated within the landscape as a tree grouping or tree lined watercourse.

Ecological Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.2.11 The Windsor Forest and Great Park has been managed by the Crown estate from the 12th century. This continuity of use and management has created unique habitats of great ecological interest and as such almost the entire Great Park and Forest is designated as an SSSI and cSAC. Its cSAC designation highlights the importance of this landscape as a habitat of European significance. Much of the Open Parkland landscape character type/area falls within this wider designation with the open parkland (including acid grassland areas) and mature trees being the principal habitats of ecological interest. Ancient veteran oak pollards (many of which are over 500 years) found within the parkland are habitat for rare invertebrates (second only to the New Forest) and the rich acid grassland around Snow Hill contains a diverse flora such as Adder's Tongue Fern and Harebell.
- 3.2.12 The Long Walk, however, and the areas of improved farmland within the landscape type/area are excluded from these designations.
- 3.2.13 Snow Hill acid grassland is also included in the Grassland Inventory.

Human Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.2.14 Human influences on the landscape seen elsewhere in the Royal Borough, such as modern residential development, intensive farming practices and gravel extraction, are notably absent. Instead 800 years of continuous Royal patronage has created a uniquely unified pastoral landscape whose extent remains impressive to this day.
- 3.2.15 Land cover is mainly grassland with some setaside land, resulting in pastoral landscape interspersed with numerous mature oaks and copses of ancient origin. There are occasional areas of dwarf shrub heath.
- 3.2.16 Rural settlement has been traditionally limited within this landscape by the creation of the Royal deer parks and the later landscaped parks.

- 3.2.17 The principal vehicular routeway through this landscape is the A332 which threads through the pastoral land and provides several parking/ viewing areas along its route. The Crown estate allows public access for a wide range of activities within set areas, for example the Three Castles Path, which is popular for walkers and riders. However, horseriding is by permit only. Routeways are indicated by a clear and consistent vocabulary of gateways and signage, and are either made of macadam (in highly trafficked areas) or compacted ground.
- 3.2.18 Car parking during peak seasons can become temporary discordant features in the landscape when the vehicles catch the light. Views of temporary marquees, security fencing and car parking associated with open air events are often visible within the Review Ground in summer months.
- 3.2.19 The south eastern urban edge of Windsor is not prominent from within this landscape type/area as it is reasonably well screened and the building forms and styles are traditional and vernacular.
- 3.2.20 The wooded slopes of Snow and Spring Hill contain views to the west, and create wooded horizons within views from the parkland.

Historical Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.2.21 Historical influences on landscape character are of paramount importance in the Open Parkland landscape type. Windsor Great Park, of which this landscape type/area falls within, is included in English Heritage's Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. A brief chronology of the Great Park is as follows:
- 3.2.22 It was created in the 12th Century, out of Windsor Forest, as a royal hunting park. Land was enclosed for the hunting of deer and wild boar at this time, with a series of fences and ditches known as 'park pale' and by c1365 had evolved into approximately its present, late 20th century size and shape. Sections of the park pale boundary are still evident around the parkland today.
- 3.2.23 The late medieval /early modern park, which developed northwards from the Virginia Brook, contained internal divisions, which were visible in the 17th Century Norden Survey (1607). The divisions probably reflected the various parts which had been joined together, each with its own lodge and keeper. The park as shown by Norden forms the core of the present (late 20th century) Great Park. Further additions were subsequently made, mainly to the north-west and south-east.
- 3.2.24 During the Commonwealth (1649-53) land was sold to private individuals, one of whom, Col James Byfield, constructed a house known as the Great Lodge at the centre of the park (known from the late-18th century as Cumberland Lodge) which, following the Restoration (1660) when the land reverted to the Crown, became the Ranger's official residence and principal residence of the Great Park.
- 3.2.25 The early 16th century Cranbourne Lodge, a hunting lodge, was rebuilt as a substantial residence in 1665, and its gardens embellished c1770 with the creation of a series of terraces and formal gardens, with avenues radiating across the park (see below).

- 3.2.26 In the mid-18th century both Cumberland and Cranbourne Lodges and their gardens were further embellished when responsibility for the Great Park and Cranbourne were combined for the first time.
- 3.2.27 In the 1790s George III employed the agricultural improver Nathaniel Kent to make recommendations about the land within the Great Park, resulting in extended farming of the park and the construction of new farm buildings. George IV built the picturesque Royal Lodge in c1814, set within its own grounds, as his private residence.
- 3.2.28 The extent and management of the open pasture land in this area was formalised by the 1813 Windsor Forest Enclosure Act which allowed the Crown to retain 6500 acres of old forest and 1500 acres of mature woodland at Cranbourne. At this time some 3000 acres were set aside within Windsor Great Park for deer and cattle, and this could not be cultivated.
- 3.2.29 During the Victorian era Windsor Great Park played an important part in the lives of Queen Victoria and her husband Prince Albert. Appointed Ranger of the park, the Prince Consort developed the farming and forestry interests within the park (his namesake given to Prince Consort's Home Farm, in Home Park).
- 3.2.30 In the 20th century a small model village designed by Sydney Tatchell, The Village, was built to house park workers and their families and Queen Victoria had a school built (Mezel Hill) so that children of workers could receive an education. The school, Crown assisted within the Berkshire Education Authority, still serves the same function to this day. The 20th century has seen a period of social development at the Village which has been expanded to include the facilities of a village club and a local shop.
- 3.2.31 The war years saw an upheaval in the land management with deer lawns and pasture being turned over to arable stock. The deer herds were removed at the end of the Second World War and were reintroduced by the present ranger, HRH The Duke of Edinburgh in 1979.
- 3.2.32 The park remains in the ownership of the Crown, and is managed by the Crown Estate.
- 3.2.33 The Rides, key features in this landscape, help to provide unity within it. The Long Walk, which is 4km in length, is a prominent linear feature in this landscape type/area and those adjacent to it, and was originally planted in 1680 as elms under the reign of King Charles II. It now contains a mix of horse chestnut and plane trees, and links Windsor Castle to the Great Park and the statue of King George III astride his horse at Snow Hill. Known popularly as the Copper Horse it commemorates King George's significant contribution to the development of the Great Park, which included the introduction of the farms (see above) that still thrive to this day. The planting of the Long Walk was followed by an active period of landscaping of the open parkland as seen elsewhere in the country and many of the avenues, woods and copses seen in the landscape today are a legacy of this period. Queen Anne's Ride and The Gallop are two further rides that are of historic interest. The c5km long Queen Anne's Ride was laid out c1708.

3.2.34 Bear's Rails SAM, located close to the eastern extent of the park pale near Old Windsor, is contained by a woodland group and therefore not clearly visible within the wider landscape. The moated Royal manorial site is thought to have been added to the park in 1359 and is of great archaeological importance not least because of the quality and range of earthwork features seen at the site today.

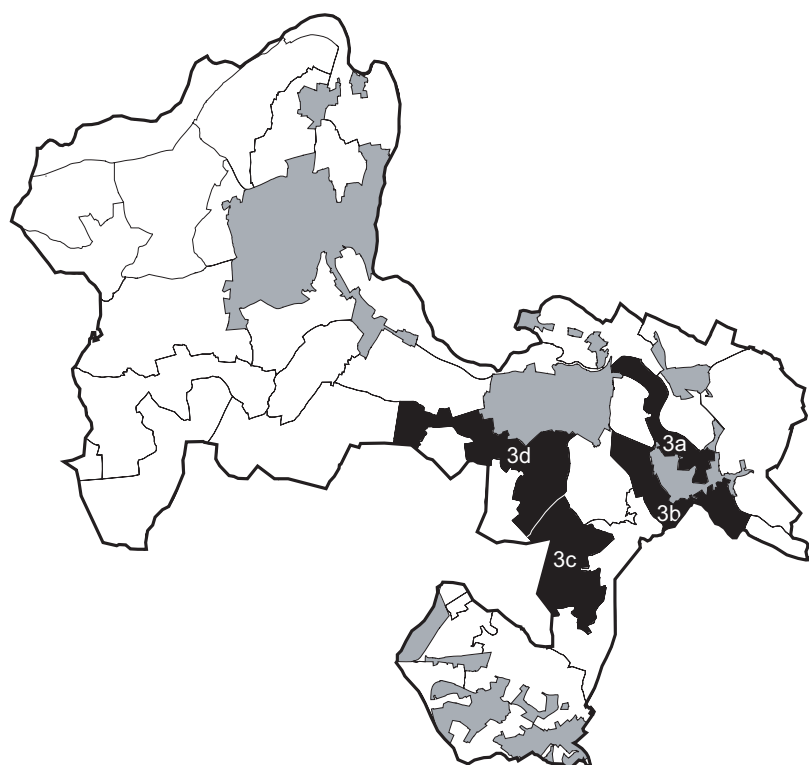
2a Windsor Great Park (North)

Key Characteristics (in addition to type)

As above

Description

As above



Landscape Character Areas

- 3a Windsor Riverside
- 3b Old Windsor
- 3c Windsor Great Park (South)
- 3d Windsor Great Park (West)

3.3 FARMED PARKLAND

3.3.1 Key Characteristics

- A designed historic landscape, much of which is included within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens, with both arable and pastoral land uses, and a unified feel
- A medium- large scale agricultural landscape which is diverse and interesting but largely inaccessible and therefore remote in character
- Deciduous woodland copses and belts, some of ancient origin
- Mature parkland and field trees, some of which are veteran trees
- Ornamental ponds and avenues are remnants of the c17th century landscaped parkland
- Predominately undulating landform which is intermittently open and enclosed
- Land predominately farmed by the Crown estate, so there is a strong sense of Royal patronage
- Settlement restricted to The Village, gatehouses, lodges and marker houses associated with the Crown estate (many of which are of historic interest), and individual farmsteads set within working farmland
- Greater frequency of field boundaries, of varying condition, which control access
- Woodland, grassland and wetland of great ecological interest

3.3.2 Characteristic Tree Species

- Beech, Oak, Birch, Ash, Sycamore, Cherry, Rowan, Hawthorn, Field Maple, Hazel, Hawthorn, Willow, Lime



Albert Road (A308) looking south



View south of St Leonards Hill (Legoland) on B383



Entrance to The Gallop, overlooking Seymour's Plantation



St Peter's & St Andrew's,
Old Windsor



Lakeside Farm, near Fifield

Description

- 3.3.3 The Farmed Parkland landscape type encompasses the landscapes of the wider historic parkland areas associated with the medieval Royal Hunting Forest of Windsor and/or the designed landscapes of the 17th century, outside of the continuously wooded Windsor Forest. This is a mature agrarian landscape which is sparsely settled and intensively managed.
- 3.3.4 The scale of the fields varies, from vast expanses of arable fields within flatter areas (associated with the Thames floodplain), to gently undulating permanent pastureland of medium - large scale fields as the land rises westward towards Windsor Forest. The field boundaries vary in type and condition but generally are defined by clipped hedgerows, some of which contain veteran trees, or post and rail timber fencing. Gatehouses and lodges mark and control entrances and routeways, and pathways and signage have a common vocabulary of design detail. This consistency in the management of the land gives a strong sense that this is an estate landscape which is 'shaped by one hand'. This is reinforced by the absence of settlement with the exception of isolated farmsteads and the estate village at the centre of the Great Park. However these built features are screened by parkland trees and are rarely visible from the wider landscape.
- 3.3.5 The ancient origin of the landscape, and the continuity of land ownership, is also apparent in the occurrence of historic landscape features such as veteran trees, copses and treed avenues. The secluded Great Meadow ornamental pond in the heart of the Great Park provides a remote refuge for wintering wildfowl. Overall these features contribute a historical and ecological dimension to the character of the landscape, adding to its richness and depth.
- 3.3.6 The resultant landscape is a unified, diverse and interesting one which is sometimes open with long distance views to wooded horizons, and sometimes intimate and enclosed, where the woodland copses and parkland trees contain views. It is highly textural but often muted in colour. The absence of settlement, roads and the control of access often gives it a remote feel. However, planes on the flight path to Heathrow often reduce the perceived remoteness of this landscape.

Boundaries and adjacent landscape types

- 3.3.7 The Farmed Parkland landscape type is found in extensive areas of the Royal Borough, to the south and east of Windsor. It includes the lowland farmland adjacent to the Thames between New and Old Windsor on the one hand and the rising ground to the west (that subsequently becomes Windsor Forest) on the other. This landscape type adjoins the Open Parkland landscape type in many areas, Wooded Heathland to the south east and the Wooded Parkland to the west.

- 3.3.8 The principal differences between this area and the Open Parkland landscape type is the variable nature of the landform and land uses, particularly the increase in arable farmland. This results in a more enclosed, working landscape (with a resultant reduction in public access) and a more intimate and diverse character.
- 3.3.9 There are areas of farmland which are included in this landscape type although they are not Crown owned. This is because they still retain important 'estate parkland' features such as mature parkland avenues and copses, some of which may be relic features of the designed landscape movements of the c17th and 18th centuries or earlier landscapes. However, unfortunately, these areas often show signs of decline.

Adjoining landscape types of parallel (district level) studies

- 3.3.10 The Windsor Great Park (South) and Windsor Great Park (West) landscape character areas are adjoined on their western and southern boundaries by the Windsor Forest landscape character area (Wooded Parkland landscape character type) as identified in the Bracknell Forest Landscape Strategy.
- 3.3.11 The easternmost extent of Windsor Great Park (West) also adjoins the Winkfield landscape character area (Rolling Open Farmland landscape character type) as identified in the Bracknell Forest Landscape Strategy.

Physical Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.3.12 The underlying geology of this landscape type is predominately London Clay. The soils are relatively fertile and productive (Grade 3) and therefore given over to arable farming. Within the Thames floodplain area alluvial deposits provide even richer soils for the further intensification of agricultural production.
- 3.3.13 Ornamental ponds are features, such as Russels Pond and Great Meadow Pond. Land drainage is also evident within the farmland landscape as ditches within areas of particularly heavy clay soils.
- 3.3.14 The landscape rises in a south westerly direction from 20m AOD at Windsor Riverside to 75m AOD at Legoland and 80m AOD at Cranbourne Tower.

Ecological Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.3.15 The Farmed Parkland landscape type includes landscape character areas within the Great Park (Windsor Great Park South and Windsor Great Park West). Within these areas the farm woodlands, copses and hedgerows which form the framework for the farmland of the locality are included within the Windsor Forest and Great Park SSSI. Many are also included in the cSAC. The listing also includes Great Meadow Pond and areas surrounding it of unimproved species

rich acid grassland (such as that around Snow Hill). These areas are habitat for rare flora and fauna. Its cSAC designation highlights the importance of these features as habitats of European significance.

- 3.3.16 Beyond the Windsor Great Park and Forest the principal habitats found are improved grasslands and arable farmland. Woodland copses and mature parkland/field trees are also commonly found and represent relic features of previous designed landscapes, as such they are likely to be of high ecological interest.

Human Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.3.17 Human influences on the landscape seen elsewhere in the Royal Borough, such as settlement and gravel extraction, are notably absent (as for the Open Parkland landscape type) due to the almost continuous ownership, and therefore control, of this landscape by the Crown since the 12th century.
- 3.3.18 The landscape is predominately unsettled. There are a number of gatehouses within this landscape type which form built features. They are situated at the entrances to the park and are attractive two storey detached buildings, generally rendered pink and white. There are also scattered buildings within the parkland which are of differing characters and ages (such as at The Village). However, many are detached dwellings of good architectural quality, such as the Forest Lodge and Rangers Lodge. Non-residential buildings include Clock Case (a small square tower of brick) and Fort Belvedere.
- 3.3.19 The principal Crown-controlled farms in this type are Flemish Farm and Norfolk Farm. The consistency of land management practices expressed through the detail of boundary fencing, hedgerow management and signage results in an unrivalled sense of estate style patronage within much of this landscape.
- 3.3.20 Much of the woodland within this landscape type is managed under the Woodland Grant Scheme.
- 3.3.21 On the periphery of the Farmed Parkland landscape type, beyond the extent of Crown ownership, remnants of the parkland patterns are still evident in the landscape but there are newer landuses influencing character such as Legoland at St Leonards Hill and commercial equestrian farming at Lakeside Farm.
- 3.3.22 Sustrans route 4 passes through this landscape type linking Reading by Warren Row, Knowle Hill, Maidenhead, Dorney, Windsor to Runnymede and East.

Historical Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.3.23 This landscape is rich in historical influences because of its proximity to Windsor Castle, the River Thames and the original site of Edward the Confessor's villa at Kingsbury. It includes relics of both the 17th century designed landscapes of the Great Park area and other historical and/or archaeological features due to its geographic proximity to the above sites in the locality.
- 3.3.24 Much of this landscape is included within English Heritage's Register of Historic Parks and Gardens, a general description of which has been given within the Open Parkland landscape type.
- 3.3.25 There are numerous features of archaeological interest within the Farmed Parkland landscape type which are indicators of the importance of this landscape in historical terms, namely, the rich history of early settlement in the locality. They should be appreciated in the context of the wider historic parkland designation defined by English Heritage.
- 3.3.26 Edward the Confessor's Palace SAM is found at Kingsbury, Old Windsor. The Scheduled monument includes land within a pronounced meander of the Thames extending from the Old Windsor Weir in the north, and parts of Ham Island, down to Church House and The Priory in the south. The monument comprises 5 areas which formed an extensive early and medieval royal palace dating from the 7th or 8th century AD however there are no above ground features visible in the landscape today. Documentary evidence shows that the Old Windsor site was a royal place or villa of Edward the Confessor and the early Norman Kings. The Royal Palace was moved to higher ground at New Windsor during Saxon times by William the Conqueror, where the raised motte-and-bailey castle provided a better defensible location.
- 3.3.27 The SAM also includes the 'Windsor Great Ditch' considered to date to the 7th century. This major boundary ditch survives in the landscape as an earthwork over a length of c400m between Church Road and Manor Farm.
- 3.3.28 Other archaeological features which are SAMs within this landscape type include the moated sites at Moat Park and Tileplace Farm, and Ankerwyke Priory. The peak period during which moated sites were built was between about 1250 and 1350 AD. Although dissected by the Bourne Ditch the earthwork feature at Moat Park is visible within the landscape as a raised platform 0.5m above the level of the surrounding ground, which is encircled by a dry moat. The site appears on Nordens map of 1607 as a moated lodge. The SAM at Tileplace Farm is a similar feature which has survived well. It includes an earthwork moated site with 2 causeways and standing water in 3 arms of the moat, both of which are visible in the landscape today.
- 3.3.29 The SAM of Ankerwyke Priory, south of Wrasbury, is of interest due to its origin as a Benedictine nunnery. Today the remains consist of a portion of a ruined 13th century building (Grade II listed), moat, fishponds and an extensive area of earthworks.

3.3.30 There are 4 potential subdivisions of the Farmed Parkland landscape type:

- 3a Windsor Riverside
- 3b Old Windsor
- 3c Windsor Great park (South)
- 3d Windsor Great park (West)

3.3.31 These areas have the generic characteristics of the type but in addition have important locally distinctive variations. The key characteristics highlighted are in addition to those identified in the landscape type.

3a Windsor Riverside

Key Characteristics (in addition to type)

- Influences of urban areas (Eton, Datchet and Old Windsor)
- Particularly high occurrence of archaeological/historic features in the landscape
- Under crown ownership
- Restricted access
- Riverside pollarded willows

Description

3.3.32 The Windsor Riverside landscape character area includes the rich flat arable landscape that is found between the River Thames and the North Slope, Coronation Avenue/ Datchet Road (Estate Parkland landscape type/area). At its northern end, to the north of Windsor Road (B470), the floodplain is very open and used as a public park. Views of the channelled river, Waterloo to Windsor branchline, and across to Eton are obtained from the park which has a pleasant but quite busy feel.

3.3.33 Further south between Windsor Road (B470) and Datchet Road (B3021), on the west side of the river and opposite Datchet, views and access onto the floodplain area adjacent to the Home Park are restricted. However available information would indicate that this is a rich arable landscape which is influenced by the built areas of Eton, Datchet and Old Windsor whose built forms would be visible and therefore give a more settled feel to the landscape within this locality.

3.3.34 At the southern end of the landscape character area farmland (focused around Manor Farm) is influenced by settlement at Old Windsor and Wraybury which almost surrounds it. Dispersed detached residential development is found on the south east bank of the river separating the site of King John's Hunting Lodge from its river setting.

- 3.3.35 The entire landscape area is within Crown ownership and this has been important in safeguarding the setting of the Castle in the landscape from the east, and perhaps more importantly, controlling the use and access to the Home Park from this side.
- 3.3.36 Mature trees in avenues and as copses are scattered across this arable landscape and there are remnants of earlier parkland features introduced into this area in the 17th and 18th centuries.

3b Old Windsor

Key Characteristics (in addition to type)

- Parliamentary enclosures suggested by land division into smaller fields
- Predominately pastureland
- Particularly high occurrence of archaeological/historic features in the landscape
- Exclusive riverside development and some large scale development
- Influences of Wraysbury
- Minor trackways
- Absence of parkland trees

Description

- 3.3.37 The Old Windsor landscape character area includes the historic farmlands to the south of Old Windsor and south of Wraysbury. This landscape has a rich history due to its proximity to Windsor Castle, the original palace at Old Windsor, and the River Thames. The landscape is flat to gently undulating and fields are regularly divided suggesting this landscape was enclosed during the 19th century. The grazing of sheep and cattle is the predominant landuse, with some linear blocks of mature deciduous woodland.
- 3.3.38 The landscape area is not within Crown ownership but retains a unified character.
- 3.3.39 Old Windsor includes the original site of Windsor Castle before its move to its present location, and indeed this stretch of the Thames floodplain was a focus for settlement from early times. During the 14th century Wraysbury (or Wyrardisbury) was a Royal Manor and its lands often featured in the dowries of English Queens. The village grew up around the Church of St Andrew which, although of 12th century origin and containing some original features, was largely rebuilt in the 19th century. Modern development has gradually extended the size of the village along roadways in a ribbon pattern, especially towards the Thames. South of Wraysbury, the yew tree in the grounds of the 12th century Benedictine Ankerwyke Priory is found, which is where Henry VIII is said to have met with Anne Boleyn. The sealing of Magna Carta by King John on 15th June 1215 is thought to have occurred on the banks of the Thames adjacent to Magna Carta Island and 1275 has been estimated as the origin of part of the Listed Building known locally as King John's Hunting Lodge.

3c Windsor Great Park (South)

Key Characteristics (in addition to type)

- Predominately arable landscape
- Ornamental ponds set against a woodland backdrop
- Public access controlled
- Green lanes with wide mown verges

Description

- 3.3.40 This landscape character area encompasses the undulating arable parkland in the south of Windsor Great Park. It extends beyond Norfolk Farm to meet the plantation woodlands of Virginia Water. The deer grazing lawns surrounding The Village and the landscape to the north of Rangers Lodge is also included. The transition between Windsor Great Park (North) landscape character area and the Windsor Great Park (South) is gradual. Mature woodland copses, tree avenues and parkland trees are features but the landscape is more clearly divided into fields and more substantial areas are taken over for arable crop production. The woodland habitats within this landscape area are of considerable ecological interest, and as such are included in the Windsor Great Park SSSI and cSAC, however the improved farmland is not.
- 3.3.41 This landscape remains largely unsettled with the exception of The Village, gatehouses (Forest Gate and Sandpit Gate), Forest Lodge and Norfolk Farm (both of 18th century origin). Ornamental ponds are features in this landscape, namely Isle of Wright Pond, Russels Pond and Great Meadow Pond, and are often seen against a woodland backdrop.
- 3.3.42 Three Castles Path winds through the Windsor Great Park (South) landscape area from north of Cumberland Lodge (in the Windsor Great Park (East) landscape character area) southwards along a clearly defined agricultural trackway before entering South Forest, which is outside the borough boundary but would fall within the Wooded Parkland landscape character type.

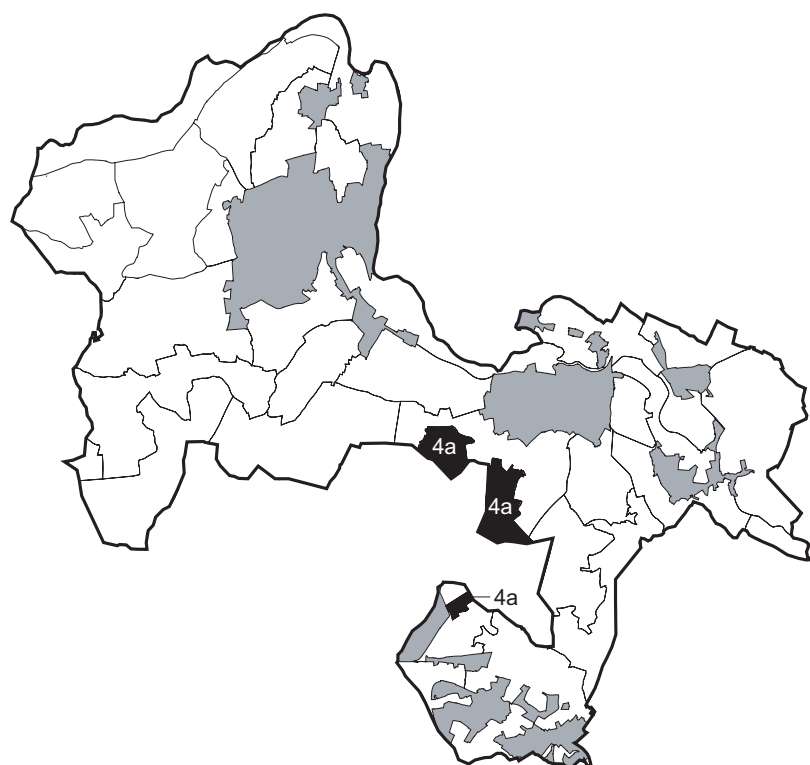
3d Windsor Great Park (West)

Key Characteristics (in addition to type)

- More pronounced undulating landform
- Periphery parkland landscapes with varied land uses
- Network of agricultural trackways
- Settlement limited to farmsteads
- Public access restricted to Public Rights of Way
- Mixture of land ownership

Description

- 3.3.43 The Windsor Great Park (West) landscape character area includes the farmed parkland on the periphery of the Crown estate and those areas beyond it which appear to retain characteristics of the wider historic Windsor Great Park area although are not within Crown ownership today. The area extends from the Windsor to Ascot Road (A332) in the south (with the exception of the Cavalry Exercise Ground) to beyond St Leonards Hill at Lakeside Farm and New Lodge Farm. This landscape is not as unified as other landscape areas in this type because of the more varied landuses and ownerships found. However the parkland character is retained because of the frequent occurrence of mature woodland and parkland trees (possible remnants of the early Royal deer park designed landscapes of the 17th and 18th centuries) and estate management regimes.
- 3.3.44 The 18th century working farm at Flemish Farm influences the southern portion of this landscape. It is accessed from the A332 and B3022 via numerous minor roadways and tracks, and is the focus for pastoral farming activity within this portion of the Windsor Great Park. To the north east of Flemish Farm is Moat Park. Formerly a separate area to the Great Park, Moat Park was ornamented during the early 18th century as landscaped parkland. Star Clump remains from this period of landscaping.
- 3.3.45 Towards the periphery of the Crown estate the sense of Royal patronage within the landscape diminishes, fields are subdivided as paddocks, boundaries are more varied and in some places derelict. However an estate style boundary is still evident as a combined ditch with post and rail timber fence along the southern boundary of the B3022.
- 3.3.46 In the central area of this landscape the relatively recent development of Legoland is located on the hillside of St Leonards. Set within a wooded framework it is relatively screened from the wider landscape although views of the area are obtained from Flemish Farm. It is a popular visitor attraction and the road improvements at the entrance to the site 'urbanises' what is otherwise a relatively minor route between Windsor and Cranbourne.
- 3.3.47 Beyond St Leonards Hill Gale House, Tarbay and Lakeside Farms and their associated farmland separate the Clewer Green area of Maidenhead from the continuous woodland at Windsor Forest. These relatively large farms include pastureland and commercial equestrian landscapes. The retention and creation (in some places) of woodland blocks and copses, and estate style boundary treatments, differentiates these area from the Settled Farmed Sands and Clays to the north and Open Clay Farmland to the west, and make them more akin to the parkland landscape of the Great Park.



Landscape Character Areas

4a Windsor Forest

3.4 WOODED PARKLAND

3.4.1 Key Characteristics

- Continuous mature woodland with an ancient 'wildwood' character
- Mixed coniferous and deciduous woodland of great ecological and historical interest
- Ancient pollarded veteran trees
- Strong sense of historical continuity/Royal patronage as evidenced by historic features in the landscape (such as veteran trees and the 'park pale') and a common vocabulary of landscape elements such as signage and boundary treatments
- Isolated gatehouses and lodges
- Land owned and managed by the Crown estate

3.4.2 Characteristic Tree Species

- Beech, Oak, Birch, Ash, Sycamore, Cherry (Spruce and Pine: planted as a crop - non-native)



Cranbourne Chase, Windsor Forest



Cranbourne Chase, Windsor Forest

Description

- 3.4.3 The Wooded Parkland landscape type/area consists of a continuous tract of woodland which runs for over 5km to the south west of Windsor. This woodland, known as Windsor Forest, is a unique and historic landscape, being the largest tract of continuous woodland in Berkshire with its origin in royal medieval hunting forest of Windsor. It includes a range of rich habitats from coniferous and mixed plantations through to mature and ultra-mature broadleaved woodlands. Tucked within the woodland, along shaded and enclosed woodland tracks, or at the edge of the Forest with the Great Park, an occasional Crown estate forestry lodge can be seen. Relics of the primary forest survive as ancient oak pollards scattered throughout the forest.
- 3.4.4 The woodland restricts many long range views into and out of the landscape type, although the woodland glades, roads and tracks that run through the type afford the occasional longer range view. The character within the forest is therefore generally enclosed with an ancient 'wildwood' quality. The park boundary is clearly defined by continuous chestnut pale/white picket style fencing or managed hedgerow, or sometimes by the historic earthwork of the 'park pale'.

Boundaries and adjacent landscape types

- 3.4.5 The Wooded Parkland landscape type covers the majority of Windsor Forest which includes Holliday's Plain, Cranbourne Chase and South Forest (largely outside of the borough).
- 3.4.6 The wooded parkland provides the backdrop to Farmed Parkland landscape type.

Adjoining landscape types of parallel (district level) studies

- 3.4.7 The Windsor Forest landscape character area adjoins both the Winkfield and Windsor Forest landscape character areas (Rolling Open Farmland and Wooded Parkland landscape character types) as identified in the Bracknell Forest Landscape Strategy.

Physical Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.4.8 The landscape within this type varies between 30m AOD and 90m AOD. The underlying geology of the area is mainly London Clay but on the southern and western edge of the Royal Borough, pockets of Bagshot Beds sands can be found. Within Holliday's Plain and High Standing Hill Woods the land cover masks the valley slopes of the numerous streams and drainage ditches which run from the woodland areas through the open landscapes to the north and ultimately the River Thames. Wooded streams within South Forest have less pronounced slopes and fall south to Great Pond, north of Cheapside.
- 3.4.9 The soils are predominately classified as non agricultural where woodland is to be found. There are occasional pockets of Grade 3 soils located mainly on the southern boundary, in the vicinity of Ascot.

Ecological Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.4.10 The entire extent of the Wooded Parkland landscape character type is included within the Windsor Forest and Great Park SSSI and cSAC. A range of habitats are represented within the woodland from coniferous and mixed plantations through to mature and over mature broadleaved woodland. Relics of the primary forest still survive as ancient oak pollards scattered throughout the Forest. Many of these ancient trees are over 500 years old and some are reputed to be up to 800 years old. Windsor Forest is second only to the New Forest with regards to the richness of its invertebrate fauna, particularly its rare beetles and flies. Of equal ecological interest, although not reaching such a great age, are numerous over-mature beech trees. Being partially hollow and decayed, both the oaks and beeches afford habitats for a number of extremely rare and specialised insects as well as nesting sites for birds. Groves of hornbeam are also a favoured wintering site for the largest flock of hawfinches in Britain.

Human Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.4.11 The woodland of this landscape type is managed by the Windsor Estate Forestry Department (which also manages Swinley Forest). It extends to 3,100 ha (7,600 acres) in Windsor and Swinley Forests. Walking within it is controlled by a key holder and permit system, thus minimising damage to sensitive habitats.
- 3.4.12 The Forest is managed by 19 employees including three forest officers staff of the Windsor Estate Forestry Department. A multipurpose policy is followed in which sustainable timber production plays a key role. The department is commercially orientated and aims to produce the maximum sustainable yield of timber at the best market price. The current annual timber yield is 13,000 cu metres. The yield is predicted to rise to 15,000 cu metres in 2010, which will remain sustainable. The department has acquired a good reputation in British forestry winning a Centres of Excellence Award in 1994 and the Royal Agricultural Society's award for the best managed woodlands in the Home Counties in 1996. Silvicultural excellence is nationally recognised at Windsor for the management of naturally regenerated pinewoods and mixed broadleaf and coniferous plantations. However the management of the Windsor Forest is limited by for its designation as a SSSI and cSAC. A Minute of Intent signed by the Crown Estate Commissioners and the Nature Conservancy in 1972 provides for consultation over certain aspects of management in the SSSI including the issuing of permits for research and the protection of especially valuable sites.
- 3.4.13 Windsor Forest is fragmented by 3 roadways, the B3022 which runs from Windsor to Cranbourne, the Windsor to Ascot Road (A332) and the B383. The straight roadways have grassed verges (3-4m wide) on either sides and the boundary of the woodland is defined by tall boundaries of white wooden post and rail fencing (approximately 1.5m high), chestnut pale fencing or chipped hedgerows.

- 3.4.14 Settlement throughout the woodland is limited to Lodge houses under Crown estate ownership. These buildings are of different character and ages, but are principally detached dwellings of good architectural quality that were built to house estate workers. The buildings often tend to be isolated houses along tracks within the heart of the woodland away from the main routeways, although some are on roadways and at the boundary of the Forest with the Park.
- 3.4.15 The woodland is managed under the Woodland Grant Scheme.

Historical Influences

- 3.4.16 There has been Royal association with the Windsor Forest since the 11th Century when the original Windsor castle was built by William I in 1070 at Old Windsor. Originally the woodland was part of the royal hunting forests, the Crown estate had its own laws and the Royal Forests were drawn in under these laws. Essentially this meant that the Crown had rights over the hunting and timber outputs within the area.
- 3.4.17 During the Middle Ages many Royal forests, including Windsor, were progressively felled of their oak trees for ship construction and building. In 1580 a concerned Queen Elizabeth I instructed oak plantations to be established at Windsor by acorns sowing, so creating the first recorded plantation of oak trees. Further oak planting occurred between 1820 and 1870, some of which survive today, although they were extensively felled during the First World War. Systematic forest management commenced in the 1920s when replanting after the First World War was started. Today the forest is managed under a 'multi-purpose' policy, integrating wildlife conservation, timber production, preservation of the traditional landscape and public access objectives.
- 3.4.18 The continuity of wealthy land ownership has helped keep it a managed productive woodland over time.

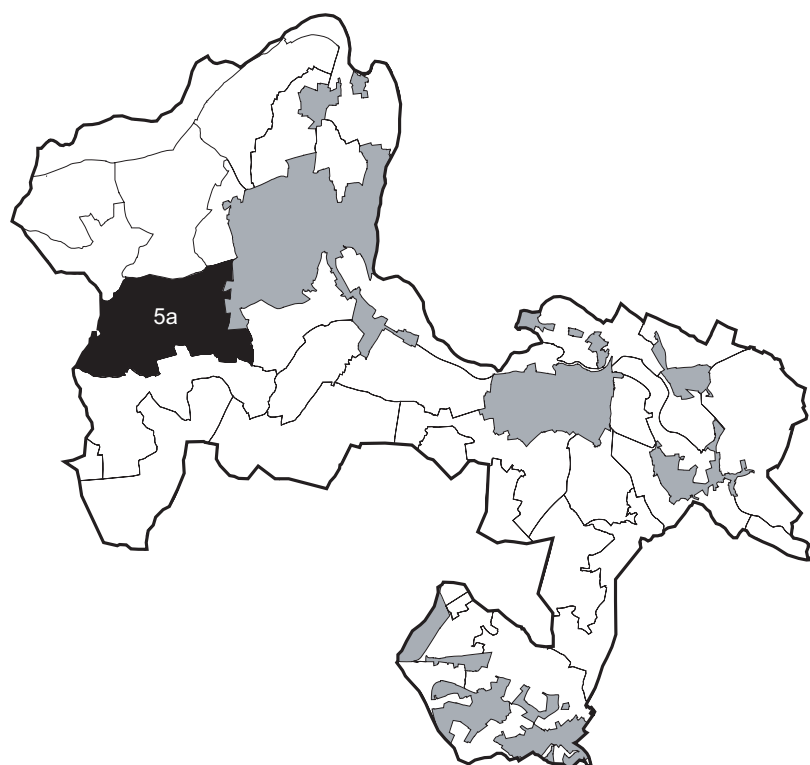
4a Windsor Forest

Key Characteristics (in addition to type)

As above

Description

As above



Landscape Character Areas

5a Littlewick Green

3.5 OPEN CHALK FARMLAND

3.5.1 Key Characteristics

- Flat and open landscape which is sometimes expansive
- Simple rural landscape with a remote and expansive feel
- Panoramic long distance views with wooded horizons
- Large arable fields of cereal crops and arable horticulture
- Mixed field boundary types of varying condition
- Newly planted woodland belts
- Isolated farmsteads with vernacular styled buildings
- Minor roadways running north to south
- Remnant hedgerows and hedgerow trees

3.5.2 Characteristic Tree Species

- Oak, Beech, Ash, Sycamore, Whitebeam, Yew, Hazel, Hawthorn, Field Maple, Elder, Birch



Farmland on northern edge of Waltham St Lawrence



Gatehouse to Shottesbrooke Park



Shottesbrooke Farm Railway Bridge

Description

- 3.5.3 The Open Chalk Farmland landscape type is distinctive due to its open and simple rural character. The expansive flat arable fields of cereal crops are defined by well maintained monoculture hedgerows, or in some places where they haven't been removed, mature hedgerow trees or copses of oak and beech, which are remnants of lost field boundaries. Settlement within the landscape type is restricted to a number of individual farmsteads built in the vernacular style of red brick and flint with clay tiles, although modern tin roofed agricultural buildings are also visible within the farm complexes. There are only minor roadways and tracks running through the landscape, predominately in a north - south direction, and therefore this landscape has a tranquil and remote character. There are long distance views, sometimes panoramic, to the north knoll where the wooded knolls of Ashley Hill and mature trees within Burchett Green create wooded horizons. To the south the settlements of Waltham St Lawrence and White Waltham are largely screened by a framework of mature deciduous trees. The occasional exotic parkland tree and domestic garden specie visible within woodlands to the north and south are indicators of the villages and historic manor estates which are features within the adjacent landscape areas.
- 3.5.4 Scrub of elderberry, ash and brambles line the railway embankment of the Great Western railway line which runs through this landscape dissecting it in two. However for the most part it is set within a cutting and does not influence the character of the area although stone railway overbridges are historic features which create natural stopping points at which to pause and survey the wider landscape. Activity at the Waltham Airfield and Maidenhead Business Park is apparent on the horizon to the east and is the only indicator of the proximity of the landscape to the western edge of Maidenhead.

Boundaries and adjacent landscape types

- 3.5.5 The Open Chalk Farmland landscape type is only found at one location within the borough. It is roughly contained between settlement along the Bath Road to the north and the settlements of White Waltham and Waltham St Lawrence to the south.
- 3.5.6 This landscape is influenced by the character of the adjacent landscape types. The undulating wooded landscapes of the Settled Wooded Knolls and Farmed Chalk Slopes to the north and the mature wooded character of the Settled Farmed Sands and Clays to the south enclose this landscape type. The open character of this landscape allows long distance views of features within adjacent landscape types, such as Ashley Hill, or the ribbed spire of the 14th century Church at Shottesbrooke, which provide interesting landmarks and historic reference in the landscape.

Adjoining landscape types of parallel (district level) studies

- 3.5.7 The Littlewick Green Open Chalk Farmland landscape character area primarily adjoins the Wargrave -Twyford Arable Chalk Lowlands landscape character area along its western boundary as identified in the Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment.

Physical Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.5.8 This landscape forms the southern plateau of the chalk dipslope of the Chilterns at a height of approximately 35m and 55m AOD. The underlying chalk substrate has led to the development of rich loamy soils (predominately Grade 2). The permeable nature of this geology results in the complete absence of hydrological features.

Ecological Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.5.9 The most extensive habitat found within this landscape is farmland, the ecological interest of which is likely to be generally low. This is because the principal refuges for wildlife would traditionally have been hedgerows and field margins, and many of these boundary features have now been removed. That said, important protected species such as bats and reptiles may still be found, and localised areas of 'unimproved' habitat such as hedgerows are apparent as features in the landscape which may be of conservation interest.
- 3.5.10 There are no statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations within this landscape.

Human Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.5.11 Settlement within the landscape type is restricted to a number of individual farms and cottages. However this open farmland is contained to the north and south by numerous hamlets and villages that would probably have sprung up along the geological boundaries of the chalk and clay (to the north) and the mixed geological compositions (to the south) so that they could more easily exploit the agricultural potential of these different areas.
- 3.5.12 Farm building styles are mixed with traditional timber with brick infill, stone and flint with red clay tile roofs and modern 'agrisheds'.
- 3.5.13 The presence of highly productive farming in the form of cereal cropping and arable horticulture (polytunnels) reflect the nutrient rich character of soils in this type.
- 3.5.14 Modern farming techniques have clearly resulted in the amalgamation of fields in the past. Field boundaries vary. Hedgerows have in some locations been reintroduced into the landscape but as single specie monocultures. Elsewhere post and wire and post and rail fencing are used, and have now replaced the traditional pattern of hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Remnants of these historic features are still indicated by occurrence of individual mature trees in some locations.
- 3.5.15 Recent Council led initiatives have reintroduced layered hedging within the vicinity of Shottesbrooke Park.
- 3.5.16 The Great Western Railway runs in a cutting across this area. It has little influence on the character of the landscape save for the stone railway overbridges.

- 3.5.17 The open and flat character of this landscape, and its proximity to Maidenhead, has resulted in its use as an airfield. Waltham Airfield is located in the eastern portion of this landscape type. It is a busy site for light aircraft associated with the West London Aero Club. One of a few remaining grass airfields in Britain, it was set up in 1928 by the de Havilland family and used by the MOD during the Second World War for the headquarters of the Air Transport Auxiliary.
- 3.5.18 White Waltham Airfield/aerodrome, which opened in 1935 as a de Havilland Flying School, was taken over during the Second World War by the RAF and reverted to civilian use in 1945. Since then it has had considerable use not only for private flying but also for the commercial light aircraft industry.
- 3.5.19 Land south of Woolley Green is managed under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, and new belts and copses of woodland planting, managed under the Woodland Grant Scheme, have been recently introduced into this area.
- 3.5.20 Communication masts and pylons are sometimes discordant features within this landscape.
- 3.5.21 Sustrans route 4 passes through this landscape type linking Reading by Warren Row, Knowle Hill, Maidenhead, Dorney, Windsor to Runnymede and East.

Historical Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.5.22 Remnant hedgerows and hedgerow trees are indicators of a past richness to the character of this farming landscape which has now largely been lost.

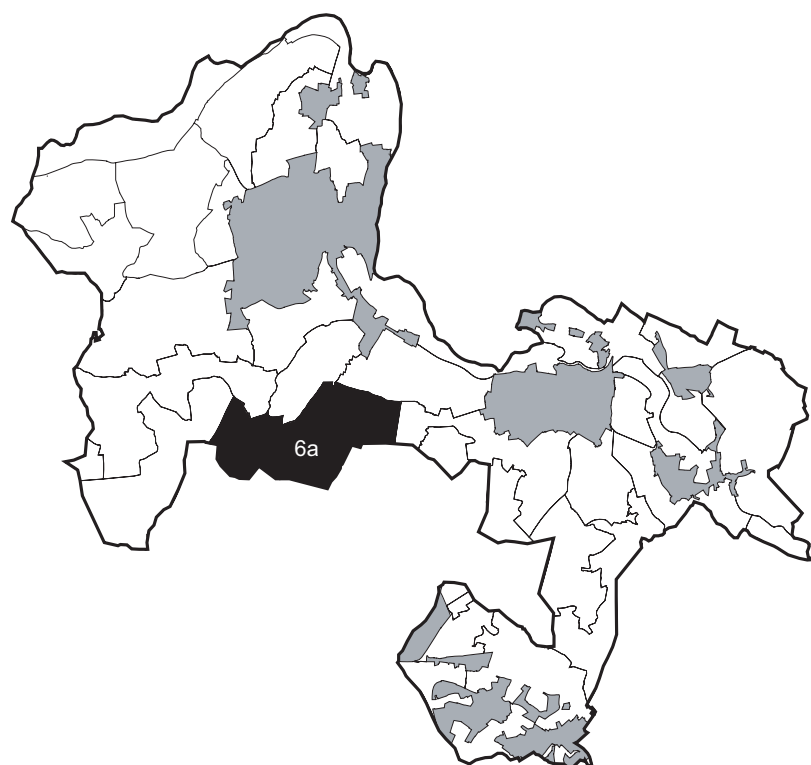
5a Littlewick Green

Key Characteristics (in addition to type)

As above

Description

As above



Landscape Character Areas

6a Braywoodside

3.6 OPEN CLAY FARMLAND

3.6.1 Key Characteristics

- Flat to gently undulating rural landscape with large, sometimes vast, rectilinear fields of arable crops
- Hedgerows of varying age and condition
- Isolated mature hedgerow trees of varying condition
- Some woodland copses and farm woodlands of ancient origin
- Isolated farmsteads and cottages of vernacular style
- Linear roadways with grass verges, ditches and hedgerows
- Fast linear rural roadways which are well trafficked, creating noise and 'business'
- Linear trackways with a remote and rural character
- Drainage ditches and ponds
- Horse paddocks within the vicinity of settlement

3.6.2 Characteristic Tree Species

- Oak, Birch, Ash, Lime, Hornbeam, Holly, Rowan, Beech, Cherry, Crab Apple, Field Maple



Lane south of Fifield



Drift Road, south of Mount Skippets Farm

Description

- 3.6.3 The gently undulating arable farmland within this landscape type has a relatively mature agrarian feel. The large fields are mainly of arable crops, and are defined by native hedgerows and drainage ditches. The shift in land management techniques from traditional to modern day practices has however resulted in the loss of some hedgerows in this landscape and, thus, the pattern of earlier field divisions. The landscape is therefore sometimes vast and where hedgerows have been removed, leaving the hedgerow trees, individual mature oak trees stand 'lost' within the arable monoculture. The horizontal farmland landscape is also punctuated by the vertical forms of farm woodlands and copses of mature oak and ash, some representing fragments of the medieval Royal hunting forest which extended into this area from the Windsor area.
- 3.6.4 Within this managed landscape groups of farm buildings and cottages are framed by vegetation. They include traditional buildings (often constructed of timber and brick with grey slate roofs) or more modern 'agrisheds'. This tranquil landscape is sometimes disrupted by intermittent noise and views of traffic on the very linear roadways which run in east-west directions across the landscape. These roads are lined with hedgerows, grass verges and ditches. The absence of settlement contrasts with the landscapes to the west and north (within the vicinity of Maidenhead), and gives a more remote, quieter feel. 'Urban fringe' activity at Pickins Farm, and the Golf Course south of Braywoodside, contrast with the more traditional rural land management seen elsewhere.

Boundaries and adjacent landscape types

- 3.6.5 The Open Clay Farmland landscape type is a unique area within the Royal Borough located on its margin, south of Maidenhead and east of Windsor. It stretches from the string of villages along Ascot Road in the east to the road adjacent to Lakeside Farm in the west. It is not influenced by adjacent landscape types because the mature woodland elements within it, and its undulating landform, generally prevent long distance views to the wider area. Glimpses of built development at Windsor and Bray are visible from some locations.

Adjoining landscape types of parallel (district level) studies

- 3.6.6 On its southern boundary the Braywoodside landscape character area adjoins both the Winkfield and Jealotts Hill/Cabbage Hill landscape character areas (Rolling Open Farmland landscape type) as identified by the Bracknell Forest Landscape Strategy. The easternmost boundary of the landscape character area also adjoins The Hazes landscape character area (Thames Basin Farmland) also identified in the Bracknell Forest Landscape Strategy.

Physical Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.6.7 The geology of this landscape is London Clay, with the landform undulating between 50m and 30m AOD. The clayey nature of the parent material in this area gives rise to heavy soils prone to waterlogging and therefore the requirement for land drainage to improve farming conditions in the locality. Drainage ditches are thus commonly seen alongside roadways and field boundaries.
- 3.6.8 The Bourne is the principal watercourse in this landscape type/area. Its catchment extends from the Hawthorn Hill and Foliejon Park area within the Bracknell Forest District. However it does not influence the character of this type beyond its immediate locality. Isolated ponds and wet areas associated with field drainage are also locally evident within the landscape but again do not influence the character of the wider landscape.

Ecological Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.6.9 The most extensive habitat found within this landscape is arable farmland, the ecological interest of which is likely to be generally low. This is because the principal refuges for wildlife would traditionally have been hedgerows and field margins, and many of these boundary features have now been removed. That said, important protected species such as bats and reptiles may be found, and localised areas of 'unimproved' habitat such as ditches, verges and hedgerows are features of this landscape which may be of ecological interest.
- 3.6.10 Woodland copses and farm woodlands are important visual features in this landscape and of potentially high ecological interest. Fernygrove Copse and Lordland's Farm woodland are semi-natural and ancient in origin, and would therefore be expected to support a diverse community of flora and fauna. They are both designated as non-statutory Wildlife Heritage Sites. There are no statutory designated sites within the landscape type/area.

Human Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.6.11 Agriculture is the principal influence on this landscape type. The predominately Grade 3 soils have been improved with the use of modern agricultural practices for arable production resulting in the intensification of farming within this area and thus an increase in field sizes (large to vast) and subsequent loss in hedgerows, probably in the 1960s and 1970s.
- 3.6.12 The linear settlement of Braywoodside is located along the Ascot Road (A330) with rough pasture for the grazing of horses associated with the peripheries of this settlement. Building styles are mixed.
- 3.6.13 Farmsteads are comprised of traditional buildings constructed of timber and brick with grey slate roofs.

- 3.6.14 The roadways within this landscape run primarily east - west. They are simple in character with grass verges, drainage ditches and managed hedgerows on either side of the carriageway. Because of this and their 'straightness' rural traffic is frequent and fast. In contrast there are numerous trackways in this landscape running north - south, which provide public access through the rich arable landscape.
- 3.6.15 Bird Hills Golf Course is an indicator of land use change within this locality and the proximity of this landscape to the urban settlement of Maidenhead.
- 3.6.16 The incidence of settlement is low and this contrasts with the adjacent landscape types (Settled Farmed Sands and Clays to the west and north).

Historical Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.6.17 The expansion of farming into this area of heavy clay soils is likely to have been in the post medieval period, however the straight angular field pattern and road ways would suggest that much of the landscape pattern that is seen today derives from the parliamentary enclosures of the 19th century.
- 3.6.18 The occurrence of ancient woodland within this landscape (Mount Scipet Copse and outliers) adds weight to the assertion that this landscape was once part of the much wider Windsor Forest.
- 3.6.19 The lines of mature veteran trees north of Wakers Farm also suggest that much of this land previously came within the wider setting and control of the manor located at Foliejon Park of 14th century origin, which was the seat of the Royal Official Oliver de Bordeaux. Remnants of the deer park and ornamental parkland (in the form of mature veteran trees) exist today.

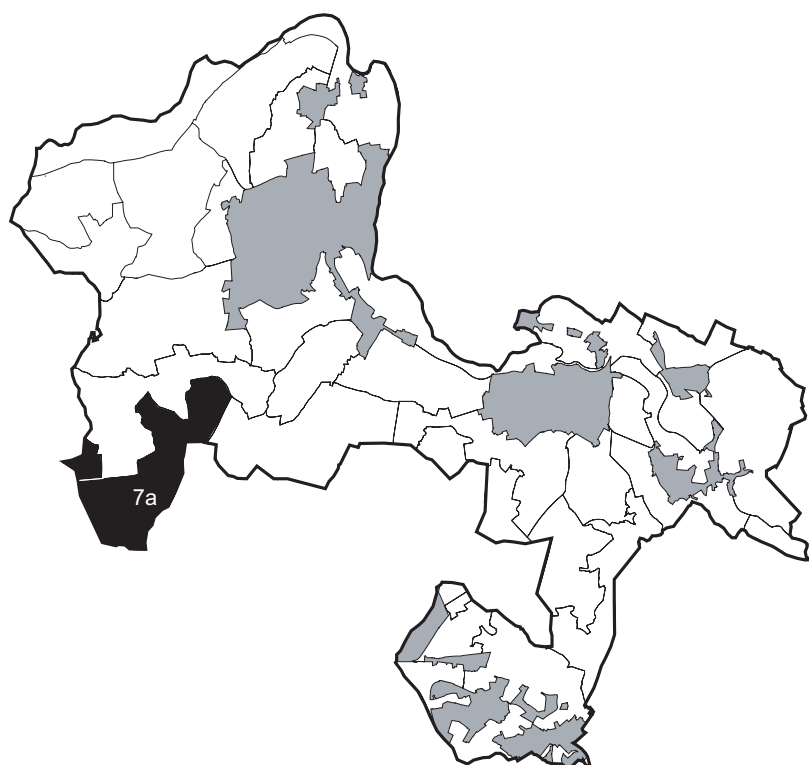
6a Braywoodside

Key Characteristics (in addition to type)

As above

Description

As above



Landscape Character Areas

7a Shurlock Row

3.7 WOODED CLAY FARMLAND

3.7.1 Key Characteristics

- Flat - gently undulating landscape of large open rectilinear fields, mainly of arable crops
- Framework of mixed woodland including coniferous plantations
- Extensive areas of mature woodland of ancient origin
- Dispersed settlement of traditional farmsteads and manor houses with some modern extensions
- Farm diversification for business, horsiculture and recreation purposes
- M4 motorway with its associated infrastructure
- Transmission lines
- Rural lanes
- Ditches and fishponds

3.7.2 Characteristic Tree Species

- Oak, Birch, Ash, Lime, Hornbeam, Holly, Rowan, Beech, Cherry, Wild Service Tree, Crab Apple, Field Maple



B3018, south of Shurlock Row



M4 motorway corridor



Broad Common



Beenham's Heath

Description

- 3.7.3 This is a simple rural landscape of farmland set within a strong woodland framework. The flat - gently undulating large and open arable fields contrast with the dense mature woodlands which contain them. Many of these woodlands of oak and beech have origins in the medieval hunting forest of Windsor. Within this wooded landscape plantations of sitka spruce and small scale development can be found, often screened from views by deciduous woodland belts. Where fields are defined by hedgerows their condition is variable. Apart from the large dispersed farmsteads which manage the land, settlement is absent. These traditional farms of red brick buildings with clay tile roofs have often recently expanded to include modern architectural styles including 'agrisheds'. The diversification of these farms for business, horsiculture and recreation activities is evidenced by the subtle changes of land uses and built features within the vicinity of the farms.
- 3.7.4 The M4 road corridor slices through the landscape, bringing noise and a sense of 'business' into a landscape which would otherwise feel remote. Transmission lines also traverse the landscape, often clearly visible above the woodland. Together these elements result in localised 'blight' of the landscape. These areas are then often given over to rough grazing or set aside.

Boundaries and adjacent landscape types

- 3.7.5 This landscape type is located within only one area of the Royal Borough, south west of Maidenhead and south of Shurlock Row. It has many similar landscape features to those within the Open Clay Farmland landscape type to the east but is distinct due to a much higher occurrence of woodland.

Adjoining landscape types of parallel (district level) studies

- 3.7.6 The Shurlock Row Landscape Character Area is bounded by the administrative boundaries of Wokingham District to its west and south, and Bracknell Forest to its south east.
- 3.7.7 The land immediately to the west of this landscape type is included in the Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment as Farmed Clay Lowlands (Ashridge) and Farmed Sand and Clay Lowland (Stanlake).
- 3.7.8 The land immediately to the south and east of this landscape type is included in the Bracknell Forest Landscape Strategy as Rolling Open Farmland (Jealotts Hill/Cabbage Hill) and Thames Basin Farmland (The Hazes) respectively.

Physical Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.7.9 The underlying geology of this landscape is London Clay but there are localised areas of 'drift' deposits of sands and gravels. The clayey nature of the parent material in this area gives rise to heavy soils prone to waterlogging and therefore the requirement for land drainage to improve farming conditions in the locality, and thus the occurrence of ditches alongside roadways and field boundaries. Fish ponds are a features associated with the large farmsteads and historic manor houses.
- 3.7.10 Where there are localised areas of drift material (in the form of sands and gravels) pine and birch are present in the wooded landscape.
- 3.7.11 The landscape gently undulates between 40m and 60m AOD.

Ecological Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.7.12 The most extensive habitat found within this landscape is farmland, the ecological interest of which is likely to be generally low. This is because the principal refuges for wildlife would traditionally have been hedgerows and field margins, and many of these boundary features have now been removed. That said, important protected species such as bats and reptiles may still be found across this habitat, and localised areas of 'unimproved' habitat' such as ditches and ponds are important landscape features in this type which may be of ecological interest.
- 3.7.13 Extensive areas of mature woodlands are important visual features in this landscape and of potentially high ecological interest; Due to their age and diverse structure, they would be expected to contain a diverse community of flora and fauna . There are substantial areas of ancient woodland and ancient semi-natural/replanted woodland such as Great Wood, Pond Wood, Long Wood and Surrells Wood as examples, many of which are non-statutory Wildlife Heritage Sites.
- 3.7.14 Grassland east of Warren Copse (associated with the Billingbear Estate) is included in the Grassland Inventory.
- 3.7.15 There are no statutory designated sites within the Wooded Clay Farmland landscape type.

Human Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.7.16 The working rural landscape comprises primarily of arable farmland. The soils vary in quality, predominately Grade 3 but with pockets of Grade 2 south of Beenhams Heath and Grade 4 at Penn Bushes (within the vicinity of Billingbear Golf Course).

- 3.7.17 Dispersed settlement in the form of large farmsteads and manor houses constructed in traditional vernacular styles are features in this landscape, for example Beenhams Farm and Billingbear Park. These buildings have been features within the landscape for many centuries. Beenham's Farm originated from a 14th century manor at this location although the buildings date from the 16th. Many of the buildings are built using bricks and clay roof tiles from the Clay works at Pinkneys Green, Maidenhead. Large weatherboarded barns and brick boundary walls are also typical as are auxiliary farm buildings in modern architectural styles.
- 3.7.18 The M4 motorway corridor is a strong linear feature across this landscape type. Views of vehicles, noise and light from the road corridor are often contained by adjacent woodland.
- 3.7.19 Transmission lines, by contrast, are clearly visible above the woodland traversing the landscape.
- 3.7.20 Gravel extraction (within localised areas associated with superficial drift deposits) is indicated by place names such as 'The Gravelpits' south of Shurlock Row.
- 3.7.21 Billingbear Golf Course is located at the southern tip of this landscape type.

Historical Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.7.22 As with the Open Clay Farmland type expansion of farming into this area is likely to have been in the post medieval period due to the difficulties associated with the heavy clay soils and the large rectilinear field patterns, which suggest they were emarked during the parliamentary enclosures of the 19th century.

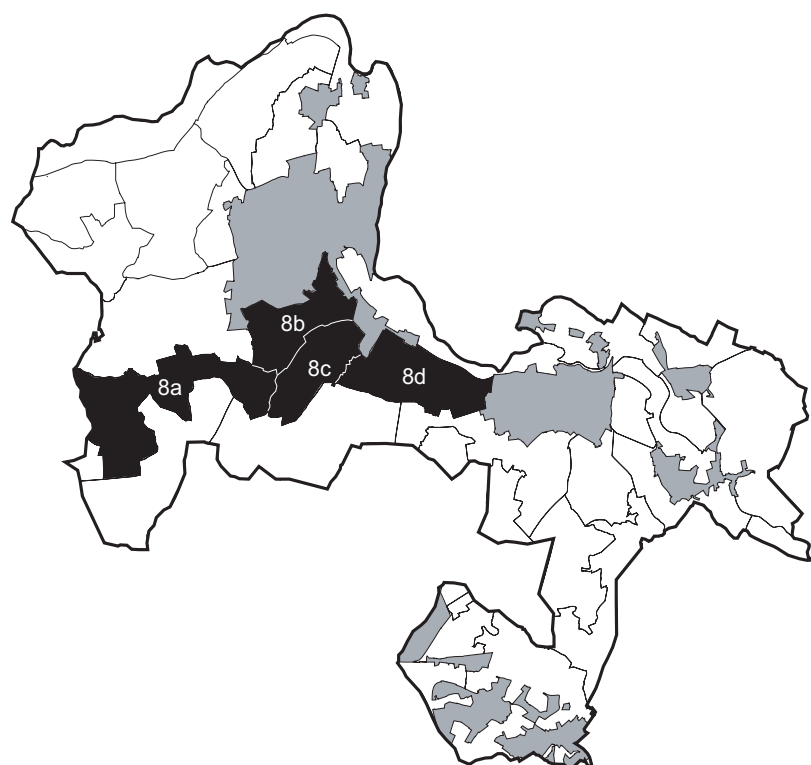
7a Shurlock Row

Key Characteristics (in addition to type)

As above

Description

As above



Landscape Character Areas

- 8a Waltham
- 8b Ockwells
- 8c Holyport
- 8d Fifield & Oakley Green

3.8 SETTLED FARMED SANDS AND CLAYS

3.8.1 Key Characteristics

- Mosaic of historic rural villages, farmsteads and manor houses set within a diverse rural landscape
- Flat to gently undulating landform which is intermittently open and enclosed with some long distance views.
- Mixed farmland with small - medium arable fields and areas of permanent pasture
- Remnant woodland areas, farm woodlands and copses of ancient origin
- Hedgerows and hedgerow/trees
- Historic designed landscapes with mature parkland trees including exotic species
- Vernacular building forms with red brick, timber frames and weatherboard details
- Brick boundary walls of manor estates
- Rough grazing/horsiculture near settlements
- M4 road motorway corridor and other trunk roads
- Rural lanes with grass verges, ditches and hedgerows
- Numerous footpaths and bridleways
- Fish ponds associated with farms and manor houses

3.8.2 Characteristic Tree Species

- Oak, Ash, Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Hazel, Elm, Elder, Crab Apple, Field Maple



Ockwells Manor, Cox Green



Harvest Hill Road



Polo ground, Stud Green



Lillibrooke Manor Farm, Cox Green

Description

- 3.8.3 This settled and diverse rural landscape is comprised of interesting historic hamlets, villages, farmsteads and large manor houses (mainly of vernacular built character), set within a richly textured medium to small scale mosaic of farmland and parkland which reflects the mixed nature of the underlying geology. Field patterns are irregular and often angular with historic woodland copses, parkland trees and hedgerows forming vertical landscape features along boundaries within the agrarian scene. The presence of water within the landscape is subtle and indicated by poached paddocks, the ditches that line fields and roadways, and the occurrence of farm ponds in association with historic timber weatherboarded farm buildings within the heavier clay areas in the west. The historic villages are often centred around village greens and comprise of red brick and timber frame buildings in the traditional vernacular style.
- 3.8.4 The traditional pastoral setting of these villages is changing as modern low density detached residential development and horsicultural land uses are becoming increasingly located on their periphery. The traditional rural settlements are connected by narrow, often straight and sometimes busy, rural lanes and roads which are lined by grass verges, ditches and hedgerows. Some are gappy and lacking mature trees. The M4 motorway cuts through this rural pattern introducing visually discordant features into the landscape. However due to the low lying nature of the landform its influence on character is localised. The sense of enclosure within this landscape is dependent on proximity to field boundary features and small woodlands, and therefore intermittent. It retains an intimate agrarian feel and surprisingly intact rural character given its proximity to the urban settlements of Maidenhead and Bray. There are some long distance views across the diverse landscape from elevated locations.

Boundaries and adjacent landscape types

- 3.8.5 The Settled Farmed Sands and Clays landscape type covers the stretch of land from Waltham St Lawrence in the west to Oakley Green in the east. The northern boundary is roughly north of the settlements of Waltham St Lawrence and White Waltham, and the southern south of Paley Street. The B3024 defines the southern extent of the character type in the east.
- 3.8.6 Changes in relief are not dramatic between this landscape type and the Open Chalk Farmland to the north and the Open Clay Farmland to the south, however, the mixed nature of land uses within the Settled Farmed Sands and Clays (particularly the higher occurrence of woodland), and the numerous small villages, contrast with the less diverse and populated landscapes of the adjacent types. This is therefore a transitional landscape between the chalk plateau and clay lowland.

Adjoining landscape types of parallel (district level) studies

- 3.8.7 The Waltham landscape character area primarily adjoins the Stanlake Farmed Sand and Clay Lowland landscape character area as identified in the Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment along its western boundary.

Physical Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.8.8 The landscape within this type is flat to gently undulating between 45m and 25m AOD with a general fall from north west to south east. The underlying geology is predominately sands of the Reading Beds formation. The eastern portion of the landscape type is comprised of drift deposits, possibly associated with the historic watercourse 'The Cut'.
- 3.8.9 The soils are generally of Grade 3 agricultural productivity with more productive soils found in the northern areas of the landscape type where the Chalk parent material begins to influence the soil. Arable crop production dominates in these areas. Heavier, less productive soils are associated with the alluvial deposits to the east at Holyport. This is reflected by the higher incidence of permanent pasture in this area.
- 3.8.10 Waterbodies are not generally a feature of this landscape type, with the exception of fish ponds and ditches. Fish ponds are found associated with historic manors and farmsteads and are found within areas of heavier soils, such as south of Ockwells Manor Farm and within the vicinity of Beenham's Heath, where land drainage ditches are associated with boundaries.

Ecological Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.8.11 The most extensive habitat found within this landscape is farmland, the ecological interest of which is generally likely to be low. This is because the principal refuges for wildlife would traditionally have been hedgerows and field margins, and many of these boundary features have now been removed. That said, important protected species such as bats and reptiles may still be found across this habitat, and localised areas of 'unimproved' habitat' such as ditches, ponds, verges and hedgerows are important landscape features in the type which may also be of ecological interest.
- 3.8.12 There are numerous small to medium sized deciduous woodlands within this landscape, many of which are of ancient origin. Of particular ecological interest is Great Thrift Wood SSSI, south of Cox Green. This natural damp, ancient, coppiced woodland displays a near natural distribution of tree species in relation to soils and drainage due to the lack of any known tree planting in the past. The varied stand, of which oak/hazel/ash is the most characteristic, also has a rich shrub and ground flora.
- 3.8.13 The grassland habitats found in this type are predominately improved. However areas of neutral grassland, which include a wider range of herb and grass species, are found to the north of Holyport and as such are designated as non-statutory Wildlife Heritage Sites.
- 3.8.14 Grassland east of Warren Copse (associated with the Billingbear Estate) is included in the Grassland Inventory.

Human Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.8.15 Agricultural activity and settlement, in the main, has shaped the character of this landscape type. Where soils are of good agricultural quality extensive arable (crop) fields are found, such as in the vicinity of Paley Street. Fields are medium to large in size. Some fields are divided by well-managed hedgerows but in others boundaries are scrappy or have been lost and replaced with post and wire fencing. Individual hedgerow trees remain at some locations. Set aside land is dominant in areas blighted by development (such as in the vicinity of the M4) and in low productivity areas such as Beenham's Heath.
- 3.8.16 Numerous villages are loosely clustered around central greens and include a rich collection of vernacular buildings. Local building materials include red brick with flint on more prestigious buildings such as St Mary's Church at White Waltham and timber weatherboarding on agricultural buildings. Slate and clay tiles are predominately used on roofs. Timber frame construction with brick or render infill is also common, for example many of the buildings that face on to the village green in Holyport.
- 3.8.17 In the case of Waltham St Lawrence and White Waltham the historic setting of the hamlet/village and loosely nucleated pattern remains largely intact. However at Paley Street, Touchen-end and Moneyrow Green/Holyport the medieval settlement boundaries have been blurred by modern infill and ribbon development. Outside the villages settlement is dispersed with farmsteads and country houses set within their grounds, and in the latter case, often screened from the wider landscape by deciduous woodland belts.
- 3.8.18 The principal routeway through this landscape is the Ascot Road/Paley Street (B3024), which threads between the historic villages between Oakley Green and Waltham St Lawrence from east to west. Numerous narrow lanes branch from this routeway to connect with the farmsteads and manor house set within the wider agricultural landscape. In contrast the public rights of way run in a north-south direction linking these rural settlements with Maidenhead.
- 3.8.19 The M4 motorway corridor, which is located across this landscape type, has severed the traditional relationship between Maidenhead and its agricultural hinterland by forming a strong physical barrier between the two. The motorway corridor (and related trunk roads), is sometimes in cutting and other times on embankment. Traffic, signage and lighting associated with these road corridors are often seen in combination with the roadway. Despite this intrusion, the impact of the road is only to the immediate locality due to the lowlying nature of the wider landscape and occurrence of woodlands and hedgerows within it which soften views of these built features from surrounding areas.
- 3.8.20 High voltage pylons and communication masts are a discordant features seen above woodland in the landscape, particularly within the vicinity of Paley Street and Beenham's Heath.

Historical Influences

- 3.8.21 There are numerous features of historic interest in this landscape which has a rich history of human activity due to its strategic position between the chalk farming landscapes to the north and the clay woodland landscapes to the south. Its proximity to the court at Windsor and the River Thames has also been important in influencing the extent and character of settlement within this landscape over time.
- 3.8.22 Mesolithic finds at Moor Farm (SAM), west of Bray Wick confirms that the Thames valley landscape at Maidenhead, which would have been extensively wooded c8,000 - 4,000BC, was being cleared at this time to attract grazing animals such as deer.
- 3.8.23 In Roman times a religious settlement is thought to have existed on Weycock Hill in Waltham St. Lawrence parish. Finds have led to the suggestion that this vast octagonal building may have been dedicated to the Roman goddess Vesta. The name Waltham is Saxon for "Dilapidated Homes," apparently referring to the ruins of the Roman souvenir shops and pilgrims' hostels there.
- 3.8.24 Shottesbrooke Church at Shottesbrooke Park, was built in 1370 as one of only three collegiate churches in the country. Unlike the majority of local churches in the locality, it has been altered very little and remains a beautiful example of the late decorated style of architecture surmounted by a graceful ribbed spire. The partly Tudor Shottesbrooke Park manor house was the subject of major Gothic built influence and in recent years has been reinstated to a family residence.
- 3.8.25 The frequent occurrence of moated sites within this landscape reinforces the assertion that it was influenced by the proximity of the Royal Court at Windsor during medieval times, as moated sites indicate wealth and status in the countryside. The moated site at Smewin's Farm (SAM), south of White Waltham, probably originates from the same period as Shottesbrooke Church. The timber and brick tudor building is visible from the roadway and is contained on 3 sides by the water filled moat earthwork. At Foxley Green Farm (SAM) the site includes a moat island which is surrounded by a water filled moat in good condition. Various earthworks survive on the moat island which once contained the manor house of Foxley's. However these features are not visible from the adjacent area.
- 3.8.26 At Waltham St Lawrence the 14th & 15th century flint and stone church can be found with Victorian details, and an interior which demonstrates its Norman origins. The spire is a local landmark.
- 3.8.27 Numerous country houses with their associated parks were built in this area from the 16th to 19th centuries, again drawn by the proximity to the court at Windsor, and London. They include Waltham Place, Ockwells Manor and Shottesbrooke Park, all of which are of historic interest. However they are generally screened from views by parkland regulation.
- 3.8.28 Ockwells Manor is of particular historic and aesthetic value. Built in the mid 15th century, this Grade 1 listed building was built by John Naveys in the reign of Henry VI, and its setting is protected by covenants that are held on surrounding fields by the National Trust.

3.8.29 Exotic specimens and veteran hedgerow trees are features associated with the parkland landscapes of these large estates. They are visible as features in the landscape, such as those within woodland at Waltham Place.

3.8.30 There are 4 potential subdivisions of the Settled Farmed Sands and Clays landscape type:

8a Waltham

8b Ockwells

8c Holyport

8d Fifield & Oakley Green

3.8.31 These areas have the generic characteristics of the type but in addition have important locally distinctive variations. The key characteristics highlighted are in addition to those identified in the landscape type.

8a Waltham

Key Characteristics (in addition to landscape type)

- Unspoilt, peaceful rural landscape with an intimate feel
- Smaller fields enclosed by mature hedgerows with hedgerow trees
- Church spires are landmarks in the landscape
- Exotic parkland trees
- Dense network of footpaths between village settlements

Description

3.8.32 The Waltham Settled Farmed Sands and Clays landscape area is a diverse largely unspoilt landscape which includes the interesting historic villages of Waltham St Lawrence, White Waltham and Shurlock Row, and the important estates of Waltham Place and Shottesbrooke Park.

3.8.33 Fields are small in scale and predominately pastoral, with the notable exception of within the vicinity of Beenham's Heath, and defined by managed hedgerows and ditches often associated with mature hedgerow trees. This is therefore a more intimately scaled landscape than the wider landscape type. It contrasts with the expansive open chalk farmland to the north and the wooded clay farmlands to the south. The historic villages of Waltham St Lawrence and White Waltham lie at the boundary of the Reading Bed sands with the chalk plateau landscape. Beeham's Heath and Shurlock Row, settlements to the south, are linear in pattern and relate to the flatter more arable landscape in that area. A dense network of foot and bridleways criss-cross this area.

8b Ockwells

Key Characteristics (in addition to landscape type)

- M4, A404(M) and A304 (M) road corridors and associated embankments
- Recreational land uses
- Remnant parkland trees and woodland areas
- The Cut historic stream

Description

- 3.8.34 The Ockwells Settled Farmed Sands and Clays landscape area is a damaged tract of landscape adjacent to the residential areas of Cox Green and Bray Wick. The former character of the landscape is indicated by the fragments of mature woodland hedgerows and hedgerow trees that are found within the vicinity of Junction 8/9 of the M4 and the parkland landscape associated with Ockwells Manor. Lilbrook Manor is also an important local built heritage feature.
- 3.8.35 The ancient woodland at Great Thrift Wood SSSI gives an indication of the longevity of these features within the local landscape.
- 3.8.36 To the east (in the chalk areas) there are large arable fields but to the west, where the land is fragmented by road development land has been put over to rough pasture or set aside. Land has also been turned over to recreation, for example the recreation ground at Cox Green or Maidenhead Golf Course.
- 3.8.37 The eclectic built edge of Cox Green on the raised ground to the north of the character area is visible from much of the surrounding landscape to the south.
- 3.8.38 A Roman villa comprising a building with a small outhouse and boundary ditches on three sides has been identified at Cox Green, Maidenhead.
- 3.8.39 The historic often tree lined waterway of 'The Cut' threads eastwards through publicly accessible pastureland from Great Thrift Wood to the channelised section of the waterway at Bray Wick.
- 3.8.40 A network of footways and bridleways traverse the landscape linking south Maidenhead to the rural landscapes to the south of the borough, via the motorway overbridges at Thimble Farm and Paley Street Farm.
- 3.8.41 The character of the hedgerows vary. Some are in good conditions, such as the hedgerows associated with Ockwells Manor, while those within the vicinity of the road corridors are gappy and often replaced with post and wire fencing.
- 3.8.42 High voltage transmission lines and a sub station at Cox Green are significant discordant features in the landscape.

8c Holyport

Key Characteristics (in addition to landscape type)

- Lower lying floodplain landscape
- Absence of woodland cover
- Dispersed modern settlement

Description

- 3.8.43 The Holyport Settled Farmed Sands and Clays landscape character area comprises of dispersed settlement within an agricultural setting. Recent residential development has resulted in the coalescence of the historic village of Holyport with Bray Wick, and the linear settlements of Stud Green, Moneyrow Green, Touchen-end and Paley Street now form continuous low level development along the Ascot Road (A330) and the B3024.
- 3.8.44 Residential development has been of mansions and detached properties (for example at Stud Green) with gated brick boundaries.
- 3.8.45 Mixed arable and pasture land are found to the north of the settlements and the Ascot Road, and arable on the lands to the south. Permanent pasture is found in lower lying areas particularly in the vicinity of the M4 road corridor.

8d Fifield and Oakley Green

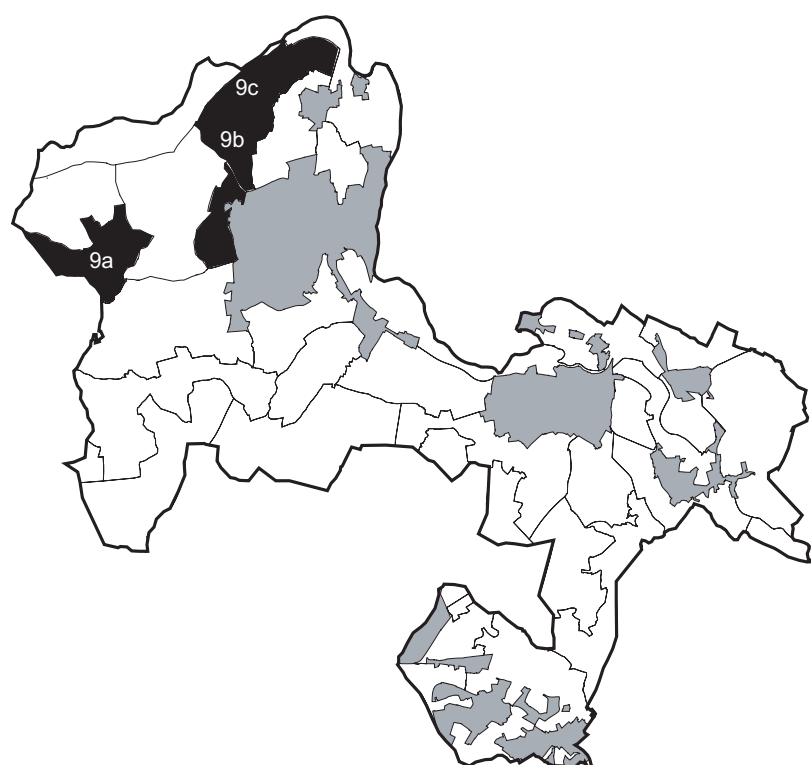
Key Characteristics (in addition to landscape type)

- Greater occurrence of improved pastureland with land drainage features
- More varied mix of building styles and materials
- Influences of recent residential development at Bray Wick & Dedworth
- Actual and perceived proximity to urban conurbations
- Urbanising influences of busy rural roadways
- Transmission lines
- Wooded horizons to the south
- Visual and audible influences of gravel extraction works

Description

- 3.8.46 A transitional landscape between the Open Clay Farmland/Open Farmed Parkland landscape types to the south, and the Settled Developed Floodplain to the north, this landscape has many of the attributes of the Settled Farmed Sands and Clays, such as a mixture of landuses and a settled character. However it differs in a number of important respects;

- 3.8.47 The underlying geology is predominately London Clay rather than a mix with Reading Bed Sands. This and the low lying nature of the land results in more extensive areas of rough and improved pasture than other areas in this landscape type. Drainage ditches are also features along roadways and field boundaries. Despite the absence of woodland blocks of ancient origin in this area, hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees are important features.
- 3.8.48 Gravel extraction works in the Shroud Farm area and pockets of 'hobby' farming, from ostrich farms to mushroom growing, add to the eclectic and 'edge of town' character of this landscape.
- 3.8.49 The village of Fifield, which is closely linked to Coningsby Farm, is an attractive historic settlement with typical vernacular buildings of the area. However, across the wider landscape character area building forms and materials are more variable than in the other areas of the Settled Farmed Sands and Clays landscape type.
- 3.8.50 Recent residential development at Bray Wick and the busy roadways and the associated signage, lighting and noise influence the character of the Fifield area, and are urbanising features within this essentially rural landscape.
- 3.8.51 There are numerous Public Rights of Ways and minor trackways traversing this landscape which is consistent with the landscape type.
- 3.8.52 The proximity of the Thames river corridor, and its use as a transportation and communication corridor, influences the character of this area. The busy roads, transmission lines and views of recent residential development, as well as a greater variation in building styles in the area, result in a greater actual and perceived sense of proximity to the urban conurbations.
- 3.8.53 Windsor Forest creates a wooded horizon in views of the rising ground to the south.



Landscape Character Areas

- 9a Warren Row
- 9b Cookham Dean
- 9c Winter Hill

3.9 SETTLED WOODED CHALK KNOLLS

3.9.1 Key Characteristics

- Rich, peaceful rural landscape with historic rural settlements set in a wooded context
- Rolling - undulating wood covered landform with pronounced 'knolls' contrasting with areas of open chalkland in adjacent landscapes
- Extensive areas of woodland, some of which is ancient, varying in size and condition
- Dispersed settlement forming loose hamlets with vernacular building forms
- Mature trees within villages
- Mixed farmland with paddocks commonly near settlement and larger fields of arable in more flatter open areas
- Network of winding tracks and rural lanes which are often enclosed by hedgerows and trees
- Village greens and extensive areas of common land (wood and open pasture) criss-crossed by Public Rights of Way, which are used for recreational purposes
- Evidence of assarting

3.9.2 Characteristic Tree Species

- Beech, Ash, Rowan, Sycamore, Oak, Whitebeam, Yew, Hazel, Hawthorn, Elder, Holly, possibly some Wych Elm



Cookham Dean



Common at Pinkneys Green



Minor roadway in Cookham



St John the Baptist Church,
Cookham Dean



Farmland nr Cookham Dean



Pinkneys Green from Marlow Road

Description

- 3.9.3 This historic landscape has a diverse and mature rural character with many different landscape features of interest. It is strongly wooded and often undulating, and contains both intimate, enclosed areas of settled and pasture and open agricultural landscapes. Although predominately a peaceful landscape which is perceived as safe, settled and managed, the influence of traffic movement and noise often disrupt the traditional rural scene.
- 3.9.4 Geology and landform have a strong influence on the character of this type. The dipslopes of the chalk formation combined with drift deposits of clay and gravel form gently rolling slopes with localised 'knolls' and flatter plateau areas. The extent of the chalk deposits are dramatically reflected in the landscape by the steep, sometimes tree cloaked scarp at Winter Hill which sweeps sinuously above the Thames floodplain forming a dramatic feature in views from floodplain areas of Bisham.
- 3.9.5 Mature woodlands within this rolling landscape form a strong framework within which areas of settlement and open farmland are found. These predominately beech woodlands represent fragments of the medieval Windsor Great Forest which spread across the east Berkshire landscape at that time and they, therefore, contain many veteran trees and have a strong 'wildwood' character as well as being rich in wildlife. Along the Chalk scarp this woodland is at its most extensive and dense, and as such forms a dramatic backdrop to the River Thames floodplain below, as detailed above.
- 3.9.6 Settlement within the gently rolling Chalk dipslope landscapes comprise of charming traditional buildings which have formed linear and loosely nucleated hamlets through organic growth over hundreds of years. These hamlets are small and intimate in scale with predominately local vernacular style building forms of brick and flint, or timber frame. Small horse paddocks defined by overgrown hedgerows, occupy land between dwellings and hamlets, and a network of winding rural lanes connect these hamlets and are often contained by trees and hedgerows or the domestic architecture and immaculate cottage gardens found within the traditional villages.
- 3.9.7 Beyond the immediate environs of the settled areas, where land is often flatter, large areas of woodland and open fields of arable farmland and common pasture land are found, which when combined create open views to wooded horizons. Woodland is often irregularly shaped, suggesting a process of assarting occurred during the loss of woodland to farmland during medieval times. The rectilinear field pattern within arable landscapes suggesting the later enclosure of this land. However field boundaries vary in condition and style, and the expansive scale of the fields in some locations suggests hedgerows have been removed from the landscape in recent times.
- 3.9.8 Mature trees are features both within hamlets and within common land.

Boundaries and adjacent landscape types

- 3.9.9 The Settled Wooded Chalk Knolls landscape type includes the wooded undulations of Bowsey Hill, Knowl Hill, Mount Hill and Winter Hill in the northern part of the borough. These wooded 'knolls' are the surface expressions of the Reading Bed sands and clay drift deposits below which sit the chalk formations that extend across the northern portion of the borough.
- 3.9.10 This landscape type is therefore contained primarily by the Farmed Chalk Slopes. However where the landscape type includes the chalk scarp (as in the Winter Hill area) there is a dramatic contrast between this landscape and the flat, open character of the Thames floodplain to the north (Settled Farmed Floodplain). Similarly south of Knowl Hill the Open Chalk Farmland provides a clear contrast in character.

Adjoining landscape types of parallel (district level) studies

- 3.9.11 The land immediately to the west of this landscape type and outside the borough is included in the Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment as Wooded Chalk Knolls (Bowsey Hill).

Physical Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.9.12 Topography is a key feature of this landscape type. The landscape is undulating between 50m and 130m AOD. The underlying geology is predominately sands of the Reading Beds formation but with London Clay overlying this in the Bowsey Hill and Knowl Hill areas. This is with the exception of the chalk escarpment north of Cookham Dean which is included in this landscape type due to its wooded nature and intimate association with the village of Cookham Dean. The agricultural soils found in this type are generally of Grade 3 (Knowl Hill) and Grade 2 (Winter Hill).
- 3.9.13 Waterbodies or channels are not a feature of this landscape type, because of the permeable nature of the underlying sand and chalk geology. Small ponds relating to clay areas and works can be seen in the Knoll Hill locality.

Adjoining landscape types of parallel (district level) studies

- 3.9.14 The western boundary of Warren Row landscape character area adjoins both Bowsey Hill Wooded Chalk Knolls and Hare Hatch Farmed Chalk Slopes landscape character areas as identified in the Wokingham Landscape Character Assessment along its western boundary.

Ecological Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.9.15 The most extensive habitat in this type is woodland, much of which is of ancient origin. Bisham Woods SSSI, which includes Winter Hill, Quarry Wood, Fultness Wood, High Wood and Inkydown Wood, also forms part of the Chilterns Beechwoods cSAC and is therefore of European conservation interest. The designations cover an extensive area of predominately broadleaved woodland situated on the steep north-west facing chalk slope overlooking the River Thames

floodplain. Most of the woodland consists of beech high forest (considered to be one of the best areas in the UK) and as such represents a southern outlier of the Chiltern Beechwoods which are found to the north and west, but there are also many other types of woodland habitat present across the scarp. The variety of woodland habitat seen in this locality supports a remarkable diversity of ground flora and mollusc fauna.

- 3.9.16 Other habitats found across the landscape type are improved grassland and arable farmland. These working landscapes may provide important habitat for protected species such as bats and reptiles, and include localised areas of 'unimproved' habitat such as hedgerows, individual trees and common land which are important landscape features in the type which may also be of ecological interest.
- 3.9.17 There are many designated non-statutory Wildlife Heritage Sites as well as the statutory sites noted above.

Human Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.9.18 Agriculture is mixed with some large fields in arable production within flatter chalk areas in the vicinity of Cookham Dean, however pasture for the grazing of horses and sheep is also an important landuse in this landscape type.
- 3.9.19 Settlement is dispersed through out this landscape type. Farmsteads set within irregularly shaped woodland suggest that a process of assarting has occurred possibly in the medieval period.
- 3.9.20 The rich geological and agricultural resources found in this landscape are expressed in the vernacular building styles seen in the locality. Locally quarried flint and chalk, clay tiles and bricks produced at local brickworks (such as that found at Pinkneys Green) and harvested timber from nearby mature woodlands are used in the construction of houses in the area. 19th Century and later properties of the 19th and 20th centuries display imported materials such as Welsh slate and London stock brick, probably transported either on the river or by rail.
- 3.9.21 There are many minor rural lanes within the Settled Wooded Chalk Knolls landscape type which are relatively quiet, with the exception of the London to Bristol Road (A4) and A404(M) which transects Maidenhead Thicket.
- 3.9.22 Large areas of this landscape type are publicly accessible as common (National Trust Owned) land. This land would traditionally be of provided wood and open pasture for the rural communities within their proximity, but it is now managed for predominately recreational purposes and is an important resource for local residents. There is also a dense network of Public Rights of Way both within and linking these areas.
- 3.9.23 Mature trees are important landscape features within the rural villages and common land, and this is reflected in the high occurrence of Tree Preservation Orders in this type.

Historical Influences

- 3.9.24 The proximity of this landscape to the River Thames and the rich farming land found on the chalk lowlands has made this area a focus for human activity since Neolithic times. There are therefore, unsurprisingly, numerous features with historic origins in the landscape.
- 3.9.25 Two Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM) located within Maidenhead Thicket are indicators of this early activity. The Maidenhead Thicket Bowl Barrow SAM north of Woolley Green is visible in the landscape as a well defined flat topped mound. Bowl barrows, the most numerous form of round barrow, are funerary monuments dating from the Late Neolithic period to the Late Bronze Age (approximately 2400 - 1500BC). Robin Hood's Arbour Roman Camp SAM, also found at Maidenhead Thicket and east of Stubbings House, includes a Belgic bank and ditch enclosure of irregular rectilinear form with a simple entrance on the west side. This site may give substance to the belief that a Roman road linked Silchester (Callewa Atrebatum) to St Albans (Verulamium) via a crossing at Cookham during the Roman period.
- 3.9.26 Cookham Dean itself has been a focus of human activity from as early as the prehistoric period with the good quality agricultural land and proximity of the Thames providing the raw materials for early farming activities. Much of the dispersed settlement is included in Cookham Dean Conservation Area which divides up the settlement into the distinctive areas of Winter Hill, Cookham Dean Bottom, Dean Lane/Alleyns Lane, Hardings Green and Cricket Pitch, and Cookham Dean around St John the Baptist Church.
- 3.9.27 Pinkney Green is thought to have grown up as a result of encroachment into wooded areas which once belonged to Windsor Great Forest. It is surrounded on nearly all sides by common land which was probably created through human encroachment for firewood and cattle pasture starting in the 13th century. The interrelationship between the Common and the Pinkneys Green settlement has remained relatively intact. The proximity of the hamlet to Pinkneys Brickworks is evident in the display of this local building material in many of the properties.
- 3.9.28 There are 3 potential subdivisions of the Settled Wooded Hills landscape type:
- 9a Warren Row
 - 9b Cookham Dean
 - 9c Winter Hill
- 3.9.29 These areas have the generic characteristics of the type but in addition have important locally distinctive variations. The key characteristics highlighted are in addition to those identified in the landscape type.

9a Warren Row

Key Characteristics (in addition to landscape type)

- Warren Row Church is a landmark

Description

- 3.9.30 The landscape character area of Warren Row includes Ashley Hill (and Forest) and Knowl Hill. These pronounced wooded knolls are features within the landscape, visible from the Open Chalk Farmland to the south and the Farmed Chalk Slopes to the north. The linear settlement of Warren Hill is within a wooded setting and includes a range of buildings from vernacular buildings of terraced brick housing with red clay tiles to new semi-detached residential buildings. The distinctive church with corrugated iron cladding is a local landmark.
- 3.9.31 The field boundaries within the landscape character area vary considerably in terms of type and condition from overgrown hedgerows to picket fencing.

9b Cookham Dean

Key Characteristics (in addition to landscape type)

- Concentration of greens and commons
- Concentration of rural tracks and lanes
- Influences of Cookham Rise and Maidenhead
- Greater incidence of settlement
- Busier roadways and rural road 'improvements'

Description

- 3.9.32 The landscape character area of Cookham Dean is more diverse than the Warren Row area. A particular distinctive feature of this area is the number of greens or commons often forming the central focus for groupings of vernacular buildings. Many of these greens survive from the common land practices of the medieval period and since 1934 have been in the care of the National Trust, which acquired lands believed to have once belonged to the medieval Manor of Cookham. Most of the greens are areas of open grassland often delineated by a series of tracks or roads.
- 3.9.33 Another characteristic of this landscape area is the dense network of country lanes, tracks and footpaths which weave their way through the area linking many of the tiny hamlets and individual farm groups, making a highly 'permeable' landscape.

- 3.9.34 The adjacent settlements of Cookham Rise and Maidenhead influence the character of this landscape area. Although from the Common Land at Pinkneys Green the built edge of Maidenhead is largely screened by garden trees the ornamental nature of this screen (an eclectic mix of deciduous and ornamental coniferous species) contrasts with the mature native woodlands and woodland belts which form the framework of the wider character area. Glimpses of built form and the higher levels of traffic on the Marlow Road (A308) and the B4447 are also urbanising elements on the periphery of this predominately rural landscape area.
- 3.9.35 The A404(M) cuts through the southern end of this character area, through Maidenhead Thicket. As the motorway is within a steep chalk cutting and contained by the mature woodland of Maidenhead Thicket the impact of the roadway on the character of the landscape is contained to the immediate locality.

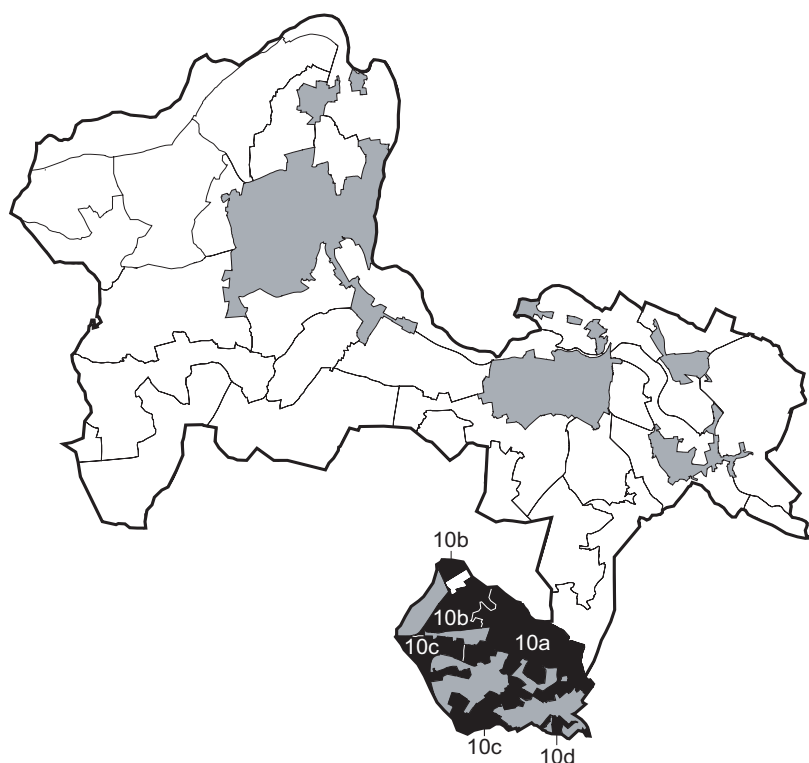
9c Winter Hill

Key Characteristics (in addition to landscape type)

- Dramatic tree cloaked chalk scarp
- The 'Pink House'

Description

- 3.9.36 The Winter Hill landscape area covers the densely wooded chalk scarp to the north of Cookham Dean and those areas of settlement contained within it. It forms a dramatic steeply sloping boundary with the Thames floodplain in the north of the borough and is a prominent landscape feature in the wider landscape around the Marlow area. Quarry woods, at the western end of the landscape area, is a beech woodland of ancient origin, a southern outlier to the Chiltern beech woods on the northern side of the Thames. The community of Winter Hill enjoy spectacular long distance views north across the Thames valley to the distant Chiltern Hills.
- 3.9.37 Palaeolithic finds (flint tools in particular) within the locality indicate that Winter Hill was an important area for human activity in prehistoric times.
- 3.9.38 The affectionally termed 'Pink House' is a local land mark which refers to the Georgian property perched within Quarry Wood which is clearly visible from vehicles travelling south along the A404 (M).



Landscape Character Areas

- 10a Sunningdale & Sunninghill
- 10b Ascot Heath
- 10c South Ascot & South Sunningdale
- 10d Chobham Common

3.10 SETTLED WOODLAND SANDS

3.10.1 Key Characteristics

- Settled landscape with much of the traditional pattern subsumed by modern 'edge of town' development such as sport and recreation facilities, educational and health institutions, horsicultural landuses and low density residential areas (mainly pockets of detached modern 'mansions' of mixed architectural character)
- Strong framework of mature mixed woodland, some of ancient origin, which merge into the urban structure resulting in the absence of clear 'town and county' boundaries
- Gently undulating landform
- Historic country homes and manor houses set within designed parkland landscapes with veteran trees and ornamental lakes
- Exotic parkland trees as features on wooded horizons within open landscapes
- Winged gateways, high boundary (security) fencing and security cameras to many properties
- Network of busy roads often contained by woodland
- Notable absence of arable farmland

3.10.2 Characteristic Tree Species

- Oak, Birch, Scots Pine, Beech, Sweet Chestnut



Broomhall Farm farmland, south Sunningdale



Broadlands Farm area, south Ascot



Ascot Racecourse, Ascot Heath



Land north of Sunningdale Church



Sunningdale Church

Description

- 3.10.3 The Settled Wooded Sands landscape type is unique because of the very high incidence of both woodland and dispersed settlement. The character of the settlement is unusual as much of the traditional pattern of this historic landscape has been subsumed by piecemeal development for 'edge of town' development and land uses in recent times. Pressure for land is exemplified by the occurrence of traditional country estates, now often converted to educational or health uses, and modern detached 'mansions' found 'cheek to jowl', the absence of marginal landscapes and the high incidence of security features. The areas of settlement found within the 'green setting' that the woodland creates are connected by a network of busy roads. The whole landscape therefore has an accessible and extremely settled feel although, because buildings are often concealed from view, it can also feel surprisingly tranquil and remote in some localities. It is also, therefore, largely an enclosed landscape whose components are simple. There is a unified feel.
- 3.10.4 Woodland is the key landscape feature, in the type which is also often of historic and ecological interest. Its mature mixed structure forms a strong green framework which conceals built form from views and prevents wider views across the landscape from higher ground. Some of this woodland has origins in the medieval Royal hunting forest of Windsor and as such forms tracts of continuous woodland emanating from the Great Park. Other areas were created as part of designated landscape during the development of the numerous country estates which sprang up within this area during the 18th and 19th centuries. Within the open pastureland of these parkland areas mature exotic species are often features on the wooded horizon. More recently, extensive areas of mixed commercial woodland have been introduced into the locality, associated with the Bracknell Forest and Chobham Common areas.
- 3.10.5 This framework of mature woodland cloaks a relatively undulating landform of free draining sandy heath soils. Higher ground is occupied by dispersed large relatively low density settlement (excluded from the study) which sprang up as 'commuter villages' along the line of the railway in the 19th century. This high ground gives way to shallow wooded valleys within which the large 18th and 19th century country estates, manor houses and farmsteads are found surrounded by the pastureland of the designed landscapes which usually screen views of the estate from the surrounding routeways. Sinuous ornamental lakes are also often features of these parkland landscapes.
- 3.10.6 The occurrence of woodland interwoven with settlement, the dispersed nature of settlement and extension of woodland into the heart of this dispersed settlement results in a gradual transition from those areas included in the Green Belt to the centre of the commuter villages. There are therefore few clear settlement 'edges' with 'open countryside'. Instead, one merges into another. This blurring of boundaries is compounded by the high occurrence of 'edge of town' land uses such as golf courses, institutional and horsicultural land uses as well as the conversion of many of the country houses in modern times to educational establishments. This lack of distinction between 'town' and 'country' is reinforced by the actual coalescence of many areas of settlement in the landscape type although the historic centres of these 'villages' remain strongly distinct.

- 3.10.7 The influence of commercial horseculture, often associated with the country estates, on the character of this landscape is strong. Significant areas are given over to the manicured grasslands of racecourses and polo grounds.
- 3.10.8 Within the limited areas of the shallow valleys which remain as open farmland, the pasture of sheep within small fields divided by hedgerows, is most common. Where land is not improved remnant areas of acid grassland and heathland, surface expressions of the underlying geology, are apparent.
- 3.10.9 The network of busy, wooded and often straight roads are defined by grass verges and timber closeboard fencing. In more residential areas timber fencing gives way to modern red brick high walls often with extensive security features.
- 3.10.10 There are few long distance views out to the surrounding landscape or clear views illustrating the extent of settlement. The landscape is therefore deceptive in its perception as a 'green oasis' when in fact it is a highly populated area.

Boundaries and adjacent landscape types

- 3.10.11 The Settled Wooded Sands landscape type covers five areas in the southernmost section of the borough below the Windsor Great Park. All the boundaries, except to the north east, are the borough boundary and so often do not run along any specific road, track or woodland boundary.
- 3.10.12 The mixed nature of landuses within the Settled wooded Sands, and the numerous small settlements, contrast with the less diverse adjacent landscape type of Farmed Parkland which is a more traditional and rare landscape. This landscape type is therefore a transitional landscape between the settlement boundaries of the urban areas and the wider Windsor Forest/ Bracknell Forest/Chobham Common landscapes.

Adjoining landscape types of parallel (district level) studies

- 3.10.13 The Sunningdale and Ascot Heath landscape character areas primarily adjoin the Windsor Forest landscape character area (Wooded Parkland landscape type) as identified in the Bracknell Forest Landscape Strategy on their northern boundaries.
- 3.10.14 South Ascot and South Sunningdale landscape character area adjoins the Ascot and Swinley Forest landscape character areas (Mixed Woodland Urban Fringe and Plateau Forest Heathland respectively) as identified in the Bracknell Forest Landscape Strategy on its south western boundary.

Physical Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.10.15 The landscape within this type is undulating with heights ranging between 10m AOD and 100m AOD. There is a general fall from the south west of the landscape type to the north east towards the Great Windsor Park where several streams drain and the man-made lake of Virginia Water was created. The landscape is perceived to be gently undulating because woodland often cloaks the steeper areas of landform.
- 3.10.16 The underlying geology for this type is predominately Bagshot Beds from the Bagshot Formation. To the north and east there are small pockets of London Clay and the whole area is scattered with later deposits of drift geology, including gravel and sands, which tend to occur at higher elevations, and localised pockets of alluvium.
- 3.10.17 The resultant sandy soils are free-draining and unsuitable for agricultural production (being predominately Grade 4 where woodland is absent). Much of this landscape has therefore been suitable for commercial forestry in recent times. Where areas have not been improved or taken over for forestry natural vegetation of acid grasslands and remnant heathland are elements in the landscape.
- 3.10.18 Man-made lakes associated with the large country estates and reservoirs are features within this landscape, such as Silwood Lake and Great Pond reservoir.

Ecological Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.10.19 The most extensive habitat in this type is mixed woodland including the areas of designed parkland. Some of these woodlands, namely Blacknest, Paddock Wood and Birch Copse are of ancient semi natural origin, however much is more recent, having been planted during the landscape movements of the 18th and 19th centuries as part of the designed landscapes associated with the large estates commonly found in the area (Silwood Park for example). Many of these mature woodlands are important habitats at a local level and as such are designated non-statutory Wild Heritage Sites, however there are no statutory designations within the landscape type. This habitat is important from a landscape character perspective because of the contribution the woodland has on the character of the locality.
- 3.10.20 Some of the deciduous parkland (veteran) trees found within the estate woodlands, as well as being important landscape features, are also likely to provide important habitat for indigenous flora and fauna, and could therefore be of great ecological interest. The grassland and wetland areas also found within the estate parklands may offer locally important habitat.
- 3.10.21 Some farmland habitat is found within the linear valleys lined by woodland, but it is piecemeal and fragmented. This landscape may provide a variety of habitat for wildlife particularly where hedgerows and field margins remain, as they form localised areas of 'unimproved' habitat.

- 3.10.22 Areas of landscape used for recreation and institutional purposes in this type are also likely to provide locally important habitat, particularly at Ascot Racecourse (where areas of heathland are found) and within the extensive grounds of education and health institutes found in the area.

Human Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.10.23 The low density commuter settlements of Broomhall, Sunninghill, Sunningdale and South Ascot are all set within a wooded framework. The 'villages' originate from the late Victorian period at the time of the opening of the railway, and contain an older core of modest red brick and clay tile buildings surrounded by more modern, predominately residential development. This peripheral suburban expansion has largely resulted in the coalescence of these settlements, although each retains a distinct central core and identity.
- 3.10.24 Between these villages clusters of exclusive, low density residential development have occurred within the wooded landscape, mainly in the twentieth century. They comprise primarily mansions set within landscaped garden plots with substantial closeboarded boundary fencing and other security features. Historic manor houses and estates such as Coworth Park and Sunningdale Park are also found. In both instances the woodland framework and siting of development prevents views to the property, creating a deceptively 'unsettled' character in a number of locations. Some areas of modern, higher density development occur along principal routeways, such as at Cheapside.
- 3.10.25 Land uses vary from predominately residential to educational establishments, such as at Silwood Park, to Ascot Racecourse on Ascot Heath. There is a notable absence of arable farming, light industry and motorway corridors. Pressure on land is great and this is apparent from the notable lack of rough ground. Ownership boundaries are often substantial (built rather than planted) and well maintained. This consistently reinforces the message of private land ownership to the visitor.
- 3.10.26 Some agricultural activities can be found but due to the poor quality of the soils for arable agriculture, pastoral activities are prevalent. This, and the relative wealth of residents, has often lead to the establishment of equestrian activities within fields between settlement.
- 3.10.27 Phone masts and pylons are also located within this landscape, though usually they are well screened in the wooded matrix; for example between Cheapside and Ascot.
- 3.10.28 The landscape type is easily accessed via A roads, with many minor roads linking these A roads to settlement creating a network of routeways. The A329 is the most prominent road and runs east to west through the area.

Historical Influences

- 3.10.29 Although there is little evidence of Mesolithic or Neolithic settlement in this landscape, as the light and sandy soils in this area lack the flints used for tools, there are Bronze Age (c2,500 - 750BC) barrows in the locality, for example at Ascot and Broomhall (both SAMs). The bell barrow on

Bowlledge Hill in the grounds of Heatherwood Hospital is the only surviving member of a small barrow cemetery that existed on the hill. Bell barrows are a particularly rare form of round barrow whose burials are frequently accompanied by weapons, personal ornaments and pottery. The Bowlledge bell barrow, although not visible within the wider landscape is important because of its rarity and because it has survived well. The bowl barrow at Broomhall (Round Barrow House), despite being partially excavated in 1901 during the construction of Chobham Golf Course, also survives comparatively well and is known to have contained an unusually large number of burial remains.

- 3.10.30 In Roman times the Roman road linking London to Silchester was constructed and the remains now known as the 'Devils Highway' runs just to the south of Sunningdale Village abutting the edge of the allotments. There is also evidence of Roman encampments in the heathland landscapes that covered this area in Roman times.
- 3.10.31 Much of this landscape type is thought to have formed part of Windsor Forest during medieval times. The term 'forest' in the medieval times did not necessarily imply an area covered with trees, but was also used to denote waste land covered with heather or other undergrowth. In fact, this district was almost treeless, except perhaps for a few sturdy oaks which had managed to grow up in spite of innumerable deer, wild pigs and other animals, which browsed off the young shoots as soon as they appeared above the ground. So rare were trees and shrubs that where they did exist, the places where they grew were named after them (such as Silwood meaning Sallow Wood in Old English/ Norman).
- 3.10.32 Due to the proximity of the Royal court at Windsor several large Manors included land within this type, including the Manor of Cookham, during medieval times. Subsequently in the 18th and 19th centuries the area's proximity to Windsor and London also made it desirable to the new class of rich industrialists. Large country homes were built with their ornamental gardens and this has created some attractive areas of parkland in the landscape today. However views of these parklands are often restricted due to the presence of woodland blocks which screen views into the estates.
- 3.10.33 There are 4 potential subdivisions of the Settled Wooded Heaths landscape type:
- 10a Sunningdale & Sunninghill
 - 10b Ascot Heath
 - 10c South Ascot & South Sunningdale
 - 10d Chobham Common
- 3.10.34 These areas have the generic characteristics of the type but in addition have important locally distinctive variations. The key characteristics highlighted are in addition to those identified in the landscape type.

10a Sunningdale and Sunninghill

Key Characteristics (in addition to landscape type)

- Educational and Civil Service Establishments

Description

- 3.10.35 Sunningdale and Sunninghill is the most extensive area of this landscape type. The enclosed wooded context provides the setting for numerous country estates, many of which have now become educational establishments, such as Coworth Park a preparatory school, or training colleges such as Sunningdale Park. The gated entrances of these estates are often the only indications that they are located within the wooded landscape.
- 3.10.36 The network of minor roads and tracks are often lined with detached residential properties in large plots set well back from the road, whose boundaries are delineated by close board fencing/brick walls with ornate winged gateways.
- 3.10.37 The village of Sunningdale is designated as a conservation area.
- 3.10.38 At the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086 Sunninghill is thought to have formed part of the valuable Manor of Cookham, known as Cochela, in the Berkshire hundred of Beynhurst which was held by Edward the Confessor.
- 3.10.39 Sunningdale Park (Civil Service College since 1969) is a Registered Historic Park located between Sunningdale and Sunninghill. It is a 19th century park, garden and pleasure ground, with origins in the late 18th century. Of particular interest is the Pulhamite rockwork of the 1890s. The undulating pasture landscape is divided into large paddocks and largely enclosed by belts of mature mixed woodland. Ornamental tree species of the parkland landscape are features visible from the landscape to the east and north east.
- 3.10.40 Silwood Park historic estate, is now part of the Imperial College London campus for Biology and Environmental Science studies. It is located within extensive parkland. However, views in are restricted by mature woodland belts. Coworth Park is also an educational establishment (Preparatory School) which is contained within a wooded setting in the east of the landscape area.
- 3.10.41 In contrast Tittenhurst Park, north of Sunningdale, is the former home of John Lennon and continues to be in private ownership for residential use. However, once again, the main buildings of the estate are screened by dense mature deciduous woodland.
- 3.10.42 Sunninghill means "the home of Sunna's people". Most of the development around the large country houses of the 18th century was accelerated by the discovery of health-giving salt springs and rapidly increased with the advent of the railway in 1841. Today Sunninghill is a favoured

residential district. Many of the larger houses have now been demolished although there are some historic smaller homes in the parish, notably the farmhouse at Silwood Park. The Cedars close to Sunninghill Church are thought to be where Sir Walter Scott wrote his poem "Marmion".

- 3.10.43 To the east of this landscape area, between Broomhall Farm and Virginia Water, the landscape is less settled and more open. This area of arable landscape is therefore more clearly undulating. To the north is Coworth Polo Ground which holds regular events.
- 3.10.44 Public Rights of way access are contained within minor trackways. Footpaths do not extend into open land.

10b Ascot Heath

Key Characteristics (in addition to landscape type)

- Ascot Racecourse
- Crown ownership
- Land management
- Lack of dispersed settlement is notable
- Absence of educational establishments
- Heathland associated with Ascot Racecourse

Description

- 3.10.45 Ascot Racecourse and associated facilities is located within this landscape area. The racecourse is found within a triangular piece of land delineated by the A329, A330 and the A332 roadways. Remnant areas of heathland are features within the racecourse area which is currently undergoing significant expansion of facilities. The east of this landscape area is undulating pasture land or setaside with blocks of ancient seminatural woodland such as Birch Copse and Paddock Wood (which are also Wildlife Heritage Sites).
- 3.10.46 As might be expected, most commercial development has grown up around the racecourse, whilst the residential areas of Ascot Heath, Cheapside and South Ascot are convenient commuter centres.
- 3.10.47 Ascot was originally a village called East Cote meaning Eastern Cottage from the old English Estcota. It lies just 6 miles from Windsor Castle. Queen Anne in 1711 ordered the races to be transferred from Datchet Meads to Ascot and Royal patronage continues to shape the character of the racecourse area today. The railway was brought to Ascot in 1845 for the purposes of the races.
- 3.10.48 Most of this area is within Crown ownership. As a consequence the woodlands are managed under the Woodland Grant Scheme and there is a lack of dispersed settlement as seen elsewhere in the landscape type, as the normal pressures for development are absent.

- 3.10.49 A woodland block included within the Wooded Parkland landscape type is located within the north east section of this landscape area. Wood End is clearly contiguous with the South Forest area.

10c South Ascot & South Sunningdale

Key Characteristics (in addition to landscape type)

- Influences of the adjacent settlements
- Strategic significance of green landscape corridors

Description

- 3.10.50 This landscape area includes the strips of landscape between Ascot and South Ascot, and South Ascot and Broomhall. They are important green landscape corridors between these settlements of strategic significance. They contain a mosaic of pastureland, woodland, dispersed settlement and educational institutions with associated playing field areas.
- 3.10.51 To the east this landscape character area runs into the Sunningdale and Sunninghill landscape character area.

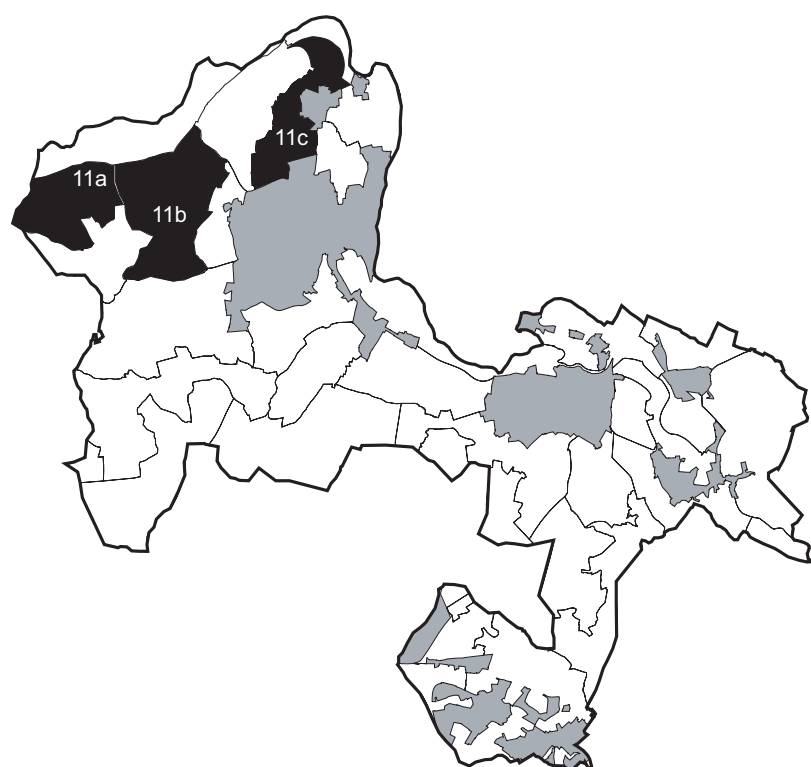
10d Chobham Common

Key Characteristics (in addition to landscape type)

- Influences of Chobham Common heathland

Description

- 3.10.52 This small corner of the borough has been included in a unique landscape character area because of the influence that Chobham Common and Golf Course has on its character.
- 3.10.53 Chobham Common is an extensive tract of heathland which has developed over the Bagshot Sand deposits found in the locality. The SSSI contains large areas of dry heath and acid grassland on the higher ground, in the vicinity of Ribs Down, and valley bogs also of considerable botanical interest in the lower lying areas. The heathland communities contains heather, dwarf gorse, Silver Birch and Scots Pin, elements of which are apparent within the Ridge Mount area.



Landscape Character Areas

- 11a Rose Hill
- 11b Burchett Green
- 11c Cookham Rise

3.11 FARMED CHALK SLOPES

3.11.1 Key Characteristics

- Flat to rolling Chalk slopes and dry valleys including striking chalk scarps
- Mixed landuses of arable, pasture, woodlands and commercial equine
- Ancient woodlands, linear woodlands and woodland copses
- Narrow 'unimproved' linear rural trackways which run up the incised dry valleys of the chalk scarp forming a local roadwork with considerable charm
- Modern road development which often cuts into the chalk landscape
- Remnant hedgerows and hedgerow trees
- Large farmsteads/estates set within their farmland (large farm holdings)
- Traditional hamlets within wider chalk landscape
- Large fields with variable field boundary types
- Recreational landuses, particularly Golf Courses
- Equestrian related features such as paddocks and stables
- Long distance open views of the rural chalk landscapes, the Thames river floodplain and Chiltern Hills

3.11.2 Characteristic Tree Species

- Beech, Ash, Sycamore, Oak, Whitebeam, Yew, Hazel, Hawthorn, Elder, Holly, possibly some Wych Elm



Farmland nr Honey Lane



Rose Lane, Rosehill



Farmland north of Cookham Rise



View of Cockmarsh SSSI from Thames Path, Bourne End

Description

- 3.11.3 This chalk lowland is a diverse, large scale agricultural landscape with a unified pattern of arable, pasture and woodland landuses. It has a simple and open rural character which generally has an interesting, settled and managed feel. The flatter chalk dipslopes provide rich agricultural soils which in modern times has allowed intensive farming practices to dominate resulting in large often regular field patterns. The texture of this landscape is smooth and colours are often muted. In those areas of intensive agriculture hedgerows are absent and large 'agrisheds' often form dominant built elements within declining brick farm complexes. However where undulates are more pronounced, within the vicinity of dry valleys, traditional pastoral land practices are prevalent and sheep can be seen grazing the chalkland. These areas are more textured and colourful, and have a more remote and enclosed feel to the visitor. The characterful hedgerows and trackways are particularly significant elements across the landscape as they add a sense of historic continuity (time depth) in a landscape often absent of built heritage.
- 3.11.4 Horizons within the landscape type are often contained by mature woodland belts and copses, with remnants of ancient woodland surviving on the steeper dry valley slopes. New woodland planting in the form of linear belts are increasingly common features within the landscape as well as commercial equestrian related land uses. The pattern of these modern landscapes are regular. The boundaries are of hedgerows and post and wire, and are well managed.
- 3.11.5 The northern extent of this landscape is defined by the north facing slope of the chalk escarpment which forms a dramatic backdrop to the Thames floodplain below. Hedgeline linear trackways run up the steep dry valley sides from the floodplain below to reach isolated farmsteads. From the scarp top, expansive long distance views of the Thames river corridor and the Chiltern Hills are experienced. Further into the chalk landscape traditional villages are set within the rural, relatively quiet landscapes. These villages are generally dispersed and linear in pattern having developed organically along routeways. They include a great variety of building styles and materials which together create a complementary composition. Deciduous trees are integral to settlement which sits sympathetically within its surrounding landscape. Further minor tracks and 'unimproved' single roadways criss cross the chalk dipslope connecting these small settlements.
- 3.11.6 The influence of the large conurbations adjacent to the landscape type in the north east of the borough are relatively minor. The built edges of Maidenhead and Cookham Rise are apparent in some views and busy roadways provide access from the wider road network into the Royal Borough through this landscape bringing noise and visual intrusion into these localised areas. However there are no transmission lines or other discordant infrastructure features in this landscape and therefore in overall terms it is a surprisingly remote, rural and quiet landscape despite its proximity to large conurbations.

Boundaries and adjacent landscape types

- 3.11.7 To the north, at the foot of the chalk scarp, the Settled Farmed Floodplain landscape of Bisham and Hurley is found. On the pronounced hills of sands and gravel deposits in this landscape the Settled Wooded Chalk Knolls landscape type is found.

Physical Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.11.8 The landscape within this type is sloping to rolling, roughly between 45m and 85m AOD with the exception of the chalk scarp areas which rise steeply from 30m to 90m AOD. The Upper Chalk substrate underlies this type, its porous properties resulting in the absence of permanent hydrological features within the landscape. Dry valley formations are features that interrupt the almost continuous escarpment whose sinuous line has been shaped by the Thames river which meanders below. There are rich agricultural soils (Grade 2) across most of this landscape type with the notable exceptions of soils within the steeper dry valley areas (which are Grade 3).

Ecological Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.11.9 This landscape has a range of habitats, the most extensive habitat being farmland, but there are significant areas of woodland, unimproved grassland and roadways with floristically rich hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- 3.11.10 The farmland seen in this type is a highly productive working landscape which has been intensively managed for crop production for many years. However it is likely that it will still provide important habitat for protected species such as bats and reptiles, as well as including localised areas of 'unimproved' areas such as hedgerows, hedgerow trees and 'wild' roadside edges to trackways which are important, not simply as landscape features, but also for their habitat value.
- 3.11.11 Woodland forms important vertical features within this open landscape as extensive wooded areas, copses and linear belts. Dungrovehill Wood, High Wood, Channy Grove and Beeching-grove Wood, which occupy some of the steeper slopes of the chalk scarp, are ancient semi-natural and replanted woodlands, and as such are designated as non-statutory Wildlife Heritage Sites.
- 3.11.12 A relatively extensive area of grassland habitat associated with the chalk scarp at Cock Marsh SSSI north of Cookham Rise is also of ecological interest due to its floristically rich chalk grassland (although only part of the SSSI is in the Cookham Rise landscape character area, the remaining grassland is found on the floodplain within the Cookham landscape character area). The site is owned by the National Trust and exhibits an interesting transition in a relatively small area from wet alluvial grassland, through calcareous grassland on a steep north-facing slope to more acidic grassland on clay at the top of the slope. It is also included in the Grassland Inventory.

Human Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.11.13 Agricultural is the principal influence on the character of this landscape. Where land is less undulating field boundaries have been removed to allow extensive arable cereal cropping to be undertaken. Where the land is more undulating sheep and horse pasture is more dominant.
- 3.11.14 This landscape type is relatively sparsely populated as settlement patterns have been influenced by the nature of the land holdings in this type. Within these large farms settlement is contained within farm complexes so as to allow the wider holding to be efficiently farmed. These farmsteads are located at the top of the chalk scarp and traditionally accessed by narrow linear trackways which run up the chalk slopes. Building styles are mixed, being both modern and traditional in style, however the occurrence of agrisheds are increasing.
- 3.11.15 The large farmsteads which farm these lands are Lower Mount Farm, Cannon Court Farm, Hyde Farm, Lee Farm, Studdings House and Hall Place. The dominance of large farm holdings has allowed for a process of economy of scale to occur in the locality resulting in the amalgamation of fields where landform and soils allow, and the subsequent loss of field boundaries.
- 3.11.16 The Grassland Research Institute is now a derelict site, awaiting redevelopment.
- 3.11.17 Outside the large farmholdings settlement is located within wooded routeways and treed villages. The traditional villages within this landscape are variable in terms of their morphology, building forms, styles and materials. This reflects their gradual growth over the centuries and the influence that the Thames waterway has had on the availability of building materials.
- 3.11.18 Linear woodland belts have been introduced into this landscape as shelter belts and to define some of the boundaries of these large farm holdings.
- 3.11.19 Many hedgerows have therefore been removed within this type and replaced with post and rail and post and wire fencing systems. In areas of pasture hedgerows are more common but are often in poor condition.
- 3.11.20 Modern road development (the A404M and the A4130) starkly contrasts with the historic trackways in this area. These road corridors are wider and cut into the scarp (sometimes 'across the grain') and through woodland to create more uniform gradients for traffic. They are therefore enclosed within the landscape and do not exert an influence on the visual character of the landscape beyond their immediate environment.
- 3.11.21 Linear Public Rights of Way follow the historic trackways up scarps and dry valleys. These provide suitable bridleways for equestrian use. The equestrian landuses, such as paddocks and stables are increasingly becoming common landscape features in this landscape type.
- 3.11.22 Recreational landuse is common in this landscape type, such as for golf courses.

- 3.11.23 There are numerous areas within this landscape that are managed through financial assistance from agri-environment schemes. An extensive framework of woodland planting has recently been introduced into the landscape near Rose Hill, with assistance from the Woodland Grant Scheme. Dungrovehill Wood is managed through the Woodland Grant Scheme by the Woodland Trust. Management of the Mungden Wood Golf Course is supplemented through the Countryside Stewardship Scheme.

Historical Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.11.24 Finds at Burchett Green date from the Saxon period. However the earliest buildings that are seen today within the village are from the 16th century.
- 3.11.25 Hall Place has 17th century manorial origins and Stubbings House is of 18th century origin.
- 3.11.26 The Bath Road is an historic routeway, with its origin in medieval times.
- 3.11.27 Landscape Areas

There are 3 potential subdivisions of the Farmed Chalk Slopes landscape type:

11a Rose Hill

11b Burchett Green

11c Cookham Rise

- 3.11.28 These areas have the generic characteristics of the type but in addition have important locally distinctive variations. The key characteristics highlighted are in addition to those identified in the landscape type.

11a Rosehill

Key Characteristics (in addition to landscape type)

- Dominance of commercial Equine (Stud/livery) land uses
- Designed landscape
- New woodland planting - belts and copses
- Highly managed landscape
- Minor, winding roads
- Irregular field shapes
- Boundary security features
- Rolling landform
- Marker buildings
- Views and noise of 'A' road and traffic

Description

- 3.11.29 The Rosehill landscape character area is a more intimately scaled landscape of predominately permanent pasture contained by hedgerows and woodland belts. Sheep and horse graze the rolling chalk downland in this area.
- 3.11.30 Specialisation into commercial equestrian breeding is occurring within the large farmholding at Juddmonte Farm. The associated security features, such a double fencing (post and rail timber with wire mesh and monoculture hedgerows) is evident in the landscape and estate management is reflected in the closely clipped hedgerows and new woodland planting throughout the area, and occurrence of new gatehouses (pink marker buildings) built in the style of the local vernacular.
- 3.11.31 Traffic noise from Hurley Lane influences this otherwise tranquil area.

11b Burchett Green

Key Characteristics (in addition to landscape type)

- Predominance of large - expansive scaled fields of arable cereal crops
- Absence of field boundary vegetation
- Linear woodland boundary vegetation at periphery of holdings
- Gently undulating
- Greater incidence of settlement

Description

- 3.11.32 This landscape character area encompasses the landscapes under intensive arable cereal production in the central area of the Farmed Chalk Slope landscape type within the Royal Borough. It is a rural managed landscape with contrasting elements. The expansive open arable landscapes are contained in the wider landscape by irregularly shaped woodland areas and belts resulting in distant but wooded horizons.
- 3.11.33 The former Grassland Research Institute, Hall Place college and Stubbings House have substantial land holdings in this landscape area, relating to the farmstead estates referred to above.
- 3.11.34 Hall Place was built in the mid 18th century for William East. 3 of the 4 lime avenues that radiated from the 17th century manor are still visible in the landscape today. It is now the Berkshire College of Agriculture.
- 3.11.35 Stubbings House was built in 1756 and is included in Burchetts Green Conservation Area. Many of the original farm buildings are now converted for residential use.

- 3.11.36 At Burchetts Green the settlement pattern is linear, relating to the routeways through the village rather than being clustered around the Green, and buildings include timber frames with brick infill, weathered boarded agricultural barns and brick buildings with clay tiled roofs.
- 3.11.37 At Littlewick Green buildings are loosely clustered around a central green. Brick is the most common building material and flint is also frequently used.
- 3.11.38 The golf course at Mungden Hill is contained within woodland, it has little influence on character of this area.

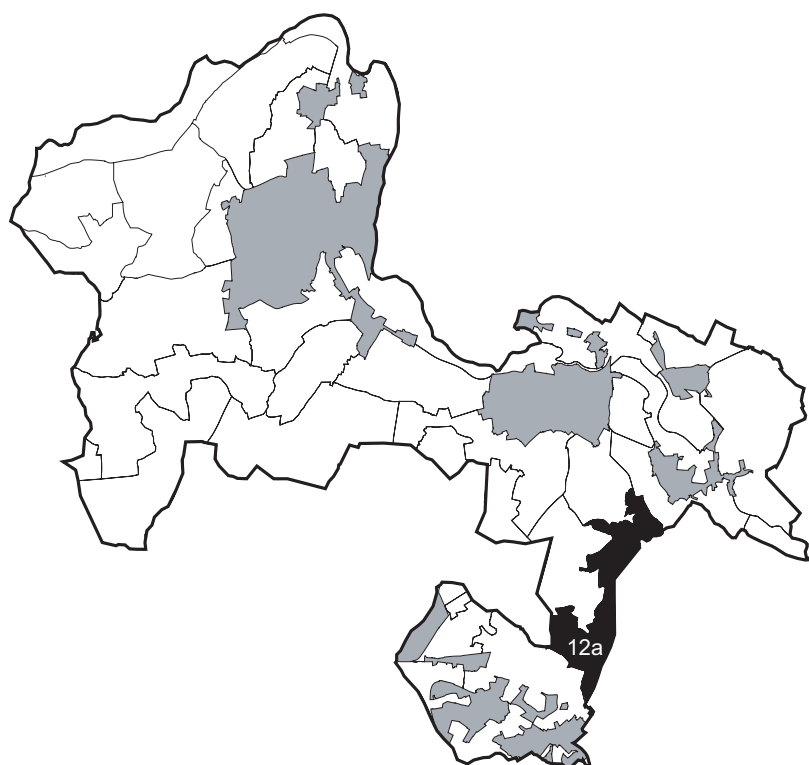
11c Cookham Rise

Key Characteristics (in addition to landscape type)

- Influences of Cookham Rise village
- Some large arable fields
- Overgrown hedgerow trees forming linear woodland belts
- Cherry orchards
- Busy

Description

- 3.11.39 The Cookham Rise landscape character area is influenced by the adjacent village of Cookham Rise . Views of settlement are visible although the built edge is largely softened by deciduous and ornamental garden vegetation. Buildings are predominately post war.
- 3.11.40 One of few remaining locations for fruit growing is found within this landscape character area. Once a centre for fruit growing the Cookham area saw the decline of the industry following the Second World War along with many other 'traditional' land management practices. Located between Furze Platt and Cookham Rise, the orchards now grow cherry, apples, plums and other soft fruits for (largely) the 'Pick Your Own' trade.
- 3.11.41 The golf course at Greythatch is a typical recreational landuse of the landscape type.



Landscape Character Areas

12a Windsor Great Park

3.12 WOODED HEATHLAND

3.12.1 Key Characteristics

- Extensive area of dense mixed woodland (much of which is semi-natural and replanted ancient woodland) with coniferous trees as features visible within the treeline
- Undulating landform with relatively steep wooded slopes
- Pockets of heathland and acid grassland habitats at the margins to woodland areas on higher ground
- Woodland streams and sinuous man-made ornamental lakes
- Historic country houses and lodges of considerable cultural and historic worth set within designed landscapes which are contiguous with the wider wooded framework
- Other incidental heritage features found within the parkland landscape
- Wide open green space which is contained by woodland, contrasting with it
- Network of enclosed trackways
- An interesting, rich and texturally diverse landscape which is contrastingly open and enclosed
- Consistent character of woodland boundary features of chestnut pale fencing and/or hedging

3.12.2 Characteristic Tree Species

- Oak, Pine, Rowan, Holly



Smith's Lawn, Polo Ground



Virginia Water



Woodland track north to round oak



Wild boar enclosure

Description

- 3.12.3 The wooded heathland landscape type and area is a mature and diverse landscape which is textually rich and of great historic and ecological interest. It contrasts markedly with the surrounding open parkland of Windsor Great Park. Restricted to the south of the Royal Borough the geology of underlying sands creates freedraining soils with heathland habitats and mixed woodland on undulating high ground. The principal areas of woodland are oak dominated with occasional birch and scots pine stands. Small areas of heather dominated heath habitats are found on the fringes of the mixed woodland adding colour and texture to the visual scene. The coniferous trees within the woodland are visible as features within the treeline particularly in winter.
- 3.12.4 These large tracts of dense woodland conceal historic buildings and heritage features of considerable historic and cultural worth. They are connected to the wider estate by enclosed trackways which traverse the woodland, some in macadam, but many are of compacted earth.
- 3.12.5 At the centre of this landscape, again defined by mature mixed woodland, is Smiths Lawn Polo Ground, a striking open green space of substantial proportion contained by woodland. The manicured, completely flat lawn stretches north to south for almost a kilometre, and east to west for three quarters of a kilometre. The club stand and auxiliary facilities (most of which are temporary) dominate the southern end of this space. Regularly used for Polo, this space has a 'lost world' character to it, as there are no views into the area and access is controlled.
- 3.12.6 Within areas of lower lying land the underlying clay geology allowed for the creation of an extensive network of ornamental lakes during the designed landscape movement of the 17th century. The steep slopes of mature mixed woodland extend down the valley sides to the waters edge defining the sinuous shapes of the waterbodies and creating channelled dramatic views across the water.
- 3.12.7 At the fringes of the landscape type the woodland character merges into the lower lying open parkland, and as the woodland becomes less dense there are stunning views of the open parkland areas, Windsor Castle and the town of Windsor.
- 3.12.8 Overall this is an enthralling landscape of contrasts, full of concealed 'treasures' and incidental views which the visitor is drawn to explorer.

Boundaries and adjacent landscape types

- 3.12.9 The Wooded Heathland landscape type extends from Woodside Farm at Old Windsor down to Blacknest in the south. It includes the Surrey landscapes of Virigina Water, Savill Gardens and the Obelisk Pond. It is bordered to the west by the Farmed Parkland and Open Parkland landscape types.

Adjoining landscape types of parallel (district level) studies

- 3.12.10 The Windsor Great Park (East) landscape character area adjoins the Windsor Forest landscape character area (Wooded Parkland landscape character type) as identified in the Bracknell Forest Landscape Strategy on its western boundary.

Physical Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.12.11 The landform of the Wooded Heathland is comprised of relatively small scale undulations rising and falling relatively rapidly between 40m and 70m AOD. The area has a distinctive geology from other areas in the borough. It is underlain by areas of River Terrace deposits which grade down to sands and gravels of the Lambeth Formation (Lambeth Group and Bagshot Beds) and at the lowest points to London Clay. These geological variations in relatively short distances results in a variety of nutrient-poor and often acidic soils with subsurface ferric pans, and subsequently a mosaic of habitat types.
- 3.12.12 Also as a result of the underlying geology and soil conditions is the presence of surface water due to impeded drainage caused by the subsurface pans and impermeability of the clay. These conditions result in the presence of surface water such as springs. Many of these streams are dammed, as in the case of Virginia Water and Obelisk Pond, and are therefore features in the landscape.

Ecological Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.12.13 The most extensive habitat in this landscape type is woodland. Ancient woodland and ancient semi natural or replanted woodland is found at Spring Hill, Wilderness and areas of Manor Hill. The continuity of the geographical extent of these woodlands, since at least the medieval period, combined with the unique underlying geology has resulted in specie rich woodland habitats and as such are included within the Windsor Forest and Great Park SSSI and cSAC. Snow Hill, Spring Hill, Cookes Hill, Wild Boar Enclosure, Frostfarm Plantation and Belvedere Wood of the wooded areas are also included in the SSSI and cSAC for Windsor Great Park, although they are not noted as ancient or ancient semi natural or replanted woodland.
- 3.12.14 A range of habitats are represented within the woodland from coniferous and mixed plantations through to mature and ultra-mature broadleaved woodland. Relics of the primary forest still survive as ancient oak pollards scattered throughout the Forest. Many of these ancient trees are over 500 years old and some are reputed to be up to 800 years. These oak woods are also ecologically interesting because they are found on acid sandy soils in combination with birch, rowan and holly species. In fact Windsor Forest is second only to the New Forest with regard to the richness of its invertebrate fauna, particularly its rare beetles and flies.

- 3.12.15 Of equal ecological interest, although not reaching such a great age, are numerous over-mature beech trees which are uncommonly found on acid soils in southern Britain. Being partially hollow and decayed, both the oaks and beeches afford habitats for a number of extremely rare and specialised insects as well as nesting sites for birds. Groves of hornbeam are also a favoured wintering site for the largest flock of hawfinches in Britain.
- 3.12.16 Also found within this wooded landscape, although not included in the Windsor Forest SSSI/cSAC is the extensive grassland area of Smith's Lawn and open water of Virginia Water which add to the great diversity of habitat found within the landscape type/area.

Human Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.12.17 The extensively wooded landscape is primarily under woodland management with environmental and ecological objectives, however some areas are more intensively managed for commercial forestry purposes.
- 3.12.18 Human activity has significantly altered the hydrology of this landscape. By earth moving and damming techniques Virginia Water was created by Henry Flitcroft in the 18th Century. The smaller water bodies of Obelisk Pond and Cow's Pond (outside of the borough but contiguous with this landscape) were created in a similar fashion. Woodland springs which feed into these waterbodies are found further up the valley sides.
- 3.12.19 Settlement is extremely limited within this landscape type/area. Contained within the woodland are a number of important historic buildings, namely, Cumberland Lodge, Royal Lodge and the Royal School. However there are also numerous estate 'lodges' and gatehouses for the housing of staff. They vary in character from the post war bungalows adjacent to Virginia Water to Victorian buildings on Manor Hill. (For a full description see landscape character type 2).
- 3.12.20 Other built features found within this landscape type include remnants of the medieval Park Pale and commemorative statues. The Copper Horse Statue, found at Snow Hill is a focal feature, framed by The Long Walk treed avenue, which draws visitors from Windsor Castle into the heart of the parkland area.
- 3.12.21 Smith's Lawn is home to the Guards Polo Club. The club includes a Clubhouse incorporating offices for management and staff and a restaurant and bar for members and guests. There are 10 grounds extending over an area of some 130 acres. At Flemish Farm (Character Area 3d), the Club has 120 stables, an exercise track and a practice ground. The Club's playing season starts in April and finishes in mid September. The Polo Ground is also used for horse trials, corporate hospitality and conferencing events.
- 3.12.22 The entire landscape type/area is within Crown Ownership. Some of the woodland is managed with financial assistance from the Woodland Grant Scheme.

- 3.12.23 Sustrans route 4 passes through this landscape type linking Reading by Warren Row, Knowle Hill, Maidenhead, Dorney, Windsor to Runnymede and East.

Historical Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.12.24 The entire extent of this landscape type/area is registered within English Heritage's Historic Park and Garden register. Of historical interest within this landscape are the following features:
- 3.12.25 Virginia Water was created by Henry Flitcroft c1750, the largest artificial lake of its day. It was enlarged in the 1780s and embellished in the mid 1820s. The creation of this waterbody led to the southern and eastern arms of the moated manor, detailed below, being destroyed and incorporated into Virginia Water.
- 3.12.26 Lodges within the Great Park were built in the 17th and 18th centuries to house park administrators. Cumberland Lodge (Grade 1 listed) and Royal Lodge are country houses located within this extensive woodland tract. Cumberland Lodge is the largest residence in Windsor Great Park and is surrounded by the remains of gardens and associated parkland laid out mainly in the 18th century. The Royal Lodge, also surrounded by woodland, originates from the 18th and 19th centuries.
- 3.12.27 The moated manor adjacent to Virginia Water is a SAM. It includes Queen Victoria's landing stage which was added in the 19th century. The site is enclosed by woodland. There is no visible evidence of the manor on the island, which is accessed by a modern bridge on its west side. The Norden map of 1607 shows this moated site and terms it 'The Manor' although the site is mentioned as early as the reign of Richard II and in 1406 is referred to as 'Manor Lodge'.
- 3.12.28 Smith's Lawn was occupied during the First World War by the Headquarters Camp of the Canadian Forestry Corps and for a short time thereafter it was known as the Canadian Camp. In the Second World War, Smith's Lawn was used as an aerodrome, with an eye for the security of the Monarch, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother.
- 3.12.29 At the far end of Smith's Lawn is The Obelisk, and the Statue of Prince Albert, The Prince Consort, placed there as the Jubilee Offering of the Women of England to Queen Victoria. The Savill Gardens (outside of the Royal Borough boundary) are beyond.

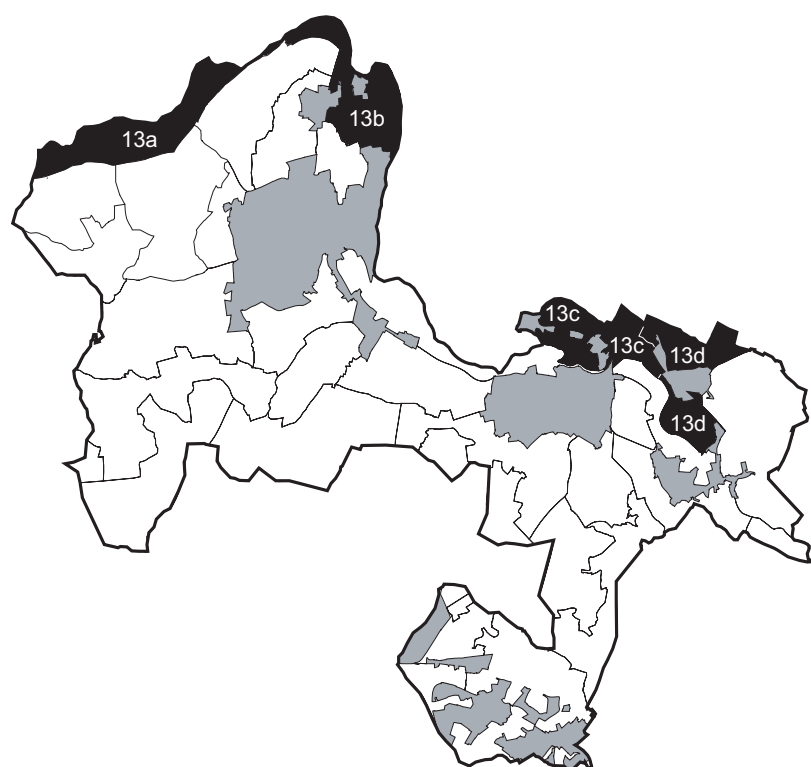
12a Windsor Great Park (East)

Key Characteristics (in addition to landscape type)

As above

Description

As above



Landscape Character Areas

13a Bisham and Hurley

13b Cookham

13c Eton

13d Datchet

3.13 SETTLED FARMED FLOODPLAIN

3.13.1 Key Characteristics

- Wide, meandering river with diverse river edge habitats including pollarded willows
- Flat and open floodplain with a rich farming heritage
- Quiet, intimate waterside routeways with riverside and floodplain historic built features
- Linear woodlands and designed landscapes with their parkland trees give a subtly wooded character to much of the valley floor
- Riverside recreation 'hotspots'
- Large farmsteads set within a rich mosaic of farmland
- Traditional vernacular buildings
- Dispersed small scale modern residential development which is unsympathetic to the vernacular style of traditional building forms seen in the locality
- Rich archaeological heritage
- Increasing influence of aviation and road traffic, and associated infrastructure development

3.13.2 Characteristic Tree Species

- Willow, Alder, Birch, Oak, Sycamore, Hawthorn, Ash, Beech, Rowan, Aspen, Elder



Farmland north of Bisham from Quarry Wood Road



Farmland south of Datchet



Eton Riverside



Magna Carta Island



Hurley Riverside

Description

- 3.13.3 The wide, slow moving watercourse of the historic river meanders sinuously within its well defined floodplain. The densely wooded escarpments of the Chiltern 'Outliers' form dramatic backdrops to the waterway and clearly delimit the extent of the floodplain through which it carves in the northern reaches of the borough. To the south the chalk scarp melts into the floodplain and instead the urban edges of Slough and Windsor contain the floodplain landscape. The river edge has a diverse and natural character and this varied margin of woodland, grassland meadows, grazing marshes, reed beds and streams provides a richly textured river setting with areas of habitat of high ecological worth. The riverside provides an important routeway through the landscape which is often quiet and remote in character. Built features of historic interest such as traditional timber framed cottages or boathouses, often with brick infill, and locks add incidental interest to the water's environs. Modern riverside development includes recreation facilities and large detached residences which detract from the traditional character of the waterway in some locations.
- 3.13.4 Beyond the river the valley floor is comprised of a rich mosaic of farmland with scattered settlement. The rural scene has a strong sense of its farming heritage but shows signs of decline due to a lack of the maintenance of traditional land management. Those areas immediately adjacent to the river, which are periodically waterlogged, are often given over to permanent pasture. Fields are irregular in size and shape, and are grazed by cattle and sheep. Their character is often 'scruffy' or 'unkempt' with boundaries of gappy hedgerows or post and wire fencing. Beyond the floodlands of the river, where flood prevention measures are in place or above the flood line, fertile alluvial soils support rich arable agriculture. Fields are large in scale, hedgerows and trees have been removed, and timber post and rail fencing define boundaries instead. Farm complexes are set within this landscape and are large. Their diversification, for example, through the expansion of commercial equestrian activities, has led to the introduction of new features into the landscape such as 'agrisheds' and security cameras.
- 3.13.5 The character of settlement within this landscape is variable. Charming traditional flint and stone or brick villages, often with origins in monastic foundations, form loose clusters of settlement near the rivers edge in the Hurley area. Around Datchet timber frame dwellings are, instead, more commonly found. Often modern development has extended from the historic core of these settlements along traditional minor routeways across the floodplain. This development, of generously spaced detached and semi detached housing, has been unsympathetic to the local vernacular and leads to a chaotic composition of materials and building styles on the periphery of some settlements.
- 3.13.6 Tree cover is in the form of either linear belts that extend from the riverside to contain pastureland, farm woodlands or mature trees which are part of the wider designed landscapes associated with the setting of the monastic foundations and manor houses found within the floodplain. These landscape features contribute to tree cover in the floodplain, particularly in the winter, when mature conifers can be seen within the treelines of the parkland areas. In combination these mature trees, although not extensive, give the floodplain a subtly wooded character and contain views from within it across the floodplain.

- 3.13.7 This is a landscape which feels intermittently intimate and enclosed or open depending on the occurrence of tree belts and proximity to the river. Long distance views are channelled and contained by the woodland backdrop of the Chiltern Hills in the Bisham and Hurley areas. Historic country houses set within their designed landscapes form striking 'eyecatchers' perched both on valleysides and on the plateau of the chalk scarp in these views. In the Eton and Datchet areas views are less clearly contained but views of the built edges of the adjacent settlements are often glimpsed.
- 3.13.8 The high quality of this landscape type, its proximity to the urban conurbations of Windsor and Maidenhead, and the presence of the river itself, make it a popular setting for recreational pursuits including walking (The Thames Path national trail following the waters edge) cycling, waterbased sports, horseriding and camping. The camping areas, sailing clubs and boating facilities found along the riverway attract many visitors creating 'honeypot' areas of high activity.
- 3.13.9 The quiet and remote character of these landscapes are increasingly influenced by noise and air pollution associated with the road and aviation traffic which passes through these localities.

Boundaries and adjacent landscape types

- 3.13.10 This landscape type shares many of the attributes of the Settled Developed Floodplain landscape type.

Adjoining landscape types of parallel (district level) studies

- 3.13.11 The western boundary of the Bisham and Hurley landscape character area adjoins the Thames River Valley and Remenham Wooded Chalk Slopes landscape character areas as identified in the Wokingham Landscape Character.

Physical Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.13.12 The flat Thames floodplain is comprised of extensive alluvial deposits that overly the Upper Chalk rock formation. These rich alluvial deposits give rise to freely-draining brown earths which are suitable for arable farming, except in areas of frequent waterlogging, in which circumstances agricultural use is restricted to pasture. The river flows in a easterly direction and falls from 30m AOD at Hurley to 20m AOD at Runnymede House.
- 3.13.13 The hydrology of the river course has been altered substantially across the borough with the introduction of locks, weirs, bunds and canals to aid navigation and alleviate flooding, most recently of which being the Jubilee River (See Chapter 2). Some of these features have become important landscape features within the river corridor. The Jubilee River and associated bunds have had a particular influence on the character of the landscape within its locality, both directly and indirectly. Water table levels have been altered by the new 'River' and thus simultaneously have an indirect influence on wider character by reducing the areas of traditional floodland for example.

Ecological Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.13.14 There is a wide range of habitats within this landscape type, the most common being farmland and woodlands, but also unimproved grassland and wetland habitats are represented including grazing marshes, reedbeds and streams.
- 3.13.15 The farmland seen in this type is a highly productive working landscape which has been intensively managed for crop production for many years. However it is likely that it still provides important habitat for protected species, such as bats and reptiles, as well as including localised areas of 'unimproved' areas such as hedgerows, hedgerow trees and 'wild' roadside edges which are important, not simply as landscape features, but also for their habitat value.
- 3.13.16 Woodlands are limited within this landscape type to linear woodlands within the wider landscape on the one hand, and those that form part of designed landscapes, such as at Temple Park, on the other. These areas include trees of considerable age and as such are likely to be of ecological interest.
- 3.13.17 A relatively extensive area of grassland habitat associated with the chalk scarp at Cock Marsh is also of ecological interest due to its floristically rich chalk grassland (although the SSSI designation relates to an area within the Farmed Chalk Slopes landscape type) . The site is owned by the National Trust and exhibits an interesting transition in a relatively small area from wet alluvial grassland, through calcareous grassland on a steep north-facing slope to more acidic grassland on clay at the top of the slope. It is also included in the Grassland Inventory.
- 3.13.18 The Thames itself forms a diverse riverine corridor along the northern and eastern edge of the borough. Including habitats such as wet woodlands and marshes, this important landscape feature is also of wider significance as a corridor for the movement of wildlife and its inherent local nature conservation interest. As such there are a number of designated non-statutory Wildlife Heritage Sites along its margin.
- 3.13.19 There are no statutory designated sites within the landscape type.

Human Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.13.20 Where areas are periodically flooded, or waterlogged, grassland for grazing is the prominent land cover (this is often seen within the fields that align the Thames), and where flood prevention measures are in place, or above the floodline, the fertile alluvial soils support rich arable agriculture and provide suitable locations for communication and transportation corridors.
- 3.13.21 Settlement within this landscape is variable. Historic villages such as Hurley, Bisham, Cookham, Eton and Datchet have a rich architectural heritage and include buildings in a great variety of vernacular styles. More recent development, such as village expansion at Datchet and Bisham, has increased the extent and dispersal of settlement within the floodplain considerably.

- 3.13.22 The high quality of this landscape type, its proximity to the urban conurbations of Windsor and Maidenhead, and the presence of the river itself, make it a popular setting for recreational pursuits including waterbased sports, horseriding and camping.
- 3.13.23 Sustrans routes 5 and 61 pass through this landscape type linking Maidenhead by Cookham to High Wycombe, and Dorney to The Myrke and Heathrow Airport, with a branch by Upton Court to Uxbridge.

Historical Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.13.24 The Thames river corridor, as indicated in Chapter 2, has had a long history of human use and occupation. It has been the principal communication and transport route within the landscape for thousands of years and as such there are many heritage features within the landscape which reflect this.
- 3.13.25 Early use of this landscape by humans is indicated by the Neolithic settlements found at Eton Wick and Southlea. The river gravels of the Thames were largely cleared of woodland by the early Bronze Age, and their intensive use during the Iron Age and Roman period is indicated by field systems and trackways visible as cropmarks. Formalised land division may date from the Iron Age and Roman period and it is possible that Roman land units were preserved in Saxon estates, which became the basis of medieval manors. The Domesday Book records numerous mills associated with settlements along the Thames as the river provided clean water for the processing of raw materials.
- 3.13.26 Settlement in the floodplain became established during the 6th and 7th centuries and by the 10th century an urban centre was developing at Cookham (which is recorded as having a market). The Domesday Book in 1086 records many other settlements on the valley floor. Wargrave had developed by the 13th century. Both Cookham and Wargrave declined as Reading developed.
- 3.13.27 In the medieval period rural settlement, outside the urban centres, appears to have moved away from the valley floor onto higher ground. The Domesday settlement of Elentone was located above the river flood line 3/4 mile from the main bridging point of the Thames between London and Bristol, and later developed into the modern town of Maidenhead whose expansion was based on the trade and travellers that the Bath Road (A4) brought.
- 3.13.28 The rich heritage of this landscape type is reflected by the number of historic and archaeological designations within it, details of which are given within the preceding landscape character area descriptions.

Landscape Areas

There are 4 potential subdivisions of the Settled Farmed Floodplain landscape type:

13a Bisham and Hurley

13b Cookham

13c Eton

13d Datchet

3.13.29 These areas have the generic characteristics of the type but in addition have important locally distinctive variations. The key characteristics highlighted are in addition to those identified in the landscape type.

13a Bisham and Hurley

Key Characteristics (in addition to landscape type)

- Floodplain contained by steep wooded valleysides of the Chiltern Outliers
- Historic hamlets with linear settlement patterns
- Traditional flint and stone villages and monastic foundations of great historic worth
- Network of minor roadways and footpaths
- Long distance views from the floodplain are contained and channelled by the steep escarpments, with views of the historic houses and manors perched on the chalk scarp and plateau above
- Commercial equestrian activities

Description

3.13.30 The historic landscape of the Bisham and Hurley area has a rural and relatively peaceful character. The steep Chalk scarps of the Chiltern AONB to the north and Winter/Prospect Hill to the south provide a dramatic, often wooded backdrop to the river floodplain, channelling views in an east - west direction. Landmarks such as Danesfield Hotel provide interesting 'eye catchers' within views from the floodplain.

3.13.31 Landuse is mixed within this landscape area. At the rivers edge land is given over for pasture of sheep and cattle, and also to temporary mobile homes/camping and areas for public access, such as at Hurley Lock. A richer, more unified arable farmland landscape of cereal crops and deciduous woodland belts is found beyond this immediate river context. However the character of these areas is becoming weakened by the increase in setaside land, lack of boundary management and expansion of equestrian facilities.

3.13.32 The nature and condition of field boundaries are variable in this landscape area. The rectilinear shape of many of arable fields adjacent to Hurley Lane suggests that they are late Parliamentary Enclosures, but there is some evidence of the farming intensification in the locality such as the loss of hedgerows and field amalgamation seen there, and also the addition of agrisheds, to Town Farm for example.

3.13.33 The parkland landscapes of Hurley Priory and Bisham Abbey span the width of the floodplain and are important features influencing the character of both the immediate river corridor and wider

floodplain. Their mature form and mixed composition add to the depth and historical richness of the locality. Linear woodlands also contribute to the subtly wooded character of the floodplain, intercepting it and containing views across it.

- 3.13.34 The principal road through this landscape is found at the foot of the chalk scarp. This busy road corridor brings noise and activity into an otherwise quiet, rural landscape. Small sunken green lanes and farm tracks lead off from this routeway. Rail corridors and small sewage treatment works are also features.
- 3.13.35 A network of smaller, single width roadways and tracks pass cross the landscape within this area, often perpendicular to modern routeways, following the angular boundaries of the fields. The principal road in this landscape area is Hurley Lane (the A4130) which runs along the higher ground and southern boundary of the character area. Noise and views of Hurley Lane influence the character of the adjacent farmland.
- 3.13.36 Bisham and Hurley are designated as Conservation Areas. There is evidence from archaeological finds that there has been settlement on the Thames floodplain here since Mesolithic times. The village of Bisham grew from Bisham Abbey (SAM), a moated monastic complex with fish ponds located to the west of the village. This 12th century abbey is a rare example of a religious house successively occupied by three different monastic orders although, following private ownership, it is now home to the National Sports Centre. Building styles vary, reflecting the development of the settlement over time, however in general materials are brick (plain, rendered or painted) with tiled roofs.
- 3.13.37 Settlement at Hurley dates from pre-Roman times and Hurley Priory (SAM), is an example of a moated Benedictine monastic complex. The village developed along the High Street in a ribbon fashion. The conservation area contains a variety of buildings dating from the Norman period to the late 20th century. The priory includes buildings of chalk and flint and the use of chalk for quoins. Timber frame and orange-red brick buildings are also common, and weatherboards along buildings in the vicinity of the river.
- 3.13.38 Recent residential development at Bisham and Hurley is varied in style and form, and lacks the unity displayed in the historic building styles of the conservation areas.
- 3.13.39 Ornamental garden trees and rough grazing fields for cattle and horses are visible on the periphery of these settlements.

13b Cookham

Key Characteristics (in addition to landscape type)

- Mature woodland belts and individual trees giving a wooded feel
- Network of sunken, narrow lanes and tracks
- Diverse natural habitats such as unimproved grassland and wet woodlands
- Drainage channels and flood alleviation features
- Quiet and remote landscape

Description

- 3.13.40 The floodplain landscape which aligns the Thames within this landscape character area forms the setting of the historic settlement of Cookham and is generally composed of open grazing pasture. Richer, arable farmland with woodland belts occurs beyond the flood line to the south of Cookham. The chalk scarp of Quarry Wood defines the southern boundary of the character area before the river turns and meanders southwards towards Maidenhead where the wooded scarp of Cliveden Reach and glimpses of Cliveden House with its landscaped pleasure gardens provide a breathtaking and intriguing backdrop to Cookham area.
- 3.13.41 The character of the river is contrastingly open in the Cock Marsh/Bourne End area, and densely wooded around Cliveden Reach (the setting of which is protected by covenant at this location). Riverside buildings in the timber frame vernacular style are features along the river corridor, such as The Boathouse at Cliveden.
- 3.13.42 Within the wider landscape mature linear woodlands and tree groupings, combined with the wooded scarp of Cliveden Reach, give the floodplain landscape a surprisingly wooded feel. The ephemeral flooding across many areas of this landscape results in ecological diverse habitats including wet woodland (south of White Place Farm) and unimproved grassland (at Cock Marsh).
- 3.13.43 Where the productivity of the waterlogged soils has been improved with land drainage, within the arable landscape to the south of Cookham, drainage channels are features in the landscape, such as the Strand Water (WHS). A flood alleviation bund runs across the landscape east to west, south of White Place Farm.
- 3.13.44 Cherry orchards were once common features in this landscape. However they have not entirely disappeared from the Cookham Dean area, the orchard crops can be seen between Furze Platt (Maidenhead) and Cookham (in the Cookham Rise landscape character area). These 'Pick Your Own' Orchards offer apples, plums, damsons and other soft fruit.
- 3.13.45 Public rights of way run north-south linking Cookham with Maidenhead. The Greenway route, which follows the line of the Jubilee Flood Alleviation bund (east to west) before turning south to Maidenhead, is a particularly popular and well used, locally important routeway. This network is complemented by the areas of public access at Cock Marsh, Cookham, Cookham Lock and Widbrook Common (WHS) which are held by the National Trust.
- 3.13.46 The principal areas of settlement are Cookham and Cookham Rise which extend eastwards from the chalk slopes. Outside these areas settlement is generally limited to farmsteads, some of important heritage value, for example White Place Farm. Sporadic modern detached riverside development is a feature along the northern reaches of the river.
- 3.13.47 Due to the absence of major transportation corridors, this landscape has a surprisingly remote and quiet character, particularly along the riverside areas. The Bourne End to Maidenhead branch line has a localised influence on the floodplain character at Cock Marsh.

- 3.13.48 It is probable that the Roman road from Silchester to Saint Albans crossed the River Thames by bridges at Sashes Island, located 0.5km to the immediate north east of Cookham. It is thought that the village sprang up along this historic routeway in a linear fashion from east to west, with much of the medieval village pattern remaining apparent today. On the western side of the village Cookham Moor is located, now forming the open space between Cookham and Cookham Rise.
- 3.13.49 Cock Marsh (SAM), distinct from the SSSI, covers the round barrow cemetery located on the floodplain 1km west of Bourne End. The cemetery comprises four bowl barrows, all of which are visible as raised earthworks in the grassland. All four barrows were partially excavated between 1874 and 1877. Finds included evidence of later Saxon inhumation.

13c Eton

Key Characteristics (in addition to landscape type)

- Historic town of Eton and its riverside setting
- Views of the college buildings from surrounding farmland
- The A332 Eton bypass and M4 road corridor
- Mature parkland trees
- Rich arable farmland
- Wooded river corridor with pollarded Willows
- Influences of recent residential development at Eton Wick on surrounding farmland
- Views of Windsor Castle and St John the Baptist Church

Description

- 3.13.50 The historic town of Eton, and its internationally renowned college, is the focus of this landscape character area (although not included within it). Its buildings form the bulk of the built form in the village and its associated historic parkland landscape and auxiliary buildings extend from the North/South Field in the East to Agars Plough (Playing Fields) in the west. Founded in 1440 the college buildings and playing fields are included in the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. The town's setting is orientated towards the river emphasising its traditional and close affiliation with Windsor. Views of college buildings set within their floodplain landscape can be seen from surrounding footpaths. The wider setting of the town has been compromised by residential development at Eton Wick, the A332 Eton bypass and the Maidenhead - Slough branch line.
- 3.13.51 Although often fragmented by recent residential and infrastructure development, rich arable farmland commonly extends across the floodplain west of the A332 Eton bypass.
- 3.13.52 Eton College School grounds, parkland and golf course dominate landuse to the east of the A332 Eton bypass. This area is well managed for sport and recreation with mature parkland trees being strong landscape features.
- 3.13.53 Beyond the Eton riverside the Thames river corridor is heavily wooded as it meanders through the landscape. Mature pollarded willows and alders line the bank. This stretch of the river is heavily used for recreational boating and the Thames Path has many visitors.

- 3.13.54 The Home Park public open space on the south side of the river is included in this landscape character area because of its close association with the Thames River corridor at this location and its use as a public park.
- 3.13.55 To the west is the modern settlement of Eton Wick, which appears to have been transposed onto the landscape in recent times, 'breaking' the historic pattern of the agrarian landscape this area. Views of the settlement edge are abrupt from surrounding areas.
- 3.13.56 Field boundaries are variable, some are very well maintained (within Eton College ownership) and others are not. Paddocks at the edge of Eton Wick and within 'orphaned' parcels of land between road corridors are often 'scruffy' and give an 'urban fringe' character to the north edge of the landscape character area, within the vicinity of the M4 road corridor and the A332 Eton bypass.
- 3.13.57 Extensive Public Access along the River Thames and across Eton Great Common at this location contrasts with the extensive private ownership of the college grounds.
- 3.13.58 Views of Windsor Castle are obtained from many areas within this area, as well as some taller college buildings within Eton itself. The church of St John the Baptist is a landmark at Eton Wick from within surrounding farmland.

13d Datchet

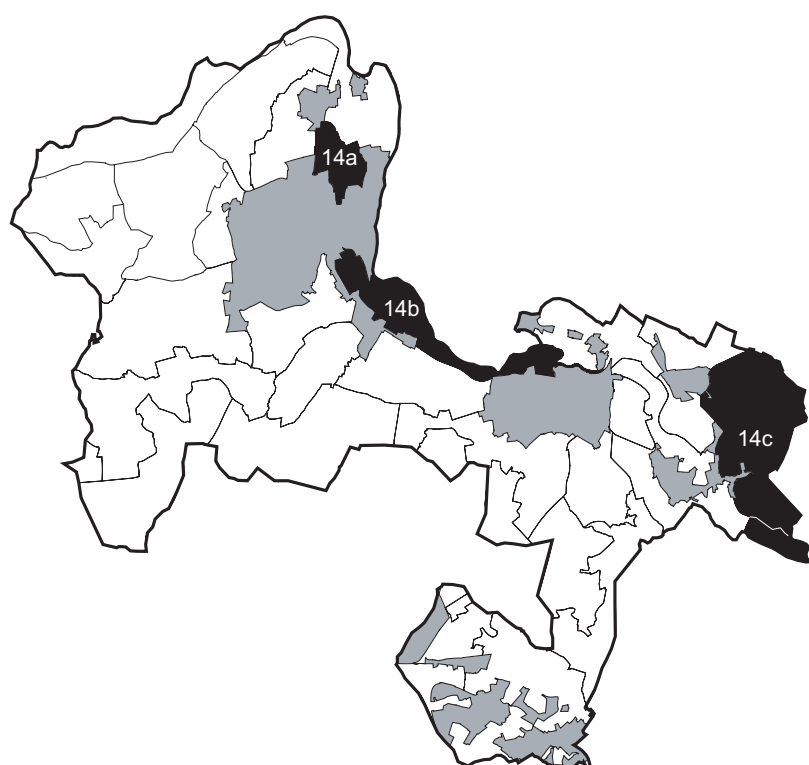
Key Characteristics (in addition to landscape type)

- Meadow grassland and willow belts along the riverside
- Influences of Datchet and Slough urban edges
- Queen Mother Reservoir embankment
- M4 road corridor
- Influence of the flight path
- Views of Datchet church spire
- Generous grass verges to roadways

Description

- 3.13.59 This mixed settled agricultural landscape contains a great variety of elements. It is a 'transitional' landscape which is influenced by the settlements of Slough, Datchet and Wraysbury as well as the rich agricultural landscape of the Farmed Parkland landscape type to the south and the fragmented wetland landscape of the Developed Settled Floodplain to the east. Although the views are not retained by chalk escarpment in this landscape area, and although it shares similar characteristics to the Developed Settled Floodplain, it (importantly) retains 'historic' features such as field systems lined with hedgerows and mature trees and designed landscape features, which give it a relatively intact feel.

- 3.13.60 To the north of Datchet the registered Historic Park and Garden at Ditton Park and the M4 motorway corridor are located. The moated country house is surrounded by the remains of formal early 18th century gardens and 'wilderness' landscape. This is Capability Brown park. The urban edge of Slough influences the character of the landscape to the north of the M4 motorway corridor, including at Ditton Park, as built forms are visible above the tree cover.
- 3.13.61 In the south the landscape is more tranquil and unified. There are large arable (cereal) fields with some tree cover and the River Thames is wooded with a soft edge. Southlea Farm, which is located at the centre of this area, is a milking herd. The golf course and sewage works at Ham Island along the riverside adds to the range of land uses seen in the locality, which despite these recent changes in land use retain a relatively intact agrarian character.
- 3.13.62 The wooded 'greenness' of the surrounding Datchet landscape is an important characteristic. Routes to and from the village are framed at different intervals by belts of mature trees, hedges, village greens and generous grass verges.
- 3.13.63 There are pockets of arable (cereal) farming between Ditton Park and Datchet, such as in the vicinity of Riding Court Farm, however it is not a dominant land cover and the landscapes within the vicinity of the motorway corridor are declining with many areas set aside and their boundaries declining or derelict. The 30m high embankment of the Queen Mother's reservoir is visible above the built development of Datchet from locations in the northern portion of this landscape character area.
- 3.13.64 The historic village of Datchet itself expanded rapidly from its historic core at Datchet Church in the post war period, in a ribbon like fashion along the B376, B470 and B3026 routeways. Much of this development has been unsympathetic to its context and as such is not well integrated into the landscape. However the church at Datchet remains a landmark within the wider landscape area.
- 3.13.65 There is a notable absence of public access, in the form of Public Rights of Way, in this landscape. Loss of footpaths is partly due to the development of the M4 and Queen Mother Reservoir. New sections of the Thames Path are a recent improvement to the Public Rights of Way network, but paths are scrubby in quality.
- 3.13.66 Of archaeological interest in this area are the recent fieldwalked finds at Southlea Farm. The prehistoric site, first identified from crop marks, has included flint tools and pottery finds dating almost continuously from Early Neolithic to late Romano British, there is also a scattering of Mesolithic flint tools.



Landscape Character Areas

14a Summerleaze

14b Bray

14c Horton & Wraysbury

3.14 SETTLED DEVELOPED FLOODPLAIN

3.14.1 Key Characteristics

- Wide slow moving river with natural, diverse river edge and wooded island habitats
- Thames navigation channels, marinas, artificial cuts and canalised sections
- Broad flat open floodplain with a fragmented landscape pattern
- Expansive naturalised and restored man-made wetland landscapes of ecological importance
- Remnant hedgerows and hedgerow trees from former traditional landscape patterns, within new wetland landscapes
- Degraded 'edge of town' landscapes with eclectic mix of modern landuses such as industrial estates, sewage works and horse paddocks with neglected boundaries and fly-tipping
- Active gravel extraction works
- Shelterbelts and linear woodlands
- Varied and dispersed mix of small scale traditional and modern settlement
- Waterbased active and passive recreation facilities
- Network of minor roads and tracks
- Busy, large scale transportation corridors
- Frequent over head noise of aviation traffic
- Wetland habitats of international and national nature conservation importance

3.14.2 Characteristic Tree Species

- Willow, Alder, Birch, Oak, Sycamore, Hawthorn, Ash, Holly, Hazel, Elder



Sheephouse Farm Fly Fishing Centre, Summerleaze



Farmland south of Bray



The Queen Mother Reservoir, Horton Road



Wraysbury and Hythe End Gravel Pits SSSI

Description

- 3.14.3 The Thames river meanders slowly through the broad flat floodplain. The traditional farmland which would have flanked the waterway has been fragmented and in many places replaced by an eclectic and disparate mix of modern landuses. The immediate river corridor remains a diverse wildlife corridor which is generally fringed with mature deciduous trees. Within the waterway treed islands provide further refuge for wildlife and exclusive residencies. The relatively quite waterway is an important and historic routeway used extensively for recreation by foot and by boat. Numerous navigation channels, artificial cuts and canalised tributaries run into the waterway from the wider area.
- 3.14.4 Beyond the river corridor the former open agricultural floodplain has undergone recent and substantial change during the 20th century. Gravel extraction has fragmented the traditional pattern of the landscape leaving expansive wetlands of flooded pits. Many areas have naturalised and become important habitats or been restored for waterbased recreation. These established areas are increasingly important for recreation due to their scenic as well as ecological value although more recently disturbed areas are sometimes disjointed and 'scruffy' in character.
- 3.14.5 The localities proximity to large conurbations and the blighting effect of the gravel workings has attracted other disparate and 'edge of town' land uses such as the development of large scale reservoirs, light industrial estates and sewage works. Boundary treatment and management is infrequent and inconsistent giving the locality a degraded character which is compounded by flytipping activities. Other leisure facilities, such as conferencing and hotel facilities, camping and marinas are also common and add to the eclectic and varied range of landuses.
- 3.14.6 Degraded landscapes of arable cropping and pasture remain where pressure for land is lessened and the traditional pattern of the landscape remains intact. Neglect is also apparent in these areas by the poor quality of field boundaries and occurrence of flytipping.
- 3.14.7 The traditional groupings of farm buildings within the floodplain have been largely subsumed by modern development. However, small lanes and tracks remain in some localities. Sporadic pockets of exclusive detached properties line the riverside. The low lying nature of this landscape has prevented major communication and transportation corridors developing within the immediate context of the river however busy transportation corridors influence the character of the locality at the periphery and the proximity of Heathrow Airport results in frequent and loud overhead noise from aviation traffic.
- 3.14.8 Although large settlements are not a feature in this landscape there is a strong influence on the character of this landscape from adjacent urban conurbations such as Maidenhead and Bray Wick. The urban form of these areas are often visible from within the landscape type.

Boundaries and adjacent landscape types

- 3.14.9 The Settled Developed Floodplain landscape type is found in 3 broad locations within the River Thames river corridor in the borough. It shares many similarities with the Mixed Settled Floodplain landscape type and they run from one to the other as the river meanders through the river floodplain landscape. This landscape type is found in areas of the valley where gravel extraction and wide scale development has occurred, largely in recent times. The boundaries of this landscape type generally follow the flooding limit of the river.

Physical Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.14.10 The physical influences that shaped the Settled Farmed Floodplain landscape type are common to this landscape. As stated previously the geology of the Thames floodplain comprises of alluvial deposits. Beneath these are found lenses of fluvial sand and gravel deposits, which are dominated by flint casts formed from the weathering of upland chalks in the west of the county. These are of great value to the construction industry and their consequent extraction has resulted in the presence of large flooded former gravel working pit, and to a lesser extent, marinas, as frequent features in the landscape.
- 3.14.11 Other man-made hydrological features seen in this landscape are artificial cuts, canalised waterways and canals to aid navigation and alleviate flooding. Their associated features such as locks, weirs, riverside buildings and access, contribute to the character of this landscape at a local level however overall, due to their extensive nature, they serve to fragment the landscape.
- 3.14.12 The landscape is predominately flat at between 30m - 20m AOD.

Ecological Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.14.13 Former gravel working within this landscape has resulted in the creation of extensive areas of wetland habitat, some of which is of great ecological interest, albeit at the loss of previous riverside habitat. These disturbed but naturalising landscapes are commonly at various stages of recolonisation or retained at an intermediary stage by managed for nature conservation purposes. They can, therefore, sometimes have a scruffy, wild or unkept visual appearance.
- 3.14.14 From an ecological perspective the most interesting wetland habitats in the landscape type are those found within the Wraysbury and Horton areas. Wraysbury (No. 1) Gravel Pit SSSI, Wraysbury Reservoirs SSSI and Wraysbury and Hythe End Gravel Pits SSSI consist of a mosaic of open water, islands, grassland, scrub and woodland habitats. These areas support nationally important numbers of wintering wildfowl and important assemblages of breeding birds associated with open waters and wetland habitats. They are also interesting for their flora and fauna.

- 3.14.15 Wrasbury No.1 Gravel Pit SSSI, Wraysbury Reservoir SSSI and parts of Wraysbury and Hythe End Gravel Pits SSSI are designated as wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. They provide internationally important wildfowl habitat for migratory species of Gadwall and Shoveler as well as supporting nationally important numbers of other bird species. These areas also form part of the South-West London Water Bodies Special Protection Area (SPA).
- 3.14.16 The Bray Pennyroyal Field SSSI, south-east of Bray and adjoining the River Thames, is the sole Berkshire locality for the nationally rare pennyroyal *Mentha pulegium*. However in landscape character terms, it does not have a strong visual influence on its locality.
- 3.14.17 There are also some areas of farmland habitat within this landscape type. Although fragmented it is likely that these areas still provide important habitat for protected species such as bats and reptiles, as well as including remnant areas of 'unimproved' areas such as hedgerows and hedgerow trees which are important, not simply as landscape features, but also for their habitat value.
- 3.14.18 Shelter belts and linear woodlands are features in this open floodplain landscape. These areas of woodland, although limited in extent, are likely to provide locally important habitat.

Human Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.14.19 Human activity has substantially altered the character of the natural landscape in this landscape type. Areas of operational gravel pits with their associated infrastructure, are visual and audible detractors in the landscape, for example, south of Maidenhead. Previous areas of gravel extraction are also clearly visible as extensive 'disturbed' areas, some naturalistic, such as within the Wraysbury area, and others in the form of more obvious development, as marinas.
- 3.14.20 The settlements included in this landscape type are Bray, parts of Bray Wick, Horton, Hythe End and Coln Brook (just outside the royal borough). Their character and form differ considerably. Modern development has largely been insensitive to traditional forms and materials of the Maidenhead and Windsor area, and form extensive linear developments into the wetland landscape.
- 3.14.21 Sustrans routes 5 and 61 pass through this landscape type linking Maidenhead by Cookham to High Wycombe, and Dorney to The Myrke and Heathrow Airport, with a branch by Upton Court to Uxbridge.

Historical Influences on Landscape Character

- 3.14.22 There are very few 'historical' influences on the landscape character of this type as much has been lost to modern development, either by that of reservoirs or gravel extraction.

Landscape Areas

3.14.23 There are 3 potential subdivisions of the Settled Developed Floodplain landscape type:

14a Summerleaze

14b Bray

14c Horton & Wraysbury

3.14.24 These areas have the generic characteristics of the type but in addition have important locally distinctive variations. The key characteristics highlighted are in addition to those identified in the landscape type.

14a Summerleaze

Key Characteristics (in addition to landscape type)

- Influences of adjacent settlement
- Intact network of public footpaths

Description

3.14.25 This is a simple and enclosed 'pocket' of pastoral landscape almost completely contained by the northern residential areas of North Town and Maidenhead Court, Maidenhead. It is still undergoing progressive change as gravel extraction continues from the Summerleaze area northwards. The built edge of Maidenhead is largely obscured by mature wetland vegetation which breaks up and softens views to the east, south and west. In the northern corner of the landscape area the character is also influenced by the built edge of Cookham Rise and the Caravan park.

3.14.26 Where the pattern of the historic landscape is intact mature trees are features within the pastoral landscape. There are numerous public footpaths, linking Maidenhead with Cookham and Cookham Rise. The absence of roadways gives it a remote feel.

3.14.27 Use of the landscape for water based recreation is evident within the mature wetland areas, including fly-fishing and sailing.

14b Bray

Key Characteristics (in addition to landscape type)

- Wide, meandering river course of the Thames
- Shelter belts and linear woodlands
- Detached riverside residential development
- M4 road corridor
- Windsor Racecourse
- Absence of extensive land management (farming)

Description

- 3.14.28 This is a wetland landscape which contains an eclectic mix of land uses and settlement, much of which relates to the Thames river corridor.
- 3.14.29 The river is contained by riverside vegetation along much of this stretch.
- 3.14.30 Shelter belts and linear woodlands screen built development from the wider landscape and also mask views of adjacent settlement at Bray Wick and Maidenhead.
- 3.14.31 Leisure pursuits are particularly evident in this landscape. The areas proximity to Maidenhead and Windsor put it under particular pressure for leisure use.
- 3.14.32 The landscape to the north of Bray is much altered by modern land uses. The sewage works, industrial buildings and sports centre give an urban character to this stretch of land. Further south, within the vicinity of Bray, areas are still farmed for arable cropping, however generally agricultural uses are not extensive and this adds to the fragmented character of this landscape area.
- 3.14.33 The character of the historic riverside village of Bray is largely intact. The clustered village is centred around a village green. It has a wealth of small cottages and houses of all periods of domestic architecture. To the west of the village detached riverside residential development in the form of exclusive 'Mansion' style buildings line the river front.
- 3.14.34 The Cut historic channel and the M4 motorway corridor pass through the landscape to the south of Bray. Motorway lighting and signage are visible from surrounding areas and influence an otherwise tranquil area of landscape. Further south the flooded gravel pits are used for recreation and the complex of farm buildings and paddocks at Weir Farm are seen adjacent to the river. A shift in land uses is apparent with the diversification of Weir Farm to a livery.

- 3.14.35 The 'cut' is something of a misnomer, since it implies a man-made watercourse, especially one intended for navigation, which the Cut in this instance is not. Whilst there are sections, that were created much of the present Cut from its source at Winkfield to its confluence with the Thames at Monkey Island near Bray was a natural stream which had subsequently been deepened for land drainage purposes.
- 3.14.36 At Water Oakley further riverside residential development line the Thames along with a hotel and temporary caravan park site. Bray Studios, several marinas, farms and Windsor Racecourse combine to fragment further the riverside character on the northern side of the Maidenhead to Windsor road (A308).
- 3.14.37 The racecourse at Windsor is located within a large meander of the Thames, within 165 acres of land and overlooked by Windsor Castle. The first race meeting at Royal Windsor was held in 1886, and throughout the intervening years, facilities have developed it is the thriving sporting facility that is seen today.

14c Horton & Wraysbury

Key Characteristics (in addition to landscape type)

- Artificial slopes of water storage reservoirs
- Auxiliary buildings of reservoirs
- Fly tipping
- Fragmented network of Public Footpaths

Description

- 3.14.38 The Horton and Wraysbury area is a relatively recent wetland landscape. Flooded former gravel pits extend across much of this area, and as such would have been worked since the 1930s. It is therefore a relative new landscape with many of the landscape features having been introduced since that time. Interestingly, despite the extensive nature of these waterbodies within the landscape they are not often visible because of the low lying nature of the landform, the occurrence of wetland vegetation on their margins which enclose them from views or roadside vegetation, and in the case of the water storage reservoirs, their perched nature.
- 3.14.39 The overall character is disparate and somewhat 'scruffy'.
- 3.14.40 Vegetation in this landscape type is predominately restricted to extensive belts around restored gravel pits. An occasional mature oak and field boundary hedgerow are features, as remnants of the former pattern of the landscape.

- 3.14.41 Routeways through the area are predominately minor linking Horton to the surrounding towns and villages, however due to the location of this area, between the M4 and M25 motorway corridors and the industrial land uses of the wider Colne Valley area, the Horton Road (B376) is an extremely busy carriage way.
- 3.14.42 References to the history of Wraysbury are given within the Farmed Parkland landscape type as it is to this historic landscape that the settlement more closely relates to.
- 3.14.43 The steep, grassed, and artificial banks of the water storage bodies within this area, which reach 20 metres in height, contrast starkly with the flat landscape within which they are located. The auxiliary pump housings and security fencing (concrete post and wire) are disparate features within the landscape. The slopes are managed by the grazing of sheep.
- 3.14.44 An extensive area of arable cropping is found within the central area of this landscape between Colnbrook and Wraysbury Station. Fields have been amalgamated within this area and are now defined by relatively young hedgerows. Outside this area managed landscapes are absent, instead fragmented parcels of land are left as rough grassland.
- 3.14.45 Fly tipping is a particular problem in this area due to its proximity to settlements and absence of land management within large areas. The resultant character of this landscape is 'scruffy' particularly when combined with dense wetland landscapes.
- 3.14.46 The character of the Public Footpaths within this area has been substantially altered by the gravel extraction industry. The remaining routeways, excluding the Colne Valley Way which passes through the relative intact landscape in the north of the area, now run on embankments across these wetland areas in a north-south direction.
- 3.14.47 High voltage transmission lines cross this landscape from Colne Brook to Hythe End, they are often visible on the horizons.
- 3.14.48 Due to the proximity of Heathrow planes are often seen and heard within the area.
- 3.14.49 The Saxon village of Horton, its name meaning Hor-tun or "Dirty Farm", is the principal settlement in this character area. Historic buildings are clustered around its small triangular green, and there are more modern houses on the roads to Wraysbury and Colnbrook as ribbon development. Building styles are variable. The name most associated with Horton is that of John Milton (1608-74) whose family rented a house locally between 1632 and 1640 and whose mother is buried in the 12th century church. Milton wrote many of his poems, including *Il Penseroso* and *L'Allegro*, whilst living at Horton and a Victorian window by Kempe in the church commemorates his poem *Paradise Lost*. However much of the landscape he would have been familiar with is largely gone.

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GLOSSARY

Key Landscape Character Assessment Terms

Analysis - the process of dividing up the landscape into its component parts to gain a better understanding of it.

Approach - the step- wise process by which landscape assessment is undertaken.

Assessment - term to describe all the various ways of looking at, analysing, evaluating and describing the landscape.

Character - a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.

Characteristics - elements or combinations of elements, which make a particular contribution to distinctive character.

Characterisation - the process of identifying areas of similar character, classifying and mapping them and describing their character.

Elements - Individual components which make up the landscape, such as trees and hedges.

Features - Particularly prominent or eye catching elements, such as tree clumps, church towers, or wooded skylines.

Landcover - combination of land use and vegetation that cover the land surface.

Landform - combinations of slope and elevation that produce the shape and form of the land surface.

Landscape - primarily the visual appearance of the land including its shape, form and colours. However, landscape is not purely a visual phenomenon. The landscape relies on a range of other dimensions including geology, landform, soils, ecology, archaeology, landscape history, land use, architecture and cultural associations.

Objective - method of assessment in which personal feelings and opinions do not influence characterisation.

Subjective - method of assessment in which personal views and reactions are used in the characterisation process.

Other Technical Terms

Alluvium - sedimentary deposits resulting from the action of rivers, including those laid down in river channels, floodplains, estuaries and lakes.

Alluvial Fan - a fan or cone shaped mass of material deposited by a stream where it emerges from the constriction of a narrow valley at the foot of hills and debouches on to a plain.

Ancient woodland - Land continuously wooded since AD 1600. It is an extremely valuable ecological resource, usually with a high diversity of flora and fauna.

Anticline - An arched fold or up fold in the strata of the earth's crust. Because denudation generally attacks the arches of folded structures faster than it does the down folds it is common for these to become the location of valleys which in time expose the core of the anticline.

Assarting - the process of clearing woodland or waste land for cultivation, associated particularly with the 12th and 13th centuries.

Biogeography - the study of areas with a distinctive flora and fauna.

Bronze Age - a cultural phase in humankind's evolution when alloying of copper and tin was perfected. Metalworking technology and new types of flint tool and pottery design were introduced at the start of this period. Changes in society were reflected in the emergence of new burial techniques, particularly round barrows. In the Middle Bronze Age cremation replaced inhumations and in the late Bronze Age social and economic changes led to the abandonment of old funerary rights in favour of less traceable rites.

Calcifuge - refers to plants which prefer acidic soils and cannot exist on chalky or alkali soils.

Carboniferous - period of the Palaeozoic era following that of the Devonian and preceding that of the Permian. It ranged from about 345 million years to about 280 million years BP. Economically the Carboniferous is the most important of the systems as it contains most of the world's coal reserves and other deposits such as oil and iron ore.

Carr - woodland in waterlogged terrain. Characteristic species include alder, willow and sallow (a kind of willow).

The 'Charter' made six political demands but the organisation was Utopian and naive in the belief that constitutional reform would automatically provide socio-economic betterment.

Coppicing - the traditional method of woodland management in which trees are cut down near to the ground to encourage the production of long, straight shoots that can be harvested.

Denudation - general term to denote the action of laying bare by the washing away of surface materials. In geomorphology the term is used to include all processes which cause degradation of the earth's surface.

Domesday Book - Conceived by William the Conqueror at Christmas 1085 in Gloucester, the survey was the most comprehensive and detailed record compiled anywhere in Europe in the Middle Ages. The survey's primary purpose was to provide maximum yield from land tax. The name arose in the 12th century to signify, like the day of judgment, there could be no appeal from its verdict.

Geomorphology - the scientific study of the origin of landforms.

Geology - the study of the origin, structure, composition and history of the Earth together with the processes that have led to its present state.

Glacial - term used to describe a cold phase during an ice age.

Hillfort - any hilltop fortress although term usually applied to defensive sites of the Late Bronze Age or Iron Age. Some hillforts may have been permanent settlements, but many were temporary refuges.

Iron Age - a cultural phase of humankind's evolution when technical improvements in iron-working enabled iron tools and weapons to replace those of the preceding Bronze Age. Population growth led to competition for land and the development of a more territorial society. Improved farming technology and scarcity of land brought about the cultivation of heavier and poorer soils.

Karst - a German term used to describe terrain created by limestone solution and characterised by a virtual absence of surface drainage. Clints and grikes together make up a limestone pavement, a feature of karst scenery.

Mesolithic - an archaeological term meaning 'middle stone' age and used to describe the culture achieved during the early Post Glacial when mankind had moved from herd- hunting practices of the upper Palaeolithic, but had not yet discovered or adopted the use of agriculture.

Metallurgy - science of extracting and working metals.

Moot Hill - Anglo Saxon term to describe a public assembly to decide legal and administrative issues. Inhabitants of an area had a duty to attend their local Moot. Prominent hills were often the sites of such meetings.

Motte-and-Bailey Castle - the earliest form of Norman castle. These were established along key communication routes after the conquest. An inner courtyard was protected by simple earth and wooden defences.

Neolithic - an archaeological term used to describe the 'new stone' age. This applies to the culture achieved during the middle Post Glacial when mankind had begun to polish and grind stone artefacts (a technological advance from the bashing and flaking of the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic). The Neolithic also saw the introduction of agriculture.

Open Field System - well established means of land management during the medieval period and was widespread across much of lowland England. The unit of cultivation was the strip which varied in length and width depending on local conditions. The strips were grouped together into furlongs and a number of furlongs formed the field. The up and down ploughing of the strips threw soil into the centre of the strip and over time created the distinctive ridge and furrow landform which may be used to identify remnants of open fields in the landscape today.

Ordovician - The second geological period of the Palaeozoic that includes rocks that were formed between about 525 million and 440 million years ago.

Orogeny - A major period of fold-mountain formation, during which the process of orogenesis occurs. Such a process includes folding, faulting and thrusting often as a result of plate tectonics.

Outcrop - the area where a particular rock appears at the surface.

Palaeolithic - an archaeological term used to describe the earliest form of human culture. The earliest toolmakers lived during the Pleistocene in Britain after the main glacial periods had passed.

Pedology - the scientific study of soils.

Permian - the final geological period of the Palaeozoic era extending from about 280 million years ago to 240 million years ago. It succeeded the Carboniferous and preceded the Triassic.

Pleistocene - the first epoch of the Quaternary which loosely corresponds to the Ice Age.

Pericline - a crustal fold structure in the form of a dome or basin in which beds dip inwards around a central point or outwards in the case of a dome.

Quaternary - the younger of the two geological periods of the Cainozoic. This was the era which saw the appearance of mankind.

Ramsar - Ramsar sites are areas designated as being Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (the Ramsar Convention (1971)). This is an inter-governmental treaty which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

Riparian - riverbank habitats.

Semi-natural vegetation - any type of vegetation that has been influenced by human activities, either directly or indirectly.

Stratigraphy - the structure produced when sediments are laid down in horizontal layers (stratum). The term may be used to describe the stratification of solid geology, drift and soils.

Syncline - a downfold or basin-shaped fold of crustal rocks in which the strata dip inwards towards a central axis.

Topography - term used to describe the surface features of the earth's surface.

Turnpike- a gate across a highway preventing passage until a toll has been paid. Turnpike roads were administered by turnpike trusts which were authorized by a private act of parliament in 1663 to levy tolls for maintenance of the highway. This replaced the parochial maintenance system and substantially improved communications in England.

Triassic - the first geological period of the Mesozoic era, extending from about 240 million years ago to about 195 million years ago.

It succeeded the Permian and preceded the Jurassic. In Britain it consists mainly of shales, red desert sandstones, marls and pebble beds. This period witnessed the evolution of the reptiles and the earliest known dinosaurs.

Vernacular - built in the local style, from local materials.

Veteran Tree - a tree which is of interest biologically, culturally or aesthetically because of its great age, size or condition.

Water Meadow - Water meadows are provided with channels to carry water on to the pasture and then to drain it off again with the intention of keeping a trickle of water flowing through the roots of the spring growth to warm them and protect from frosts. The result is faster grass growth and an earlier first bite - several weeks earlier if the spring is cold. For over 300 years water meadows supplied early grazing and the first, most valuable hay crop. They have almost all ceased operation due to the cost of the labour required to maintain them and the difficulty of working them with machinery. In many instances all that remains of water meadows is the banks and ditches that controlled the water. These often only survive where pasture has endured and protected the earthworks from ploughing or development.

ABBREVIATIONS

General

AOD - Above Ordnance Datum

AONB - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

ASNW - Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

AW - Ancient Woodland

BAP - Biodiversity Action Plan

BP - Before Present

cSAC - Candidate Special Area of Conservation

GIS - Geographical Information System

KWS - Key Wildlife Site

pSAC - Provisional Special Area of Conservation

SAC - Special Area of Conservation

SPA - Special Protection Area

SSSI - Site of Special Scientific Interest

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Mr. M. Bayley, (18 April 2004)
Society for the Protection of Ascot Environs (SPAEC) - G. Cooper (17 May 2004)
Sustrans - John Ashford (30 April 2004)
Woodland Trust (May 2004)

The Council has prepared a Consultation Statement which sets out the procedures on Consultation for the LCA. It also summaries all representations made in response to the LCA and the Councils response.

GIS Data Sources

British geological Survey
CEH Monks Wood Land Cover Data (NERC)
Countryside Agency
Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
English Heritage
English Nature
Forestry Commission
Land Use Consultants
Sustrans
Woodland Trust

Others

Landscape Design Associates would also like to acknowledge previous work that has helped to informed the background to the report. They are:

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Beenham's Heath.

Bisham.

Burchetts Green.

Datchet.

Eton.

Holyport.

Hurley.

Littlewick Green.

Maidenhead Town Centre.

Pinkneys Green, Maidenhead.

Shurlock Row.

Sunningdale Village.

St. Mary's Church and Burycourt, White Waltham.

Statement Inner Windsor.

Cookham High Street.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Extracts from 'Countryside Character Volume 7: South East & London, The Countryside Agency, 1999'

Character Area 110: Chilterns

Key Characteristics:

- Chalk hill and plateau with a prominent escarpment in many places, and extensive dip slope with numerous dry valleys.
- Remnants of chalk downland on the escarpment and valley sides. Extensive areas of downland invaded by scrub.
- The most extensive areas of beech woodland in the country on the plateau, and 'hanging' woodlands in the valleys.
- Enclosed and intimate landscapes of the valleys contrasting with the more open plateau top and extensive views from the scarp to the clay vale below.
- Small fields and dense network of ancient hedges, often on steep ground. The agricultural landscape often dominated by hedges, trees and small woodlands.
- Many surviving areas of semi-open common land on the plateau.
- Scattered villages and farmsteads, some of medieval origin, displaying consistent use of traditional building materials including flint, brick and clay tiles.
- Network of ancient green lanes and tracks including the Ridgeway which links numerous archaeological sites and settlements.
- Frequent grand country houses and designed landscapes occupying prominent positions on sloping valley sides.

The Changing Countryside:

- New commuter housing development and expansion of settlements by infilling leading to erosion of the traditional Chiltern's building style and adverse changes in the overall character of settlements. Recent developments on the edge of scarp-foot historic market towns are particularly intrusive. Suburbanisation through small scale but inappropriate development design.
- New road construction and road 'improvements' are a significant pressure on the small scale road network of the area.
- Intensification and changes in agricultural practice including the loss of characteristic chalk grassland on escarpment and valley sides because of scrub invasion and cessation in traditional sheep grazing regimes. The loss of winter stubble means that fields are now green in the winter months. Increasing number of new crops appearing.
- Cumulative effect of localised removal of field hedgerows and an associated lack of appropriate hedgerow management. The reduction in the quality of hedgerows is considered to erode the character of many Chiltern valleys.

- Increase in horse-related land uses and development of new golf courses on former agricultural land.
- Elements of ancient countryside within the Chilterns, such as narrow winding lanes, organic field patterns and mature tree specimens, are particularly vulnerable to change.
- Remnants of parkland within the agricultural landscape are gradually disappearing.
- Increase number of telecommunication masts on the skyline.

Character Area 115 : Thames Valley

Key Characteristics:

- Hydrological floodplain of the River Thames as a landscape feature provides unity to the large areas of fragmented poor agricultural land.
- The western Thames valley is wide and flat with the river barely discernible, occupying only a small part of the wider geological floodplain.
- Woodlands characterise the north-western area, the wooded character extending up to the southern edge of the Chiltern Hills.
- To the south, the open Thames floodplain dominates with its associated flat grazing land, becoming characterised by a number of formal historic landscapes on higher ground such as Windsor Park.
- Towards London in the east, the natural character of the area is overtaken by urban influences; a dense network of roads including the M25 corridor, Heathrow Airport, railway lines, golf courses, pylon lines, reservoirs, extensive mineral extraction and numerous flooded gravel pits.

The Changing Countryside:

- Golf course development pressures
- Designed parkland features within farmed landscapes at risk from changing agricultural activities and lack of management for individual trees.
- General development pressures owing to proximity to London in particular both existing and proposed major road corridors including lighting and signage, expansion of urban areas, and airport development/associated activities. Much of this development is unrelated to the character of the surrounding area and has significantly contributed to the overall fragmentation of the landscape.
- Incipient pressure from non-farming use of small-sized holdings, notably horse grazing and land, held for 'hope value'. Also pressure from recreational uses and associated facilities within the Green belt and urban fringe in general.

- River Thames itself is a focus of increasing recreation both on and off the water, as are the historic riverside towns, woodlands, commons and restored gravel workings.
- Pressures for the sub-division of land holdings and associated pressures of new buildings, fencing and other developments more usually related to urban fringe land uses.

Character Area 129: Thames Basin Heaths

Key Characteristics:

- Particularly diverse landscape unified by the high incidence of heathland and coniferous forestry, the open unenclosed nature of which is unusual within the context of the south-east region.
- Heavily populated and developed area characterised by large towns plus numerous smaller settlements along transport corridors interspersed by open land.
- Important occupation area from Mesolithic to modern times based on exploitation of the rivers with numerous Prehistoric, Roman and medieval settlements, the latter of which extended along valley bottoms.
- Fragmented but often connected blocks of largely neglected remnant heathland as a result of early agricultural clearances and widespread development, with most heath retained on large commons or as Ministry of Defence training areas.
- The western part of the area is fairly well-wooded with grazed pasture but retains a healthy character due to the dominance of oak/birch/bracken/pine and remnant heath on small unimproved pockets of land.
- Variety and contrast is given by the wide grazed floodplain, drainage ditches, restored gravel workings and lush wetland vegetation associated with the Kennet Valley.
- Cultivated farmland and pasture is typically enclosed within small and irregularly shaped fields divided by hedgerows with small areas of wood and heath heavily used for horse grazing.
- Large tracts of coniferous plantations or mixed wood with beech and birch are typical of much of the area, with significant areas of ancient woodland in the west.

The Changing Countryside:

- Poor management of existing woodland and tree belts is diminishing the character of the landscape and making development more intrusive.
- Planting of extensive conifer plantations since 1945 has dramatically altered the traditional appearance of the heathlands.
- Loss of characteristic features such as hedgerows in small pockets of farmland.
- Ministry of Defence activity has restricted development and public access.

- Mineral extraction along rivers.
- Decline in commons grazing.
- Agricultural diversification pressures on the landscape giving rise to inappropriate land uses, such as Christmas tree nurseries and golf courses.
- Development pressures from the continuing rapid growth of towns in the area and from pressures relating to transport infrastructure and road improvements.

Appendix 2: Extracts from the National Landscape Typology, The Countryside Agency

National Landscape Typology - Definitive Attributes

Attribute		Definition
Physiography		The underlying structure and physical form of the land surface. Derived from interpretation of the relationship between geological and contour data.
H	High hills	High land, mainly over 1000 ft, including descriptive landform classes 'high hills & ridges' and 'mountains' (see below) - associated with Palaeozoic (Permian, Carboniferous, Devonian, Ordovician, Silurian & Cambrian) and earlier Pre-Cambrian rocks of sedimentary, or igneous origin.
U	Low hills	Upstanding areas, mainly below 1000 ft, including descriptive landform class 'low hills - sloping' (see below) - associated with Palaeozoic (Permian, Carboniferous, Devonian, Ordovician, Silurian & Cambrian) and Mesozoic rocks (mainly sandstones and limestones) of sedimentary origin.
V	Upland vales & valleys	Low-lying areas including descriptive landform classes 'upland vales & valleys' and 'rolling lowland' (see below) - associated mainly with Palaeozoic (Permian, Carboniferous, Devonian, Ordovician, Silurian & Cambrian) and earlier Pre-Cambrian rocks of sedimentary origin.
R	Intermediate	Rolling/undulating areas, below 1000 ft, including descriptive landform classes 'low hills - plateau' and 'rolling lowland' (see below) - associated mainly with Mesozoic (Cretaceous, Jurassic, Triassic & Permian) or Tertiary rocks of sedimentary origin and glacial till.
L	Lowlands	Low-lying areas, mainly below 300 ft, including descriptive landform classes 'levels' and 'lowland vales & valleys' (see below) - associated with Mesozoic (Cretaceous, Jurassic, Triassic & Permian) or Tertiary rocks of sedimentary origin, and glacial or fluvial (marine, riverine, lacustrine, or wind blown) drift.

Landcover		The nature of the ground in which terrestrial plants (natural and cultivated) grow. Derived from interpretation of geological, soils and agricultural census data.
W	Wetland	Low-lying land associated with fluvial (marine/riverine) drift and supporting wetland (wet pasture, marsh, fen or relic wetland vegetation characterised by lines of willow, reeds in ditches, etc. Land may be seasonally or perennially wet; often associated with ditches.
D	Heath & Moorland	Land associated with nutrient-poor mineral and/or peaty soils supporting dwarf shrub heath, acidic grassland and bog habitats, or relic heathy/moorland vegetation (bracken, gorse, etc.). This ground type is normally associated with sandstone, or sandy drift in the lowlands, but it is widespread on mixed sedimentary and igneous rocks in upland/hard rock areas. Often marginal in agricultural terms.
L	Chalk & Limestone	Light land associated with shallow, free-draining soils developed directly on chalk; or limestone bedrock - typically distinguished by stoney soils with relic calcareous grassland on steeper slopes in soft rock areas and rock outcrops/limestone pavement with dry species-rich pasture/hay meadow in hard rock areas.
B	Other Light Land	Light land associated with free-draining loamy and sandy soil developed on permeable rocks (sandstones, siltstones & mudstones), or sandy drift at elevations below about 300 metres. Within the soft rock zone, where there are few constraints to agricultural production, this ground type is strongly associated with arable cultivation. Mixed farming predominates on the shallower soils found in western hard rock areas.
C	Clayland	Heavy, often poorly draining land associated with base-rich, clayey and loamy soils developed on soft (Mesozoic & Tertiary) clay and chalky till. Seasonal waterlogging is the main constraint to agricultural production and, although utilized extensively for cereal growing in Eastern England, this ground type is mainly under permanent grassland in central and western areas where neutral grassland is the characteristic associated habitat.
P	Other Heavy Land	Heavy land typically associated with base-poor, clayey and loamy soils developed on slowly permeable rocks (mudstones & shales) and mixed till/plateau drift. Seasonal waterlogging is the main constraint to agricultural production and this ground type is mainly under permanent grassland - patches of wet heath are the characteristic associated habitat, grading into wet moorland at higher elevations in the north and west.

Cultural pattern		The structural component of the cultural landscape as expressed through the historic pattern of settlement and land use.
A	Wooded - ancient woods	Settled agricultural landscapes (dispersed or nucleated settlement) characterised by an assorted pattern of ancient woodlands which pre-date the surrounding enclosure pattern - in places associated with densely scattered hedgerow trees (typically oak).
E	Wooded - estateland	Settled agricultural landscapes characterised by estate plantations, parkland and belts of trees. Settlement is usually restricted to scattered farmsteads and small estate villages.
S	Wooded - secondary	Marginal agricultural landscapes (sparsely settled/unsettled) characterised by patches of secondary woodland and/or recent forestry plantation - usually associated with a large scale rectilinear enclosure pattern.
D	Dispersed unwooded	Settled agricultural landscapes characterised by a moderate to high level of dispersal, comprising scattered farmsteads and frequent clusters of wayside dwellings. Although typically unwooded, hedgerow, streamside and other trees are often a prominent feature.
N	Nucleated unwooded	Settled agricultural landscapes characterised by discrete settlement nuclei (villages and/or hamlets) associated with a low to moderate scattering of farms and outlying dwellings. Tree cover is usually fairly sparse and restricted to thinly scattered trees and/or small coverts/tree groups.
W	Wetland/waste unwooded	Open, sparsely settled agricultural landscapes characterised by a surveyor enclosed pattern of large rectilinear fields and isolated farmsteads. Tree cover is usually restricted to watercourses, or groups of trees around buildings.
O	Unsettled/open land	Extensive areas of uncultivated, mainly unenclosed land (including moorland, heath and coastal grazing marsh) characterised by the virtual absence of human habitation.
C	Coalfields	Semi-rural areas (eg. the coalfields of Derbyshire) that have been significantly altered by large-scale industrial activity.
Ur	Urban	Extensive areas of predominantly built land where the rural settlement pattern has been completely subsumed by urban development (see urban land use).

Appendix 3: Extracts from Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment

BERKSHIRE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT STAGE TWO CONSULTATION DRAFT

Prepared for Berkshire Joint Strategic Planning Unit by Land Use Consultants December 2002

Type B: Lower River Floodplain - Landscape Character Description

6.1. The Rivers Thames, Loddon, Kennet, Pang and Blackwater cut through Berkshire within broad corridors of a distinctive flat and open lowland landscape. The valley floor comprises a periodically waterlogged alluvial floodplain, which supports a verdant mosaic of pastoral farmland, principally used for cattle grazing. Larger arable fields are located away from the immediate river corridor. The fields are frequently divided by gappy hedgerows and post-and-wire fences, although some areas still exhibit historic hedgerow patterns and there are remnant areas of traditionally managed unimproved pastureland that retain pollarded willows at the waterside. Many attractive wetland habitats are found within the Lower River Floodplain including wet meadow, reed bed and flooded gravel workings. These introduce a varied texture within the floodplain landscape and are of particular ecological importance, supporting nationally rare assemblages of flora and important wildfowl breeding sites.

6.2. All valleys have a subtly wooded context, created by a dispersed patchwork of small deciduous farm woodlands, copses, and bankside trees on the valley floor. This quality is enhanced by the presence of woodland on the steep valley sides, from which the floodplain is clearly differentiated, and which create a sense of enclosure. Along the Thames valley at the northern boundary of the county, these valley sides comprise the dramatic chalk landscape of the Chilterns AONB, which has a strong influence on the character of this floodplain.

6.3. The rivers are the focus of the landscape and are wide and deep with pronounced large-scale meanders. These rivers are mostly navigable and some have adjoining navigation channels and infrastructure, including the Kennet and Avon Canal, and the locks and weirs of the River Thames, which include features of industrial archaeological interest. The rivers are extensively used for waterborne recreation and colourful boats and river barges are an important feature.

6.4. Roads are located above the floodable level and there are railway lines in some valleys, such as the Thames and Kennet. There are numerous large settlements located in or around the river valleys including the urban centres of Newbury and Reading. Within these urban areas the rivers have been engineered with characteristic hard banks and bridges. Elsewhere there is a more rural character with settlement limited to small villages and towns and generously spaced corridors of detached linear residential development. The riverside development, particularly adjacent to the Thames, includes numerous large exclusive detached residences, such as at Cookham. In addition, numerous parklands associated with valley side manors have extended down onto the valley floor.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Flat and open broad lowland floodplain enclosed within steep valley sides.
- Wide, deep, meandering natural river corridors of the Kennet, Thames, Enborne and Loddon.
- Resence of navigation channels and associated infrastructure including the Kennet and Avon Canal.
- Pastoral farmland including areas of unimproved permanent pasture along the river corridor.
- Large regular arable fields particularly away from the immediate river channel.
- Deciduous wooded context created by a variety of woodlands including small farm woodlands, copses, and riverbank trees.
- Important wetland habitats including wet meadows, reed-beds and flooded gravel workings.
- Important transportation networks often parallel to the river corridor.
- Variety of settlement forms including urban towns at important river confluences, small traditional towns and villages at fording points and large prestigious detached dwellings along the river corridor.
- Presence of historic valley edge parks that extend onto the valley floor.

Landscape Character Area Descriptions

B4. Hurley Thames

6.22. The Hurley reach of the Thames is a long meandering corridor of land that stretches from near Sonning to Hurley and Cookham, including (on the Buckinghamshire side of the character area) the more well-known towns of Henley-on-Thames and Marlow. The landscape in this area shares many similarities with B2 on account of the enclosing scarp/dipslopes of the valley sides. There is considerable recreational use of the landscape, with numerous recreation nodes including the Thames Path (National Trail), and numerous marinas/locks for example at Hurley and Henley, which provide a base for boating activities (including the famous Henley Regatta). The presence of a large number of prestigious, detached residences, some of high architectural quality, creates a distinct ambience and sense of 'exclusivity'. Of particular note are the impressive mansions directly overlooking the river characterised by long gardens sloping down to the banks where there is often a small dock for harbouring boats. Many of these originate from the 18th century country homes of Londoners, although there are many more modern buildings of varying design.

6.23. The landscape is in many places well wooded creating an attractive setting to the river and the associated recreational activities. However, despite this the rural context shows some signs of decline with areas of large arable fields, enclosed by gappy hawthorn monoculture hedgerows or post and wire fences, for example at Remenham. Nevertheless, some important intact wetland habitats remain including Cock Marsh near Cookham Dean, an important chalk wet grassland, owned by the National Trust.

B5. Eton Thames

6.24. The Eton reach of the Thames is a short section of floodplain located between the reservoirs at Wraysbury and the village of Eton Wick. This part of the Thames river corridor is also sandwiched between the urban areas of Slough and Wind (excluded from specific consideration in this study). Much of the area is settled and it is the nature of the settlement within and adjoining this character areas that gives the landscape its distinctive character. Eton, with its famous public school, is the principal settlement and the buildings of Eton College dominate the townscape. Additionally, from the town centre there are landmark views to Windsor Castle across the Thames. Around Eton some of the floodplain has been given over to recreational use and, in particular, the green playing fields of Eton School are a feature, as is the Windsor racecourse. Also in this vicinity is the newly-constructed Thames Flood Alleviation Channel. Outside the settled area the landscape shows signs of degradation with intrusive features such as the M4 cutting through the area and adversely affecting the visual quality and rural character. The remaining arable farmland appears to be marginal, with some areas no longer in active management, and decline of associated features such as hedgerows.

Type C: Lower River with Open Water - Landscape Character Type Description

7.1. The landscape of the Lower River with Open Water is centred around the valley-floor landscapes of the Rivers Kennet, Loddon and Thames. The river channels are mostly natural in profile, although some reaches within the settled areas have been engineered and urbanised, for example within Maidenhead. The landscape is characterised by a broad-scale mixture of active and restored gravel extraction plants with some water storage reservoirs within a context of marginal farmland. There are also river floodplain industries, sewage treatment works, settled areas and numerous transportation corridors.

7.2. The presence of large-scale gravel workings, particularly around the valley of the Kennet, has resulted in extensive degradation of large areas of landscape and consequent loss of agricultural land. Where the workings are still active, are currently being used for landfill or have been abandoned without restoration, the resultant landscape has a strong sense of dereliction due to the presence of areas of bare soil, spoil heaps and visible machinery. This is compounded by fly tipping, the presence of pylons, and road corridors such as the M4 and M25. The active workings also introduce noise into the landscape.

7.3. Many of the former gravel workings have been or are in the process of restoration. Some have been filled in, whilst most have been flooded to form a variety of naturalistic lakes. Many of these lakes are visible in the wider landscape, for example from the embanked sections of the motorways. However, many of the older restored gravel working landscapes are now enclosed within a peaceful wooded setting and support attractive ecologically-rich wetland habitats indicating varying stages of succession from open water, marginal vegetation and carr. Some of the restored workings now form the focus of Country Parks, such as Dinton Pastures Country Park, and are accessible for passive recreational enjoyment with public footpaths and recreational trails. Some are also used for active recreational pursuits such as boating, canoeing and jet skiing, which introduce colour, movement and interest into the landscape but also inevitably disturb the sense of tranquillity.

7.4. In the east of the county around Colnbrook and Wraysbury the character of the landscape is influenced by the presence of large reservoirs (some outside of Berkshire) although, frequently, the water cannot be seen. The presence of the reservoirs is indicated by steep sheep-grazed grass embankments, which create a highly artificial and angular landform.

7.5. There is little agricultural land remaining due to the extent of disturbance from mineral working. This has resulted in the fragmentation of the farmed landscape and the consequent abandonment or poor management of agricultural land. The remaining farmland comprises large-scale fields of arable farmland, which are largely denuded of hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Few areas retain vestiges of the historic enclosure pattern. There are some remnant areas of pastoral landscape, with a more intact character, generally confined to the corridor adjacent to the river channel.

Throughout the landscape there is the perception of a wooded horizon due to the presence of distant woodland belts.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Distinct flat and open broad lowland floodplain semi-enclosed with vegetation or by topographic variation.
- Presence of large artificial water-bodies comprising flooded former gravel workings and reservoirs.
- Wide and deep meandering river channel present but sometimes screened by bankside vegetation or landuse.
- Navigation channels and associated infrastructure including the Kennet and Avon Canal, locks and marinas.
- 'Industrial' landscapes including extraction industries and sewage treatment works.
- Areas of degraded landscape suffering from fly-tipping.
- Presence of large transportation corridors cutting through or across the valley landscape.
- Important wetland habitats including wet woodlands, reedbeds and meadows, supporting nationally rare species of flora.
- Active recreational landscape based upon the rivers, canal and the restored gravel workings including sailing, canoeing, windsurfing, jet skiing and fishing.
- Marginal agricultural land of fragmented and degraded arable land and pasture.
- Varied settlement pattern with small villages, the large town of Maidenhead plus extensive areas without settlement.

Landscape Character Area Descriptions

C3. Maidenhead Thames

7.24. The Maidenhead Thames Lower River with Open Water is the most urban area of this landscape type being centred between and with views of the large urban settlements of Maidenhead and Slough (excluded from specific consideration within this survey) and including other smaller nucleated settlements at Bray, Bray Wick and Eton Wick. The River Thames defines the eastern boundary of this area and there is also a navigation channel, The Cut, that branches from the Thames through the town. Operational gravel workings have a dominant visual and audible influence. There are also numerous restored gravel pits that are currently in use for water sports including sailing and boating. The importance of the water resource for recreation is evidenced by the presence of numerous marinas, which are a particularly distinctive feature of this character area.

7.25. This landscape continues to be used for agriculture. Agricultural use is characterised by large, open fields that emphasise the wide and flat qualities of the floodplain landscape. In the east of the character area the open character of the resulting landscapes includes a number of important views across the Thames valley to Windsor Castle (in character area J1).

C4. Wraysbury Thames

7.26. The Wraysbury Thames character area is located in the far east of the County and comprise a distinctive area with features not found elsewhere in the Berkshire but which continue into the neighbouring Surrey and Buckinghamshire landscapes. This wide and flat landscape is strongly affected by the presence of water, the wide and open quality of the arable landscape and the variety of settlements. Much of this area is greenbelt land and falls within the Colne Valley Regional Park which extends north up to the area's boundary with the large urban settlement of Slough (excluded from specific consideration in this study).

7.27. There are numerous water corridors including the River Thames (with the adjoining Thames National Trail), sometimes diverging into the New Cut, the Colne Brook and some unnamed tributaries. Lakes of varying sizes, originating from former gravel workings are a particular feature. These waterbodies are often well wooded (providing a wooded horizon throughout the area) and have a strong and attractive naturalistic character with positive views. Many have developed or are in the process of developing valuable wildlife communities and the former gravel works at Hythe End are now classified as an SSSI due to their important wildfowl populations. Many lakes are also used for recreation, including boating. Some of these are visible from the M4.

7.28. Unique to the area is the presence of reservoirs to supply London's water needs, both in Berkshire and extending into the adjoining district of Spelthorne. In particular, the Queen Mother Reservoir is a distinctive feature and forms a 'landmark' at the gateway to the county on the M4. Both this reservoir and the neighbouring Wraysbury Reservoir have a strong influence on the character of the area due to their angular grazed grass banks and associated concrete structures, which provide a hard edge, truncating views and intruding upon this flat landscape. Planting (currently immature) has been undertaken at the base of some of these reservoirs to soften their appearance. The water of the reservoirs is generally not visible; although where boats are present their rigs may be seen protruding above the grassy banks.

7.29. This area is much affected by transportation corridors which fragment the landscape. These corridors include the M4, which defines the area's northern boundary, the M25 along the eastern edge, and a railway line that dissects the area. An extensive 'sprawl' of development includes a large industrial estate and sewage works. In this area, the settlements, including Colnbrook, Wraysbury and Hythe End, are of fairly modern (interwar and post war) character and follow a linear form along the network of smaller roads throughout the area, although have developed around earlier historic cores and include some architecturally distinctive buildings. The remaining farmed landscape is predominantly arable, comprising immense open fields, denuded of field boundaries and trees. There are more intact areas of landscape immediately adjacent to the River Thames including areas of parkland and pastoral landscapes, including that on the banks opposite the National Trust property at Runnymede.

Type I: Forested Sands - Landscape Character Type Description

13.1. The Forested Sands is an undulating landscape, underlain by the Bagshot Beds and dominated by extensive forestry plantation on the infertile, sandy soils. The plantations are principally coniferous and are managed on a commercial rotation resulting in a landscape of dense dark and enclosed character. Within this context there are large areas of clear fell, sometimes colonised by birch and rhododendron, and blocks of replanted woodland. The large-scale nature of the landscape is emphasised by the relative inaccessibility of the forest landscape, being traversed by few transportation corridors. There are in addition a number of training areas under the control of the Ministry of Defence to which public access is denied. Together, enclosed character and inaccessibility create a strong sense of remoteness. However, the heart of the forest is accessible to pedestrians via straight Forestry Commission trackways and woodland rides which radiate from a highpoint known as Lower Star Point.

13.2. The forest character extends to the settlements, with low density detached houses set within a context of coniferous and smaller mixed woodlands. Development mostly originates from the 20th century with modern design. Much of the settled area is focussed around or connected by long straight roads, which are a very distinctive feature of the area. These include a magnificent redwood avenue located east of Finchampstead. The settlements include areas of Finchampstead North, Crowthorne and Sandhurst (to the west), which are largely laid out in a geometric pattern, and (to the east) the more organic settlements of Broomhall, Sunninghill and Ascot. These have a largely modern appearance, although some centres have a more Victorian appearance with brick and bargeboards. There are, in addition, a number of large institutional buildings and land uses throughout the area such as the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, Broadmoor hospital and the Road Research Laboratory. The large modern settlement of Bracknell (excluded from the study but discussed more fully in Settled Farmlands) is located to the north of this area and is influenced by the character of the Forested Sands with coniferous and heathy influences extending into the urban area.

13.3. Lowland heathland is highly characteristic of the Forested Sands and is of great ecological significance. It is found in small remnant patches and along the roadside embankments, which are enlivened by the colour of the heather and gorse. The poor acidic soils have resulted in little agricultural activity in this area, although there are a few paddocks in the south. Generally where fields are present these have been assarted from the woodland. Within this landscape there are also archaeologically important sites including Caesar's Camp, a former Iron Age Hill Fort, and redoubts associated with The Devil's Highway - formerly a Roman road.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Large-scale, enclosed landscape.
- Densely wooded with vast coniferous plantations.
- Low density modern settlements within mixed woodland context.
- Notable absence of farmland.
- Internationally important heathland characteristic of the acidic sandy soils, including both dry and wet heathland.
- Acidic wetlands and lakes of ecological importance.
- Sites of archaeological importance including an Iron Age hill fort.

Landscape Character Area Description

I3: Sunninghill

13.20. To the east is an area comprising the linked low-density commuter settlements of Broomhall, Sunninghill, Sunningdale and South Ascot, all of which are set within a wooded framework. The 'villages' originate from the late Victorian period with the opening of the railway and contain an older core of modest red brick and clay tile buildings. Subsequent peripheral suburban expansion has resulted in the merger of settlements, although each retains a distinct central core and identity. There are, in addition, small areas of parkland and associated country houses which flank the edge of Windsor Great Park in the east of the area. The extensive development means that the ecological value of this area is lower than in the adjoining character areas.

Type J: Royal Forest - Landscape Character Type Description

14.1. The Royal Forest is a flat to gently undulating historic parkland landscape, of vast deer-grazed pastures scattered with large trees, fringed by large and dense ancient forests, which form the setting to important buildings in use by the Royal Family and their employees.

14.2. The land is in the ownership of the Crown Estate, which has ensured a unified landscape of distinctive character and uniqueness that is recognised nationally. The Royal parkland landscape is centred upon and has grown up around Windsor Castle with its prominent Round Tower (Grade 1). The juxtaposition of this dramatic stone castle on a distinctive chalk outcrop above the Thames has ensured its acknowledgement as one of the famed landmarks of Berkshire, and indeed of the nation. It is particularly important as a 'gateway' for those entering Berkshire along the M4.

14.3. The wider landscape comprises three principal parkland areas: Windsor Great Park, Home Park (immediately around the Castle) and Virginia Water. Within this wider context are localised ornamental landscapes, including Frogmore Gardens, Royal Lodge and Royal residences, gate lodges and 'grace and favour' estate workers' dwellings. The parkland has a restrained, verdant character inspiring a sense of freedom, with large grassy expanses grazed by roaming herds of deer. Important features of this parkland setting are the veteran trees - oak, sweet chestnut and beech - which punctuate the landscape. There are also dramatic long avenues of trees which provide structure including 'The Long Walk' which is over three kilometres long. Local ponds and lakes, including the upper arms of Virginia Water in the south of the park and Great Meadow Pond, also contribute to the character of this landscape type.

14.4. Surrounding, and visually defining, the deer park are large blocks of woodland, mostly deciduous but with some mixed and coniferous plantation. These ancient forests are the largest continuous woodlands within Berkshire and are important both ecologically and aesthetically, retaining the quality of the ancient 'wildwood' of the medieval forest. The park boundary is clearly defined by continuous wooden park pale, brick wall, distinctive white-painted gates, co-ordinated signage, and the presence of the gate lodges.

14.5. At the periphery of the park there are small areas of more 'secular' landscapes including the residential area of Old Windsor, and the presence of the Legoland theme park which has been constructed within an area of forest contiguous with the estate.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Crown Estate land with distinctive regal and ancient ambience due to continuity of Royal association from the 11th Century.
- Openness and freedom of verdant and naturalistic landscape.
- Presence of historic Royal buildings including Windsor Castle and surrounding grounds, Cumberland Lodge and Royal Lodge.
- Residential 'grace and favour' buildings and gate lodge.
- Historically important designed ornamental landscapes.
- Pleasant flat to gently undulating deer-grazed parkland.
- Very large and mature veteran trees including oak pollards, beech and chestnut.
- Extensive densely-forested tracts including deciduous, coniferous and mixed woodlands creating woodland envelope.
- Perimeter 'park pale' fence.

Landscape Character Area

14.19. Although within the park subtle character distinctions can be made, e.g. between the Home Park; Virginia Water; the dense woodlands along the eastern boundary; the central parkland core and the Cumberland Lodge Area, on the whole at the county-wide scale there is sufficient homogeneity to consider this landscape type to be part of one character area. As such no character area distinctions have been made.

Type K: Settled Farmlands - Landscape Character Type Description

15.1. The Settled Farmlands, found in the south and east of Berkshire, are a transitional landscape with a generally flat to shelving landform and with some gently undulating or domed areas. The Settled Farmlands are characterised by their densely-settled character which includes the major Berkshire town of Wokingham and large parts of the new town of Bracknell (both outside of the study area boundary), as well as the larger villages of Ascot, Arborfield and Spencers Wood. These are connected by a dense, and sometimes intrusive, network of transportation corridors including motorways and railways. Although the Bracknell and Wokingham urban areas are excluded from this assessment their presence within the Settled Farmlands landscape has a significant effect upon landscape character both directly, through the presence of large commercial and industrial buildings visible in the wider countryside, and indirectly, leading to replacement of farmland with characteristic edge-of-town uses such as country parks and golf courses. However, the edges of these settled areas are often well integrated into the surrounding countryside due to the presence of edge-of-town woodland and the continuation of mature trees into the urban fabric.

15.2. The agricultural landscape, which provides the context to the settled area, is generally mixed farmland with medium and large scale open arable fields, generally used for cereal growing, and smaller areas of permanent pasture. Some areas have retained their historic hedgerow pattern, including areas of irregularly shaped fields, although many hedgerows in this type have a mechanically-managed character. Generally the traditional landscape is more intact in the south and west of the Settled Farmlands landscape, such as around Arborfield, becoming more fragmented and marginal around the urban areas in the east and north. Towards the east, particularly around Ascot, horse racing has a considerable influence upon the character of the landscape, notably including the famous racecourse at Ascot, but extending into the countryside which has a high number of paddocks.

15.3. The landscape is subtly wooded due to the presence of small farm and copses, belts of coniferous trees associated with areas of sandy nutrient-poor soils and larger coniferous and mixed woodlands on elevated areas. This effect is complemented by the presence of hedgerows with mature trees, and remnant free-standing hedgerow standards which visually merge to create the impression of a wooded horizon. Where the landscape is underlain by clays, deep water-filled, and sometimes rush-colonised ditches are found bordering the fields and along the roads and small farm ponds are present which impart a lush and verdant character. There are also small tributaries, although these are usually hidden within bankside vegetation. A number of moderately large lakes are found associated with historic parklands and country parks. Areas of base-poor soils give rise to the localised areas of bogs and mires which are important ecological habitats.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Flat to shelving and gently undulating landform.
- Transitional landscape with much of the traditional pattern subsumed by modern development, particularly towards the east.
- Densely settled areas that strongly influence the character of the surrounding landscape.
- Urban fringe uses including characteristic edge-of-town uses such as golf courses, educational institutions, country parks and marginal farmland.
- Dense network of transportation corridors including motorways and railways.
- Mixed farmland with areas retaining historic field boundary patterns including areas of permanent pasture (often associated with tributaries) and open arable farmland with mechanically managed hedgerows.
- Wooded context due to presence of scattered mature oak trees that are remnant hedgerow standards and managed copses/farm woodlands and large mixed and coniferous woodland on elevated areas.
- Characteristic water-filled ditches, small farm ponds, larger lakes and small (often unseen) tributaries associated with the drainage of the poorly-draining clay soils.
- Presence of horse racing infrastructure including the racecourse at Ascot, with many small paddocks nearby.
- Presence of historic parkland and manor houses, now frequently used by institutions such as education establishments.

Landscape Character Area

K5. Ascot

15.21. The Ascot Settled Farmlands occupies the landscape to the east of Bracknell and is focused upon Ascot. The principal distinguishing characteristics of Ascot are the associations with the horse racing world, which are given visible presence in the landscape by the famous flat racecourse with its large grandstand and white perimeter fencing; the presence of stud farms; and the concentration of paddocks in the wider landscape. There are also other recreational uses including golf courses (one within the racecourse itself).

15.22. The landscape is wooded with deciduous, mixed and coniferous woodland, generally in large blocks. A large area of this woodland is ancient. This includes Wood End, which, although not designated, is of particular importance because it is interconnected with an SAC in the adjoining Royal Forest landscape type. The intact pastureland of the landscape also contributes to the wooded character of the landscape due to the presence of large veteran trees within the fields, which create the impression of parkland.

15.23. Heathland was once an important component of this landscape following the clearance of Windsor Forest. However today there are only a few heathland fragments remaining including some remnants of Ascot Heath within Ascot Racecourse. The ecology and landscape of the area are enriched by the presence of water bodies, accessible by public footpath. These include several small lakes which have been created in the minor tributary valleys that, ultimately, drain into Virginia Water (outside Berkshire).

Type L: Open Clay Lowlands - Landscape Character Type Description

16.1. The Open Clay Lowlands are predominantly a flat to gently undulating open mixed agricultural landscape of pasture and arable land, with distant views to wooded horizons. It is peaceful working landscape of small villages, connected by narrow rural lanes. One of the key characteristics is the presence of water, with small springs and minor watercourses, such as the Bourne and the Cut, emerging on the less permeable clay base. These streams are frequently hidden within the wider landscape, as a result of the flat topography and vegetation. However, the presence of water is evident through the construction of ditches around field boundaries to drain the heavy and waterlogged soils and in numerous farm ponds. The reed-filled roadside ditches, lined with willows and bound by a wide grass verge, are a notable feature.

16.2. The nature of the agricultural land use is a dominant influence on local character. On areas of lighter soils it comprises expansive arable landscapes with regular medium-large fields of cereal crops, from which hedgerows have often been removed, and replaced by post and wire fences. Isolated former hedgerow standard oak trees frequently remain within the farmland and form a distinctive feature. The remaining hedgerows are often low flailed hawthorn monocultures, although this is variable and there remain areas of high quality with intact hedgerow systems, particularly around the villages. In contrast, the heavier undrained clays remain in pasture, with fields often enclosed by high, unmanaged mixed hedgerows.

16.3. There are numerous small and medium sized farm woodlands within this landscape, many of ancient origin. These include small farm copses as well as large blocks of mixed woodland. Together, these features create a wooded context to the farmland and a more enclosed character. The area is also considerably enriched by the presence of parkland, originating as medieval deer parks or landscape schemes around 19th century country houses. Isolated mansions and country houses are an occasionally visible within the landscape. Farm buildings are a further notable feature and include distinctive black timber-framed and red brick buildings, sometimes located at historic moated sites.

16.4. Other rural settlement comprises hamlets and small villages of traditional vernacular character, clustered around a green and served by a loose network of country lanes. Built form includes brick and flint, reflecting the availability of local materials. The villages are often set within a small-scale grazed pasture landscape, with cattle or, frequently, horse paddocks. The M4 dissects this character type but despite this intrusion, the area generally maintains an intact rural character.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Peaceful rural landscape.
- Distinctive flat to gently rolling clay lowland.
- Mixed farmland with medium - large arable cereal fields and areas of grazed pasture.
- Remnant hedgerow trees, some retaining hedgerow boundaries but some with post and wire fences.
- Regular grid of drainage ditches.
- Farm woodlands, many of ancient origin, creating a wooded context and horizons.
- Small rural settlements, often with vernacular built character and a village green.
- Parkland associated with manor houses.

Landscape Character Area Description

L1: Shurlock Row

16.17. The Shurlock Row Open Clay Lowlands (L1), is the largest area of this type. It is a variable landscape with the northern part dominated by grazed pasture on heavy clay soils, with water and reed-filled ditches, willow boundaries and wide grass verges along the roads being characteristic elements. Towards the Loddon Valley, it is characterised by a more open arable landscape and with large scale field systems. In contrast, superficial deposits of sands and gravels are represented by areas of pine and placename evidence for former heathland such as at Beenham's Heath. The woodland in the area includes some larger woodland blocks and includes areas of mixed and coniferous woodland, including a significant amount of ancient woodland. Settlement is very dispersed and comprises the linear village of Shurlock Row, the northern extension of Binfield and 'valley edge' settlement of Hurst. Elsewhere settlement is restricted to small hamlets such as the attractive settlement of

Ruscombe within its red brick church, isolated farmhouses and the occasional large country house associated with the remaining parkland landscapes such as Allanby Park. The dominant vernacular influence in this area is brick, and much of the settlement occurred after the 19th century, although older buildings sometimes have conglomerate incorporated into them as a decorative feature and churches are often brick and flint. This character area is affected by the M4 that cuts through the heart of this landscape, although the presence of woodlands in the vicinity of the motorway lessen its visual impact.

L2: Windsor-Bray

16.18. This is the most settled landscape of the Open Clay Lowlands and includes the east extension of the modern town of Windsor, which has subsumed former villages such as Clewer. Other settlements include Fifield, Holyport and Moneyrow Green, the open areas between which are currently being diminished by newer roadside development. The landscape has intact remnants of parliamentary field

systems as well as areas of the, less common, irregular field systems all predominantly in arable land use, plus grazed paddocks. There are few woodland areas. The adjacent settled areas are the dominant influence on the landscape - both visually in the form of hard settlement edges and on the character of the farmland, which includes horse paddocks and some pockets of more marginal unmanaged land.

L3. Maidens Green

16.19. The Maidens Green Open Clay Lowland is distinguished by its intact and intimate character. This includes the survival of rectilinear field strips, small regular parliamentary boundaries, paddocks and large areas of parkland. The parkland includes Foliejon Park with its remarkable folly-like building as well as smaller areas around Warfield House, Ascot Place (listed) and Fernhill Park. The parkland landscapes are usually centred around a lake. Woodland is an important component of the landscape, including Windsor Forest that defines the eastern boundary. Settlements are dispersed throughout the area and include Winkfield, Winkfield Row, Warfield, Maiden's Green, and Cranbourne. These frequently have a loose linear form, with settlement spread out along a road. Interestingly many of the churches within this area (including Winkfield and Warfield Parish Churches) include the rarely-used dark brown Conglomerate associated with the Bagshot Beds. Elsewhere Brick and Flint is commonly used and there are also many older timber-framed buildings.

Type M: Open Chalk Lowland - Landscape Character Type Description

17.1. The Open Chalk Lowland forms the southern edge of the chalk dip slope of the Chilterns. It is a level, open, low lying landscape of large arable fields, with the flat topography distinguishing it from the rolling chalk downlands that characterise the west of the county. To the north, the higher land (Character Area N3) forms a strong sloping wooded backdrop to this lowland area. The absence of woodland and hedgerow cover creates a large scale landscape offering long views. Church spires, such as that at Shottesbrooke Park, are features within these views.

17.2. The area appears remote and even isolated, because although crossed by major communication routes such as the A4 and railway there are few roads, providing access into the area. Those that do exist are minor lanes, sometimes bound by intact mixed or hazel hedges but more often with boundaries removed and only a thin grass verge bordering the adjacent open arable fields. The absence of water is a further notable feature although springs and small watercourse emerge at the junction with the clay to the south. This strategic location, between the chalk and clay, is also the site of several parkland landscapes as at Shottesbrooke and Waltham Place. Here, the parklands, with their mature trees and greater proportion of woodland cover, much of ancient origin, create a more intimate enclosed character. Other more enclosed areas, with pockets of woodland cover occur in the west, for example around Kiln Green.

17.3. Settlement includes distinctive loosely clustered villages located around a village green along the northern boundary such as 'Littlewick Green' and 'Woolley Green'. Linear villages, with development located along roads occur at the southern boundary. Elsewhere settlement is sparse and limited to occasional isolated farmsteads. Farm buildings include old red brick barns, which are an attractive feature, as well as more modern buildings, including polytunnels in areas of market gardening.

17.4. This rural area extends to the edge of the large settlement of Maidenhead in the eastern part of the area and includes the suburban growth of the town around Woodlands Park. In the south east, proximity to the urban area and presence of the motorway network M4, A404(M) and A308(M) are dominant features of the landscape. Fragmentation of agricultural land, suburban development and land uses such as golf courses create a more 'urban fringe' character, although to an extent this is mitigated by the presence of larger blocks of woodland and a more undulating topography.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Distinctive flat and open chalk lowland.
- Arable farmland within large fields, often divided by gappy hedgerows or post and wire fences.
- Some areas of market gardening.
- Long, open views - punctuated by church spires.
- Subtly wooded context with dispersed patchwork of small deciduous farm woodlands and parklands in the east and south areas of this landscape type.
- Distinct settlement pattern - sparsely settled central area with villages located on boundaries of the landscape type.
- Loosely clustered village around central green are a feature of the northern boundary.
- Parkland landscapes to the south.
- Suburban growth of Maidenhead and Twyford on the periphery.

Landscape Character Area Description

17.16. The Open Chalk Lowland landscape type occurs in a single location and forms one character area. There are no additional subdivisions at this scale of assessment. A local study, for example, at the District scale may potentially create further subdivisions, for example separating the urban fringe from the more rural areas.

Type N: Elevated Wooded Chalk with Slopes - Landscape Character Type Description

18.1. The Elevated Wooded Chalk with Slopes is a diverse landscape type with a mixed land use pattern, resulting from the underlying varied geological and topographical conditions. It is predominantly an upper chalk landscape including outlying areas of the dipslope of the Chilterns capped in places with gravel and clay-with-flint formations. The landform is variable and strongly articulated including rolling hills and localised flatter 'plateau' areas and upland chalk knolls, but common to the northern periphery of each character area of this landscape type is the presence of steep and incised slopes shelving to the Thames Valley. These create a dramatic river corridor sharing characteristics of the Chilterns on the northern side

of the Thames. Water is not a feature of this landscape type due to the porosity of the chalk and the incised valleys are dry, although seasonal-flowing streams are present.

18.2. The landscape is characterised by the presence of woodlands commonly located on the steepest slopes corresponding to the incised ghyll stream valleys or areas where the chalk has been overlain by deeper deposits of Clay-with-Flints. Deciduous woodland occurs in a distinctive pattern within the ghylls, where they emphasise the varied landform, and mixed woodland is also common in bands blanketing the steep slopes or in larger blocks in elevated areas.

18.3. Set within this wooded context there are a wide variety of land uses including pasture with chalk grassland on the steepest land and arable farmland where the landform flattens. The pastures include open verdant sheep grazed grassland, reminiscent of the Wooded and Open Downlands, and areas of formal paddocks enclosed within regular and well-maintained timber fences. The arable farmland tends to be characterised by medium-scale fields framed within wooded horizons and often bounded by overgrown hedgerows. The steep grassy areas include important floristically rich unimproved chalk grassland habitats.

18.4. Valley-edge parklands are also a feature of this landscape type. These are associated with historic manors located to overlook and exploit views to the River Thames and tend to occupy large areas being surrounded by wooded parkland settings. Many of these landscapes are of historic importance. The presence of spectacular views has also resulted in the purchase of significant areas within this landscape type for public recreation by the National Trust, who hold land at Lardon Chase (N1) and Winter Hill (N3), resulting in the presence of footpaths allowing recreational access and providing strategic scenic viewpoints. From these areas the attractive views to Chilterns AONB and Thames valley including the Goring Gap can be appreciated.

18.5. This landscape is sparsely settled with predominantly linear and dispersed villages such as Warren Row and Upper Basildon. The larger villages are located at the top of the slope overlooking the Thames, such as Cookham Dean, or have grown up from a nucleus originating at the edge of the Thames floodplain, such as parts of Wargrave and Pangbourne. The riverside towns have a strong Victorian influence with brick and timber bargeboards. There are also numerous isolated farmsteads including some large modern agricultural buildings. Attractive and imposing manor houses are a focus of the historic parkland such as Purley House, Basildon House and Park Place but these are often hidden within their surrounding woodland and can only be appreciated from inside the estate.

18.6. The largest settlement in Berkshire - Reading (outside of the study remit) - borders parts of this landscape type and Maidenhead also borders the easternmost areas. To some extent it could be considered that Reading is actually located on an area which would once have had the character of the Elevated Wooded Chalk with Slopes. Despite the presence of Reading and Maidenhead this area retains a predominantly peaceful rural character, with significant transportation corridors (roads and railways) largely confined to the periphery of the landscape type i.e. following the edge of the Thames valley floodplain. Elsewhere the landscape is connected by a network of small quiet and rural lanes including some deeply incised lanes with prominent hedgebanks, including some attractive lanes set within grassy banks and 'green' lanes that wind up the dip slope through the dappled woodland blocks.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- Varied geology with the underlying upper chalk mantled by deposits of gravels and clay.
- Varied settlement form and pattern including linear and nucleated villages, small riverside towns.
- Presence and influence of adjacent urban areas (including Reading and Maidenhead).
- Mixed land use of deciduous and mixed woodland, arable fields, pasture and paddocks.
- Wooded context created by distinctive wooded slopes and ghyll valleys and occasional hill top woodlands.
- Presence of naturalistic open 'downland' sheep pastures within a wooded context with more angular and regular medium sized formal paddocks and medium sized arable fields.
- Deeply incised dry valleys and seasonal streams.
- Valley-edge country houses set within extensive historic parkland estates.
- Winding, sometimes sunken, rural lanes and green lanes with intimate character.
- Important calcareous grassland and woodland habitats.

Landscape Character Area Descriptions

N3: Cookham Dean

18.25. The Cookham Dean Elevated Wooded Chalk with Slopes is located within a loop of the Thames between Cookham Dean and Wargrave. The area adjacent to the boundary with the adjoining Lower River Floodplain is steeply sloping, sharing many similarities with N1 and parts of N2, including dramatic views of the Thames from the National Trust land at Winter Hill and important calcareous grassland habitats. The core of the landscape is topographically varied with a gently rising plateau top punctuated by a number of small hills or knolls that are extensively wooded. These create an undulating wooded backdrop that contrasts with the adjoining Open Chalk Lowland (M). It has a fairly intimate character with deciduous (beech and oak) and coniferous woodland interspersed with open pastoral landscapes. The hedgerows dividing the fields are low monocultures, however many of the hedges bordering the winding Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment: Stage Two Consultation Draft 222 sunken rural lanes are tall and diverse. Within this area there are also some large pastoral areas with a 'downland' appearance defined by close-grazed grassland divided by angular low-flailed hedges and straight-edged coniferous woodlands.

18.26. This area is settled but the settlement is small-scale and well-spaced creating a pleasant traditional character. It includes the larger riverside settlement of Wargrave with attractive Edwardian houses and large elegant houses overlooking the Thames. There are also scattered villages/hamlets of Remenham, Burchetts Green and Crazies Hill and linear villages such as Warren Row. In the east of the area is Cookham Dean with its broad green and picturesque high street. The vernacular is based on warm and mellow red brick with occasional tile hanging and pantiles.

Appendix 5: Field Survey Sheet

1. Housekeeping

- 1a. Surveyor Name 1b. Date
- 1c. If 'Other' Please type your name
- 1d. Location
Text description (including road names, prominent buildings)
- 1e. Six Figure Grid Reference
- 1f. Map Survey Point Number
- 1g. Digital Photograph Numbers
- 1h. Landscape Character Type (LCT)
- 1i. Landscape Character Area (LCA)
- 1l. If 'Other' Please type LCT Name
- 1m. If 'Other' Please type LCA Name
- 1l. nfluence on neighbouring Landscape Character Type (LCT)
- 1m. Influence from neighbouring Landscape Character Type (LCT)

Note: When completing the following questions use the prompting sheet provided.

2. Physical Influences

- 2a. Geology and Soils - Describe drift and solid geological features and soil type.
- 2b. Landform - Describe landform and topographic features and assess the contribution they make to landscape character. Mark principal features on the map.
- 2c. Hydrology - Describe the main hydrological features evident in the landscape and drainage patterns.
- 2d. Land Use and Land Cover- Describe land use and land cover and the patterns they create in the landscape.
- 2e. Woodland and Trees- Describe woodland and tree cover elements and features and the patterns they create in the landscape.

3. Human Influences

- 3a. Buildings and Settlement - Describe the primary and secondary settlement types, their location in the landscape and the patterns they create. Also where relevant describe character of urban edge and its influence on landscape character.
- 3b. Buildings Type, Style & Materials - Record building type, styles, materials and architectural detailing.
- 3c. Heritage Features - Record and name where possible principal heritage features in the landscape and describe the contribution they make to landscape character.
- 3d. Boundaries - Record the main boundary features present, their state of repair/ condition and the patterns they create in the landscape.
- 3e. Communications and Infrastructure - Record the dominant communication and infrastructure features and describe any obvious patterns and the contribution they make to landscape character.
- 3f. Recreation- Describe any significant recreational features and elements in the landscape.
- 3g. Setting of the Thames - Describe the character of the immediate river corridor, the landscape elements and features and adjacent landuses.

4. Aesthetic and Perceptual Qualities

- 4a. Aesthetic Qualities - Record the aesthetic qualities of the landscape.
- 4b. Perceptual Qualities - Record perceptual qualities of the landscape.
- 4c. Landmarks - Photograph, record and name key landmark features and assess the contribution (positive, neutral or negative) they make to landscape character. Mark principal landmarks on the map.

5. Local Distinctiveness, Landscape Condition and Landscape Change

- 5a. Local Distinctiveness - Identify the degree of local distinctiveness of the landscape
- 5b. Landscape Condition - Assess the condition of the landscape in general and the main (named) features within it. (Use the tick boxes below)

Landscape Feature 1 -

Excellent Good Declining Poor Derelict

Landscape Feature 2 -

Excellent Good Declining Poor Derelict

Landscape Feature 3 -

Excellent Good Declining Poor Derelict

Landscape (Overall)

Excellent Good Declining Poor Derelict

5c. Strength of Character - Assess the strength of character of the landscape in general.

Strong Moderate Declining Weak

5d. Forces for Change - Identify what elements and features of the landscape are changing and why

5e. Potential Landscape Implications - Identify the long term implication of these changes to landscape character

5f. Possible Landscape Strategies and Guidelines - Identify the requirement for conservation, enhancement, restoration and creation of landscape elements and features to counter these changes.

5g. Landscape Capacity - Capacity of landscape to accommodate changes identified in 5d.

Field Survey Sheet - Prompts

2. Physical Influences

2a. Geology and Soils

Solid	Drift	Soils	Surface Expression
Chalk	Alluvium	Sandy	Quarry
London Clay	Boulder Clay	Clay	Diagnostic feature
Sandstone	Sands & Gravel	Loam	Exposure
		Deep	Habitat/ land cover
		Thin	
		Stony	
		Colour	

2b. Landform

Flat	Plain	Hills	High
Rolling	Plateau	Ridge	Intermediate
Gently undulating	Scarp	Deep gorge	Low
Undulating	Lowland	Broad valley	
Sloping	Upland	Narrow valley	
Steep	Basin	Hillock	
Vertical	Escarpment	Terrace	
		Valley Side	
		Dry valley	

2c. Hydrology

Main river	Reservoir	Canal - active
Main tributary	Lake - natural	Canal - disused
Stream	Lake - artificial/purpose	Mill race
Dry valley	Lake - naturalised	Flood alleviation Scheme
Floodplain	Pond - natural	
Spring	Pond - artificial/purpose	
Spring line	Restored Extraction Pits	
Drainage ditch		

2d. Land Use and Land Cover (indicate percentage of 2d & 2e landscape elements)

Arable (cereals)	Permanent pasture	Cows	Scrub	Quarry - active
Arable (vegetables)	Improved pasture	Sheep	Marsh	Quarry - disused
Arable (other)	Meadow	Pigs	Heath	Sand and gravel
Orchard	Rough grazing	Oilseed/ linseed	Recreation	Mineral Workings
Horticulture	Grazing marsh	Energy crops	Horsiculture	Restored Workings
Common Land	Setaside	Silage bales	Stud/Livery	Racecourse
Crown Land	Poached pasture	Flowers/ bulbs	Designed parkland	

2e. Woodland and Trees

Forest	Deciduous	Small	Field trees	Poplar
Extensive woodland	Coniferous	Medium	Parkland trees	Alder
Shelterbelt	Mixed	Large	Clumps	Willow
Linear woodland	Commercial	Regular	Hedgerow trees	Oak
Wet woodland	Semi natural	Irregular	Avenue	Ash
Game covert	Ancient	Geometric	Riverside trees	Birch
Arboretum	Coppice	Organic	Self sown	Pine
Historic parkland	Pollards		Condition	Exotics
Boundary screen	Veteran Trees		Sycamore	

3. Human Influences

3a. Buildings and Settlement

Urban	Farming - old barn	Linear	Urban edge:
Sub urban	Farming - agri shed	Nucleated	Strong
(Market) town	Industry -heavy	Clustered	Weak
Village	Industry - light	Dispersed	Degraded
Estate village	Mining	Village Green	Well maintained
Hamlet	Military	Hill/ ridge top	Hard
Farmstead	Airfield - active	Valley floor	Soft
Isolated house	Airfield - disused	Valley side	Unclear
Castle	Business Park	Springline	
Hotel	Research/Educational Establishment		Static caravans

3b. Building Type, Style & Materials

5-7 storey residential block - mansion block		Post 1980 modern	Brick (colour) Concrete
5-7 storey office block	Post war 1945-1980	Stone (Type)	Glass
3-4 storey town house	Interwar	Tile (Slate, Clay, Concrete)	Corrugated iron
2-3 storey terrace	Arts & Craft	Thatch	Wood
Semi-detached	Edwardian	Timber frame	Flint
Detached	Victorian	Timber boards	Braces
Detached mansion	Georgian	Quoins	
	Pre1800	Roof pitch	
	Medieval	Wall copings	
		Render	
		Ashlar	
		Rubble	

3c. Heritage Features

Prehistoric defensive	Industrial heritage	Cathedral	Prehistoric fields
Prehistoric ritual	Transport heritage	Monastery	Assarts
Medieval fort/ castle	Mining heritage	Church	Ridge and furrow
Medieval domestic	Agricultural heritage	Chapel	Parliamentary fields
Medieval manorial		Vernacular building	Estate landscapes
Medieval ecclesiastic		Country house	Parkland
20th Century military		Windmill	Water meadow system
Priory/Abbey		Bridge	Common land
Riverside Buildings		Folly	Lynchets

3d. Boundaries

Stone wall	Picket	Hedge - hawthorn	Tall (>2m)	Ditches - regular
Copings	Closeboard	Hedge - species rich	Medium (1.5m-2m)	Ditches - irregular
Brick wall	Security Fencing	Hedge - gappy	Low (<1.5m)	
Fences	Railing	Overgrown		Fields - regular
Post and wire	Winged Gateways	Hedge tree - species		Fields - irregular
Post and rail	Post & Chain	Stagheaded oak		Fields - enclosure
Field gate		Hedge bank		Fields - Celtic
Metal parkland fencing				Fields - open

3e. Communications and Infrastructure

Motorway(at grade)	Motorway(elevated)	Footpath	Transmission lines
Principal road (A)	Railway - active	Bridleway	Wind turbine
Secondary road (B)	Railway - disused	Byway	Telecom mast >30m
Country lane	Tramway	Wide verges	Telecom mast <30m
Track	Airport	Road signage	
Green lane	Canal	Lighting	
Enclosure road	Bridge	Security Camera	
Winding lane			

3f. Recreation

National Trail	Country park	Prehistoric monument	Sports (formal)
Long Distance Footpath	Park	Historic house	Sports (informal)
Forest trail	Picnic site	Historic garden/parkland	Water recreation - river
Racecourse	Viewpoint	Playing fields	Water recreation - lake
Litter	Car park	Recreation ground	Horseriding

3g. Thames Setting (channel type, adjacent landuse and features)

Hard edge - vertical	Public access to waterfront	Jetty	Moorings - perm
Hard edge - rip-rap (sloping)	POS at waterfront	Pier	Moorings - temp
Soft edge	Residential waterfront	Steps	Marina
Mud flats	Industrial waterfront	Boats	
	Commercial waterfront		

4. Aesthetic and Perceptual Qualities

4a. Aesthetic Qualities

Pattern	Scale	Texture	Colour	Variety
Dominant	Intimate	Smooth	Monochrome	Uniform
Strong	Small	Textured	Muted	Simple
Broken	Large	Rough	Colourful	Diverse
Weak	Vast	Very rough	Garish	Complex
Unity	Form	Enclosure	Visual	Dynamic
Unified	Straight	Expansive	Panoramic	
Interrupted	Angular	Open	Framed	
Fragmented	Curved	Enclosed	Intermittent	
Chaotic	Sinuous	Confined	Channelled	

4b. Perceptual Qualities

Security	Stimulus	Tranquillity	Naturalness	Noise
Intimate	Monotonous	Inaccessible	Natural	Loud
Safe	Interesting	Remote	Tamed	Intermittent
Unsettling	Challenging	Settled	Managed	Distant
Threatening	Inspiring	Busy	Man-made	Quiet

4c. Landmarks

Church spire	Hill	Positive
Church tower	Ridge	Neutral
Church spire & tower	Cliff	Negative
Prominent building(s)	Valley	
Telecoms mast	Escarpment	
Pylons	Monument	
Bridge	Castle	
Country house	Woodland	
Other building	Tree	
Water tower	Copse	
Settlement		
Windmill		
Wind turbine		
Chimney		
Silo		
Agricultural building		

5. Local Distinctiveness, Landscape Condition and Landscape Change

5a. Local Distinctiveness

Scenic Quality	Rarity	Visibility	Sensitivity to change/capacity	Associations
Outstanding	Single example	Open	No capacity	Writers
High	Rare	Overlooked	Some capacity	Artists
Moderate	Frequent	Sheltered	Capacity	Musicians
Low	Common	Screened		Historic figures

5b. Landscape Condition - Excellent, Good, Declining, Poor, Derelict

5c. Strength of Character - Strong, Moderate, Declining, Weak

5d. Forces for Change

Farming	Infrastructure/ Industry/Mining	Settlement	Tourism and Recreation	Habitats
Field amalgamation	Light industry	Infill	Honey pot	Woodland
Large agri sheds	Heavy industry	Intensification	Car parking	Wetland
Farm amalgamation	Quarrying	Rebuild	Erosion	Heathland
Reversion to arable	Waste management (landfill)	Expansion	Littering	Grassland
Diversification	Waste management (fly tipping)	Ribbon development	Golf Courses	Farmland
Specialisation		Suburbanisation	Caravan Parks	Hedgerows
Intensive management	Road improvements	Barn conversions	Racecourse expansion	Hedgerow trees
Under management	Rural traffic	Out of town development		
Grant schemes	Pylons	Densification		
Renewable (bio-fuel) initiatives	Telecoms masts			
Soil erosion	Turbines			

5e. Potential Landscape Implications

5f. Possible Landscape Strategies and Guidelines

