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LANDSCAPE  
URBAN  
ENVIRONMENT  
ECOLOGY

Landscape Character Assessment  
for the  
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

PART 2:  
LANDSCAPE STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES

Final Report  
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## PREFACE

This report should be read in conjunction with Part 1: the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's (RBWM) Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). By building on the findings of the LCA, the Landscape Strategy and Guidelines document provides an overview of the forces for change that are influencing the landscape, and outlines a series of landscape strategies and guidelines to help manage change in a sustainable and positive way in the future.

It is hoped that the findings of both reports will provide a useful tool in the decision making process and allow the Royal Borough, together with a wide range of stakeholders including local communities, to find new ways of delivering change and regeneration which conserves landscape character and promotes local distinctiveness. The aspiration is to achieve a balance between the desire to conserve, and where appropriate, re-instate the cherished landscape elements that have so long been associated with the borough, and at the same time promote and support a living, working landscape that is compatible with the principles of sustainable development. The particular purpose of the Landscape Character Assessment (Part 1) and Landscape Strategies and Guidelines (Part 2) is to provide technical reports which inform the review of the RBWM's development plan.

This report was subject to public consultation between April and May 2004. Both Communities of Interest (such as government agencies, local authorities and non-governmental organisations) and Communities of Place (such local communities and businesses) were invited to contribute to the formulation and evolution of strategies and guidelines for the future management of landscape change within the Royal Borough and thus build consensus for action and shared commitment to the future of this important resource.

This document therefore, now provides a framework for action by RBWM. It is also hoped that other interest groups, those who engaged in the consultation process or not, will contribute towards the strategies and guidelines identified as important for the successful conservation of the locally distinctive character of the borough's landscape in the future. This framework document therefore intends to act as **a catalyst for further contributions and actions rather** forming a closed document. Stakeholders are actively encouraged to review and add to the issues identified in the Forces for Change chapter, and to contribute to the subsequent sections that address the outline landscape strategies and guidelines, particularly the 'Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement'. It is important to note that the authorities and organisations identified in the Potential Opportunity for Stakeholder Involvement section are **examples** of potential stakeholders only. They have been included to provide a basis for further contribution and therefore do not represent firm commitment for the delivery of the strategy or guideline in question.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out proposed Strategies and Guidelines to guide future landscape change within the Royal Borough. It has been prepared following a detailed landscape character assessment (LCA) carried out by LDA Design in 2003 (the subject of Part 1). This document (Part 2), and Part 1, has been undertaken on behalf of the RBWN's Planning Policy Unit, in line with the Countryside Agency's most up-to-date guidance on Landscape Character Assessment (LCA).

The report firstly considers how the landscape character assessment and strategy (Parts 1 and 2) may be used, and implemented by the Royal Borough and other stakeholders. The principal 'forces for change' which are seen across the Borough's landscape are then identified under the headings of agriculture and land management, forestry and woodlands, built development and settlements, transport and infrastructure, recreation, tourism and access, mineral extraction and waste management, water management, renewable energy and climate change.

Strategies and guidelines are then formulated to counter the potential implications of this change on landscape character, with a particular focus on 'joined up action' between stakeholders and the potential for community involvement. Landscape indicators are also identified, where possible, which may be used to monitor the effectiveness of a guideline to counter change in the longer term.

Of particular concern to the Royal Borough is the continuing pressure for housing development, due both to regionally led housing targets for the Royal Borough and the popularity of the locality, particularly at key urban/rural interfaces. The report considers what the implications of this force for change may be on the landscape character of these localities in the future and how proposals should be formulated to minimise the impact of housing development deemed 'appropriate' in the Green Belt.

The final chapter reviews the existing local designations in the Royal Borough's development plan and the future of these local designations within the context of recent government policy and industry Best Practice.

The Final reports of both Part 1 and Part 2 are intended to be published subject to approval by Cabinet. It is intended that these technical reports will then inform the current review of the development plan.



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Appointment and Brief

1.1.1 In June 2003 the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead appointed LDA Design to carry out a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) of the Royal Borough with supporting Strategies and Guidelines.

1.1.2 The overall study consists of two separate reports, comprising the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's Landscape Character Assessment (Part 1), and this report, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's Landscape Strategy and Guidelines (Part 2).

### 1.2 The Scope and Context of the Study

1.2.1 The Royal Borough's Landscape Character Assessment provides the basis for this Landscape Strategy and Guidelines document. The character assessment describes the evolution of the landscape, and the character of the 14 landscape character types that have been identified within the Borough. The study area and landscape character types are shown on Figure 1.

1.2.2 The Landscape Strategy and Guidelines considers the potential applications for the landscape character assessment and landscape strategy before providing an overview of the forces for change affecting the landscape of the Royal Borough. It then presents a range of landscape strategies and guidelines for the identified landscape character types to counter this potential change.

1.2.3 The Landscape Strategy and Guidelines document has five main objectives, as follows:

- to explain the purpose of the study and explore the range of mechanisms and techniques that might be used to implement it and help inform policy and decision making processes;
- to identify the forces for change that have influenced the landscape of the Royal Borough in the past, and are likely to do so in the foreseeable future;
- to consider the implications of these changes on landscape character, with particular reference to the key features and attributes identified for the 14 landscape character types which should be the focus for consultation and enhancement;
- to develop broad landscape strategies and guidelines to inform the decision making process and help manage change in a sustainable and positive manner;
- to develop ideas for local landscape indicators that could be used to monitor landscape change in future; and
- to provide a framework within which the RBWM and other Stakeholders can review and add to the landscape strategy and guidelines, and identify opportunities for their involvement and long term delivery of the strategy.

### **1.3 Approach and Methodology**

1.3.1 The Landscape Strategy and Guidelines document has been completed in accordance with the most up-to-date methods of landscape character assessment and has involved wide research, analysis, evaluation and consultation. The main stages in preparing the strategy have been:

- to provide general guidance on the application of the study and possible responsibilities for implementation;
- to identify the changes in the landscape that have taken place in recent years and that are anticipated to influence the landscape into the foreseeable future, through a combination of field work, research and analysis of existing policy and strategy documents and consultation with local authority and government agency staff;
- to identify the key features and attributes of each landscape character type, which should be the focus for conservation and enhancement such as key habitats, historic sites and features, and cultural and perceptual qualities;
- to explore the implications of land use change for each landscape character type and assess the possible effects on landscape character and key landscape features; and
- to develop strategy ideas and advice to counter adverse landscape change and optimise beneficial landscape change, and consider the means by which landscape change may be monitored in the future.

### **1.4 Stakeholder Involvement**

1.4.1 Current Countryside Agency guidance emphasises the importance of stakeholder involvement in landscape character assessment process and its application, including the development of strategies and guidelines. To accord with this Good Practise guidance, this document has undergone review and responses from both Communities of Interest (such as government agencies, local authorities and non-governmental organisations) and Communities of Place (such as local communities and businesses). The purpose of the consultation was to invite comments on the Landscape Strategy and Guidelines document (along with Part 1), and seek further contributions to the identification of the key trends and management issues affecting the Royal Borough's landscape. In addition to written consultations, workshops were held to provide a forum for further discussion and contributions. The inclusion of stakeholder involvement was to ensure that their detailed knowledge and guidance, as well as particular interests and aspirations for the Royal Borough, were fully represented within the Part 1 and 2 documents.

## **1.5 Structure of the Report**

- 1.5.1 Following this introduction Chapter 2 describes how the strategy and guidelines could be used and delivered, in collaboration with other stakeholders.
- 1.5.2 Chapter 3 identifies the principal and ongoing forces for change that continue to influence the Royal Borough's landscape. These are identified under a range of topics, and key issues for each are summarised.
- 1.5.3 Chapter 4 introduces the key characteristics for each of the 14 landscape character types with an explanation as to why they are important to character together with a broad overview of their condition and capacity for change. A table then sets out the local forces for change within each landscape character type, and potential landscape implications arising from such changes, followed by outline landscape strategies and guidelines. Potential indicators to help monitor landscape change are also included. The final column of the table also includes examples of Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement in the delivery of landscape strategies and guidelines, and the monitoring of change.
- 1.5.4 Chapter 5 considers the potential implications of housing development, the principal force for landscape change within key 'suburban areas' (as termed and identified by the project brief) and gives recommendations as to the general scale, form and density that may be appropriate within these areas for future housing development. Recommendations for landscape enhancement are also discussed.
- 1.5.5 Chapter 6 outlines the policy context for the study, including the local landscape designations currently in place within the Royal Borough, and explores the future potential of the Landscape Character Assessment approach as a planning tool to assist decision making within the emerging planning framework.
- 1.5.6 The report concludes with a glossary of key terms, and abbreviations, including abbreviated references of potential stakeholders, and a list of core references used in the compilation of Part 2. The acknowledgements section identifies all members of the Planning Policy Unit, stakeholders and individuals who contributed to Part 2 of the study.





## 2.0 IMPLEMENTING THE LANDSCAPE STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES

### 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This chapter considers how the Part 1 and 2 documents could be used. It provides an overview of strategic issues and priorities for the RBWM and indicates the main actions and responsibilities for implementation of the strategy.

### 2.2 Uses of the Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Strategy

2.2.1 There are often widely differing views and opinions amongst all sections of the community on the uses, benefits, and potential applications of LCA. In addition, LCA is seen by many principally as a development control tool, the purpose of which is to resist forms of development. There is therefore a need for clear guidance on the range of potential uses and applications of the RBWM's Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Strategy and these are considered below.

#### 2.2.2 *Planning:*

- Informing emerging development plan policies at a borough level and influencing high tiers of policy, such as at regional and sub-regional levels;
- Assisting studies of development potential, for example to help identify sites for new development;
- Informing the siting, scale and design conditions for particular forms of development such as minerals and housing;
- Contributing to landscape capacity studies relating to the supply of land for housing, minerals or other land uses;
- Providing an input to Environmental Assessment at the level of plans and policies and in association with individual development proposals; and
- Providing a framework and context for the production of more local landscape character assessments and Village Design Statements.

#### 2.2.3 *Landscape Conservation, Management and Enhancement:*

- Providing a basis for the preparation of landscape management strategies;
- Helping guide landscape change in positive and sustainable ways, for example programmes of woodland expansion and identifying new uses for disturbed and degraded land;

- Informing the targeting of resources for land management and agri-environment schemes and evaluating the effectiveness of funding; and
- Monitoring landscape change by developing indicators in order to monitor rates and patterns of change. This information can be used to target areas for conservation and enhancement.

### **2.3 Implementing the Strategy**

2.3.1 The reports should be accessible to every organisation involved in the planning, design and management of the Borough's landscape as it provides a common source of baseline information. Indeed by offering a common framework, the study will make it easier for an integrated (multi-agency) approach to be adopted to manage and monitor landscape change in the Borough. The following section suggests the role and responsibilities of agencies likely to be involved in implementing the strategy and identifies how the study might be used.

#### *2.3.2 Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead:*

- Guiding and implementing the development control process including the preparation of development briefs and contributions to evidence at public inquiry;
- Consideration of landscape issues in planning policy development;
- Providing a framework for development capacity studies and for the analysis of the landscape setting of towns and villages;
- Input towards Countryside Design Summaries;
- Basis for developing more detailed local landscape character assessments and townscape assessments; and
- Help improve awareness of landscape issues through promotion and interpretation.

#### *2.3.3 Government Agencies:*

- Help inform organisations such as the Countryside Agency, the Environment Agency, DEFRA, the Forestry Commission, English Nature and English Heritage in prioritising and targeting action through grants and funding initiatives; and
- Support the Quality of Life Capital process by providing baseline landscape assessment data and identifying indicators for monitoring landscape change.

#### 2.3.4 *Land Owners and Land Managers:*

- Help guide landowners and managers and inform decisions on land management issues and long term planning; and
- Target funds to achieve optimal landscape benefits and provide a benchmark for monitoring future landscape change.

#### 2.3.5 *Developers:*

- Help promote the benefits of high quality distinctive environments as a setting for new developments and the value of reflecting local identity by using distinctive elements and features of landscape character as a model for the layout and design of new developments.

#### 2.3.6 *Community Groups, Parish Councils, Local Interest Groups, Voluntary Organisations:*

- Input to local projects and initiatives such as Village Design Statements, Parish Plans, Community Action Plans and Local Heritage Initiatives;
- Help improve pride in local distinctiveness and awareness in landscape issues generally;
- Help identify opportunities for community action; and
- Assist local communities in securing funding for environmental restoration or enhancement projects.

#### 2.3.7 *Educational Establishments and Research Organisations:*

- Promoting an understanding of landscape character and the influence of landscape change; and
- A basis for long-term research projects such as monitoring landscape change.

### **2.4 Taking a Positive Approach to Change: Guiding Principles**

#### *Recognise and Enhance Local Distinctiveness:*

- 2.4.1 The LCA (Part 1) identifies and records the patterns, features and elements of the various landscape character types and areas that contribute to making one landscape different from another. It is these factors that contribute to defining local distinctiveness.

2.4.2 The Landscape Strategy and Guidelines identifies both the wider and local forces for change that threaten to erode local distinctiveness and reduce the inherent variety expressed by the Borough's landscapes. The study aims to counteract this by offering the means by which landscape change might be managed to reinforce the contrasts in landscape character identified in the LCA. This obviously has significant implications for landscape design and management and the following underlying principles should be adopted:

- Avoid a standardised approach to design by using the strategy and assessment to inform the process of negotiation between RBWM planning officers and developers. For example, officers might identify specific criteria and landscape considerations that a specific development should take account of prior to approval. The success of a proposal can subsequently be assessed on the basis of these criteria and considerations;
- The RBWM should be proactive and specify to developers how their proposals can be designed to reflect and enhance local landscape character. Officers might outline elements and characteristic features that should be considered for enhancement, restoration or conservation etc;
- The RBWM should, where appropriate, encourage developers to use local building materials, building styles, native species and other characteristic features and elements of a particular landscape to strengthen local distinctiveness;
- Developers and agents for change should be encouraged to adopt creative solutions and identify the means by which development might be successfully integrated into the existing landscape character. Consideration should be given to the scale of development, layout and relationship to existing development and field patterns. This might apply to built development as well as new woodland planting for example; and
- The RBWM should consider the cumulative impact of small-scale changes and incremental changes as a result of one-off developments.

*Adopt a Positive Approach to Landscape Change:*

2.4.3 The landscape strategy aims to identify which features and attributes of the landscape are of key importance and why. It is these features which should be the focus of landscape management within the borough.

2.4.4 The strategy will offer a key tool as part of Quality of Life Capital Assessments. The Quality of Life Capital approach undertakes a similar exercise to the strategy by determining 'what matters and why' as part of providing a consistent and integrated way of managing for quality of life. This approach, developed jointly by the Countryside Agency, English Nature, English Heritage and the Environment Agency, assists politicians, policy makers, planners and developers to make informed decisions that consider different social, economic and environmental aspects.

2.4.5 In very broad terms priorities might be summarised as:

- Protecting or conserving key features and attributes which are important to local landscape character and that are rare and/or not substitutable; and
- Monitoring the loss of substitutable yet important features and attributes, and ensuring that wherever possible there is no net loss. This might mean accepting the loss of the original feature on the provision that a compensatory increase in the valued element can be agreed in an appropriate location.

2.4.6 In taking a positive approach to landscape change, developers and planning authorities should consider the following:

- Use key features and attributes to assist the development control process. Development, which is assessed as having potential to have a significant effect on key features and attributes, may be a candidate for refusal or require stringent planning conditions that ensure important features are not lost;
- Use the landscape strategy as a baseline for Environmental Impact Assessments of developments. The impact of development on key features and landscape character should be assessed and where impacts are found to occur, scheme modification or mitigation measures should be required to remove or reduce the impact of development;
- Priority should be given to protecting key features and attributes. However where these elements are lost or degraded opportunities to introduce new features should be identified to compensate elsewhere. This might include ensuring that where a particular habitat or area of planting is lost as a result of development, habitat creation or planting is undertaken at a suitable location close by, or that existing degraded features are strengthened;
- Ensure that change is appropriate to landscape character. Proposals should only be pursued that are appropriate for each landscape type and the features and characteristics that define local distinctiveness. Perceptual aspects such as tranquillity, remoteness and wilderness should also be considered;
- Developers should be encouraged to consider adopting creative design solutions to conserving or enhancing local landscape character. The character assessment and strategy can provide a blueprint for new development and provide a model for creating landscape and restoring habitats. This is particularly important where brownfield sites offer no features on which new development can refer to; and

- Consider the effects of small-scale development on landscape character. Incremental changes can gradually erode landscape character and local distinctiveness if the wider context of a development or land management initiative is not considered. The landscape character assessment and strategy highlights key features and attributes such as distinctive field patterns, the perceptual quality of 'remoteness' and settlement patterns that are particularly susceptible to incremental change. However, the findings of the study may also identify the means by which such developments may be successfully incorporated into the landscape and indeed enhance particular characteristics.

*Building Bridges: A Coordinated Approach to Landscape Resources:*

- 2.4.7 A wide range of factors, and forces for change, influence the character, condition and sensitivity of the Borough's landscape character. To counter, control and guide these forces for change, numerous strategies have been identified, many of which have implications for a diverse range of disciplines, organisations and communities. It is essential that landscape issues are tackled in an integrated way and interested parties and community groups engaged in order that their thoughts and aspirations are assessed, consensus reached and particular roles and responsibilities identified and agreed. There is also a need to share and co-ordinate information, in order to minimise costs and reduce the risk of duplication of work.
- 2.4.8 The Royal Borough is committed to an integrated approach and the findings of the strategy will be combined with the results from a wide range of parallel studies and initiatives. In the long term, a Partnership should be formed that will oversee and lead the promotion of the landscape strategy.

*Monitoring Landscape Change in the Future:*

- 2.4.9 Monitoring the rate of landscape and environmental change enables planning officers and those responsible for implementing the strategy to assess the practical effectiveness of existing policy, initiatives and management, and help modify policy and management regimes in the light of actual trends.
- 2.4.10 The information arising from a programme of monitoring rates and patterns of landscape change can be used for a variety of purposes including decision making in the development control process, and the identification of priorities and targets for funding and enhancement initiatives. For each landscape type, an initial range of potential indicators have been identified which will assist in the monitoring of change whether this is deemed to be positive or negative.
- 2.4.11 It is important that the responsibilities for recording and monitoring change are established at an early stage. It is likely that a range of agencies and organisations will be required to monitor change as indicators vary from elements of the built environment, the extent of particular habitats, and the survival rate of particular heritage features. Wherever possible, communities should be engaged in the monitoring process.

*Local Agenda 21:*

- 2.4.12 The Landscape Strategy will be of benefit to meeting the aims of Local Agenda 21. The Local Agenda 21 Plans for each local authorities contain a vision for a more sustainable future and identifies a series of actions to improve the quality of life for local people and a set of indicators to measure progress. The plan contains ideas covering a wide range of topics such as creating a sustainable local economy and transport system. The Strategy will be a valuable tool in guiding decision making and help ensure new development considers local distinctiveness and landscape character.

**2.5 The Next Stage**

- 2.5.1 The landscape strategy and guidelines presents a range of ideas that are intended to provide a catalyst for further debate, and a stimulus for contributions from those stakeholders that will be responsible for the management and monitoring of landscape change across the Borough. There is clearly a need for further development of the strategy ideas presented within this report, however, and for continued collaboration between the Borough, other projects and stakeholder groups. Ownership of the project by the RBWM and other stakeholders who have a commitment to and interest in the borough, is considered fundamental to this process.
- 2.5.2 Establishing an effective and agreed operational framework is also fundamental to its success. Clearly the details of this framework will need to be developed through a process of discussion and debate between the key players.

**2.6 Conclusion**

- 2.6.1 The Landscape Strategy sets out a series of ideas and initiatives to help ensure that change and development respects landscape character, and that key features and attributes are conserved and enhanced.
- 2.6.2 The Strategy also provides the framework for further action and it is hoped that through a process of continued collaboration, and the input of similar projects, the strategy ideas presented here, can be translated into firm commitments which can be supported and delivered through a Landscape Management Plan for the Borough.
- 2.6.3 Ultimately, the intention is that the Strategy will provide a tool in the decision making process and assist the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, together with other agencies, developers and local communities, in finding new ways of delivering change and regeneration, whilst protecting landscape character and promoting local distinctiveness.





## 3.0 FORCES FOR CHANGE

### 3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's Landscape Character Assessment (Part 1 to this document) traced the evolution of the Royal Borough's landscape from the Palaeolithic period up to the present day. It is clear from this that changes in food procurement practices, industry, society and the environment have together had a profound and lasting influence on landscape character. However, the landscape continues to evolve. Indeed, since the Second World War, change has been more rapid than at any time since perhaps the period of Parliamentary Enclosure, and has been driven by a diverse and increasingly international range of forces.
- 3.1.2 Landscape change is often difficult to assess. New elements introduced into the landscape that were initially unpopular or regarded as negative may, after sometime, be regarded as valuable landscape features and worthy of protection. For example, hedgerows emerged as a significant element of the landscape during the time of the Enclosures, when they were planted to divide up common pasture and 'waste'. They radically changed the character of the landscape at that time but are now regarded as an important landscape element in themselves.
- 3.1.3 Of particular significance to this study is the overarching planning constraint of the Green Belt, supported by other regional and local landscape designations, which is in place across the entire extent of Borough outside excluded settlements (which are the settlements of Maidenhead, Windsor, Ascot, Cookham Rise, Cookham Village, Datchet, Eton and Eton Wick, North Ascot, Old Windsor, South Ascot, Sunningdale, Sunninghill and Wraysbury as shown on the Royal Borough's Local Plan). Despite this national level of landscape protection, the countryside continues to show indications of strain, illustrated by inappropriate land use changes and incremental development, which suggests that this 'blanket' designation is not sufficiently addressing modern forces for change.
- 3.1.4 Also of overarching significance when considering potential landscape change in the future of Royal Borough are the planning policies being put forward within the Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas which recently replaced PPG 7 (The Countryside and the Rural Economy). Most of the policies in PPS 7 reproduce, or are closely based on, those policies found in PPG 7, updated as appropriate. However there are new policies proposed on the replacement of buildings in the countryside and the potential for new 'exceptionally built' homes, and on equine-related activities, whilst the policies on community services and on tourism and leisure are expanded (with the intention to cancel PPG 21 on Tourism in due course). PPS 7 also includes policy regarding Local Designations (see Chapter 6).

3.1.5 This chapter examines the driving forces behind landscape change in the borough and places it in a longer-term context by analysing trends for the foreseeable future. It represents the culmination of a desk based review followed by field and stakeholder observations to date. Forces for change have been considered under the following topic headings:

- 3.1.6
- Agriculture and Land Management;
  - Forestry and Woodlands;
  - Built Development and Settlements;
  - Transport and Infrastructure;
  - Recreation, Tourism and Access;
  - Mineral Extraction and Waste Management;
  - Renewable Energy;
  - Water Management;
  - Climate Change.

3.1.7 So that a clear understanding of the issues and pressures affecting the Royal Borough's landscape can be made, the review includes forces for change which are outside the scope of local level planning control, for example climate change and agriculture. It is acknowledged that the landscape strategies and guidelines may be limited in addressing these issues, but it is considered appropriate that they are identified for reasons of completeness and to raise awareness of these pressures on the landscape.

## **3.2 Agriculture and Land Management**

3.2.1 As is the case with most of rural England, agriculture represents the major land use in the borough, although the exact coverage of this habitat is not known. Farming practices have played a crucial role in influencing the evolving character of the landscape, as well as providing an essential link with the rural economy. Future agricultural and land management practices will continue to be a major force for landscape change, and will continue to have the most significant role in safeguarding the environment and shaping future landscapes.

3.2.2 Changes in farming practices and the nature of land holdings are indicated by Farming Census Statistics for the Royal Borough. Within the past decade there has been an overall reduction (by 80 km<sup>2</sup>) in the total area of land farmed within the borough with land concentrated between fewer and therefore presumably larger holdings. This is with the exception of the number of land holdings of less than 5ha, which has increased by a marked 50% suggesting an increase in 'hobby farming' and horticultural (horse related) use of land within the borough. Census information also indicates a reduction in cattle and sheep farming, presumably stemming from the Foot and Mouth epidemic of 2001 and a reduction in 'Mixed' farms, all of which suggest that permanent pasture land within the borough is being lost to arable production with land being more intensively managed by larger farm holdings. This leads to the increased mechanisation of farming practices (and subsequent reduction in traditional land practices).

- 3.2.3 The implications of this shift to the landscape character of the borough is the continuing loss of important features such as hedgerows, field margins and rough pasture land as 'standardised' farming practices reduce the richness and interest of the landscape and increase scale and monocultures.
- 3.2.4 These shifts in agricultural practice will continue to be pressures for landscape change in the borough in the future. New agri-environment schemes may prove more effective at countering these changes in the longer term, but this will be dependent on both increased funding for these initiatives and the development of more effective schemes which are tailored to local circumstances and habitat needs, both of which appear to be being addressed within the current 'overhaul' of agri-environment schemes (See Part 1).
- 3.2.5 In parallel with the national trends as noted above is increasing opportunities for farms to diversify into non-agricultural activities (supported by PPS 7). This pressure for change is compounded in the Royal Borough by the proximity of urban areas and the extremely settled nature of the rural landscape, and has in some cases resulted in inappropriate development and land use, for example for general industrial uses (Class B1[a] and B2) and for storage and distribution (Class B8).
- 3.2.6 The Environment Agency's (EA) objectives for agriculture and rural land use includes; deintensifying land use along river corridors in order to establish buffer zones and optimise the use of set-aside for the benefit of the environment and nature conservation fund; realising opportunities for environmentally sensitive agricultural practices in terms of pollution prevention measures for example through Countryside Stewardship or Organic Farming Schemes (which are shortly to be replaced by DEFRA 's Environmental Stewardship Scheme in 2005).
- 3.2.7 *Summary of Issues*
- A wholesale fall in agricultural markets, the retirement of farmers, and the industry not attracting the next generation of farmers, may lead to the abandonment of farms, the consolidation of farm holdings and the creation of fewer, larger farms;
  - Specialisation, and the tendency for farms to concentrate on a narrower range of activities in order to control and predict labour requirements and other inputs;
  - Diversification and the tendency for farm enterprises to develop other sources of income from non-agricultural activities, such as 'horsiculture', small business and tourism use;
  - Loss and decline in features of the rural landscape that vary in materials, designs and species composition according to geographic location, and therefore contribute to local landscape character. Examples include hedgerows, woodland coverts and the built character of gateways, boundaries and farm buildings;

- Influence of national policies, driven by the changing structure of agricultural and other rural development subsidies disseminated from European directives, and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in particular, and currently implemented through the England Rural Development Programme (ERDP);
- The continued decline of traditional land management practices due to intensification, leading to the loss of now uncommon habitats such as hay meadows and natural wet grasslands, historic landscape and archaeological features (through ploughing of former pastureland and removal of field trees);
- The continued decline of land drainage practices resulting in the neglect of streams and infilling of ditches with resultant flood management problems found within farms downstream;
- An increase in part time or 'hobby farmers' leading to fragmentation of holdings and a general decline of traditional land management strategies in favour of short term gains;
- The neglect of hedges, trees and woodlands as a direct result of these changes in land ownership;
- The influence of large retailers and supermarkets on agriculture by imposing restrictions and conditions on growers and producers; and
- Continuing shift from production subsidies to a new system of agri-environment grant schemes and initiatives for the rural landscape and economy offering many benefits to landscape character, the environment and the rural economy, but subject to incentives matching the particular needs and aspirations of the borough.

### **3.3 Forestry and Woodlands**

- 3.3.1 Commercial Forestry is not a significant industry within the borough with the exception of Windsor Forest which currently yields circa 13,000 cubic metres of timber a year. There is little current evidence to suggest that this activity will be an important force for change in the borough in the future, as activities at Windsor (the principal centre for commercial forestry) are relatively static.
- 3.3.2 Most of the large woodlands in the borough are owned and managed by the Crown estate, many others are also managed by the Woodland Trust. Most are assisted by funding from the Forestry Commission through its Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) which provides incentives for their management. The Forestry Commission are shortly to launch a new set of incentives under the England Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) in 2005 which will replace the WGS. The new scheme will include incentives for woodland management in a similar fashion to the WGS but includes important new incentives for the restoration of native woodland on ancient woodland sites and conservation of historical and archaeological features within woodland.

3.3.3 The long-term management of larger woodlands would seem secured through these agri-environment schemes. However the smaller woodlands (less than 2 hectares) are not covered by these schemes. These small, irregular shaped areas of woodland found scattered across the landscape of the borough, which are commonly of ancient woodland origin, are likely to continue to be lost or further fragmented. The viability of these woodlands as landscape features in the future is therefore less clear.

3.3.4 The new areas of woodland planting that are being introduced into the landscape under the agri-environment schemes will have impacts on the localised character of the landscape in those areas in the longer term.

3.3.5 As noted in the recent Woodland Trust publication 'Making Woodlands Count - its contribution to our quality of life' woodland is increasingly understood to be a multi-purpose resource which fundamentally contributes to the quality of life.

### 3.3.6 *Summary of Issues*

- Lack of management of woodland and forestry, notably the enclosure woodlands as they approach over-maturity; and the need for appropriate long term management of woodlands to arrest their decline;
- Overall decline in, and fragmentation of, areas of ancient semi-natural woodland;
- Decline and loss of parkland and hedgerow trees (particularly Veteran Trees) due to their common age, lack of management, increasing concerns about public safety/liability and the possible impact of variations in the water table arising from climate change and / or water extraction;
- Effects of a general decline in commercial outlets for forestry products affecting the economic viability of woodland and forestry and lack of incentive for future planting and management;
- Effect of decline in field sports, and loss of incentive to plant new woodlands or manage existing game coverts;
- Impact of woodland management on historic landscapes and archaeological features. However, the relaunched agri-environment schemes look to go some way to address this by including incentives to ensure that sensitive woodlands are carefully evaluated before management is undertaken;
- Encouragement of sustainable woodland management, such as coppicing, through the development of markets for woodland products;
- Incentives for the restructuring of existing woodlands to achieve multi-purpose woodlands;

- Establishment of non-indigenous and coniferous species within new woodlands, resulting in woodlands that are inappropriate to the landscape character of the borough;
- Further reduction in grazing levels resulting in scrub encroachment;
- Aspiration to increase the area of woodland cover within the region, as promoted in the England Forest Strategy and the Regional Forestry Framework , but provided location, scale and design of new woodlands are appropriate to the situation, and are in context with and reflect variations in landscape character and local distinctiveness;
- Impact of increased deer and squirrel populations limiting natural regeneration within existing woodlands and affecting irreplaceable flora;
- Establishment of inappropriate woodland planting often associated with new developments such as roads, commercial and industrial development and housing;
- Potential decline in semi natural escarpment beech woods due to impact of climate change; and
- The 'inappropriate' enclosure of parkland around larger houses by woodland planting for security purposes.

### **3.4 Built Development and Settlements**

- 3.4.1 The post-war period has witnessed a rural revolution. Increased personal mobility through road network development, a gradual improvement in public transport provision and advances in telecommunications technology have made rural areas more accessible. These trends, coupled with an enhanced perception of rural life, greater affluence, and the decline in the profitability of agricultural land, are placing increasing pressures on the countryside to accommodate built development. In parallel with this, existing towns and villages, and in particular brownfield sites (previously developed land) within them and their undeveloped fringes, are also under considerable pressure to accommodate housing, retail and employment sites.
- 3.4.2 The rural landscapes of Windsor and Maidenhead are particularly attractive to potential residents due to their innate quality and unspoilt character, proximity to London and other large conurbations, accessibility to the motorway network and airport at Heathrow. Thriving rural communities and the richness and diversity of the built heritage, from isolated farmsteads to historic manor houses and village dwellings which are full of charm and historical reference, are also important features which attract residents to the locality.
- 3.4.3 Notwithstanding these pressures, land outside of the excluded settlement boundaries of the borough enjoys a higher level of control embedded in development plan policies that seek to ensure that the quality of built development and settlement form within the borough's landscape is not devalued.

3.4.4 Despite the constrained context the Royal Borough's housing requirement for the period 2001 - 2016, as set out in the emerging Berkshire Structure Plan, is 3,500 net additional dwellings. The rate of house building within the Royal Borough is envisaged to be an average of 190 dwellings per year in the period 2001 - 2016. A significant proportion of which will, importantly, be affordable housing. Although provision will focus on the development of previously developed land, the scale of the housing allocation is such that undoubtedly there will be pressure for building in the Green Belt. This is therefore a considerable pressure for change which is considered in further detail within Chapter 5.

3.4.5 These pressures will continue, and indeed undoubtedly increase in the future, and it is the effective management of these pressures that are particularly pertinent to the future of the special character of the landscape in the Royal Borough.

#### 3.4.6 *Summary of issues*

- The expansion of existing towns, villages and hamlets, and the disproportionate growth of 'commuter' settlements with good road transport links;
- Infill development in villages and hamlets that may be contrary to traditional settlement pattern and form;
- Expansion of individual dwellings in rural settlements altering the character of buildings and settlements;
- Incremental spread and densification of buildings and associated features, and changes of land use within Major Developed Sites and other country and manor estates which compromises the historic integrity of the building with its designed landscape or/and parkland;
- Incremental spread of inappropriate development leading to clustering and significant cumulative impacts;
- Standardised housing designs and construction materials, and the densification of housing plots within and on the fringes of existing settlements, that may compromise their distinctive characteristics and landscape setting;
- The introduction of a wide variety of building materials and styles and the lack of reference to traditional rural styles of siting and design;
- Farm conversions and associated hard and soft elements such as driveways and gardens in rural areas that may detract from local landscape character;

- Poorly designed new employment areas, schools and leisure facilities in rural landscapes and on the edge of existing settlements with inappropriately designed landscape settings (if at all), placing additional pressure on the urban fringe and open spaces by introducing suburban elements into these landscapes;
- Increasing demand for, and a reduced supply of, affordable housing and the need to provide for 'balanced communities'; and
- Decline in sense of tranquillity arising from increased effects of noise and lighting.

### **3.5 Transport and Infrastructure**

- 3.5.1 The term 'infrastructure' in the context of the landscape strategy has been used to describe those elements such as transport, energy provision and communication that might reasonably be proposed within the borough. The impact of infrastructure provision varies considerably depending on the nature and scale of development under discussion.
- 3.5.2 Of particular relevance to this report is the proposed expansion of Heathrow Airport, both that of Terminal 5 and the additional run way. Although these proposals have no direct bearing on the Royal Borough, expansion of activities within the Heathrow area will increase pressure for additional housing and infrastructure within the borough. The increased frequency of overhead aviation noise may also significantly affect the quiet and remote character of some areas of the Borough which fall within the flight path.
- 3.5.3 The development of the Jubilee River between Cookham and Eton has resulted in considerable landscape change within the Buckinghamshire landscape. Within the Royal Borough flood alleviated land is now subject to considerable development pressure as a consequence of the development of this infrastructure, particularly land south of the flood bund north of Maidenhead.
- 3.5.4 With reference to the adopted Local Plan for the Royal Borough (2001- 2006), there is one Environmental/Traffic Management Proposal which may have an impact on the character of its locality;at Cookham. There are proposals to improve the carriageway between Cookham Bridge at the Thames and the western end of The Pound (but excluding the Cookham Moor area).
- 3.5.5 The Countryside Agency's Quiet Lanes and Greenways Initiatives aims to give better mobility and access for people on foot, bike or horseback, or for people with disabilities. Greenways are designed for shared use and largely exclude motorised vehicles. They are in and around towns, cities and the countryside. Quiet Lanes are minor rural roads, already lightly trafficked where extra traffic measures are proposed to improve their attractiveness for non-motorised users. Both initiatives are part of the Countryside Agency's transport work which aim to assist national level integrated transport policies. This initiative may increasingly influence the character of some minor routeways.



### 3.5.6 Summary of Issues

- Cumulative impact on landscape character of piecemeal local road improvements such as widening and straightening, and the standardising influence arising from the proliferation of signs, road furniture and traffic calming measures;
- Impact of large-scale road orientated infrastructure schemes, particularly through the more sensitive and highly visible areas of landscape such as the chalk escarpment or the historic landscapes south of Maidenhead;
- Increases in road traffic arising from increased settlement and tourism, which may erode local character particularly on quiet rural roads, generate severe congestion in popular 'honeypot' villages and landscapes at peak periods, and the need for new car parks;
- Potential increase in applications for telecommunication masts, particularly mobile phone masts;
- Increase in pressure to establish renewable energy initiatives, notably wind turbines; and
- Impact arising from the provision of infrastructure such as overhead low and medium voltage masts and underground water and sewage pipes associated with new developments, such as housing, and expansion of existing development areas.

## 3.6 Recreation, Tourism and Access

- 3.6.1 Recreation and tourism is a significant economic activity in the borough. Its particular attraction to regional visitors lies in its accessibility from the adjacent conurbations of Windsor, Maidenhead, Slough and Ascot. The intimate wooded places of the Thames riverside are a focus for leisure throughout the borough as is the water-based recreation sites of the Wraysbury area. However the rural charm of the wider agricultural landscape, such as that seen in the Cookham area, also attracts many visitors, and added to this is the charm of its many vernacular villages and 'secret' places. The historic landscapes associated with Windsor Castle attract visitors from around the world, as well as those from the surrounding settlements, and are therefore significant from an international perspective.
- 3.6.2 The national designation of these rural areas as Green Belt land, as well as other local designations, brings not just a requirement for the protection of the quality and openness of the landscape from development but a need to make provision for informal outdoor recreation within these areas and access to the countryside. Public demand for recreation and access to the countryside continues to grow.

- 3.6.3 In terms of tourism within the Royal Borough, it is home to more than 20 visitor attractions, two appearing in the 'UK's Top 20', Windsor Castle and Legoland. Windsor Castle is in a unique position in that it is the largest inhabited castle in the world and the weekend home of the Queen. Legoland Windsor was the largest investor in tourism in England when it opened in 1996 at a cost of £84 million and has invested steadily ever since, with visitor numbers rising from 1.1 million in its first year to 1.47 million in 2000.
- 3.6.4 Significant developments continue to be proposed at both Ascot and Windsor Racecourses, which will further serve to promote racing fixtures in the Borough.
- 3.6.5 New attractions also continue to interest visitors such as Windsor Royal Station which opened in 1997 (and has won British Council of Shopping Centres awards since) and Eton Rowing Lake, now a major sports venue included in London's 2012 Olympic bid proposal. The Thames Valley Athletic Centre is another example.
- 3.6.6 In total 7 million visitors come to the Royal Borough each year for business or for pleasure, with about 10% staying overnight within it. Of these, 55% will stay in serviced accommodation and about 14% in self catering or camping. The remainder stay with family and friends.
- 3.6.7 The domestic market makes up about 70% of visitors to the Royal Borough; and the overseas market about 30%. Tourism is worth £360 million to the Royal Borough per annum, and makes up 10% of its GDP.
- 3.6.8 Employing over 11,000 people, it is perhaps the largest sector of employment, in volume terms, in the Royal Borough. Unlike other industries, tourism tends to select from the local population and, therefore, the multiplier spend effect is greater in this industry than in many others.
- 3.6.9 In terms of nationally important cycle and foot access routes within the Royal Borough, the principal Sustrans (National Cycle Network) routes are: NCN4 from Reading by Warren Row, Knowle Hill, Maidenhead, Dorney, Windsor to Runnymede and East; NCN61 from Dorney to The Myrke and Heathrow Airport, with a branch by Upton Court to Uxbridge; and NCN5 (partially complete) from Maidenhead by Cookham to High Wycombe.
- 3.6.10 The Thames Path National Trail travels the length of the river through the borough, alternating between banks. In total there are also almost 300 kms of Public Rights of Way in the borough.
- 3.6.11 *Summary of Issues*
- Optimising the tourism potential of the landscape and natural environment without detriment to the environmental resource;
  - The erosion of tracks, footpaths and the wider landscape through walking, horse riding, mountain biking and motorcyclists;

- Pressure for new amenity and recreational facilities such as golf courses, holiday villages and caravan parks, which may have a potentially significant impact on landscape character;
- Increased tourist interest in the borough leading to further short stop tourist traffic in 'honeypot' villages and landscapes causing congestion and impact on rural character and perception of remoteness and tranquillity;
- The effect on water quality, riverine habitats and local character as a result of the rising popularity of water based / river edge activities;
- Potential of re-use of disused quarries for incompatible activities e.g. motor bike scrambling;
- A developing recognition of the importance of sustainable tourism, and the need to balance the economic benefits of tourism development with the social and environmental effects;
- Declining popularity of field sport such as game shooting and fishing leading to reduced incentive to manage game coverts and fishing rivers;
- Pressure to provide new sports pitches and formal recreational areas on the edge of towns and villages;
- Lack of understanding of, and respect for, the countryside generally by some visitors leading to degradation of landscape features, habitats, historic sites and littering; and
- Lack of investment from the tourism sector in the asset that it relies upon.

### 3.7 Mineral Extraction and Waste Management

- 3.7.1 Central government provides guidance to Minerals and Waste Planning Authorities (in this case the Joint Strategic Planning Unit at the county level) and those involved within these industries via regional government on allocations for mineral extraction and waste management within the subregions through Regional Planning Guidance (in the case for waste) and Mineral Planning Guidance Notes (for aggregates, cement or sand for example). It is this steer from central government which is the primary driver for extraction and waste activity within the borough.
- 3.7.2 The Regional Minerals and Waste Strategies (Proposed Alterations to Regional Planning Guidance) sets out a regional framework up to 2016 for waste management and the development of minerals such as chalk, clay, sand and gravel; raw materials which are important for both the manufacturing and construction industry.

- 3.7.3 Extraction within the Royal Borough is guided at a local level by the Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire. Similarly waste management for the borough is guided by the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire.
- 3.7.4 It is clear from these documents that mineral extraction, waste disposal and restoration of mineral workings will be a feature of the borough for many years to come because of the requirement for the maintenance of 'mineral' landbanks and the fact that these uses need not be considered inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- 3.7.5 The future of chalk and clay extraction in the borough, specifically, is limited. The chalk pit at Pinkneys Green is the only remaining active chalk quarry in Berkshire. The last remaining brick and tile works, at Knowl Hill, has recently ceased activities despite having extensive permitted reserves at the location, and turned operations over to landfill. In fact national and regional mineral policies do not indicate any future 'appropriate production levels' of chalk and clay in Berkshire and are not requiring land banks of these minerals to be maintained.
- 3.7.6 In contrast the future of aggregate extraction will be ongoing and substantial. In the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire (Incorporating the Alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001) the production of sand and gravel is proposed to be maintained at a level of 2.3 million tonnes a year to 2006 and beyond (unless otherwise revised). The phased release of land for extraction activity in the county is directed by the Mineral Planning Authority who maintains a stock of planning permissions in the county (the 'land bank') equivalent to at least seven years extraction at the above rate. Any demand in excess of 2.3 million tonnes in the county are proposed to be met by secondary and recycled aggregates or importation (which will preferably be by rail). Through rigorous assessment the 'Preferred Areas' for aggregate extraction in the future within the borough are identified as the land at Riding Court Farm, Datchet, land north of Horton and further areas of the railway land at Kingsmead, Horton. However it is envisaged that substantial areas of land in the borough will continue to be under pressure for mineral extraction in the future.
- 3.7.7 The wider issue of waste management is undergoing a radical re-assessment, the resolution of which is being disseminated down from European Union directives and national policy through to the Local Plan that covers the borough. The disposal of waste continues to present a challenge, with a need to ensure that disposal of both industrial and domestic waste is undertaken in a sustainable manner.
- 3.7.8 The Waste Local Plan for Berkshire (Adopted 1998) identifies the basic strategy for waste management in the county in the future to be (going from the most to least preferred techniques); Education, Minimisation, Re-use, Recycling, Quantity reduction by processing/Use for the production of energy, Disposal by landfill and Disposal by landraising. However solutions are not simple and it is envisaged that more and more diverse facilities will need to implement the new waste strategy to make it work. There will be a continuing need for landfill sites, which have long term environmental management implications, while alternative arrangements become operational.

3.7.9 The delivery of this strategy is closely related to the availability of suitable sites in the county. There are 7 'preferred' sites identified in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, mainly within river floodplain areas (unsurprisingly correlating to previous extraction areas). They are as follows; Star Works, Knowl Hill (which is proposed as a engineered landfill site) Hindhay Quarry, Pinkneys Green (which is proposed as a recycling centre for inert material) Bray Wick, Maidenhead (which is proposed as a recycling centre for non-inert material) Timber Yard, Englemere, North Ascot (again proposed for recycling of non-inert material) Plant Site, Monkey Island Lane, Bray (again proposed for recycling of non-inert material) Riding Court Farm, Datchet (proposed as a site for a waste treatment and green waste composting centre along with an area of engineered landfill) and North of Horton (which is also proposed as a engineered landfill site). There is a general presumption against planning permission for waste management or extraction development outside of these 'preferred' sites.

#### 3.7.10 *Summary of Issues*

- The impact of extractive industries on landscape character, including noise and dust during operation and following restoration, and effects on landscape, nature conservation, and historic features;
- Visual, noise and dust impact of quarry traffic and machinery, especially traffic travelling along rural roads where perceived tranquillity and remoteness may be compromised;
- The requirement to balance the adverse effects of quarrying operations with the need to provide a supply of locally derived material that ensures continuity of the distinctive character of the built environment, in the case of Chalk quarrying only;
- Positive impact of the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund with regard to mitigating the effects of aggregate extraction and increasing the wider benefits of restoration schemes;
- The implications of potential future waste management and recycling operations within the borough;
- Restoration of quarries provides opportunities for a range of new uses particularly for water based recreation facilities;
- The potential for pollution of ground aquifers by waste landfill sites.

### 3.8 Renewable Energy

3.8.1 As noted within ODPM information PPG 22 'Renewable Energy' has recently been reviewed. The draft Planning Policy Statement (PPS 22) sets out the Government's broad policy objectives relevant to renewable energy in England, and its proposed planning policies that will help deliver these objectives. These policies are firmly based on the principles set out in the Government's recent Energy White Paper. Many of the policies in draft PPS22 are based on existing policies in PPG22, updated as appropriate. However, there is a clearer focus on assisting the UK to meet

national and international targets for the reduction of emissions of greenhouse gases, including the goal to cut the UK's carbon dioxide emissions by some 60% by 2050, with real progress by 2020. There are also new policies proposed on the use of regional targets for renewable energy, buffer zones, and an emphasis on clear, criteria based policies for use in regional planning guidance and development plans.

3.8.2 The Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Strategy (Proposed alterations to Regional Planning Guidance, South East - Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy) is a regional framework which sets out a vision for the substantial increase in the efficiency of energy use and the proportion of energy supplied by renewable sources in the South East, within the context of the draft PPS 22. By 2010 it notes that the South East should generate at least 5.5% of its electricity from renewable sources and by 2026 at least 16%.

3.8.3 Most of the borough's energy is currently generated outside its boundary by non-renewable energy sources. However, studies have shown that there is potential to harness energy from, amongst other sources, wind, agricultural crops and woodlands, waste combustion, hydro and solar power. Such developments support the Government's aim of generating 10 % of the UK's electricity requirements from renewable energy by the end of 2010. However in the South East, recent recommendations state that the region should work towards a target of procuring 6.6% of electricity from renewable energy sources by 2010 rising to 10% by 2015.

3.8.4 Whilst renewable energy schemes are of obvious benefit to the wider environment and consistent with government policy, some can have the potential to impact significantly upon landscape character in localised areas, particularly that of wind turbines. However these impacts can be positive as well as negative, particularly, for example, in the instance of using local woodlands as a source of energy. Small scale use of wood to provide heating for larger properties and/or new developments can help support the management of these local woodlands.

3.8.5 *Summary of Issues*

- Visual impact of wind turbines on open areas of landscape, if they are poorly located and designed;
- Bio-energy crops resulting in incongruous crops in the landscape;
- Potential impact of processing plants, chimneys, road infrastructure and traffic associated with the transport of and generation of energy from bio energy crops and wood fuel;
- Impact of long term woodland management arising from wood fuel schemes;
- Potential future impact of hydropower on the Thames through the creation of new weirs or the harnessing of existing ones.

### 3.9 Water Management

3.9.1 The River Thames and its associated navigation and drainage channels are important landscape features within the borough. As well as their considerable landscape and nature conservation value, they provide a major source of water for the communities that live both within and beyond the borough. The effective management of the water resource is therefore of great importance. The Environment Agency (EA) has a key role in the integrated management of water resources, together with the wider remit to protect and enhance the environment.

#### 3.9.2 Summary of Issues

- Water abstraction within the borough is primarily from the River Thames, although the Thames floodplain gravels are also an important source of potable water; their management is therefore of the utmost importance to ensure an assured quality and quantity of water supply;
- Groundwater in the borough is particularly sensitive to pollution due to the presence of major outcrop aquifers across much of the area, that is, the river terrace gravel and chalk landscapes of the borough, which are highly permeable;
- Of particular concern within the borough is the pollution of terrace gravel water tables by landfill, which as noted above, is a significant after use of gravel extraction;
- The trend towards smaller household size is likely to lead to higher levels of water consumption and waste generation per head of population. Water abstraction for public supply continues to affect river flows and groundwater levels (seen commonly as a reduction in water table levels), threatening aquatic and wetland habitats;
- Intensification of agriculture, and runoff from pesticides and nitrates in particular, has been the major source of pollution of ground and surface water quality in the past. 'One off' pollution events from sewage, oil and chemical incidents can also have dramatic environmental consequences;
- Level of recreational boat use on the Thames is a source of concern because of the congestion that it creates and consequent problems to the river caused by boat wash, however as a sustainable transport corridor it is seen as a strategic routeway within which use should be encouraged and the management of these conflicting interests will be important;
- The threat to the long term future of the Thames for tourism and recreation caused by the redevelopment of existing boatyard sites for alternative uses such as housing and offices;
- The decline in commercial usage of the Thames and the loss of associated boating facilities;

- The management of riverside habitats, including the maintenance, restoration and creation of natural bankside and marginal habitats, along with coppicing and pollarding operations, undertaken through EA's Initiatives as well as through its statutory role in development planning and the Countryside Stewardship Scheme;
- Inappropriate bank protection/ 'improvements' along riversides. The river banks are now heavily modified within areas of settlement. Insensitive bankworks, such as sheet piles and concrete bagwork, significantly reduce the ecological value of the resource and are visually discordant. The habitats of many of the tributaries of the Thames are also degraded;
- Non-tidal encroachment; and
- Climate change may affect the future flow regime of rivers and further exacerbate existing low flow conditions, and biodiversity balance.

3.9.3 The EA's Lower Thames Local Environment Agency Plan provides an integrated approach to the river catchment management of the River Thames, embracing environmental, economic and social effects, and the opportunity for local action and monitoring. Specific actions proposed in the borough with a potential bearing on the landscape character of the river corridor in the future specifically are:

- The impact of the decline in commercial usage of the Thames and the loss of boating facilities are being targeted by the EA;
- The cataloguing of historic and archaeological features along the River Thames waterway, with the intention of securing their future;
- Planned improvements to the condition of locks along the waterway, particularly to Bray and Boveney Locks;
- The impoundment of the Cut at Cannon Hill weir with potential localised impacts;
- A Japanese Knot-weed eradication programme is ongoing;
- A strategic initiative to develop design guidance to reduce the impact of riverine development on the River Thames landscape is being undertaken in collaboration with the 'Thames Ahead' Initiative; and
- The Thames 21 project (formally Thames Clean) is trying to reduce the impact of litter on the Lower Thames and increase litter control, including the 'Adopt a River' campaign.



### 3.10 Climate Change

3.10.1 Scientific evidence suggests that global climate change is already happening, partly attributable to natural cyclical change, but considerably exacerbated by the burning of fossil fuels, methane and nitrous oxide from agricultural, industrial and waste disposal. Although a gradual rise in sea level arising from the global effect of rising temperatures may not directly effect the Windsor and Maidenhead area, it is thought that the influence on weather patterns may result in stronger winds, and heavier rains, particularly during the winter period, and extended periods of drought during the summer period. Projections suggest that it will influence a great many physical, chemical, biological and human activities, which in the longer term may have the potential to result in changes to the physical appearance, and therefore the character of the landscape.

3.10.2 Figures released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in January 2002 predict a worst case scenario of an average global temperature rise of c.5.8 this century, with sea levels rising 88cm by 2100. The Environment Agency confirms that in the South East of England temperature estimates are expected to mirror the global scenario, but sea level rise is predicted as slightly lower, at 60cm.

#### 3.10.3 *Summary of issues*

- Seasonal decline in water table effecting the landscape and ecology of river systems;
- Pressure on land not under risk from flooding for built development;
- Gradual changes in habitats in response to climate change;
- Increase in fire hazard and changes in pests resulting in potential damage to vulnerable or protected habitats;
- Reduction or loss of plant and animal species on the edge of their range due to species competition as well as absence or lack of opportunity for habitat/species to migrate as a result of habitat fragmentation, obstacles to migration such as wide spread development and the fast rate of change predicted;
- Introduction of non native plant and animal species whose geographic range is extended to cover the borough;
- Change in crop production (to new types such as grain maize and soya) and land management practices generally in response to changing climate patterns and growing conditions;
- Change in the character of parks and gardens due to changing plant species and design in response to reduced water requirements for example;

- Changes in visitor destinations and length of stay in the borough due to changing perceptions of the predictability of the weather;
- Potential for increased visitor pressure is also dependent on the sustainability of a significant tourist industry which is based on the quality of the natural environment and features within the borough;
- Potential pressure on land due to increased opportunities for outdoor leisure activities, particularly water-based activities; and
- Increased tree stress and loss through drought putting landscape features such as veteran trees at risk.

## 4.0 LANDSCAPE STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The aim of this strategy and guidelines chapter is to consider the implications of the forces for change identified in the previous chapter on landscape character, with particular reference to the key characteristics identified for the fourteen landscape character types. These valued elements, encompassing features of landscape, historic and biodiversity interest as well as the built environment, contribute either singly or in combination to the unique character and quality of the borough's landscape. The strategy, in particular, recognises the potential for landscape conservation, enhancement, restoration and creation, and on finding opportunities to strengthen distinctive character through the design and management of new and existing landscapes.

4.1.2 The broad landscape strategy and guidelines developed in the preceding sections aim to inform the decision making process and help manage change in a sustainable and positive manner. They also hope to provide a framework within which the Royal Borough, along with other key stakeholders and partners, can review, add to and identify opportunities for, their and community involvement, and the long term delivery of the strategy.

4.1.3 Ideas for local landscape indicators have also been included that could be used to monitor the effectiveness of the landscape strategy in securing the retention of the key features and attributes of the landscape in the future.

4.1.4 The Landscape Strategy and Guidelines has involved research, analysis, evaluation and consultation. The main stages in preparing the strategy have been:

- the evaluation of the key features and attributes which should be the focus of positive management of each landscape character type such as key habitats, historic sites and features, and cultural and perceptual qualities, from the key characteristics identified in Part 1: Landscape Character Assessment;
- the identification of the changes in the landscape character type that have taken place in recent years and that are anticipated to influence the landscape into the foreseeable future;
- the implications of land use change for each landscape character type and assessment of the potential effects on landscape character and key features and attributes; and
- the development of strategy ideas and advice to counter adverse landscape change and optimise beneficial landscape change, and consider the means by which landscape change may be monitored in the future.

- 4.1.5 The strategy and guidelines for the Royal Borough commence with an explanation of the terminology used within the strategy and guidelines work, followed by a review of those key landscape elements which are of borough wide significance. They are listed in table form, together with the principal threats that may affect them, and the areas and opportunities for action that may be available to counteract or ameliorate these threats. Key stakeholders envisaged in the delivery of these actions are also indicated. An explanation of abbreviations are given at the rear of the document.
- 4.1.6 Directly following on from this, a Landscape Strategy for each landscape character type is set out in turn; Firstly, the strategy sets out those key positive features and attributes that were identified as central to the character of the landscape from Part 1 ( the Landscape Character Assessment) that should be conserved and enhanced, along with an explanation as to why they are important, and secondly; a brief consideration of the overall condition, strength and sensitivity of the landscape is included after which the guidelines are listed, again in table form.
- 4.1.7 The tables set out the local forces for change, and potential landscape implications arising from such changes, followed by outline landscape guidelines. Ideas for potential indicators to help monitor landscape change are also included. The final column of the table includes examples of Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement in the delivery of landscape strategies and guidelines and the monitoring of change.
- 4.1.8 Where reference is made to 'locally appropriate species' refer to the 'characteristic tree species' given for each Landscape Type (under Key Characteristics) in Part 1: Landscape Character Assessment.

## 4.2 Explanation of Terminology

4.2.1 Outline Landscape Strategies have been identified for each of the borough's fourteen landscape character types.

4.2.2 Landscape strategies for each landscape type include consideration of the following:

- **Key features and attributes that contribute to local distinctiveness of the landscape which should be Conserved, Restored or Enhanced.** These are the features of the landscape that make the most important contribution to the character of the landscape. The notes are based on the key characteristics identified in the Landscape Character Assessment but also explain why they are important. Key features are specific and do not necessarily occur in each of component landscape character areas. It is anticipated that the key features identified for each of the fourteen landscape types will be the focus of conservation, restoration and enhancement initiatives in the future and that their protection will normally be sought. Key attributes that refer to aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape are also identified although again are not necessarily experienced in each component landscape character area. These overarching characteristics should be respected in the consideration of planned change within the landscape. Where there is an appropriate opportunity to create elements into landscapes these are identified;
- **Assessment of Landscape Condition.** For each of the landscape types, a brief assessment of the condition of existing key features is given. Reference to the overall intactness of the landscape from visual, functional and ecological perspectives is included along with evidence of recent change and its consequences. A general assessment of 'landscape condition in the landscape character type' is then indicated as either Excellent, Good, Declining, Derelict and Poor as a summary, for guidance purposes only;
- **Assessment of Strength of Landscape Character.** For each of the landscape types, a brief assessment of the existing strength of the character is indicated. This is based on the occurrence and condition of key features and other elements which combine to create consistent patterns in the landscape. A general assessment of 'strength of landscape character in the landscape character type' is then indicated as either Strong, Moderate, Declining and Weak as a summary, for guidance purposes only;
- **Assessment of Landscape Capacity.** For each of the landscape types, a brief discussion of the landscape's capacity to successfully accommodate change is given. Such as housing, mineral extraction or infrastructure development. The assessment is based on the ability of a particular landscape to accommodate change without significant effects on its character, or overall change of landscape character type. The type and nature of the change being considered is given. A general assessment of 'strength of landscape character in the landscape character type' is then indicated as either High, Medium or Low as a summary, for guidance purposes only;

- **Local Forces for Change.** These are the forces that have been assessed as being of greatest significance in each of the fourteen landscape types;
- **Landscape Implications.** The same or similar forces for change may apply across a number of landscape types. However, the implications of change on each landscape may be very different as a result of their contrasting character, the nature of their key features and their sensitivity or capacity to accommodate change;
- **Outline Landscape Strategies.** This section presents outline strategy ideas for each of the landscape types based on the key features and consideration of the implications of each of the local forces for change. Strategies are presented under the general headings of Conserve, Enhance, Restore and Create in accordance with current guidance. An (\*) indicates an Outline Landscape Strategy for which the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead will take a significant role;
- **Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change.** A range of potential indicators are proposed as a means of measuring the effects of change on the landscape, and the success of initiatives which seek to conserve or enhance the character of the landscape; and
- **Opportunities for Community Involvement.** Where relevant, opportunities for community involvement in the implementation of the strategy or monitoring landscape change are proposed. It is anticipated that the work of community groups, organisations and action groups would be co-coordinated by the Borough Council or agencies such as the Countryside Agency or Environment Agency as part of their shared commitment to deliver the landscape strategy.

4.2.3 BOROUGH WIDE ELEMENTS

Principal Elements	Principal Threats	Areas for Action and Identification of Key Local Level Stakeholders (in brackets)
<p>Hedgerows;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in agricultural land management practices, generally;</li> <li>• Cost of maintenance;</li> <li>• Loss of hedged boundaries arising from amalgamation of fields or change in ownership boundaries;</li> <li>• Damage by inappropriate hedge maintenance methods and use of machinery;</li> <li>• Declining skills in hedge management, in particular hedge laying;</li> <li>• Age and health of hedgerow trees;</li> <li>• Inappropriate enclosure of the landscape and obstruction of open views arising from grown out hedges;</li> <li>• Standardisation of roadside hedges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote availability of agri-environment grants for hedgerows replacement / long term maintenance (*);</li> <li>• Seek to promote wider availability of and financial support for training in hedgerow management techniques (*);</li> <li>• Seek to ensure compatibility with variations in local style, species composition and laying methods (*, LWT);</li> <li>• Seek to ensure relationship with other composite features such as ditches and parkland fencing are appropriate to locality (*);</li> <li>• Seek to encourage management of grown out hedgerows (*);</li> <li>• Seek to discourage establishment of new hedges in areas where not appropriate with regard to landscape and historic character and patterns (*);</li> <li>• Planning guidance and development control process shall ensure that, where appropriate to local character, new hedges are incorporated into the design of new development, including road infrastructure (*).</li> </ul>

Principal Elements	Principal Threats	Areas for Action and Identification of Key Local Level Stakeholders (in brackets)
<p>Ancient Semi Natural Woodlands and Veteran Trees;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decline and fragmentation of ASNWs;</li> <li>• Loss of veteran trees;</li> <li>• Loss of species diversity;</li> <li>• Inappropriate replanting, particularly with coniferous plantations;</li> <li>• Inconsistent and inappropriate management;</li> <li>• Multiple ownership, resulting in differential condition and management approaches;</li> <li>• Lack of commercial incentive to manage woodlands;</li> <li>• Loss of trees as a consequence of disease, potentially that of Oaks by sudden Oak Death.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and promote Regional Forestry Framework strategies generally (*, FC);</li> <li>• Preparation of a Borough Wide 'Forestry and Woodlands Strategy and Guidance' (or similar) to encourage appropriate management and planting within ASNWs and counteract their further fragmentation (including a full audit) (*, LWT);</li> <li>• Preparation of a Borough Wide 'Veteran and Parkland Trees Strategy and Guidance' (or similar) to encourage appropriate management of these features and promote wider understanding and appreciation of them including a full audit) (*, LWT);</li> <li>• Encourage the scheduling of all veteran trees as TPO's (*);</li> <li>• Introduce statutory designation to all ASNWs, additional to SSSI/cSAC etc to enhance protection of ASNWs and veteran trees from further decline and loss (*);</li> <li>• Promote wider understanding and benefits of sustainable management such as coppicing and wood fuel schemes (*, LWT);</li> <li>• Encourage appropriate replanting of PAWs (LWT);</li> <li>• Encourage woodland expansion to buffer AW and extend natural habitats in parallel with de-intensifying agricultural practice around natural habitat margins (*, LWT);</li> <li>• Promote wider availability of, and financial support for, training in woodland management skills (*, LWT);</li> <li>• Promote a wider understanding of the social and cultural benefits woodlands can provide (*, LWT).</li> </ul>



Principal Elements	Principal Threats	Areas for Action and Identification of Key Local Level Stakeholders (in brackets)
<p>Permanent Pasture, including unimproved neutral calcareous and acid grassland (and encompassing Common Pasture Land);</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in agricultural land management practices, generally resulting in progressive decline and fragmentation of areas of permanent pasture;</li> <li>• Conversion to improved pasture with resultant loss of species diversity;</li> <li>• Permanent loss arising from ploughing up of permanent pasture and conversion to arable land;</li> <li>• Permanent loss arising from neglect of common land;</li> <li>• Inconsistent and inappropriate management, or neglect, including inappropriate grazing regimes, with overgrazing resulting in loss or decline in biodiversity interest, and undergrazing in scrub encroachment</li> <li>• Damage and decline in species diversity arising from neighbouring uses e.g. spray drift;</li> <li>• Pressure from recreational uses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with the Berkshire Nature Conservation Forum to promote the Berkshire Grassland Habitat Action Plan;</li> <li>• Undertake a comprehensive Grassland Study in the Borough to establish the extent and distribution of the permanent pasture resource, to gain a clearer understanding of the contribution of this habitat to the borough (*, BNCF);</li> <li>• Support a borough wide Grassland Strategy to provide a framework for focused action and responsibilities as outlined in the Berkshire Grassland Habitat Action Plan (*, BNCF);</li> <li>• Encourage appropriate management of this habitat through agri-environment schemes or/and the production of Whole Farm Conservation Plans and Farm Biodiversity Action Plans by FWAG and ADAS (*);</li> <li>• Establish initiatives for co-ordinated action by landowners as well as local authorities for restoration and management of key areas of common land, and other designated grassland areas (*);</li> <li>• Lobby for measures to control the further loss or conversion of permanent pasture to other agricultural uses (*);</li> <li>• Promote the take up of enhanced agri-environment grants which are tailored to meet specific requirements in respect of the management of unimproved permanent pasture; grants to focus on encouraging increase of areas of permanent pasture, and the control of overgrazing and undergrazing (*);</li> <li>• Seek to control or limit access to protected areas of permanent pasture and unimproved grassland (*);</li> <li>• Promotion, through guidance and grant support, wider use of buffer areas to further protect priority areas of unimproved grassland, to include all statutory designated sites (*, LWT).</li> </ul>

Principal Elements	Principal Threats	Areas for Action and Identification of Key Local Level Stakeholders (in brackets)
<p>Remnant historic landscapes; and archaeological sites and their setting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of historic features due to a lack of understanding of their significance within the wider landscape;</li> <li>• Isolation of individual monuments that form part of a wider historic landscape;</li> <li>• Inappropriate management and use of sites, and their wider setting;</li> <li>• Deep ploughing affecting upstanding features, surface features such as crop marks and ridge and furrow, and buried archaeology;</li> <li>• Conversion and loss of permanent pasture which protects surface features such as ridge and furrow;</li> <li>• Erosion and damage arising from visitor pressure;</li> <li>• Potential damage of features within existing and new woodlands arising from root damage, establishment and long term management operations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to improve present understanding of the Royal Borough as an historic landscape through a borough wide historic character assessment (*);</li> <li>• Dissemination of information and interpretation on the historic landscape, with specific guidance for landowners and land managers (*);</li> <li>• Promote and support agri-environment schemes tailored to meet specific requirements in respect of the appropriate management of the archaeological and historic resource (*);</li> <li>• Seek to prevent deep ploughing in areas of archaeological sensitivity and potential (*);</li> <li>• Seek to control further loss of, or conversion of permanent pasture to other agricultural uses (*, BNCF);</li> <li>• Seek to control or limit access to protected sites;</li> <li>• Seek to improve wider setting and landscape context of monuments, and their interrelationship (*);</li> <li>• Seek to prevent planting of woodland on known archaeological sites and historic landscapes;</li> <li>• Undertake a comprehensive photographic record to monitor existing and changing resource (LIG, PC).</li> </ul>

Principal Elements	Principal Threats	Areas for Action and Identification of Key Local Level Stakeholders (in brackets)
<p>Historic designed landscapes (C.17-19th Century);</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inappropriate building re use resulting in insensitive re-use/development and management of historic and loss of historic integrity of 'designed' landscape features;</li> <li>• Inappropriate management of the wider setting and loss of features that contribute to historic parkland character;</li> <li>• Decline or dereliction of boundary features and elements;</li> <li>• Inappropriate management, and potential decline, of woodlands that form an essential component of the wider setting and character of the historic designed landscapes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote wider understanding of, and access to, grants in respect of the appropriate management of features within historic designed landscapes (*, LIG);</li> <li>• Improve understanding of the historic and designed landscapes within the Borough and their contribution to the wider landscape character (*, LIG);</li> <li>• Seek to maintain strict development control to ensure that new developments or changes of use within historic designed landscapes are compatible with their form, design concept and integrity (*).</li> </ul>
<p>Vernacular buildings and their setting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inappropriate extensions to older historic properties;</li> <li>• Use of inappropriate materials, suburban styles and detailing in new buildings, and in repair and restoration schemes;</li> <li>• Infill and loss of the spaces between buildings affecting the historic and visual interrelationship of buildings;</li> <li>• Inappropriate use of soft and hard landscape materials within the context and setting of buildings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to improve understanding of the historic vernacular of the borough, the built environment and settlement setting (*, LIG);</li> <li>• Encourage the undertaking of Village Design Statements, preferably with SPG status, to engender local understanding and commitment to appropriate built form (*, LIG);</li> <li>• Clarify availability of sources of traditional building materials (*);</li> <li>• Maintain strict development control to ensure compatibility with local materials, vernacular styles, architectural detailing and construction methods, and the re-use of existing stone and brick, where suitable (*);</li> <li>• Ensure wider understanding of, and access to, grants (*);</li> <li>• Undertake a comprehensive photographic record to monitor existing and changing resource (LIG, PC).</li> </ul>

Principal Elements	Principal Threats	Areas for Action and Identification of Key Local Level Stakeholders (in brackets)
<p>Settlement patterns and relationship to landscape</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inappropriate village extensions impacting on village morphology and interrelationship of settlements to surrounding landscape elements;</li> <li>• Inappropriate edge of town development impacting on the setting of historic settlements and their traditional interrelationship to the surrounding landscape;</li> <li>• Improvements to, and standardisation of, rural roads linking settlements impacting on historic patterns of movement between settlements, and their local character.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve present understanding of the general pattern of settlements, with regard to their form and relationship to landscape and landscape elements (*).</li> <li>• Undertake townscape assessments of key excluded areas to provide a district level framework for localised development capacity studies (*);</li> <li>• Encourage the undertaking of Village Design Statements to engender local understanding and commitment to appropriate settlement form (LIG, PC);</li> <li>• Maintain strict development control to ensure that new development is sympathetic to the wider pattern of settlement morphology (*).</li> </ul>

## 4.3 ESTATE PARKLAND

### 1a Windsor Castle

#### 4.3.1 Key features and attributes of the landscape to Conserve and Enhance

- **Historic buildings** of great architectural interest and cultural significance are also of unrivalled historic and archaeological importance.
- **Unique historic designed landscape** including pleasure gardens which are important in providing the landscape setting for Windsor Castle as well as being of historic and cultural heritage value in their own right (the extent of which is included in the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens).
- **Unified and exhilarating qualities** which are particularly important due to the 'uniqueness' of the built and natural environment.
- **A strong sense of historical continuity/Royal patronage** is apparent throughout this landscape. The common vocabulary of landscape features and management regimes consistently reaffirms the controlling role that the Crown Estate has traditionally had within the locality, and continues to have, on this landscape and its constitute elements.
- **Stunning views of Windsor Castle** raised on a prominent chalk outcrop above the historic town of Windsor can be viewed from many miles around, views of which are central to the localities unique 'sense of place'.
- **Parkland trees** (some of which are veteran trees and therefore of great historical, cultural and ecological value) are prominent and important mature features within the landscape either forming striking drives and treed avenues that traverse the landscape and frame views of Windsor Castle or stand majestically in open parkland.
- **19th century gatehouses and lodges** with a common architectural style are important as visual markers within the landscape which indicate the extent of Crown control within the locality as well as having the principal role of controlling access.
- **Estate stone boundary walls** which are important in visually defining the extent of the immediate setting to Windsor Castle in the landscape and controlling views (as well as access into the estate). They are also important historic and cultural features in their own right.

### **Landscape Condition**

- 4.3.2 The condition of the key features and attributes of this landscape is probably unrivalled. This is a unique historic landscape type whose extent is owned and managed by the Crown Estate. It is not therefore subject to most of the forces for change that are apparent across the rest of the Royal Borough and as such remains untouched by modern development pressures. That said the landscapes proximity to Windsor and Old Windsor makes it vulnerable to indirect impacts that modern development might have on the visual context of the landscape and its relationship with the town. More minor changes, with a potential to accumulatively negatively impact the character in the longer term, include erosion caused by high visitor numbers, signage and litter. However, in overall terms this landscape is considered to be largely unchanged in recent times and therefore landscape condition is considered to be **excellent**.

### **Strength of Landscape Character**

- 4.3.3 This landscape has many mature landscape and built features, it has also enjoyed continuous 'stewardship' from the Crown Estate since the 12th century. It subsequently has a very **strong** sense of history and strength of character.

### **Landscape Capacity**

- 4.3.4 This historic landscape would be highly sensitive to change because of the extent of important natural and built features and elements within it, and the visual prominence of the area within the locality as well as within the nation's collective 'sense' - the very great importance of this landscape in terms of its nationally important cultural, historical and ecological assets, would render it entirely unsuitable as a location for any form of development, even that which is very minor. Landscape capacity is therefore **low**.

4.3.5

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
<p>Incremental spread of tourist related development</p> <p>Increasing visitor activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Damage and disturbance to valuable habitats and species</li> <li>• Loss of natural and built heritage features</li> <li>• Decline in visual quality and loss of unintentional majestic character</li> <li>• Gradual erosion of distinctive character of the landscape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to conserve internationally, nationally and locally important habitats and species</li> <li>• Seek to preserve the integrity and setting of natural and built features</li> <li>• Seek to retain the unified and majestic character of the locality</li> <li>• Seek to conserve and enhance the distinctive character of the Castle area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments</li> <li>• Extent of historic gardens included with the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens</li> </ul>	<p>LA/CE/EH/LIG</p>
<p>Climate change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of habitat and changes to species composition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide habitat 'buffer zones' to allow for habitat 'shift'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor habitat extent and composition for signs of change</li> <li>• Number of veteran trees</li> </ul>	<p>LA/CE/EN/BTCVLWT</p>





## 4.4 OPEN PARKLAND

### 2a Windsor Great Park (North)

#### 4.4.1 Key features and attributes of the landscape to Conserve and Enhance

- **The historic designed landscape** of Windsor Great Park which is important in providing the wider landscape setting for Windsor Castle as well as being of historic and cultural heritage value in its own right (the extent of which is included in the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens).
- **A strong sense of historical continuity/Royal patronage** is apparent throughout this landscape. The common vocabulary of landscape features and management regimes consistently reaffirms the controlling role that the Crown Estate has traditionally had, and continues to have, on this landscape and its constitute elements.
- **Relatively large and simple landscape** which clearly contrasts with, and is different in character from, other landscapes within the Royal Borough. The strong pattern of expansive grassland areas and parkland trees, and a lack of boundaries is unique and exhilarating to local residents and tourists alike.
- **Mature oaks**, some of which are veteran trees and therefore of ecological, cultural, historical as well as aesthetic importance. These features enrich the landscape adding a historic dimension to character.
- **Open parkland** which is important for providing a setting both for the Castle and for formal and informal recreation events, from cycling, walking and riding to large 'jamborees' and festivals.
- **Permanent improved and unimproved pasture** which is ecologically rich and relatively rare as a habitat reserve in the borough.
- **The Rides and Avenues**, particular The Long Walk, traverse the parkland forming striking landscape features which direct views and movement between Windsor Castle and the wider parkland areas (park proper).
- **Stunning near and long distance views of Windsor Castle** raised on a prominent chalk outcrop above the historic town of Windsor can be viewed, sometimes framed by treed avenues, from many miles around; views of which are central to the localities 'sense of place'.

### **Landscape Condition**

- 4.4.2 The condition of the key features and attributes of this landscape is excellent. This is a unique historic landscape type whose extent is owned and managed by the Crown Estate. It is not therefore subject to most of the forces for change that are apparent across the rest of the Royal Borough, and as such remains untouched by modern development pressures. That said the landscapes proximity to Windsor makes it vulnerable to indirect impacts that modern development in the town might have on the visual context of the open parkland landscape and its relationship with the settlement. More minor changes, with a potential to accumulatively negatively impact the character in the longer term, include erosion caused by high visitor numbers, signage and litter. However, in overall terms this landscape is considered to be largely unchanged in recent times and therefore landscape condition is considered to be **excellent**.

### **Strength of Landscape Character**

- 4.4.3 This landscape has many mature natural and built features, it has also enjoyed continuous 'stewardship' from the Crown Estate since the 12th century. It subsequently has a very **strong** sense of history and strength of character.

### **Landscape Capacity**

- 4.4.4 This historic landscape would be highly sensitive to change because of the extent of important natural and built features and elements within it, and the open character of the parkland. The very great importance of this landscape in terms of its nationally important cultural, historical and ecological assets would render it entirely unsuitable as a location for any form of development, even that which is very minor. Landscape capacity is therefore **low**.

4.4.5

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
<p>Incremental spread of tourist related development</p> <p>Increasing visitor activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Damage and disturbance to valuable habitats and species</li> <li>• Loss of natural and built heritage features</li> <li>• Decline in visual quality and loss of open parkland character</li> <li>• Gradual erosion of distinctive character of the landscape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to conserve internationally, nationally and locally important habitats and species</li> <li>• Seek to preserve the integrity and setting of natural and built features</li> <li>• Seek to retain the open parkland character of the locality</li> <li>• Seek to conserve and enhance the distinctive character of the Great Park area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area of statutory and non-statutory designated sites</li> <li>• Number of Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments</li> </ul>	<p>LA/EH/LIG/LWT</p>
<p>Climate change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of habitat and changes to species composition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide habitat 'buffer zones' to allow for habitat 'shift'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor habitat extent and composition for signs of change</li> <li>• Number of veteran trees</li> </ul>	<p>LA/EN/LWT</p>



## 4.5 FARMED PARKLAND

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

### 4.5.1 Key features and attributes of the landscape to Conserve and Enhance

- **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.
- Ornamental ponds and avenues are **remnants of the c17th century landscaped parkland**.
- It is a **rich working agricultural landscape** which would traditionally have had a central role in supporting the Castle population's needs. Its farmed character is important to the perceived (if not actual) link between the Castle and its hinterland.
- **The diverse, rural and remote character** of this medium to large scaled landscape is important to the wider setting of the Castle and its designed landscape.
- **Deciduous woodland copses and belts**, some 'ancient' and therefore with origins in the 12th century Windsor Forest deer park which extended across East Berkshire at that time, and are important because they contain ecologically important habitat and also because they are strong historic features visible in the landscape today. These woodlands create wooded horizons and enclosed landscapes within their locality.
- **Mature parkland and field oaks**, some of which are veteran trees and therefore of ecological, cultural, historical as well as aesthetic importance. These features enrich the landscape adding a historic dimension to character.
- **Long and medium distance views across the predominately undulating landscape** which are experienced by users on roadways and footpaths within the locality are important to visual character of the type.
- **A strong sense of Royal patronage** is apparent throughout this landscape. The common vocabulary of landscape features and management regimes often reaffirms the controlling role that the Crown Estate has traditionally had, and continues to have, on this landscape and its constitute elements.
- **Absence of settlement with the exception of traditionally styled farm houses and gatehouses** which are important historic features which contribute to the visual character of the area.

- **Field boundaries**, of varying condition, which are important for defining field extents as well as being of ecological and historic importance.
- **Grasslands, woodland and wetlands** which are ecological rich.

### **Landscape Condition**

- 4.5.2 The condition of the key features and attributes of this landscape varies from excellent to declining. Much of this landscape type is owned by the Crown Estate. Those areas on the periphery of the Great Park which are not within Crown ownership, are often found to show signs of neglect or poor management (such as absence of boundary or woodland management). The influence of the Crown Estate therefore appears to diminishes the further the landscape is from the estate core.
- 4.5.3 The farmland under crown ownership will be subject to the forces for change apparent in the wider agricultural landscape of the Royal Borough although there are clearly restrictions on operations permitted within areas of woodland which fall within the SSSI and SAC statutory designations. Other forces for change, with the exception of climate change, would not generally be applicable to this landscape type. That said the landscapes proximity to Windsor and adjacent landscape types, and the modern landuses within areas no longer under Crown control, make it vulnerable to indirect impacts that modern development within those areas might have on the visual context of the farmed parkland, and in the longer term erode character. More minor changes, also with a potential to incrementally negatively impact the character in the longer term, include erosion caused by high visitor numbers, parking provision, signage and litter. However, in overall terms this landscape is considered to be largely intact and therefore landscape condition is considered to be **excellent**.

### **Strength of Landscape Character**

- 4.5.4 This landscape has many mature natural and built features, it has also largely enjoyed continuous 'stewardship' from the Crown Estate since the 12th century. It subsequently has a very **strong** sense of history and strength of character.

### **Landscape Capacity**

- 4.5.5 This historic landscape would be highly sensitive to change because of the extent of important natural and built features and elements within it. The very great importance of this landscape in terms of its nationally important cultural, historical and ecological assets would render it entirely unsuitable as a location for any form of development, even that which is very minor. Landscape capacity is therefore **low**.

4.5.6

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
<p>On-going impact of intensive agriculture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decline in traditional farming techniques resulting in a decline in species rich habitats such as meadows and hedgerows</li> <li>Decline of traditional land drainage practices specifically</li> <li>Loss of hedgerows or hedgerow trees resulting in a decline in the loss of historically important landscape features and decline of landscape pattern</li> <li>Decline in the visual amenity of the landscape through the introduction of inappropriate built features such as 'agrisheds'</li> <li>Loss of sense of 'Royal Patronage'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage traditional farming techniques amongst landowners to retain/reinstate key traditional features generally such as ditches and hedgerows.</li> <li>Promote the reinstatement of hedgerows giving priority to those close to settlements, roads and footpaths</li> <li>Resist development which results in the further loss/fragmentation of hedgerows or hedgerow trees.</li> <li>Conserve existing species rich habitats and promote the reintroduction of these habitats where lost or reduced in scale.</li> <li>Promote the use of locally appropriate species within woodlands, hedgerows and parklands.</li> <li>Promote the restoration of traditional estate boundary features - such as parkland fencing with particular regard to the 'estate' style, including materials and construction methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of species rich habitats managed using traditional techniques</li> <li>Length of hedgerows</li> <li>Monitor take up of agri-environment grant schemes</li> </ul>	<p>FWAG/NFU/CLA/LWT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good Practice guidance</li> <li>Promotion of agri-environment grant schemes</li> </ul>

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
<p>Incremental spread of tourist related development</p> <p>Increasing visitor activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Damage and disturbance to valuable woodland and grassland habitats</li> <li>• Loss and erosion of natural and built heritage features</li> <li>• Decline in visual quality and loss of diverse and remote, rural character</li> <li>• Gradual erosion of distinctive character of the landscape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the 'zoning' of visitor activities to avoid damage to sensitive areas such as Snow Hill</li> <li>• Seek to preserve the integrity and setting of natural and built historic features.</li> <li>• Seek to retain the diverse and remote rural character of the locality</li> <li>• Seek to conserve and enhance the distinctive character of the Great Park area</li> <li>• Resist development which would result in the loss of views across the landscape from surrounding routeways.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area of statutory and non-statutory designated sites</li> <li>• Number of Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments</li> </ul>	<p>LA/EH/EN/LW/T/LIG</p>
<p>Pressure for further settlement</p>	<p>'Loss of rural unsettled' and remote character</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resist pressure for development which would compromise the 'unsettled' character of this landscape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of new dwellings in the LCT</li> </ul>	<p>LA/EH/CE</p>
<p>Climate change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of habitat and changes to species composition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide habitat 'buffer zones' to allow for habitat 'shift'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor habitat extent and composition for signs of change</li> <li>• Number of veteran trees</li> </ul>	<p>LA/EN/BTC/V/LWT</p>



## 4.6 WOODED PARKLAND

### 4a Windsor Forest

#### 4.6.1 Key features and attributes of the landscape to Conserve and Enhance

- **Continuous mature woodland** with origins in the ancient forest of Windsor deer park and therefore of ecological, cultural, historical as well as aesthetic importance. These woodlands form continuous swathes of woodland over the undulating landform which enclose views and create wooded horizons within adjacent landscapes.
- **Ancient pollarded veteran trees** of great ecological, cultural, historical as well as aesthetic value.
- **Mixed coniferous and deciduous woodland** of great ecological and historical significance with some areas managed for commercial purposes.
- **A strong sense of Royal patronage** is apparent throughout this landscape. The common vocabulary of landscape features and management regimes often reaffirms the controlling role that the Crown Estate has traditionally had, and continues to have, on this landscape and its constitute elements.
- **Isolated gatehouses and lodges** which are often historically important features as well as focal features to woodland walks.

#### Landscape Condition

4.6.2 The condition of the key features and attributes of this landscape is **excellent**. This is a unique historic landscape type whose extent is owned and managed by the Crown Estate. It is not therefore subject to most of the forces for change that are apparent across the rest of the Royal Borough, and as such remains untouched by modern development pressures.

#### Strength of Landscape Character

4.6.3 This woodland landscape is mature and largely 'untouched' by modern forces for change with the exception of those relating to woodland management practices. It subsequently has a very **strong** sense of history and strength of character.

### **Landscape Capacity**

- 4.6.4 This historic landscape would be highly sensitive to change because of the extent of the natural woodland resource within it. The very great importance of this landscape in terms of its nationally important cultural, historical and ecological woodland assets would render it entirely unsuitable as a location for any farm development, even that which is very minor. Landscape capacity is therefore **low**.

4.6.5

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
<p>Incremental spread of tourist related development</p> <p>Increasing visitor activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Damage and disturbance to valuable habitats and species</li> <li>• Loss of natural and built heritage features</li> <li>• Decline in visual quality and loss of 'wild wood' character</li> <li>• Gradual erosion of distinctive character of the landscape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to conserve internationally, nationally and locally important habitats and species</li> <li>• Seek to preserve the integrity and setting of natural and built features</li> <li>• Seek to retain the 'wild wood' character of the locality</li> <li>• Seek to conserve and enhance the distinctive character of the Great Park area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area of statutory and non-statutory designated sites</li> <li>• Number of Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments</li> <li>• Number of veteran trees</li> </ul>	<p>LA/EN/LWT</p>
<p>Loss of historic/archaeological features from deep ploughing and planting operations, commercial woodland planting and management activities</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to preserve historic woodland features such as the 'park pale' or ridge and furrow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor SAM's within Great Park</li> <li>• Length of 'park pale' within Great Park area</li> </ul>	<p>LA/EH/LIG</p>
<p>Climate change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of habitat and changes to species composition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide habitat 'buffer zones' to allow for habitat 'shift'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor habitat extent and composition for signs of change</li> <li>• Number of veteran trees</li> </ul>	<p>LA/EN/LWT</p>



## 4.7 OPEN CHALK FARMLAND

### 5a Littlewick Green

#### 4.7.1 Key features and attributes of the landscape to Conserve and Enhance

- **Flat and open landscape** which is sometimes expansive.
- **Simple rural arable landscape** with a remote, expansive feel which contrasts markedly within the more settled and busy character of adjacent landscapes.
- **Panoramic long distance views** with wooded horizons created by woodland in adjacent landscapes are central to the character of this landscape.
- **Isolated farmsteads** built in the traditional vernacular style of red brick and flint and therefore of cultural, historical as well as aesthetic value as landscape features.
- **Minor roadways** running north to south, which are narrow, often straight and lined with grass verges and hedgerows.
- **Remnant hedgerows and hedgerow** trees which are important vertical landscape features within the flat and open landscape which also have ecological and historic value. They indicate the historic boundaries and pattern of the landscape prior to the loss of the hedgerow resource.

#### Landscape Condition

4.7.2 This landscape has a simple and generally intact rural character although modern intensive farming practice has resulted in the loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees and creation of large scale fields in recent times. There are few detracting features within this mature rural landscape however those areas nearest Maidenhead suffer localised blight from the influences of 'edge of town' land uses such as business park development and residential ribbon development. The conversion to residential use of barns is also apparent within some farmsteads and the introduction of inappropriate 'garden' tree species. The railway corridor which dissects this landscape has only a localised impact on character, as it is in cutting and views are largely screened by deciduous vegetation for much of the year. Erosion and litter is apparent along some footpaths. Landscape condition overall is considered to be **good - declining**.

### **Strength of Landscape Character**

- 4.7.3 This historic rural landscape has a strong composition of landscape features and elements however 'pattern' and scale has been lost recently due to hedge removal. It is an open, large scale landscape which is perceptually 'rural' and remote in character despite its proximity to Maidenhead. Overall character is considered to be **moderate**.

### **Landscape Capacity**

- 4.7.4 The generally flat and large scaled character of this type combined with the absence of hedgerows and hedgerow trees to enclose views make this landscape highly sensitive to changes. The rural and remote character would also contribute to its sensitivity to increases in traffic, noise and lighting associated with even minor increases in rural activity, through farm diversification for example. Overall capacity for change is **low**.

4.7.5

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
<p>On-going impact of intensive agriculture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decline in traditional farming techniques resulting in a decline in species rich habitats such as meadows and hedgerows</li> <li>Loss of hedgerows or hedgerow trees resulting in a decline in the loss of historically important landscape features and decline of landscape pattern</li> <li>Decline in the visual amenity of the landscape through the introduction of inappropriate built features such as 'agrisheds'</li> <li>Decline of traditional land drainage practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage traditional farming techniques amongst landowners to retain key features</li> <li>Promote the restoration of hedgerows giving priority to those close to settlements, roads and footpaths</li> <li>Resist development which results in the further loss or fragmentation of remnant hedgerows or hedgerow trees</li> <li>Promote the use of locally appropriate species within new hedgerows and tree planting</li> <li>Promote the restoration of traditional boundary features and routeways with particular regard to their local styles, materials and construction methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of species rich habitats managed using traditional techniques</li> <li>Length of hedgerows</li> <li>Monitor take up of agri-environment grant schemes</li> </ul>	<p>LA/FWAG/NFU/CLA/LWT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good Practice guidance</li> <li>Promotion of agri-environment grant schemes</li> </ul>
<p>Pressure for additional residential development illustrated by ribbon development along roadways</p> <p>Inappropriate new development</p> <p>Pressure for edge of town development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Erosion of unsettled character of landscape and network of minor roadways between Burchett Green and Waltham</li> <li>Illumination of existing dark skies</li> <li>Increase in noise and 'busyness'</li> <li>Loss of quiet rural character</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve the distinctive character of isolated farmsteads and the rural road network, particularly the strong pattern created by narrow lanes between and linking smallholdings</li> <li>Resist new development which would be highly visible in the open chalk landscape or limit characteristic panorama views across it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number and distribution of new dwellings within Green Belt</li> </ul>	<p>LA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Plan Policies</li> <li>Monitoring and mapping settlement</li> <li>Photographic record of locality</li> </ul>

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve and restore traditional boundary features with particular regard to local styles, materials and construction methods</li> <li>Conserve existing dark skies</li> </ul>		
Expansion of individual farmsteads and dilution of vernacular form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Erosion of distinctive architectural form and character of farmsteads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve historic buildings, their structures and setting within farmsteads with particular regard to the proportion and scale between elements</li> <li>Conserve and restore traditional boundary features with particular regard to their local styles, materials and construction methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of Listed Buildings and associated structures</li> </ul>	<p><i>LA/EH/PC/LIG</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design Guidance</li> <li>Monitor and map settlement</li> <li>Photographic record of locality</li> </ul>
Piecemeal loss of urban fringe land through urban expansion and edge of town 'infill'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of discrete urban/rural edge due to use of suburbanising of features such as lighting and loss of vegetation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resist development on the western edge of Maidenhead which adversely affects the rural character of the landscape</li> </ul>		
Introduction of inappropriate garden species into rural scene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further erosion of distinctive character of farmsteads</li> <li>Suburbanisation of landscape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve and restore traditional boundary features with particular regard to locally appropriate species selection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Length and composition of native hedgerow vegetation</li> </ul>	<p><i>LA/LWT</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Design Guidance</i></li> </ul>



## 4.8 OPEN CLAY FARMLAND

### 6a Braywoodside

#### 4.8.1 Key features and attributes of the landscape to Conserve and Enhance

- **Flat to gently undulating landscape** with a strong rural character.
- **Hedgerows and isolated mature hedgerow trees** which are of ecological and historical value as well as aesthetic importance.
- **Woodland copses and farm woodlands** of ancient origin which both contain ecologically important habitat and are important historic features visible in the landscape. These woodlands create enclosed landscapes within their locality.
- **Isolated farmsteads and cottages** with vernacular styles of red brick and timber framed barns with brick infill are important historic features which display traditional building materials and styles.
- **Linear rural roadways** with grass verges, ditches and hedgerows which run in a predominately east - west, the linear nature of the roadways and rectilinear field pattern suggesting they were laid out during the time of the Parliamentary enclosures, and are therefore historic landscape features.
- **North - south linear trackways** which are important recreation routes, as well as wildlife corridors, which provide access to the wider agrarian landscape and have a remote and rural character. These routeways contrast with the busy grass verged roadways which link settlements in an east-west direction.
- **Drainage ditches and ponds** which are historically important land drainage features as well as of potential ecological value.

#### Landscape Condition

- 4.8.2 This landscape has a simple and relatively intact rural character although there are signs of decline. There are few detracting features (such as major infrastructure or settlement) however those areas nearest Maidenhead and Bray have features which indicate their proximity to these areas, such as views of overhead transmission lines, increased signage and busy intermittently noisy roadways. Across the wider area there are indications that traditional land management practices are declining, such as the loss of hedgerows which has had a substantial impact on the scale of the landscape and 'isolation' of remaining hedgerow trees (now field trees). The occurrence of 'edge of town' land uses such as golf courses also detracts from rural character of the locality. Overall landscape condition is considered to be **good - declining**.

### **Strength of Landscape Character**

- 4.8.3 This rural landscape has a strong simple pattern of landscape features and elements such as mature farm woodlands, regular rectangular field systems with linear roadways. It is a large scale landscape which is perceptually settled and managed in character. Overall character is considered to be **strong**.

### **Landscape Capacity**

- 4.8.4 The gently undulating, large scaled and open character of this landscape, the absence of major infrastructure or settlement, and the occurrence of long distance views where hedgerows are missing or landform allows, make it vulnerable change. Overall capacity for change is **low**.

4.8.5

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
<p>On-going impact of intensive agriculture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decline in traditional farming techniques resulting in a decline in species rich habitats such as woodlands and hedgerows</li> <li>Loss of hedgerows or hedgerow trees resulting in a decline in the loss of historically important landscape features and decline of landscape pattern</li> <li>Decline in the visual amenity of the landscape through the introduction of inappropriate built features such as 'agrisheds'</li> <li>Decline of traditional land drainage practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage traditional farming techniques amongst landowners to retain key features</li> <li>Promote the restoration of hedgerows giving priority to those close to settlement, roads and footpaths</li> <li>Conserve existing species rich habitats</li> <li>Promote the use of locally appropriate species</li> <li>Promote the restoration of traditional boundary features and routeways with particular regard to their local styles, materials and construction methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of species rich habitats managed using traditional techniques</li> <li>Length of hedgerows</li> <li>Monitor take up of agri-environment grant schemes</li> <li>Area of ancient woodland</li> </ul>	<p>LA/FWAG/NFU/CLA/LWT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good Practice guidance</li> <li>Promotion of agri-environment grant schemes</li> </ul>
<p>Pressure to upgrade rural road network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of road verges and introduction of 'suburbanising' and 'standardising' features such as signage and lighting</li> <li>Increase in noise and speed of vehicles resulting in loss of routeways for use by other users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve rural road network and resist pressures to upgrade</li> <li>Promote use by more sustainable users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extent of 'Quiet Lanes'</li> </ul>	<p>LA/Sustrans/CPRE/LIG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Plan policies</li> </ul>

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
<p>Pressure for additional residential development illustrated by ribbon development along roadways</p> <p>Inappropriate new development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Erosion of distinctive dispersed settlement character and network of narrow lanes between settlement</li> <li>• Illumination of existing dark skies</li> <li>• Increase in noise and 'busyness'</li> <li>• Loss of quiet rural character</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve the distinctive dispersed character of isolated farmsteads and rural roadways, particularly the strong pattern created by narrow roadways and tracks</li> <li>• Conserve and restore traditional boundary features with particular regard to local styles, materials and construction methods</li> <li>• Conserve existing dark skies</li> <li>• Resist development which results in the loss of hedgerows, hedgerow trees or woodland</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and distribution of new dwellings within Green Belt</li> </ul>	<p>LA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Plan Policies</li> <li>• Monitoring and mapping settlement</li> <li>• Photographic record of locality</li> </ul>

## 4.9 WOODED CLAY FARMLAND

### 7a Shurlock Row

#### 4.9.1 Key features and attributes of the landscape to Conserve and Enhance

- **Flat - gently undulating** landscape of large open rectilinear fields, mainly of arable crops.
- **Framework of mixed woodland** which contains farmland and gives the locality a wooded context. The coniferous woodland areas particularly contribute to the textural diversity seen in the landscape which is emphasised in winter months.
- **Extensive areas of mature ancient woodland** with origins in the medieval hunting forest of Windsor and therefore of great historic, cultural and ecological value as well as being important mature landscape features.
- **Dispersed rural settlement** of traditional farmsteads and manor houses built in vernacular building styles using red brick, timber and weatherboard details. They are important historic as well as landscape features which contribute significantly to the rich, locally distinct character of this landscape.
- **Rural lanes** interlinking farmsteads which are narrow and lined with grass verges, ditches and hedgerows.
- **Ditches and fishponds** which are important historic landscape features as well as of potential ecological interest.

#### Landscape Condition

- 4.9.2 The previous impact of the M4 motorway corridor, overhead transmission lines and also telecommunication masts is reduced by the wooded character of the landscape which serves to integrate these discordant elements within their locality and screen views to them. The assimilation of the road corridor into the rural scene is assisted by the absence of lighting and signage along this section. More recent pressures for landscape change are influencing character, such as the extension of farmsteads to include inappropriately designed buildings, the loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees, and the expansion of non-agricultural landuses such as golfcourses. Landscape change from localised gravel extraction is also apparent at Felix Farm Trout Fishery. However, the absence of extensive settlement and busy roadways (beyond the M4) combined with extensive areas of rich arable farmland makes it a relatively intact landscape in overall terms. Landscape condition overall is therefore considered to be **good - declining**.

### **Strength of Landscape Character**

- 4.9.3 This rural landscape has a strong pattern of mature landscape features and elements such as mature woodlands and traditional farmsteads built in vernacular styles interconnected by characterful rural lanes. It is an interesting landscape which is perceptually 'rural' in character despite its proximity to Maidenhead. Recent development, in the form of the M4 motorway corridor has disrupted this pattern and therefore overall character is considered to be **moderate**.

### **Landscape Capacity**

- 4.9.4 The wooded character of this type would allow this landscape to accommodate localised changes with out detriment to its overall character, as demonstrated by the accommodation of telecommunication masts at Beenhams Heath. However the perceived quietness of this landscape and the great ecological and historical value of its woodland would make it sensitive to development, generally, and the increases in traffic, noise and lighting associated with even minor increases in rural activity, through farm diversification for example. Overall capacity for change is **low**.

4.9.5

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
<p>Pressure for telecommunication masts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of visual amenity by the introduction of visually discordant features above and within woodland</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilise existing masts in preference to the erection of new masts</li> <li>Oppose the erection of new masts where these would adversely affect views from the wider landscape</li> <li>Ensure sympathetic siting and design of new features if introduction is necessary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of new telecommunication masts</li> </ul>	<p>LA/LIG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Plan policies</li> </ul>
<p>Expansion of individual farmsteads and dilution of vernacular form</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Erosion of distinctive architectural form and character of farmsteads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve historic buildings their structures and setting within farmsteads with particular regard to the proportion and scale between elements</li> <li>Conserve and restore traditional boundary features with particular regard to their local styles, materials and construction methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of Listed Buildings and associated structures</li> </ul>	<p>LA/EH /PC/LIG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design guidance</li> <li>Monitor and map settlement expansion</li> <li>Photographic record of locality</li> </ul>

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
<p>Decline in the agricultural sector generally leading to loss of farm viability and thus, an increase in farm diversification, hobby farmers and landuse changes (for example to horsicultural uses) at settlement edges leading to a decrease in rural intactness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fragmentation of land holdings primarily for horsicultural uses, leading to loss of landscape structure, disparate sometimes neglected boundary treatments and an increased perception of decline/neglect around settlements fringes</li> <li>Features typical of 'horsiculture' land uses such as jumps, fences and poached fields introduced to the landscape</li> <li>Decline in traditional farming techniques resulting in a decline in species rich meadows</li> <li>Increases in rural traffic associated with farm diversification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the restoration of hedgerows giving priority to those close to settlements, roads and footpaths should be regarded as a priority</li> <li>Conserve existing species rich meadows</li> <li>Encourage traditional farming techniques amongst hobby farmers and other small land holders so management is sensitive to existing landscape character by retaining features of the landscape such as hedgerows</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of species rich grassland managed using traditional techniques</li> <li>Length of hedgerows</li> <li>Monitor take up of agri-environment grant schemes</li> </ul>	<p>LA/FWAG/NFU/CLAWT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Plan policies</li> <li>Good Practice guidance</li> <li>Promotion of agri-environment grant schemes</li> </ul>
<p>Continuing impact of extractive and waste industries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of land to aggregate extraction with landfill afteruse</li> <li>Visual, noise and dust impact of quarry traffic</li> <li>Introduction of new waste management features (such as recycling centres) into the landscape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek to conserve key landscape features within areas of extraction and reinstate landscape elements following restoration of worked sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of Permitted Rights</li> </ul>	<p>LA</p>



#### 4.10 SETTLED FARMED SANDS AND CLAYS

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

##### 4.10.1 Key features and attributes of the landscape to Conserve and Enhance

- **Intermittent open and enclosed character** with some long distance views across the relatively 'wooded' landscape.
- **Mosaic of historic rural villages, farmsteads and manor houses**, which display dispersed and small, loosely clustered - linear settlement patterns (often around village greens) as a result of organic settlement expansion across this lowland landscape over millennia. This rural settlement has a strong vernacular character.
- **Mixed farmland with areas of permanent pasture** which give the landscape a diverse and working agricultural character, and are also, in the case of permanent pasture, an important ecological resource.
- **Remnant woodland areas, copses and farm woodlands of ancient origin** associated with historic manor houses and the Windsor Forest deer park which both contains ecologically important habitat and are important historic features visible in the landscape.
- **Intact hedgerows and hedgerow trees** which follow historic boundary lines and are important historic features which reinforce the rural/traditional character of the mixed agricultural landscape.
- **Historic designed landscapes**, which provide the landscape setting to historic manor houses, with origins in the 17th and 18th century landscape movements.
- **Parkland trees including exotic species**, some of which are veteran trees and therefore of ecological, cultural, historical as well as aesthetic importance. These features enrich the landscape adding a historic dimension to character.
- **Vernacular building styles with red brick, timber frames and weatherboard details** which are important historic features which display traditional vernacular building materials and farms.
- **Red brick boundary walls of manor estates**, which are historic features built using traditional building materials forming the built curtilage to important listed historic buildings.
- **Rural lanes** interlinking villages along the valley floor which are narrow, often straight, lined with grass verges, ditches and hedgerows.

- **Numerous footpaths and bridleways** of recreational and historic importance.
- **Fish ponds** which are features, often associated with the manor houses of medieval origin of historical, cultural and ecological importance.
- **Peaceful rural agricultural landscape** with a settled and managed feel.

### **Landscape Condition**

- 4.10.2 This landscape has a diverse yet generally intact rural character. There are few detracting features within this mature rural landscape however those areas nearest Maidenhead and Bray suffer localised blight from road development, mineral extraction and 'edge of town' uses, and consequently these landscapes show evidence of neglect. The M4 motorway corridor (west of Junction 8/9), which dissects this landscape, has only a localised impact on character due to the low lying nature of the landform and the presence of woodland copses and hedgerows which intercept views, however, at night lighting is apparent associated with the road corridors.
- 4.10.3 Across the wider area there are indications that some traditional land management practices, such as boundary management, are declining and a loss of traditional building patterns and the dilution of vernacular character are apparent within some settlements. The landfill site south of the B3024 is an indication of previous localised landscape change. Modern residential development has resulted in the coalescence of Holyport with Bray and this is a continuing and worrying trend within the landscapes around Bray between Windsor and Maidenhead. Landscape condition overall is considered to be **good - declining**.

### **Strength of Landscape Character**

- 4.10.4 This historic rural landscape has a strong pattern of mature landscape features and elements such as mature farm woodlands and traditional rural villages built in vernacular styles interconnected by characterful lanes. It is an intimate, small scale landscape which is perceptually 'rural' in character despite its proximity to Maidenhead. Recent, predominately residential development has disrupted this pattern and therefore overall character is considered to be **moderate**.

### **Landscape Capacity**

- 4.10.5 The generally flat and small scaled character of fields within this type combined with the presence of hedgerows and hedgerow trees which sometimes enclose views would allow this landscape to accommodate very localised changes with out detriment to its overall character, as demonstrated by the landfill activities associated with Smewins farm. However the perceived quietness of this landscape and rural character make it sensitive to increases in traffic, noise and lighting associated with even minor increases in rural activity, through farm diversification and residential development, for example. Overall capacity for change is **low**.

4.10.6

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
<p>Decline in cattle farming within the locality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of permanent pasture to other, more intensive landuses such as for arable horticulture</li> <li>Resultant decline in species rich meadows</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve existing species rich meadows through management agreements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of species rich grassland managed using traditional techniques</li> <li>Monitor take up of agri-environment grant schemes</li> </ul>	<p>LA/FWAG/NFU/CLA/LWT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good Practice guidance</li> <li>Promotion of agri-environment grant schemes</li> </ul>
<p>Decline in the agricultural sector generally leading to loss of farm viability and thus, an increase in farm diversification, hobby farmers and landuse changes (for example to horticultural uses) which is particularly evident at settlement edges leading to a decrease in rural intactness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fragmentation of land holdings primarily for horticultural uses, leading to loss of landscape structure, disparate sometimes neglected boundary treatments and an increased perception of decline/neglect around settlements fringes</li> <li>Features typical of 'horsiculture' land uses such as jumps, fences and poached fields introduced to the landscape</li> <li>Decline in traditional farming techniques resulting in a decline in species rich meadows</li> <li>Increases in rural traffic associated with farm diversification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the restoration of hedgerows giving priority to those close to settlements, roads and footpaths should be regarded as a priority</li> <li>Conserve existing species rich meadows</li> <li>Encourage traditional farming techniques amongst hobby farmers and other small land holders so management is sensitive to existing landscape character</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of species rich grassland managed using traditional techniques</li> <li>Length of hedgerows</li> <li>Monitor take up of agri-environment grant schemes</li> </ul>	<p>LA/FWAG/NFU/CLA/LWT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Plan policies</li> <li>Good Practice guidance</li> <li>Promotion of agri-environment grant schemes</li> </ul>

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
<p>Decline, neglect and further fragmentation of woodlands, particularly ancient woodlands, enclosure woodlands and game coverts</p> <p>Pressure for additional residential development illustrated by ribbon development along roadways and infilling/expansion of existing scattered settlements.</p> <p>Inappropriate new development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of woodlands as features in the landscape</li> <li>Degradation and loss of woodland habitats, ancient semi natural woodland and wildlife corridors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve, enhance and restore woodlands through effective long term management and replanting</li> <li>Promote traditional woodland management techniques and woodland grant schemes amongst farming and land owning community</li> <li>Encourage establishment of sustainable and multipurpose woodlands through support of new business/ development of markets for woodland products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of deciduous semi ancient natural woodland</li> <li>Monitor take up of woodland grant schemes</li> <li>Area of coppice woodland</li> </ul>	<p>LA/CA/FC/EN/LWT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Forest Initiatives</li> </ul>
<p>Pressure for additional residential development illustrated by ribbon development along roadways and infilling/expansion of existing scattered settlements.</p> <p>Inappropriate new development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Erosion of distinctive dispersed settlement character and network of narrow lanes between settlements</li> <li>Illumination of existing dark skies</li> <li>Increase in noise and 'busyness'</li> <li>Loss of quiet rural character</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve the distinctive dispersed character of the lowland settlements and rural road network, particularly the strong pattern created by narrow, tree lanes between and linking settlements and smallholdings</li> <li>Conserve historic buildings their structures and setting within settlements</li> <li>Conserve and restore traditional boundary features with particular regard to local styles, materials and construction methods</li> <li>Conserve existing dark skies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number and distribution of new dwellings within Green Belt</li> </ul>	<p>LA/EH/PC/LIG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring and mapping village expansion</li> <li>Village Design Statements</li> <li>Photographic record of locality</li> </ul>

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
Expansion of individual dwellings and dilution of vernacular form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Erosion of distinctive architectural form and character within settlements</li> <li>Densification of built elements within plots resulting in changes in the character of the village structure over the long term</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve historic buildings their structures and setting within settlements with particular regard to the proportion and scale between elements</li> <li>Conserve and restore traditional boundary features with particular regard to their local styles, materials and construction methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of Listed Buildings and associated structures</li> </ul>	<p>LA/EH/LIG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design guidance</li> <li>Monitoring and mapping village expansion</li> <li>Village design statements</li> <li>Photographic record of village growth</li> </ul>
Piecemeal loss of urban fringe land through urban expansion and edge of town 'infill'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coalescence (perceived or otherwise) of settlements leading to loss of distinctive settlement character of villages and farmsteads</li> <li>Upgrading of minor roads and lanes associated with new development and introduction of suburbanising features such as mini roundabouts, street lighting and kerbs eroding rural character</li> <li>Increase in noise and 'busyness' within the area and its influence on adjacent areas</li> <li>Loss of quiet rural character</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek to restore degraded urban edges through prioritising these landscapes for the take up of agri-environment (and other) schemes</li> <li>Seek to halt trend of urban edge land uses and development within locality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number and distribution of new dwellings within Green Belt</li> </ul>	<p>LA/EH/PC/LIG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Plan Policies</li> <li>Monitoring and mapping village expansion</li> <li>Village Design Statements</li> <li>Photographic record of village growth</li> <li>Promotion of agri-environment grant schemes</li> </ul>

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
Piecemeal loss of urban fringe land to road development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upgrading of roadways and expansion of existing infrastructure corridors (such as Motorway Service Areas)</li> <li>Increase in noise and 'busyness' within the area and its influence on adjacent areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek to restore land blighted by road development through prioritising these landscapes for the take up of agri-environment (and other) schemes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of Green Belt land</li> </ul>	LA/CA/LIG/LWT
Pressure to upgrade rural road network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of road verges and introduction of 'suburbanising' and 'standardising' features such as signage and lighting</li> <li>Increase in noise and speed of vehicles resulting in loss of routeways for use by other users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve rural road network and resist pressures to upgrade</li> <li>Promote use by more sustainable users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extent of 'quiet lanes'</li> </ul>	LA/Sustrans/RA
Continuing impact of extractive and waste industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of land to aggregate extraction with landfill afteruse</li> <li>Visual, noise and dust impact of quarry traffic</li> <li>Introduction of new waste management features (such as recycling centres) into the landscape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek to conserve key landscape features within areas of extraction and reinstate landscape elements following restoration of worked sites</li> </ul>		LA/LIG/LWT

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
Climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May in time lead to an increase in the severity and frequency of storm surges and flooding along the Cut</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect unstable stream banks to avoid erosion as a result of storm surges through proposals which reflect the natural character of the bankside</li> <li>Realign river defences</li> <li>Conserve the extent of the natural floodplain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor habitats and species in the river for signs of change</li> </ul>	LA/EA/LWT
Increase in security related boundary features such as close-broad fencing and high brick walls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of views, from within settlements, of surrounding countryside</li> <li>'Tunnelling' of views emphasising the roadway as a traffic corridor rather than as an interface for 'village life'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve and restore traditional boundary features with particular regard to local styles, materials and construction methods</li> </ul>		LA/LIG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design guidance</li> </ul>
Farmland/ land holding fragmentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of traditional management practices and neglect of farm boundaries</li> <li>Disintegration of traditional landscape pattern</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote traditional farming management techniques amongst farming and land owning community (particularly an integrated approach to boundary treatments)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor take up of agri-environmental grant schemes</li> </ul>	LA/FWAG/NFU/CLA/LWT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good Practice guidance</li> <li>Promotion of agri-environment grant schemes</li> </ul>





## 4.11 SETTLED WOODED CHALK KNOLLS

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

### 4.11.1 Key features and attributes of the landscape to Conserve and Enhance

- **Dispersed settlement pattern** of loose hamlets within a mosaic of horse paddocks, open farmland and woodland with a strong traditional rural character.
- **Wooded undulating landform of pronounced 'knolls'** which contrast with the areas of open chalkland of adjacent landscape character areas.
- **Vernacular building forms** (including brick and flint and timber framed) which are important historic features built using local traditional materials sourced from the brick factory and clay and chalk quarries of the area, which are no longer worked.
- **Extensive areas of woodland, some of which is of ancient origin**, which provide enclosure and context to historic settlements, and form wooded horizons. They are also of historical, ecological, cultural as well as aesthetic importance as many contain veteran trees. Their irregular 'edges' (evidence of assarting) are also a subtle feature adding variation and depth to the landscape character.
- **Mature trees within rural villages** which are local land marks and are historic, ecological and cultural features of importance.
- **Mixed farmland** with pastureland within the locality of settlement and arable cropping in flatter, more open areas.
- **Village greens and extensive common land** which form essential parts of both the village form within this locality and the wider relationship between the village and its traditional pastoral setting. They are an important recreational resource.
- **Network of rural tracks and lanes** which are often unsurfaced narrow, winding and enclosed by buildings or woodland/trees belts/hedgerows that link the areas of traditional settlement and therefore carry predominately local traffic.
- **Network of footpaths and bridleways** which are of historic and recreational value.
- **Peaceful rural agricultural landscape** with a settled and managed feel.

### Landscape Condition

- 4.11.2 This landscape has a generally intact character. There are few detracting features within this mature rural landscape however those areas nearest Maidenhead are influenced by the suburban character of those areas and the continual pressure to upgrade the road network. The A404 (M), which passes through Maidenhead Thicket within a deep cutting, has only a localised impact on character due to the presence of extensive woodland which intercept views to it. Across the wider area there are indications that some traditional land management practices, such as boundary and tree management, are declining and a loss of traditional settlement pattern including the gradual infilling of land plots and the dilution of vernacular character are apparent within some areas. Most extensive tracts of woodland and key village trees, which are an important ecological and historical resource, are protected through landscape and ecological planning designations and managed by the Woodland Trust or the National Trust. Their condition is therefore relatively good. Landscape condition overall is considered to be **declining**.

### Strength of Landscape Character

- 4.11.3 The strength of this historic landscape's character is variable. The character within areas of settlement is relatively strong with many mature, well maintained built features however the surrounding landscape is sometimes weaker. The decline of traditional land management is apparent in the visible decline of field boundaries, their total loss (resulting in increased field sizes) and a lack of tree management particularly of hedgerow trees and field trees. Rural road improvements have altered the charm of some of the routeways and built development and inappropriate garden style planting influences the character of the common land nearest Maidenhead. Landscape character is considered to be **moderate**.

### Landscape Capacity

- 4.11.4 The undulating and wooded nature of this settled landscape could allow localised change to occur in principal because this change could be accommodated into the under landscape without significant visual or landscape change. However it is considered that the capacity of this landscape is at its limit. Remaining undeveloped space between settlements are important for the retention of the individual character of the hamlets within this landscape type. The historic relationship between the settlements and their common land, and woodland, is also important to their integrity. The perceived attributes of this landscape, that is its rural settled and peaceful character, could also be under threat by the change that further development could bring to the locality, such as increases in rural traffic. Overall capacity for change is **low**.

4.11.5

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
<p>Decline in the agricultural sector generally leading to loss of farm viability and thus farm diversification, an increase in hobby farmers and landuse changes (for example to horsicultural uses)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fragmentation of land holdings primarily for horsicultural uses, leading to loss of landscape structure, disparate boundary treatments and an increased perception of decline/neglect around settlements/fringes</li> <li>Features typical of 'horsiculture' land uses such as jumps, fences introduced to the landscape</li> <li>Decline in traditional farming management resulting in a decline in species rich meadows and hedgerows</li> <li>Increases in rural traffic associated with farm diversification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the restoration of hedgerows giving priority to those close to settlements, roads and footpaths</li> <li>Conserve existing species rich meadows</li> <li>Encourage traditional farming techniques amongst hobby farmers and other small land holders to retain key features</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of species rich grassland managed using traditional techniques</li> <li>Length of hedgerows</li> <li>Monitor take up of agri-environment grant schemes</li> </ul>	<p><i>LA/FWAG/NFU/CLA/LWT</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Plan policies</li> <li>Good Practice guidance</li> <li>Promotion of agri-environment grant schemes</li> </ul>

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
Decline, neglect and further fragmentation of woodlands, particularly ancient woodlands and small woodlands within settlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of woodlands as features in the landscape</li> <li>Degradation and loss of woodland habitats, ancient semi natural woodland and wildlife corridors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve, enhance and restore woodland areas through effective long term management and replanting</li> <li>Promote traditional woodland management techniques and woodland grant schemes amongst farming and land owning community</li> <li>Encourage establishment of sustainable and multipurpose woodlands through support of new business/ development of markets for woodland products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of deciduous semi ancient natural woodland</li> <li>Monitor take up of woodland grant schemes</li> <li>Area of coppice woodland</li> </ul>	<p>LA/FC/LWT/WT/CA/EN/NT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Forest Initiatives</li> </ul>
Lack of management and subsequent loss of important 'landmark' trees within villages, including introduction of new/ replacement trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of trees as features in the townscape of hamlets/villages</li> <li>Degradation and loss of tree habitats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve, enhance and restore village trees through effective long term management and replanting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Numbers of TPOS</li> </ul>	<p>LA/LIG/NT</p>

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
<p>Pressure for additional residential development illustrated by infilling/expansion of existing scattered settlements.</p> <p>Inappropriate new development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Erosion of distinctive dispersed settlement character and individual character of settlements resulting in coalescence (perceived if not actual)</li> <li>Upgrading of minor roads and lanes associated with new development and introduction of suburbanising features such as mini roundabouts, street lighting and kerbs eroding rural character</li> <li>Increase in noise and 'busyness' within the area and its influence on adjacent areas</li> <li>Illumination of existing dark skies</li> <li>Loss of peaceful rural character</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve the distinctive dispersed character of the chalk downland settlements</li> <li>Conserve historic buildings, their structures and setting within settlements</li> <li>Conserve the narrow and contained character of village lanes</li> <li>Conserve and restore traditional boundary features with particular regard to local styles, materials and construction methods</li> <li>Conserve existing dark skies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number and distribution of new dwellings within Green Belt</li> </ul>	<p>LA/PC/LIG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Plan Policies</li> <li>Monitoring and mapping village expansion</li> <li>Village design statements</li> <li>Photographic record of village growth</li> </ul>
<p>Expansion of individual dwellings and dilution of vernacular form</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Erosion of distinctive architectural form and character within settlements</li> <li>Densification of built elements within plots resulting in changes in the character of the village structure over the long term</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve historic buildings their structures and setting within settlements with particular regard to the proportion and scale between elements</li> <li>Conserve and restore traditional boundary features with particular regard to their local styles, materials and construction methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of Listed Buildings and associated structures</li> </ul>	<p>LA/EH/LIG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design guidance</li> <li>Monitoring and mapping village expansion</li> <li>Village design statements</li> <li>Photographic record of village growth</li> </ul>

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
<p>Inappropriate use of village greens and common land for car parking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Degradation of open space character</li> <li>Gradual encroachment of road associated features into areas of open space</li> <li>Loss of quiet, rural character and open space resource</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek to enhance degraded common land</li> <li>Seek to identify the extent and use of the resource through auditing and assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of Common Land and Village Greens</li> </ul>	<p>LA/CA/EH/NT/LIG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Initiative such as Door Step Greens</li> <li>Common land audit</li> </ul>
<p>Erosion of Common Land rural and historic character by lack of management and introduction of 'suburbanising' features such as inappropriate signage and planting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further degradation of open space character and resultant downward spiral such as increased littering</li> <li>Reduced quality of open space resource</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek to identify the extent and use of the resource through auditing and assessment</li> <li>Seek to enhance degraded common land through community involvement</li> <li>Promote the use of locally appropriate plant species for boundary vegetation and at urban/rural interfaces.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of Common Land and Village Greens</li> </ul>	<p>LA/CA/EH/NT/LIG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Common land audit</li> </ul>
<p>Pressure to upgrade rural road network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Widening of lanes, surfacing of tracks and introduction of 'suburbanising' and 'standardising' features such as signage, lighting and mini roundabouts</li> <li>Increase in noise and speed of vehicles resulting in loss of routeways for use by other users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve rural road network and resist pressures to upgrade</li> <li>Promote use by more sustainable users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Length of 'unimproved' tracks</li> </ul>	<p>LA/LIG/Sustrans/LIG/RA</p>

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
<p>Waste management; existing and proposed landfill and recycling plants at Knowl Hill and Pinkneys Green</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both positive and negative potential influences on character</li> <li>• Visual intrusion of new built features of recycling plant within existing clay pits locality</li> <li>• Potential restoration of landfill site for recreational/ecological uses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to ensure that the restoration of landfill site to 'fits' with character of landscape</li> <li>• Seek to ensure recycling centre built proposals are sympathetic to context of locality</li> </ul>		<p>LA/LIG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Plan policies</li> </ul>
<p>Expansion of use of inappropriate tree and shrubs species, particularly for use on boundaries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gradual spread of suburban plant species</li> <li>• Loss of rural character</li> <li>• Reduction in biodiversity resource</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to promote appropriate use of plant species, particularly along boundary edges</li> </ul>		<p>LA/LWTT/LIG</p>

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
<p>Piecemeal loss of urban fringe land through urban expansion and edge of town 'infill'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coalescence (perceived or otherwise) of settlements leading to loss of distinctive settlement character of villages and farmsteads</li> <li>• Upgrading of minor roads and lanes associated with new development and introduction of suburbanising features such as mini roundabouts, street lighting and kerbs eroding rural character</li> <li>• Increase in noise and 'busyness' within the area and its influence on adjacent areas</li> <li>• Loss of quiet rural character</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to restore degraded urban edges through prioritising these landscapes for the take up of agri-environment (and other) schemes</li> <li>• Seek to halt trend of urban edge land uses and development within locality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and distribution of new dwellings within Green Belt</li> </ul>	<p>LA/EH/PC/LIG Parish Councils &amp; Societies/ FC/WT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Plan Policies</li> <li>• Monitoring and mapping village expansion</li> <li>• Village Design Statements</li> <li>• Photographic record of village growth</li> <li>• Promotion of agri-environment grant schemes</li> </ul>



## 4.12 SETTLED WOODED SANDS

### 10a Sunningdale

### 10b Ascot Heath

### 10c South Ascot and South Sunningdale

### 10d Cobham Common

#### 4.12.1 Key features and attributes of the landscape to Conserve and Enhance

- **Strong framework of mature mixed woodland**, some with origins in the Windsor Forest deer park which extended across this area in the 12th century, others in the designed landscapes of the 17th to 19th centuries, and some associated with the modern forests of Bracknell and Chobham.
- **Historic designed landscapes**, which provide the landscape setting to historic manor houses, with origins in the 17th century landscape movements. Veteran trees and ornamental lakes found within these landscapes are of ecological, cultural, historical as well as aesthetic importance.
- **Exotic parkland trees as features on wooded horizons within open landscapes**, which are visual indicators of the historic designed landscapes within which they are located.
- **Roads enclosed by woodland**, which contrast with the character of the more open roadways found within the landscapes to the north.

#### Landscape Condition

4.12.2 The traditional pattern of much of this rural landscape has largely been destroyed or fragmented by modern settlement and landuses, such as commercial forestry and horsiculture. This has been compounded by the conversion of many of the large estates (which often contain the only large remaining tracts of agricultural land illustrating a strong landscape pattern) for educational or health uses, resulting in less 'traditional' land management of the wider estate and subsequent 'dilution' of the rural character and loss of landscape attributes and features. However a new kind of character is found where the traditional pattern is lost. It is a strongly settled, wooded landscape which is enclosed and intimate often busy, where the woodland serves to contain views and conceal settlement. The extent of settlement into this landscape is exemplified by the high incidence of designated Major Developed Sites within it including Heatherwood Hospital (Ascot) Imperial College Silwood Park (Sunninghill) and the Civil Service College at Sunningdale. The condition of many of the woodlands themselves are good as they form either part of wider designed landscapes or areas of commercial forestry (rather than farm woodlands). Boundaries to many properties and landholdings are generally in good condition where they are to restrict access. This contrasts with the poorer condition of field boundaries within areas of agriculture. Overall the landscape pattern is being both lost and created simultaneously and the overall condition is judged as **good-declining**.

### **Strength of Landscape Character**

- 4.12.3 This largely enclosed, settled landscape has a simple character. Extensive tracts of woodland create a green context within which built development and designed landscapes are found. It is intimate and small in scale. Because of its wooded character, high incidence of settlement and busy roadways it rarely feels rural in the traditional sense; The traditional landscape pattern has been so extensively altered in recent times. However the wooded nature of the locality is very distinct and recent change has introduced new features which provide a new dimension to the character of the landscape. Overall strength of character is considered to be **declining**.

### **Landscape Capacity**

- 4.12.4 The wooded, enclosed, accessible and 'busy' character of this landscape could potentially allow further small scale development with very localised changes. However it is considered that this landscape is, in overall terms, at 'capacity' as it is extremely densely populated with the pressure on the land often expressed by the substantial security features which are prominent landscape elements. Incremental development and infill will continue to put pressure on this landscape within the type, specifically at the Major Development Sites (particularly at the Imperial College sites) and along settlement boundaries. Overall capacity for change is **low**.

4.12.5

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
<p>Farmland/ land holding fragmentation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of traditional management practices and neglect of farm boundaries</li> <li>Disintegration of traditional landscape pattern</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote traditional farming management techniques amongst farming and land owning community (particularly an integrated approach to boundary treatments)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor take up of agri-environmental grant schemes</li> <li>Monitor length of hedgerows</li> </ul>	<p>LA/FWAG/NFU/CLA/LWT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good Practice guidance</li> <li>Promotion of agri-environment grant schemes</li> </ul>
<p>Loss of vernacular boundary treatments with a greater emphasis on security and access restriction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eclectic collection of building styles and forms and the erosion of local styles, materials and construction methods</li> <li>Views of adjacent landscape lost. Instead they are 'tunnelled' by built boundary features.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve and restore traditional boundary features with particular regard to their local styles, materials and construction methods</li> <li>Promote a common vocabulary of new features (based on the building vernacular) within and within proximity to Ascot, Sunningdale and Sunninghill through design guidelines</li> </ul>		<p>LA/EH /LIG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design guidance</li> <li>Photographic record of boundary treatments and road character</li> </ul>

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
Expansion of telecommunication masts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of visual amenity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilise existing masts in preference to the erection of new masts</li> <li>Oppose the erection of new masts where these would adversely effect views from the wider landscape</li> <li>Ensure sympathetic siting and design of new features if introduction is necessary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of new telecommunication masts</li> </ul>	<p>LA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Plan policies</li> </ul>
Expansion of individual dwellings and densification of building plots, at the boundaries of Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Erosion of distinctive architectural form and character of settlements</li> <li>Densification of built elements within plots resulting in changes in the character of the village structure over the long term and the interrelationship between the settlement and its landscape setting ('suburbanising' it)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve historic buildings their structures and setting within settlements with particular regard to the proportion and scale between elements</li> <li>Promote the use of appropriate plant species and boundary treatments at urban edges to better integrate development into the adjacent rural character</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of Listed Buildings and associated structures</li> </ul>	<p>LA/PC/LIG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design guidance</li> <li>Monitoring and mapping village expansion</li> <li>Village Design Statements</li> <li>Photographic record of settlements</li> </ul>
Loss of land 'patronage' through conversion of large estates to modern uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss and fragmentation of historic designed landscapes</li> <li>Loss of traditional land management practice</li> <li>Expansion of edge of town landuse e.g. for playfields</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek to enhance and restore degraded and fragmented landscapes through prioritising these landscapes for the take up of agri-environment (and other) schemes</li> <li>Raise awareness of the historic dimension of the landscape to landowners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of parkland veteran trees</li> <li>Area of land registered as a Historic Park or Garden</li> </ul>	<p>LA/EH/LIG</p>

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
<p>Piecemeal loss of urban fringe land through urban expansion and edge of town 'infill'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coalescence (perceived or actual) of Ascot with Sunningdale and Sunninghill due to loss of locally strategic open space with a rural character leading to further 'blurring' of town/county boundary</li> <li>• Loss of historic designed landscape</li> <li>• Upgrading of minor roads and lanes associated with new development and introduction of suburbanising features such as mini roundabouts, street lighting and kerbs eroding rural character</li> <li>• Increase in noise and 'busyness' within the area and its influence on adjacent areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resist pressures for development within the rural landscape between Ascot, Sunningdale and Sunninghill</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and distribution of new dwellings within Green Belt</li> <li>• Area of Green Belt land in LCT</li> <li>• Number and extent of recreation facilities in LCT</li> </ul>	<p>LA/LIG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Plan Policies</li> <li>• Monitoring and mapping village expansion</li> <li>• Village Design Statements</li> <li>• Photographic record of village growth</li> <li>• Promotion of agri-environment grant schemes</li> </ul>

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
Expansion of edge of town recreational facilities eg racecourse provision at Ascot, sports pitches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of remaining rural character</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek to integrate development proposals into landscape framework to minimise impact to key characteristics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extent of recreational facilities within Green Belt</li> </ul>	<p>LA/LIG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Plan policies</li> <li>Design Guidance</li> </ul>
Enclosure of designed landscape for security/privacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of valuable open views</li> <li>Loss of original design intent/integrity of designed landscape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek to promote understanding and appreciation of designed landscapes within the locality and reversion of current trend</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of land Registered as an Historic Park or Garden</li> </ul>	<p>LA /EH/LIG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote Good Practice</li> <li>Design Guidance</li> </ul>

#### 4.13 FARMED CHALK SLOPES

11a Rose Hill

11b Burchett Green

11c Cookham Rise

##### 4.13.1 Key features and attributes of the landscape to Conserve and Enhance

- **Mosaic of large scale mixed arable, pasture and woodland landscapes** give this type an interesting yet strong and simple rural character.
- **Geological chalk formations particularly the character and integrity of the chalk scarp.** This landscape feature is visible from many views from the north, it is important in defining, and providing the setting for, the River Thames, and represents a gateway feature to travels entering the Borough from the north. The rural and often remote character of the dry valleys is also important to the overall character of the landscape.
- **Ancient woodlands, linear woodlands and woodland copses** which form landscape features, wooded horizons and contain long distance views within this open landscape. They are also of historical, ecological and cultural importance as many contain rich habitats, Veteran Trees and provide public access.
- **Narrow linear rural trackways which run up the dry valleys of the chalk scarp** which are lined by hedgerows and represent important cultural and historical landscape features as they originally connected the agricultural settlements within the locality. They represent one of a few elements with historic continuity in this landscape.
- **Remnant hedgerows and hedgerow trees** which form important landscape features of historical, ecological and cultural significance.
- **Ecologically rich grasslands and woodlands** which provide not just a biodiversity resource but contribute to the rich and strong aesthetic characteristics of the landscape.
- **Large farmsteads/estates set within their farmland** which represent the traditional settlement pattern of this landscape.
- **Traditional hamlets within wider chalk landscape** which are small scale often linear settlements rich in built heritage and sympathetically integrated into their traditional rural setting.
- **Long distance open views of the rural chalk landscapes, the Thames river floodplain and Chiltern Hills** which are sometimes exhilarating, and add to the rural and remote character of the landscape.

### **Landscape Condition**

- 4.13.2 The condition of the key features and attributes of this landscape are generally good. Modern impacts of settlement and telecommunication development have had little direct influence on its character and therefore the aesthetic and functional aspects of the landscape are largely intact. However the modern development is increasingly threatening to influence the character of the some areas of this landscape. The settlement of Cookham Rise and continued expansion of Maidenhead's northern edge is increasingly impacting long distance views from this locality. Modern agricultural practices have resulted in the decline and loss of hedgerows and the expansion of farm buildings ( 'agrisheds') as discordant features which distort the traditional pattern of the landscape. Modern agricultural practice has also resulted in a decline of ecological important habitats and an increase in the scale of fields in some areas. Modern road development has also been unsympathetic to the traditional pattern of routeways seen in this chalk landscape, and resulted in cutting large 'scars' into the chalk scarp to date. Overall condition is judged as **good-declining**.

### **Strength of Landscape Character**

- 4.13.3 This open rural landscape has a distinctive simple character which varies in strength. Where the traditional character of the landscape remains, where components of the chalk lowland is most intact, character remains strong. However where character is influenced by modern change such as road development, agricultural intensification and residential development character is declining. Overall strength of character, in balance, is considered to be **moderate**.

### **Landscape Capacity**

- 4.13.4 The open, remote and unsettled character of this rural landscape could not accommodate change without significant changes in its character, even changes that are viewed as relatively minor such as road improvements. Overall capacity for change is **low**.



4.13.5

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
<p>On-going impact of intensive agriculture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decline in traditional farming techniques resulting in a decline in species rich habitats such as meadows and hedgerows</li> <li>Loss of hedgerows or hedgerow trees resulting in a decline in the loss of historically important landscape features and decline of landscape pattern</li> <li>Major decline of locally important fruit (cherry) growing farms and subsequent decline in local character</li> <li>Loss of distinctive character due to the introduction of alien shelter belt species</li> <li>Decline of traditional routeways</li> <li>Decline in the visual amenity of the landscape through the introduction of inappropriate built features such as 'agrisheds'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage traditional farming practices amongst landowners to retain key features</li> <li>Resist the removal of remaining hedgerows and hedgerow trees and encourage their reinstatement, giving priority to those close to settlements, roads and footpaths</li> <li>Conserve existing species rich grass and woodland habitats and seek to recreate these habitats where they have been lost</li> <li>Promote the use of locally appropriate species generally and specifically within hedgerows and woodland planting, and at urban/rural interfaces</li> <li>Promote the restoration of traditional boundary features and routeways with particular regard to their local styles, materials and construction methods</li> <li>Promote the reintroduction of fruit growing as a 'local product' industry in the Cookham area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of species rich habitats managed using traditional techniques</li> <li>Monitor take up of agri-environment grant schemes</li> </ul>	<p>LA/FWAG/NFU/CLA/LWT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good Practice guidance</li> <li>Promotion of agri-environment grant schemes</li> </ul>

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve the traditional settlement pattern of the landscape by restricting further expansion of inappropriate farm development particularly where this would be visible within the open chalkland landscape</li> </ul>		
<p>Piecemeal loss of urban fringe land through urban expansion and edge of town 'infill'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coalescence (perceived or otherwise) of settlements leading to loss of distinctive settlement character of villages and farmsteads</li> <li>Upgrading of minor roads and lanes associated with new development and introduction of suburbanising features such as mini roundabouts, street lighting and kerbs eroding rural character</li> <li>Increase in noise and 'busyness' within the area and its influence on adjacent areas</li> <li>Loss of quiet rural character</li> <li>'Suburbanisation' of landscapes nearest urban edges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resist pressures for further development within the landscape between the urban edges particularly that of Cookham Rise and Maidenhead, and Cookham and Cookham Rise.</li> <li>Seek to restore degraded urban edges through prioritising these landscapes for the take up of agri-environment (and other) schemes</li> <li>Seek to halt trend of urban edge land uses and development within locality</li> <li>Consider opportunities for woodland planting at urban edges which could better integrate urban edges into their landscape setting and provide recreation and nature conservation opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number and distribution of new dwellings within Green Belt</li> <li>Number and distribution of golf courses and playing fields within LCT</li> </ul>	<p>LA/EH/PC/LIG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Plan Policies</li> <li>Monitoring and mapping village expansion</li> <li>Village Design Statements</li> <li>Photographic record of village growth</li> <li>Promotion of agri-environment grant schemes</li> </ul>

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the use of locally appropriate species along urban edges</li> <li>Resist development that would be highly visible in the open chalk landscape areas or block views to the Thames Floodplain/Chiltern Hills</li> </ul>		
Expansion of commercial equestrian land use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction of new woodlands and boundaries which are unsympathetic to landscape pattern</li> <li>Introduction of new 'farm sheds' for equestrian use</li> <li>Introduction of modern security features which are not sympathetic to locality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage use of more traditional farming practices and techniques with particular regard to their local styles, materials and construction methods</li> <li>Resist the further expansion of farming related 'sheds' particularly in open chalkland areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor take up of agri-environment grant schemes</li> </ul>	<p>LA/CLA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Plan policies</li> <li>Design guidance</li> </ul>
Decline, neglect and further fragmentation of woodlands, particularly ancient woodlands and game covers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of woodlands as features in the landscape</li> <li>Degradation and loss of woodland habitats, ancient semi natural woodland and wildlife corridors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve, enhance and restore woodland blocks and belts through effective long term management and replanting</li> <li>Seek to increase the extent of native deciduous woodland using locally sourced species</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of deciduous semi ancient natural woodland</li> <li>Monitor take up of woodland grant schemes</li> <li>Area of coppice woodland</li> </ul>	<p>LA/FC/WT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Forest Initiatives</li> </ul>

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote traditional woodland management techniques and woodland grant schemes amongst farming and land owning community</li> <li>Encourage establishment of sustainable and multipurpose woodlands through support of new business/ development of markets for woodland products</li> <li>Ensure expansion of woodland are in keeping with character and do not block important view lines</li> </ul>		
Pressure to upgrade rural road network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of road verges and hedgerows of historical and ecological importance, and introduction of 'suburbanising' and 'standardising' features such as signage and lighting</li> <li>Increase in noise and speed of vehicles resulting in loss of routeways for use by other users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve rural road network and resist pressures to upgrade</li> <li>Promote use by more sustainable users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extent of quiet lanes</li> </ul>	LA/Sustrans/LTG/RA
Incremental spread of piecemeal (residential) development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of distinctive settlement form of chalkland hamlets</li> <li>Degradation of rural character</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resist further 'small' scale residential development which is inconsistent with traditional village farms</li> </ul>		

## 4.14 WOODED HEATHLAND

### 12a Windsor Great Park

#### 4.14.1 Key features and attributes of the landscape to Conserve and Enhance

- **Mixed woodland** most of which is statutory designated Ancient Woodland (both semi natural and replanted) Its mature character is important in contributing to the overall sense of historical continuity of the landscape. It is also important in framing and containing views through the undulating landscape and providing the setting for the traditional use of the open green space for formal events. It is also of great historical, ecological and cultural importance as many contain rich habitats and veteran trees.
- **Coniferous trees** which are strong landscape features on wooded horizons in winter.
- **Steep wooded slopes** which form wooded horizons and intimate, enclosed space.
- **Pockets of acid grassland and heathland** which add texture and diversity to the character of the landscape and are important ecological not only due to their richness but because of their limited extent within the Royal Borough.
- **Sinuous man-made ornamental lakes** which are important both because they are striking as landscape features and represent the 'centrepiece' of the historic designed landscapes within which they are located.
- **Historic county houses and lodges** which are of international and national historic and cultural importance.
- **Other incidental heritage features** which are framed by woodland and are features which are integral components of the designed landscape within which they are located.
- **Wide open green space** of Smith's Lawn which is contained by woodland, contrasting with it.
- **Network of enclosed trackways** which are important for access through the wooded areas, providing enclosed and intimate woodland walks and drives which connect the historic county houses and lodges to the wider parkland and estate.
- **Contrastingly open and enclosed 'sequential' landscape** which is significant because it draws the visitor 'to explore' and therefore adds to the visual richness and depth of experience that the landscape provides.

### **Landscape Condition**

- 4.14.2 The condition of the key features and attributes of this landscape is excellent. This is a unique historic landscape type whose extent is owned and managed by the Crown Estate. It is not therefore subject to many of the forces for change that are apparent across the rest of the Royal Borough and as such remains untouched by modern development pressures. Minor pressures are apparent within the landscape such as the physical and visual impact of tourism related development particularly the major events area with support facilities seen at Smith's Lawn, (although much is temporary in nature) and a number of post-war properties which provide housing for estate staff. More minor changes, with a potential to accumulatively negatively impact character in the longer term, include erosion caused by high visitor numbers, signage and litter. However, in overall terms this landscape is considered to be largely unchanged since the landscape movement of the 17th century led to the creation of the ornamental lake of Virginia Water. Landscape condition is therefore considered to be **excellent**.

### **Strength of Landscape Character**

- 4.14.3 This landscape has many mature landscape and built features, it has also enjoyed continuous 'stewardship' from the Crown Estate since the 12th century. It subsequently has a very **strong** sense of history and strength of character.

### **Landscape Capacity**

- 4.14.4 The strength of character of this landscape and its strongly wooded, undulating attributes result in a robust landscape with a high capacity to accommodate change in a general sense. However, the very great importance of this landscape in terms of its cultural, historical and ecological value, would render it entirely unsuitable as a location for any development, even that which is very minor. Capacity is therefore **low**.

4.14.5

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
<p>Incremental spread of tourist related development</p> <p>Increasing visitor activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Damage and disturbance to valuable habitats and species</li> <li>• Loss of natural and built heritage features</li> <li>• Decline in visual quality and loss of quiet, wooded character</li> <li>• Gradual erosion of distinctive character of the landscape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to conserve internationally, nationally and locally important habitats and species</li> <li>• Seek to preserve the integrity and setting of natural and built features</li> <li>• Seek to retain the 'wild wood' character of the locality</li> <li>• Seek to conserve and enhance the distinctive character of the Great Park area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area of statutory and non-statutory designated sites</li> <li>• Number of Listed Buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments</li> <li>• Number of veteran trees</li> </ul>	<p>LA/CE/EH/EN/LWT/LIG</p>
<p>Climate change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of habitat and changes to species composition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Profile habitat 'buffer zones' to allow for habitat 'shift'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor habitat extent and composition for signs of change</li> <li>• Number of veteran trees</li> </ul>	<p>LA/CE/EN/LWT</p>





#### 4.15 SETTLED FARMED FLOODPLAIN

##### 13a Bisham and Hurley

##### 13b Cookham

##### 13c Eton

##### 13d Datchet

#### 4.15.1 Key features and attributes of the landscape to Conserve and Enhance

- **Wide, meandering river with natural, diverse river edge habitats** (including pollarded willows) which are both of high ecological and aesthetic value.
- **Flat and open floodplain of mixed agriculture** which has a strong sense of its farming heritage but shows signs of a decline in the maintenance of traditional land management.
- **Quiet waterside routeways.** The Thames riverside is an historic routeway which continues to be an important recreational resource, used and enjoyed by a wide variety of users (navigating the river as well as using the towpath).
- **Historic riverside and floodplain** which are important landmarks as well as of historic and cultural interest.
- **Linear woodlands and parkland trees** which are important for containing and framing views across the floodplain, giving it a subtly wooded character, and are mature landscape elements visible in the landscape, of historic, ecological and cultural importance.
- **Designed landscapes** associated with monastic foundations and manor houses are valuable ecological, historic and cultural assets as well as contributing to the visual diversity and richness of the floodplain.
- **Traditional vernacular buildings** which are locally distinct because of their use of local materials. Building scale, style and form give these villages a unique sense of place.
- **Rich archaeological heritage** associated with the Thames estuary, a historic routeway and thus area for early settlement. These archaeological artefacts are important for informing the nature and growth of human activity over time.

### **Landscape Condition**

- 4.15.2 The condition of the key features and attributes of this landscape is good. This floodplain landscape has a colourful history having been the focus for settlement since pre Roman times and as such exhibits many historic features and elements in the landscape, such as sunken lanes and vernacular styled villages. Due to the periodic flooding of this area the floodplain has avoided developments that have damaged the traditional pattern of the landscape in other parts of the Borough, such as from extensive residential development, and roadways are contained to the valley edge. It is therefore relatively intact from modern forces for change. However, this landscape is under pressure from more piecemeal development such as the gradual expansion of farm buildings and riverside recreation facilities. The lack of traditional land management, possibly due to fragmentation or changes in use of land holdings has resulted in the physical and visual decline of landscape features such as hedgerows and farm woodlands. Landscape condition is therefore considered to be **good - declining**.

### **Strength of Landscape Character**

- 4.15.3 This landscape has a mature, diverse and unified character despite its recent decline due to modern pressures. It subsequently has a **moderate** strength of character.

### **Landscape Capacity**

- 4.15.4 The open and flat nature of this landscape and its high intervisibility, adjacent areas, particularly with the sensitive landscapes of the Chiltern escarpments in the north of the borough, make it an inappropriate location for large scale development. Smaller scale development, such as residential, would also erode the essentially rural character of the locality and fragment the traditional pattern of farmsteads and farmland further. The historic significance of the floodplain as a location of early settlement, and presence of nationally important recreation routes also increase the sensitivity of this landscape to change. Landscape capacity is therefore **low**.

4.15.5

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
<p>On-going impact of intensive agriculture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decline in traditional farming techniques resulting in a decline in species rich habitats such as meadows and hedgerows and loss of pollarded willows</li> <li>• Loss of hedgerows or hedgerow trees resulting in a decline in the loss of historically important landscape features and decline of landscape pattern</li> <li>• Decline of traditional routeways</li> <li>• Decline in the visual amenity of the landscape through the introduction of inappropriate built features such as 'agrisheds'</li> <li>• Decline of traditional land drainage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage traditional farming techniques amongst landowners</li> <li>• Encourage the reinstatement of hedgerows giving priority to those close to settlements, roads and footpaths</li> <li>• Conserve existing species rich grassland and wet woodland habitats and seek to reinstate those areas lost giving priority to those areas nearest the River Thames and adjacent to publically accessible areas</li> <li>• Promote the use of locally appropriate species</li> <li>• Promote the reinstatement of hedgerow boundaries giving priority to those nearest to roads, settlements and footpaths</li> <li>• Conserve the traditional settlement pattern of the landscape by restricting further expansion of inappropriate farm development particularly where they would be visible within the open floodplain landscape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area of species rich grassland and woodland habitats managed using traditional techniques</li> <li>• Length of hedgerows</li> <li>• Monitor take up of agri-environment grant schemes</li> </ul>	<p>LA/CLAN/FU/LIG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good Practice</li> <li>• Design Guidance</li> </ul>

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
<p>Pressure for additional residential development particularly at riverside locations</p> <p>Inappropriate new development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Erosion of distinctive settlement character and riverside setting</li> <li>Upgrading of minor roads and lanes associated with new development and introduction of suburbanising features such as mini roundabouts, street lighting and kerbs which erode rural character</li> <li>Increase in noise and 'busyness' within the area and its influence on adjacent areas</li> <li>Illumination of existing dark skies</li> <li>Loss of quiet character particularly along the riverside</li> <li>Loss of archaeological features</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resist riverside development which results in the loss of views or access to the waterside, or to the loss of its quiet character</li> <li>Resist development which would be highly visible within the open floodplain landscape</li> <li>Conserve existing dark skies</li> <li>Resist development which would compromise the setting of historic riverside built features</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number and distribution of new dwellings within Green Belt</li> </ul>	<p><i>LA/PC/LIG</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring and mapping and riverside development</li> <li>Village Design Statements</li> <li>Photographic record of riverside character</li> </ul>
<p>Expansion of commercial equestrian land use</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction of new 'farm sheds' for equestrian use</li> <li>Introduction of modern security features which are not sympathetic to locality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage use of more traditional farming management practices with particular regard to local styles of boundary features and their materials and construction methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor take up of agri-environment grant schemes</li> </ul>	<p><i>LA/CLA/LIG</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good Practice guide</li> <li>Design Guidance</li> </ul>

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
<p>Decline, neglect and further fragmentation of linear woodlands, and parkland trees</p> <p>Fragmentation of designed landscapes</p> <p>Loss of veteran trees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of woodlands as features in the landscape</li> <li>Degradation and loss of woodland habitats and wildlife corridors</li> <li>Loss of subtly wooded character of floodplain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resist the further expansion of farming related 'sheds', particularly where they would be visible from views within the floodplain or views from higher ground</li> <li>Provide guidance to help ensure management of paddocks is sensitive to existing character by retaining hedgerows for example</li> <li>Conserve, enhance and restore woodland areas and belts through effective long term management and replanting</li> <li>Consider a tree replanting programme at important locations (such as Bisham Abbey) to plan for future replacement trees</li> <li>Promote traditional woodland management techniques and woodland grant schemes amongst farming and land owning community</li> <li>Encourage establishment of sustainable and multipurpose woodlands through support of new business/ development of markets for woodland products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area of deciduous semi ancient natural woodland</li> <li>Monitor take up of woodland grant schemes</li> <li>Area of coppice woodland</li> <li>Number of veteran/parkland trees</li> </ul>	<p>LA/FC/CLA/NFU/WT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Forest Initiatives</li> </ul>

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
Pressure to upgrade rural road network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of road verges and hedgerows of historical and ecological importance, and introduction of 'suburbanising' and 'standardising' features such as signage and lighting</li> <li>Increase in noise and speed of vehicles resulting in loss of routeways for use by other users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conserve rural road network and resist pressures to upgrade particularly within traditional villages</li> <li>Promote use by more sustainable users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extent of 'quiet lanes'</li> </ul>	LA/Sustrans/RA/LIG
Expansion of recreation facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of quiet riverside settings</li> <li>Loss and erosion of riverside habitats and landscape features</li> <li>Increase in noise and 'busyness' to locality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek to concentrate 'active' recreation use on Thames riverside to key 'honeypot' locations to allow passive recreational pursuits remain to be enjoyed in more tranquil areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of camping and other recreation sites along the Thames riverside</li> <li>Number of users on Thames path</li> </ul>	LA/BW/LIG
Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of remaining mature hedge trees and pollarded willows due to fluctuation of ground water levels</li> <li>Loss of habitat and changes in composition species</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide habitat 'buffer zones' to allow for habitat shift</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor habitat extent and composition for signs of change</li> <li>Number of pollarded willows</li> </ul>	LA/EA/EN/LWT/CE

#### 4.16 SETTLED DEVELOPED FLOODPLAIN

##### 14a Summerleaze

##### 14b Bray

##### 14c Horton & Wraysbury

#### 4.16.1 Key features and attributes of the landscape to Conserve and Enhance

- **Wide slow moving river with natural, diverse river edge and wooded island habitats** which are ecological important, of great scenic value and integral to the immediate setting of the watercourse.
- **Thames navigation channels, marinas, artificial cuts and canalised sections** which are important for providing recreation opportunities for local residents and visitors alike, as well as being of historic and ecological importance.
- **Broad flat, open floodplain**, the perception of which is important to the setting of the Thames.
- **Expansive naturalised and restored man-made wetland landscapes** of high ecological importance as well as providing an important recreation resource for adjacent urban populations.
- **Remnant hedgerows and hedgerow trees** which are of high historic and ecological as well as landscape value. They represent one of the few landscape elements remaining within the floodplain from the former traditional landscape pattern within the new wetland areas.
- **Shelterbelts and linear woodlands**, which although are new landscape features, have the potential to significantly contribute to the future 'structure' of the developing wetland landscapes.
- **Network of minor roads and tracks** which are of historic and recreation value.
- **Wetland habitats of international and national nature conservation importance** which are an important biodiversity resource.

### **Landscape Condition**

- 4.16.2 The condition of wide areas of this landscape is poor, both due to the recent and extensive impact of gravel extraction and the spread of 'edge of town' development radiating from the urban conurbations of Windsor and Maidenhead. Very little remains of the floodplain landscape that existed within the locality at the turn of the twentieth century, many of whose attributes and features would have been similar to those seen in the Mixed Settled Floodplain landscapes. However, where wetland landscapes are established, these new landscapes are becoming increasingly valued for their scenic and recreational, as well as ecological, value. It is therefore a fragmented landscape of great diversity, which requires the 'redefinition' and strengthening of its overall structure through creation and restoration strategies to re-establish an overall 'pattern' . Landscape condition is overall therefore considered to be **declining - derelict**.

### **Strength of Landscape Character**

- 4.16.3 The strength of character of this landscape varies considerably. Within established wetland areas where lakeside habitats are well established and/or where there are remnants of the previous landscape elements, strength of character is good. However in more recently disturbed areas, or within areas in close proximity to transportation corridors, settlements and 'edge of town development', landscapes show signs of neglected. In overall terms this landscape has a **declining** strength of character.

### **Landscape Capacity**

- 4.16.4 The flat nature of this landscape (and therefore low intervisibility between it and adjacent landscape types), and the poor condition of overall character and pattern would make it an appropriate location for 'positive' landscape change which assists in the creation and restoration of an improved landscape structure and pattern. Smaller scale development could assisted in redefining the landscapes 'sense of place' and distinctiveness and repair and improve degraded areas if undertaken appropriately. In overall terms landscape capacity is therefore considered to be **medium**.



4.16.5

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
Expansion of recreation facilities particularly watersports/boating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of riverside habitats and species</li> <li>• Inappropriate bank works (ie sheetpiling)</li> <li>• Loss and erosion of historic and archaeological riverside features</li> <li>• Increase in noise and 'busyness' to locality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conserve and reinstate areas of permanent pasture and unimproved riverside habitat including wetland areas.</li> <li>• Consider zoning of activities to provide opportunities for both active and passive pursuits and to ensure sensitive areas are protected from damaging activities</li> </ul>		EA/Thames Ahead/Thames 21
On-going gravel extraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of habitats</li> <li>• Large scale loss of landscape pattern and visual amenity</li> <li>• Localised loss of mature landscape features</li> <li>• Deterioration of PROW network</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek to retain important landscape features and patterns within areas of extraction</li> <li>• Seek to maintain quality of routeways and enhance routeways where necessary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor number of TPO's</li> <li>• Monitor length of PROW</li> </ul>	

Local Forces For Change	Potential Landscape Implications	Outline Landscape Strategies	Potential Indicators for Monitoring Landscape Change	Potential Opportunities for Stakeholder Involvement
Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of remaining mature hedge trees and mature willows due to fluctuation of ground water levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide riverside habitat 'buffer zones' to allow for habitat shift</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor habitat extent and composition for signs of change</li> <li>Number of pollarded willows</li> </ul>	LA/EA/EN/LWT/CE
<p>Pressure for expansion of built development on edges of towns</p> <p>Areas of degraded landscape quality due to eclectic mix of land uses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coalescence (perceived or otherwise) of Maidenhead, Bray Wick and Ascot leading to loss of distinctive settlement character and suburbanisation of landscape</li> <li>Upgrading of minor roads and lanes associated with new development and introduction of suburbanising features such as mini roundabouts, street lighting and kerbs eroding rural character</li> <li>Increase in noise and 'busyness' within the area and its influence on adjacent areas</li> <li>Loss of quiet rural character</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protect the individual identity of these settlements by conserving the rural character of the landscape between them</li> <li>Seek to restore degraded urban edges (and thus 'reverse' the trend) through prioritising these landscapes for the take up of agri-environment (and other) schemes</li> <li>Seek to halt trend of urban edge land uses and development within locality (particularly expansion of industrial and infrastructure facilities)</li> <li>Develop guidance on management of horse paddocks - to be sensitive to existing landscape character by retaining features of the landscape such as hedgerows</li> <li>Resist further visual intrusion of large industrial/infrastructure within the floodplain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number and distribution of new dwellings within Green Belt</li> <li>Number and extent of new development within LCA</li> </ul>	<p>LA/EH/PC/LIG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development Plan Policies</li> <li>Monitoring and mapping village expansion</li> <li>Village Design Statements</li> <li>Photographic record of village growth</li> <li>Promotion of agri-environment grant schemes</li> </ul>

## 5.0 REVIEW OF KEY URBAN EDGE AREAS

### 5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The RBWM project brief identified a number of 'suburban areas' under great development pressure, particularly for new housing, due both to their proximity to important employment centres and their attractive landscape setting. Within the context of this and Government housing targets (noted in Chapter 3) it was considered by RBWM that there was a need to further review the potential implications of this particular force for change on landscape character (over and above the general review undertaken within Chapter 3) within these areas (hence forth termed 'urban edge areas').

5.1.2 The objective is to provide general recommendations/design guidelines which will assist in informing the siting, layout, scale and design considerations for new housing development within these urban edge areas so that any such development contributes to the character of the area rather than detracting from it. Clearly these recommendations refer to housing exceptions in the Green Belt where development has been deemed 'appropriate' for example, infill sites within villages or one for one replacements.

5.1.3 This has been undertaken through the systematic identification of the key characteristics for each landscape character type which could potentially be under direct threat from housing development and the potential wider 'indirect' landscape implications of this. The review for each landscape character type concludes with general design guidance (in the form of recommendations) for new housing development within the urban edge areas and the possible landscape features which may assist in the assimilation of proposed development into the landscape.

5.1.4 **It should be noted that this guidance is given for the purpose of an overview only.** Any significant settlement growth, such as proposed urban extensions, should be considered through a Landscape Capacity Study for the locality concerned, in line with Good Practice. This is so that detailed issues which are important to development growth, such as degree of intervisibility, physiographic constraints and existing character of built edges, can be taken into account at a local level. This is normally considered in parallel with a settlement study which provides the built context for the landscape study.

### 5.2 Urban Edge Areas

5.2.1 The urban edge areas identified in the Project Brief are given below:

- Ascot/Sunninghill/Sunningdale(LCAs 10a-d);
- The riverside setting of Maidenhead/Bray/Windsor/Eton/Eton Wick and Datchet (areas recently alleviated from flooding following the completion of the Jubilee River)(LCAs 3a, 13b-d and 14b);
- Cookham (including Poundfield) (LCA 13b);

- The western urban fringe of Maidenhead (LCAs 5a and 9b);
- Old Windsor/Horton and Wraysbury (especially the riverside areas) (LCAs 3b and 14c);
- St Leonards Hill (LCA 3d);
- Shoppenhangers Road (LCA 8b).

5.2.2 The landscape character types within which they fall are:

- 3 - Farmed Parkland
- 5 - Open Chalk Farmland
- 9 - Settled Wooded Hills
- 10 - Settled Wooded Sands
- 13 - Settled Farmed Floodplain
- 14 - Settled Developed Floodplain

The above landscape character types are therefore reviewed as follows:

### 5.3 Landscape Character Type 3: Farmed Parkland (Character Areas a/b/d)

Geographical reference: Windsor Riverside, Old Windsor and St. Leonards Hill

Landscape Condition: Excellent  
Strength of Landscape Character: Strong  
Landscape Capacity: Low

*Potential direct impact on key characteristics:*

- The loss of **designed historic landscape and their remnant features** largely due to a lack of detailed information and mapping of the historic extent and development of the wider parkland associated with Windsor Castle.
- The loss of the **rich working agricultural landscape** which surrounds Windsor Castle, which traditionally provides its wider setting. Its farmed character is important to the perceived (if not actual) link between the Castle and its hinterland.
- The loss of **deciduous woodland copses and belts** to development.
- The loss of **mature parkland oaks** to development.
- The loss of **field boundaries** to development.
- The loss of **grasslands, woodland and wetlands** to development.

*Potential indirect impacts to other key characteristics:*

- The loss of **wooded horizons and enclosed landscapes** within their locality due to the loss of deciduous woodland copses and belts within the landscape.
- The loss of **long and medium distance views** due to the introduction of new boundaries which restrict views across the landscape.
- A loss of the **sense of historical continuity/Royal patronage** that is apparent throughout this landscape.
- The loss of the **rural and remote character** of this farmed landscape due to the incremental spread of urbanising features including access roads and lighting.

*Other comments:*

- Potential loss of unified character due to the further fragmentation of land holdings and decline in traditional land management practice.
- The introduction of new built features into the landscape such as infrastructure and its associated features.
- A decline in landscape condition and strength of landscape character.

**5.3.1 Recommendations for the scale, form and density of new housing development:**

- 1 This landscape is characteristically unsettled. Settlement is therefore unprecedented with the exception of the planned village at the centre of the Great Park and isolated gatehouses and lodges all of which have central roles in servicing the Crown Estate. Any proposed housing development should respect the significance of Windsor Castle in its wider context and the settlement morphology of the locality.

**5.3.2 Recommendations for the (re)introduction and enhancement of landscape features:**

- 1 Proposed development should contribute to the enhancement and (re-introduction where appropriate) of hedgerows, woodland copses and other habitats unavoidably lost through development, with a particular focus on the re-establishment of historic landscape patterns and features.
- 2 Proposed housing development should not result in further disintegration of historic landscapes, instead they should respect the historic context and integrity of these landscapes. New development should not also result in the loss of their constitute features, particularly veteran trees which are important ecological and historic features.

- 3 Proposed housing development should not result in the loss of important agricultural land.
- 4 Proposed housing development should not result in the loss of woodland copse and belts which form wooded horizons or exceed (in height) the woodland horizons.
- 5 Proposed housing development should not result in the loss of long and medium distance views experienced within the locality across the rural landscape.
- 6 Proposed housing development should not result in the loss of the rural and remote character of the landscape type and its particular sense of historic continuity recreated by the common vocabulary of boundary treatments and signage for example.
- 7 Proposed tree and shrub species should be locally appropriate.

#### 5.4 Landscape Character Type 5: Open Chalk Farmland (Character Area a)

Geographical reference: Western urban fringe of Maidenhead

Landscape Condition: Good - Declining

Strength of Landscape Character: Moderate

Landscape Capacity: Low

*Potential direct impact on key characteristics:*

- The loss of the **character of the minor roadways** within the locality due to 'road improvement' schemes associated with housing development, and the introduction of new access roads which do not reflect the character of existing narrow, often straight roadways lined with grass verges and hedgerows.
- The further loss of **remnant hedgerows and hedgerow trees** which reflect historic boundaries and patterns of previous landscapes.

*Potential indirect impacts to other key characteristics:*

- The loss of the **open character** of the chalk landscape.
- The loss of the **simple rural character of the landscape and its remote feel** which contrasts markedly within the more settled and busy characters of the adjacent landscapes.
- The loss of **panoramic, long distance views to wooded horizons** which are currently enjoyed within this locality.

*Other potential impacts:*

- The introduction of new built features into the landscape such as infrastructure and its associated features.
- A continuing decline in landscape condition and strength of landscape character.

**5.4.1 Recommendations for the scale, form and density of new housing development:**

- 1 Settlement is unprecedented within this locality, with the exception of isolated farmsteads. Proposed housing development should therefore reference appropriate morphology from the wider locality such as that seen at Burchett Green which is small scale and linear in nature, with buildings displaying vernacular building materials including weatherboarding and brick with clay tiled roofs.
- 2 Proposed housing development should not extend above the woodland horizons which contain views within this open landscape.

**5.4.2 Recommendations for the (re)introduction and enhancement of landscape features:**

- 1 Proposed housing development should not result in damage to the integrity of historic landscapes, rather it should respect the wider historic character and integrity of the landscape. It should also not result in the loss of their constitute features, particularly parkland trees which are important visual features within the wider landscape context.
- 2 Proposed housing development should not result in the loss of the simple and unified character of the landscape type by introducing new natural and built elements in the landscape.
- 3 Proposed housing development should contribute to the enhancement and (re-introduction were appropriate) of historic hedgerow field boundaries.
- 4 Proposed tree and shrub species should be locally appropriate.

**5.5 Landscape Character Type 9: Settled Wooded Chalk Knolls (Character Area b)**

Geographical reference: Western urban fringe of Maidenhead

Landscape Condition: Declining

Strength of Landscape Character: Moderate

Landscape Capacity: Low

*Potential direct impact on key characteristics:*

- The **loss of the extensive tracts of woodland** which provides enclosure and context to historic settlements, as well as being important for their cultural and ecological value.
- The **loss of mature trees** within rural villages which are local land marks.

*Potential indirect impacts to other key characteristics:*

- The loss of the **dispersed settlement pattern of loose hamlets** within the locality.
- The **dilution of characteristic vernacular building forms and materials** of the locality due to unsympathetic 'off the peg' volume house building.
- The loss of **wooded horizons and their 'irregular edges'** due to the incremental loss of woodlands.
- The loss of **the interrelationship between settlement and its farmland**, that is pastureland (near settlement) and arable cropping (within the wider area).
- The loss of **the character of the rural road network** of tracks and lanes due to 'road improvement' schemes associated with housing development, and the introduction of new access roads which do not reflect the character of existing narrow, winding and enclosed roadways which carry predominately local traffic.
- The loss of the **peaceful rural agricultural landscape with a settled and managed feel**.

*Other potential impacts:*

- A continuing decline in landscape condition and strength of landscape character.

**5.5.1 Recommendations for the scale, form and density of new housing development:**

- 1 Proposed housing development should not result in the 'dilution' of vernacular buildings forms or result in the loss of the dispersed small scale pattern of hamlets; both apparent in the locality.

**5.5.2 Recommendations for the (re)introduction and enhancement of landscape features:**

- 1 Proposed housing development should contribute to the enhancement (and re-introduction were appropriate) of woodland areas.
- 2 Proposed housing development should not result in the loss of wooded horizons and new woodland should reflect the irregular edged pattern of woodlands seen in the locality.



- 3 Proposed housing development should reinforce the traditional interrelationship seen between settlement and its farmland in this area.
- 4 Proposed housing development should not result in the loss of the rural character of the road network.
- 5 Proposed housing development should not result in the loss of the peaceful, rural and managed character of the landscape; by significantly increased vehicular traffic or urbanising the locality for example.
- 6 Proposed tree and shrub species should be locally appropriate.

## 5.6 Landscape Character Type 10: Settled Wooded Sands (Character Areas a/b/c/d)

Geographical reference: Ascot, Sunninghill, Sunningdale

Landscape Condition: Good: declining

Strength of Landscape Character: Declining

Landscape Capacity: Low

*Potential direct impact on key characteristics:*

- **Historic parkland landscapes;** The fragmentation of larger land holdings has led to both the loss of individual parkland features and a disintegration of the wider parkland design. The significance and interrelationship between parkland areas and features subsequently becomes 'lost' over time. The introduction of new features (such as golf courses) and the neglect of existing further features, such as game coverts, contributes to the disintegration of these historic parkland landscapes.

*Potential indirect impacts to other key characteristics:*

- **Exotic parkland trees as features on wooded horizons within open landscapes;** The incremental loss of historic parkland (and hence mature exotic trees found within this locality) could result in the subsequent loss of these features within views of wooded horizons from within adjacent open landscapes.

*Other potential impacts:*

- Potential loss of simple and unified character of the wooded landscape
- A continuing decline in landscape condition and strength of landscape character.

5.6.1 **Recommendations for the scale, form and density of new housing development:**

- 1 Proposed housing development should respect the dispersed nature of the character type's historic settlement patterns.
- 2 Proposed housing development should contribute to the re-introduction of vernacular styled built boundaries treatments and reduce the visual intrusion of security features.
- 3 Proposed housing development should not extend above the woodland horizons which are features within views in more open areas of the landscape type.

5.6.2 **Recommendations for the (re)introduction and enhancement of landscape features:**

- 1 Proposed housing development should not result in further disintegration of historic parkland landscapes, or the loss of their constitute features, particularly parkland trees which are important visual features within the wider landscape context.
- 2 Proposed development should contribute to the enhancement (and re-introduction were appropriate) of hedgerow field boundaries.
- 3 Proposed housing development (and access to it) should be set within a strong woodland framework, which links with the established woodland structure and blurs 'town and country' boundaries.
- 4 Proposed housing development should contribute to the simple and unified character of the landscape type.
- 5 Proposed tree and shrub species should be locally appropriate.

5.7 **Landscape Character Type 13: Settled Farmed Floodplain (Character Area b/c/d)**

Geographical reference: Cookham, Eton, Eton Wick and Datchet Riverside

Landscape Condition: Good - Declining

Strength of Landscape Character: Moderate

Landscape Capacity: Low

*Potential direct impact on key characteristics:*

- The loss of **mature linear woodlands** which are important landscape features.
- The loss of **historic parkland landscapes and their remnant features** such as mature trees.
- The loss of the **rural network of sunken, narrow lanes and tracks** due to unsympathetic improvements to roadways to allow access to new development.

*Potential indirect impacts on key characteristics:*

- The loss of the **open character of the mixed agricultural floodplain**
- The loss of **the strong sense of farm heritage** apparent within the landscape and the continuing decline in traditional land management practices.
- The loss of **views which are contained and framed** by mature woodland belts.
- The loss of **views of mature parkland trees and historic designed landscapes** within their floodplain setting.
- The loss of the **unique sense of place experienced within the traditional villages** due to the dilution of their vernacular style and village morphology.

*Other potential impacts:*

- A continuing decline in landscape condition and strength of landscape character.

**5.7.1 Recommendations for the scale, form and density of new housing development:**

- 1 Proposed housing development should not result in the 'dilution' of vernacular buildings forms and styles or result in the small scaled pattern of the traditional villages seen in the locality.
- 2 Proposed housing development should use locally sourced materials such as flint, limestone and clay brick.

**5.7.2 Recommendations for the (re)introduction and enhancement of landscape features:**

- 3 Proposed housing development should contribute to the enhancement (and re-introduction were appropriate) of linear woodland belts.
- 4 Proposed housing development should not result in the loss of historic landscapes or their remnant features.
- 5 Proposed housing development should not result in the loss of the rural character of the road network.
- 6 Proposed housing development should not result in the loss of the open character of the floodplain, its strong sense of farming heritage, woodland which frames views, or views of historic parkland landscapes and their features.
- 7 Proposed tree and shrub species should be locally appropriate.

## 5.8 Landscape Character Type 14: Settled Developed Floodplain (Character Areas b/c)

Geographical reference: Bray, Wraysbury and Horton

Landscape Condition: Declining to derelict

Strength of Landscape Character: Declining

Landscape Capacity: Moderate

*Potential direct impact on key characteristics:*

- Loss of the **broad open character of the floodplain**
- Loss of **remnant hedgerows and hedgerow trees**
- Loss of **shelterbelts and linear woodlands**, which although are new landscape features, have the potential to significantly contribute to the future 'structure' of the developing wetland landscapes.
- Loss of **rural road network** of minor roads and tracks.

*Potential indirect impacts to other key characteristics:*

*Other potential impacts:*

- Continued decline of condition and character of the landscape.

### 5.8.1 Recommendations for the scale, form and density of new housing development:

- 1 Proposed housing development should take reference from the varied settlement forms, materials and pattern seen in the Maidenhead and Windsor floodplain area.
- 2 Proposed housing development should not result in a further 'dilution' of vernacular buildings forms, but should positively contribute to a renewed 'sense of place' and distinctiveness.

### 5.8.2 Recommendations for the (re)introduction and enhancement of landscape features:

- 3 Proposed housing development should seek to contribute to the 'repair' and improvement of degraded landscapes generally.
- 4 Proposed housing development should contribute to the enhancement (and re-introduction where appropriate) of linear woodland belts.

- 5 Proposed housing development should not result in the loss of the open character of the floodplain.
- 6 Proposed housing development should not result in the further loss of remnant hedgerows and hedgerow trees, and where appropriate should contribute to the reintroduction and enhancement of these features.
- 7 Proposed housing development should not result in the loss shelterbelts and linear woodlands.
- 8 Proposed housing development should not result in the loss of the rural character of the road network.
- 9 Proposed tree and shrub species should be locally appropriate.



## 6.0 DESIGNATION AND POLICY REVIEW

### 6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 It is the purpose of this Chapter to review the existing local designations in the borough Development Plan, particularly the ASLI, Setting of the Thames and Landscape Enhancement Area, and the need for the introduction of new local designations or a shift in policy approach, in the context of national and county planning policy and emerging approaches to landscape character assessment.

6.1.2 This chapter sets out the national, regional and local planning framework within which the local designations currently sit. A discussion on local designations in relation to Landscape Character Assessment Good Practice is then given. The chapter finishes with recommendations for the way forward and suggestions of areas for further work.

### 6.2 Existing Planning Context

#### *National Guidance*

6.2.1 Current Government advice contained within PPS 7 - Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (July 2004) places a requirement on planning authorities '...to ensure that the quality and character of the wider countryside is protected and, where possible, enhanced...'; the 'character led approach' (see section 6.4).

6.2.2 The recently published document illustrates a subtle but significant policy shift with regards to Local Landscape Designations (LLD). Where as PPG7 provided a framework for support for local designations, PPS 7 requires that they '... should only be maintained... where it can be clearly shown that criteria-based planning policies cannot provide the necessary protection...'. 1 of 6 key principles of the new guidance is that '...all development in rural areas should be well designed and inclusive, in keeping and scale with its location, and sensitive to the character of the countryside and local distinctiveness...'.

6.2.3 PPS 7 reflects a concern that local countryside designations may have been used to unduly restrict acceptable development without identifying the particular features of the local countryside that need to be respected or enhanced. Accordingly, the guidance states that Local Planning Authorities should '...rigorously consider the justification for retaining existing local countryside designations. They should ensure that they are soundly based on a formal assessment of the qualities of the landscape (what requires extra protection and why)...'.

6.2.4 PPG 12 - para 3.2 requires local plans to include policies in respect of the conservation of natural beauty and amenity of the land and the improvement of the physical environment. Para 4.4 states that local plans should include policies designed to secure the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty and amenity of the land.

*Regional Guidance*

- 6.2.5 No reference is to local landscape designations within the Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) March 2001

*County Guidance - Berkshire Structure Plan 1991 - 2006, Adopted 1995*

- 6.2.6 The adopted Berkshire Structure Plan 1991 - 2006 sets out general policies relevant to the landscape of the Borough. Structure plan policies of relevance to this study are;

OS1 (Overall Strategy);  
LD1 (Sustainable development);  
LD3 (Environmental impact of development);  
LD7 (Development and Water Resources);  
C4 (Development in Metropolitan Green Belt);  
C5 (Maintenance of the Rural Character of the Countryside Adjoining Built-Up Areas)  
C8 (Designation of and Development within Areas of Special Landscape Importance);  
C9 (Protection and Enhancement of Landscape Features);  
C10 (Protection of Agricultural Land);  
C11(Agricultural Diversification Proposals);  
EN4 (Buildings of Special Character and Interest);  
EN5 (Areas of Special Character including Conservation Areas);  
EN6 (Conservation of Archaeological Heritage);  
EN7 (Protection of Historic Parks and Gardens);  
EN8 (Protection and Enhancement of Wildlife Habitats and Geological Sites of Special Interest or Value);  
EN9 (Development and Sites of Nature Conservation Value);and  
EN10 (Protection and Enhancement of the County's Rivers, Canals and Streams).

- 6.2.7 With regards to local designations the current Berkshire Structure Plan clearly advocates that LPA's delineate and designate Areas of Special Landscape Importance through local plans (Policy C8). The designation of ASLIs aims to '... highlight particularly important parts of the countryside which display landscape characteristics of importance in the county context'. The Structure Plan criteria for the identification of areas for designation were based on those given within the Countryside Commission's 'Landscape Assessment Guidance' 1993 (Landscape as a resource; Scenic quality; Unspoilt character; Sense of place; Conservation interests; and Consensus). More generally Policy C9 refers to the requirement for the protection and enhancement of landscape features within the wider countryside.

- 6.2.8 With regards to the River Thames (Policy EN10) development was to '...protect, and where possible, enhance the waterside frontage and environmentally acceptable proposals which facilitate public access' was to be encouraged. Particular attention was to be paid to'...the environment of the River Thames...and development likely to give rise to a significant increase



in the use of the river... by boats' was to be resisted. The County Council considered that measures to secure the conservation and enhancement of the River Thames and its setting were of similar importance to the ASLI.

*Local Guidance - Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan, Incorporating Alterations Adopted June 2003*

- 6.2.9 The adopted Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan 1991 - 2006 sets out general policies relevant to the landscape of the Borough under the overarching heading of 'Environment' and encompasses policies on the Green Belt, Natural and Built Environments, Development within Areas Liable to Flood, and Pollution and Development.
- 6.2.10 The Environment Chapter seeks to achieve broad environmental objectives to encourage sustainable development patterns emphasising the re-use and redevelopment of urban land; protecting the cultural and natural environment while providing homes for jobs; the encouragement of a healthy environment; improving the quality of urban life; maintaining Green Belt, protecting areas of natural beauty and maintaining and enhancing wildlife habitats.
- 6.2.11 The adopted Borough Local Plan contained Policies N1 (relating to Areas of Special Landscape Importance), N2 (relating to the Setting of the Thames) and N3 (relating to the Landscape Enhancement Area) all of which (bar N3) stem from the Structure Plan guidance detailed above.
- 6.2.12 Policy regarding Areas of Special Landscape Importance (ASLI) broadly covers (1) the Cookham, Bisham and Hurley area including the chalk scarp and dipslopes; and (2) the Home Park, Great Park and Windsor Forest area.
- 6.2.13 The designation aims to:
- Protect and enhance valued landscapes;
  - Preserve and enhance existing wildlife habitats and provide opportunities to create new areas of nature conservation interest, in both rural and urban areas;
  - Maintain and enhance the level of tree and hedgerow cover within the Borough.
  - Promote opportunities for environmental education within the Borough; and
  - Ensure that new development maintains and enhances the quality of the natural environment.
- 6.2.14 Policy regarding the setting of the Thames refers to the river and its valley sides (where they are a distinctive topographic feature) namely much of the valley above Cookham. South of Maidenhead, where the floodplain is more open, the boundary of the designation has been drawn to include all areas where change would have a significant impact on views from the towpath, and thus includes large areas of meadow and farmland.

6.2.15 The purpose of the designation is to:

- Protect the Thames natural riverbanks from inappropriate development and to enhance its setting;
- Retain significant views to and from the river;
- Maintain the distinctive character of the various reaches; and
- To encourage landscape enhancement on areas of degraded land.

6.2.16 Policy regarding the Landscape Enhancement Area covers the land south of Hythe End.

6.2.17 The policy seeks to achieve landscape enhancement of this area through:

- The creation or restoration of landscape features;
- Tree planting;
- Positive land management;
- The provision of opportunities for public access;
- New land uses appropriate to the area such as recreation; and
- The protection and creation/restoration of wildlife habitats.

6.2.18 Further policy areas generally relevant to this study are:

Policies GB1, 2 & 10 (Green Belt, Unacceptable Development and Motorway Services Areas),  
N4 (Common land, Village Greens and Ponds);  
N5 (Tree Preservation Orders);  
N6 (Trees and development);  
N7 (Hedgerows);  
N8 (Sites of Special Scientific Interest, etc.);  
N9 (Wildlife Heritage Sites);  
N11 (Creative Nature Conservation);  
HG1 (Historic Gardens and formal landscapes);  
DG1 (Design guidelines);  
CA2 (Conservation Areas);  
LB2 (Proposals affecting Listed Buildings or their settings); and  
R18 (Colne Valley Regional Park).

### 6.3 Emerging Planning Policies

*County Guidance- Berkshire Structure Plan, Deposit Draft Incorporating Proposed Modifications, March 2004*

6.3.1 The Deposit Draft Berkshire Structure Plan Incorporating Proposed Modifications was revised in March 2004 following public consultation in 2004 in respect of the draft policies and Proposals Map and formulation of subsequent proposed modifications. Within the Structure Plan Vision, two of the five general principles upon which policy is based are;

'Berkshire's natural resources of water, air, land and energy will be carefully managed so as to ensure their availability to future generations.'

'The area will be home to scenic and architectural assets in town and country, and to a wide variety of species. These assets will be protected for future generations and for their own sake.'

6.3.2 The Vision for the Built and Natural Environment is for:

'An area where substantial development pressures have been managed so as to maintain and where possible enhance the area's biodiversity; the character and heritage of its settlements; and its important and characteristic countryside assets, including the Berkshire Downs, the lowland heaths and forests and the River Thames and its tributaries'.

6.3.3 Furthermore the vision for Rural Areas in particular includes that:

'...agriculture will continue to play a major role in the rural economy of Berkshire but there will be increasing diversification into areas like alternative growing practices, farmers' markets, and provision of farm-based leisure services. Other new and existing rural enterprises will also play an important role in contributing to the rural economy. New technology and working practices are likely to lead to an increased number of people who both work and live in the County's rural settlements, although this will not necessitate any significant increase in office and related development in rural areas'.

6.3.4 And also:

'...the open countryside will offer increased leisure opportunities for local residents and visitors. There will be a general opening up and increased promotion of the whole countryside including the numerous areas of parkland, the Thames and its tributaries and the Downlands in the west. This promotion will have led to an increase in the number of visitors coming to the area to make use of these countryside facilities'.

6.3.5 And also:

'...there will be a much greater understanding of, and protection given to, Berkshire's historic assets and landscape character, with an increased level of assessment, recording and strategy development. This knowledge and protection will be mirrored in the County's biodiversity, which will be protected and enhanced for its intrinsic worth'.

6.3.6 Policy EN1 of that document requires that '...the distinctiveness of county- and district-level Landscape Character Types and Areas will be maintained in line with the strategy option developed for each area'. With the Reason for the Policy being that '...it is important that the qualities of the whole of the County's landscape are recognised [not just nationally designated landscapes] so that all the features that give it its historical or local character can be identified, protected or enhanced'.

- 6.3.7 In addition to the North Wessex Downs AONB, Berkshire has other well-known landscapes of regional or national significance. These include the river valleys of the Thames, Kennet, Lambourn, Loddon and Pang, the Colne Valley Regional Park, Windsor Great Park and the lowland sandy heaths along the borders with Hampshire and Surrey'.
- 6.3.8 Under the mechanism that it is proposed to be carried out it states that'...the Berkshire Assessment will act as the context for the development of district-level assessments, where required, which will identify the landscape character in more detail and allow the Councils to develop management strategies that best suit the condition and quality of each area....They will also act as a guide to local plans and development control by indicating the particular local qualities of the landscape which development proposals should respect. Development proposals should be informed by and fully justified in terms of the Landscape Character Assessment'.
- 6.3.9 The emerging Structure Plan therefore confirms both the importance of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the need to protect and enhance the character of the whole countryside. However, there is no reference to Local Landscape Designations within the document, in line with the subsequently published draft PPS 7.
- 6.3.10 It is notable that there are no 'Monitoring Indicators and Targets' identified for Policy EN1, as it is considered 'not susceptible to quantification'.
- 6.3.11 Emerging Structure Plan policies of general relevance to this report are as follows:
- DP1 Spatial Strategy;
  - DP3 Green Belt;
  - DP6 Land Outside Settlements;
  - DP8 Rural Communities;
  - EN1 Landscape;
  - EN3 Biodiversity;
  - EN4 Historic Environment;
  - S4 Other Sport, Recreational, Tourism and Leisure Uses.

*Local Guidance*

- 6.3.12 Work has begun on the review of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan (Incorporating Alterations Adopted June 2003) but within the context of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Act replaces the current system of local plans and structure plans with Local Development Frameworks (LDF), a portfolio of Local Development Documents (LDD), which together will form an authority's planning strategy.
- 6.3.13 The Royal Borough undertook an extensive consultation, 'Partnership in Planning', during March to May 2004 as the first step in reviewing the Local Plan. Details of future work are outlined within the Royal Borough's Local Development Scheme.

## 6.4 Landscape Character Assessment - Guidance on Good Practice

- 6.4.1 Policy that relied on landscape designation inevitably required some form of assessment of the landscape in order to decide which areas of landscape required stronger protection than others.
- 6.4.2 The Countryside Commission's 1993 guidance marked a shift away from the evaluation of relative value (as was popular in the 1970 and early 1980s) towards the assessment of intrinsic character, quality and condition of different landscapes. The recently published Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland, 2002 takes this 'character approach' still further and does not refer to evaluation criteria at all rather that different judgments will be needed depending on what they are intended to inform. For example, whether a judgment on landscape character is needed to directly inform land use planning decisions or feed into broader decision-making tools such as Environmental Impact Assessment or Quality of Life Capital.
- 6.4.3 The guidance accepts the subjectivity inherent in making judgments about landscape character, but makes a distinction between the type of judgment necessary to record whether a particular landscape feature is intrinsic to landscape character and, the type of subjectivity which judges that one landscape is better than another in some way. This distinction is at the heart of emerging approaches to landscape character assessment. Increasingly quality judgments are being explicitly eschewed in favour of;
- Identification of the key characteristics of a landscape; and
  - Judgment about how best to manage or restore that landscape in such a way that its key characteristics are protected and maintained.
- 6.4.4 This approach is just as relevant in 'poor quality' landscapes as it is in 'high quality' landscapes and reflects an acceptance that development need not be unacceptable if appropriate, well sited and designed. The character based approach obviates the need for some types of local designations and suggests instead an approach which places value on the key characteristics of all landscapes, regardless of their relative value.
- 6.4.5 This shift in Good Practice guidance is a reflection of the consensus reached amongst practitioners that the whole landscape constitutes a valuable resource, that landscape change is inevitable and that difficult decisions are required to be made regarding the landscape as a resource in the future.
- 6.4.6 With particular reference to this study, the character based approach will provide the framework, through the identification of key features and attributes of the landscape which should be conserved or enhanced, from which assessments on the impact of proposals on the distinctive character of the landscape can be assessed. Equally, matters regarding the sensitivity and capacity of landscapes to accommodate change can be made as a separate 'judgment' exercise within the framework of the landscape character assessment.

## 6.5 The Way Forward

- 6.5.1 In the light of PPS7's, policy emphasis on local landscape designations and Best Practice on landscape character assessment, this study proposes a character-led approach to policy formation for the future protection and enhancement of all of the Royal Borough's landscape, and that this should be achieved by the inclusion of criteria based landscape policies during the current review of the development plan. **This approach will give protection through Planning Policy to all key features and attributes of the landscapes in the borough.**
- 6.5.2 Aside from this approach, both according with best practice and the draft PPS 7, further reasons for the move to a criteria based policies are:
- Designation can imply a lack of value in other parts of the Plan area which goes against the character based approach;
  - While developers value certainty, it is not possible to create a complete list of sites. This is because the contribution that is made by a particular open area may change over time, for example, as a result of development on neighbouring land and because different types of development would have different affects on the contribution of an open area to local character and distinctiveness;
  - A criteria based policy could accommodate changes in context; for example, new development increasing the amenity or visual value of an area, or possible archaeological significance being identified;
  - The landscape and nature conservation aspects of an area are dynamic and habitats and features may develop in importance over time.
- 6.5.3 It is suggested that the emerging policy and supporting text should focus on the key aspects of the landscape which have been identified through Part 2 of this study, termed within the evaluation work as 'Key Characteristics or Key Features and Attributes'. This would encompass the attributes, features and visual qualities of the landscape which make a significant positive contribution to character.
- 6.5.4 This approach would enable a single criteria based policy on landscape character within the emerging development plan to cover the entire borough. Policy would require development to conserve, enhance and restore the key features and attributes for the relevant landscape character area.
- 6.5.5 This approach would also provide a clear basis for identifying what impact a proposed development would have on the landscape and how this could be mitigated.

## 6.6 The Provision of a Comprehensive Environmental Planning Framework

- 6.6.1 Central to a character led approach to landscape management within the Royal Borough in the future is the consideration of the existing and future role of LCA as a planning tool within the planning framework. This will require a review of existing strategy and planning documents to consider the extent to which these documents make reference to, and use, landscape character assessments as part of the decision making process to date.
- 6.6.2 If the role of landscape character assessment subsequently becomes a central planning tool for development control decisions and embodied as such within the emerging Local Development Framework, the production of clear guidance or advice on the practicalities of using such information within the planning and development decision process would also be required.
- 6.6.3 As detailed previously the value of having a Landscape Character Assessment and Strategy is to help in the process of managing change in a particular place and in so doing help to ensure change is 'positive'. However, the LCA forms only one strand of environmental baseline information which is required to ensure informed decisions are made within the development planning process. A fully integrated approach would also include documentation on the historical and biodiversity resources of the Borough (and plans for them e.g. BAPs) so as to inform emerging policy and planning decisions along with landscape considerations. All three documents could ultimately form part of a 'suite' of baseline environmental planning documents within the wider planning framework for the Royal Borough and as such would inform the emerging Local Development Framework. Through this approach complementary policies for these environmental assets can be considered in parallel and combination with the landscape resource. A robust environmental planning framework would thus be set in place within the Borough to meet the wider sustainable agenda.

## 6.7 Principal Areas for Further Work

- 6.7.1 In the light of the above discussion, and the guidelines and strategies included in Chapter 4, the following recommendations are made for further work and initiatives. They are prioritised in descending order and reflect the possible requirement for technical information to be produced as part of the 'evidence base' for the review of the development plan, and the need in the longer term to gather information to support a comprehensive environmental planning framework for the borough.
- Townscape assessments and open space studies for Maidenhead and Windsor to determine the condition and quality of the urban form of key settlements and inform future landscape capacity work;
  - The finalising of biodiversity action plans for the Royal Borough to provide detailed ecological information which can be referred to during the development planning process and provide information for the further initiatives detailed below;

- A comprehensive historic assessment of the Royal Borough to provide detailed 'time depth' baseline information on the historic landscape of the borough which can be referred to during the development planning process and provide information for further initiatives detailed below;
- A full audit of veteran trees in the borough and their subsequent protection through Tree Preservation Orders followed by, the preparation of a borough wide 'Veteran and Parkland Trees Strategy and Management Guidance' document;
- The comprehensive mapping of ancient woodlands (ASNW and PAW) in the borough and their subsequent designation as Sites of Nature Conservation.
- Develop borough wide Good Practice/design guidance for general farming land management practices;
- Borough wide 'Historic Landscapes and Features' Promotional Initiative to raise awareness of these features in the landscape, their contribution to character and potential funding sources for their management;
- Promotional Initiative to raise understanding and awareness of local construction techniques and styles and use of materials (including sourcing);
- The preparation of a borough wide 'Forestry and Woodlands Strategy and Management Guidance' document, including advice on sustainable management practices with particular reference to ancient woodland;
- The preparation of a borough wide 'Grassland Strategy' document, including advice on management including buffer areas;
- Detailed Design Codes and Guidance for new housing development within the Royal Borough Metropolitan Green Belt (housing exceptions only);
- Undertake a borough wide photographic record of the landscape for monitoring purposes (oblique as well as aerial);
- Undertake Landscape Capacity studies for the principal settlements within the Royal Borough to enable detailed assessments of the capacity of the landscape to accommodate future development to be made, and the potential implications to the settlement and its wider landscape setting; and



6.7.2 **The above list does not include all further work and initiatives detailed within Chapter 4, but instead aims to highlight those actions which are of greatest priority.**

## **6.8 Study Omissions**

6.8.1 During the production of the LCA and Strategy work the following area of information was identified as being lacking as comprehensive 'datasets' for the Royal Borough:

- The extent of common land and village greens (Audit required).

It is not considered that this would invalidate the study.



## 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

### Stakeholder References / Grants Sources

BNCF	Berkshire Nature Conservation Forum
BTCV	British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
BW	British Waterways
CA	Countryside Agency
CLA	Country Landowners Association
CPRE	Campaign for the Protection of Rural England
CSS	Countryside Stewardship Scheme
DEFRA	Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DfT	Department for Transport
EA	Environment Agency
EH	English Heritage

EN	English Nature
FC	Forestry Commission
FWAG	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
LA	Local Authorities
LIG	Local Interest Groups
LWT	Local Wildlife Trusts
NFU	National Farmers Union
NT	National Trust
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PC	Parish Council
RA	Ramblers Association
WGS	Woodland Grant Scheme
WT	Woodland Trust

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### **Planning Policy Unit**

Sarah Ball  
Ian Bellinger

### **Communities of Interest - Workshop Attendees**

*22nd April 2004*

Afternoon Session:

Cllr Mrs Cubley	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead / Campaign for the Protection of Rural England
Ann Darracott	Maidenhead Civic Society
Susan Shearer	Windsor and Eton Society

Evening Session:

John Ashford	Sustrans / Maidenhead Civic Society
Janice Crewe	Maidenhead Civic Society
Diane Harker	Friends of the Earth
Helen Leonard	RBWM Arboricultural Co-ordinator
Martin Woolner	Tree Warden

*27th April 2004*

Afternoon Session:

GMG Cooper	Society to Protect Ascot Environs
Patrick Davis	Fighting for Datchet
John Foulger	Campaign to Protect Rural England
Diana Hughes	Wraysbury Parish Council
MN Jamieson	West Windsor Residents
Judith Lewis	Wraysbury Parish Council
Karin Lohn	Windsor and Eton Society
Tim O'Flynn	Datchet Parish Council
Cllr John Penfold	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Jane Simpson	Windsor and Eton Society

Harry Sparrow	Hurley Parish Council
Peter Standley	Society to Protect Ascot Environs
Des Warren	Shottesbrooke Parish Council

Evening Session:

David Coppinger	Bray Parish Council
Steve Futers	West Windsor Residents Association
Donald Lyon-Davis	Datchet Parish Council
Gordon Marrs	Ramblers Association
Alec Rhodes	Forestry Commission
Colin Shearer	Windsor and Eton Society
Michael Sullivan	West Windsor Residents Association

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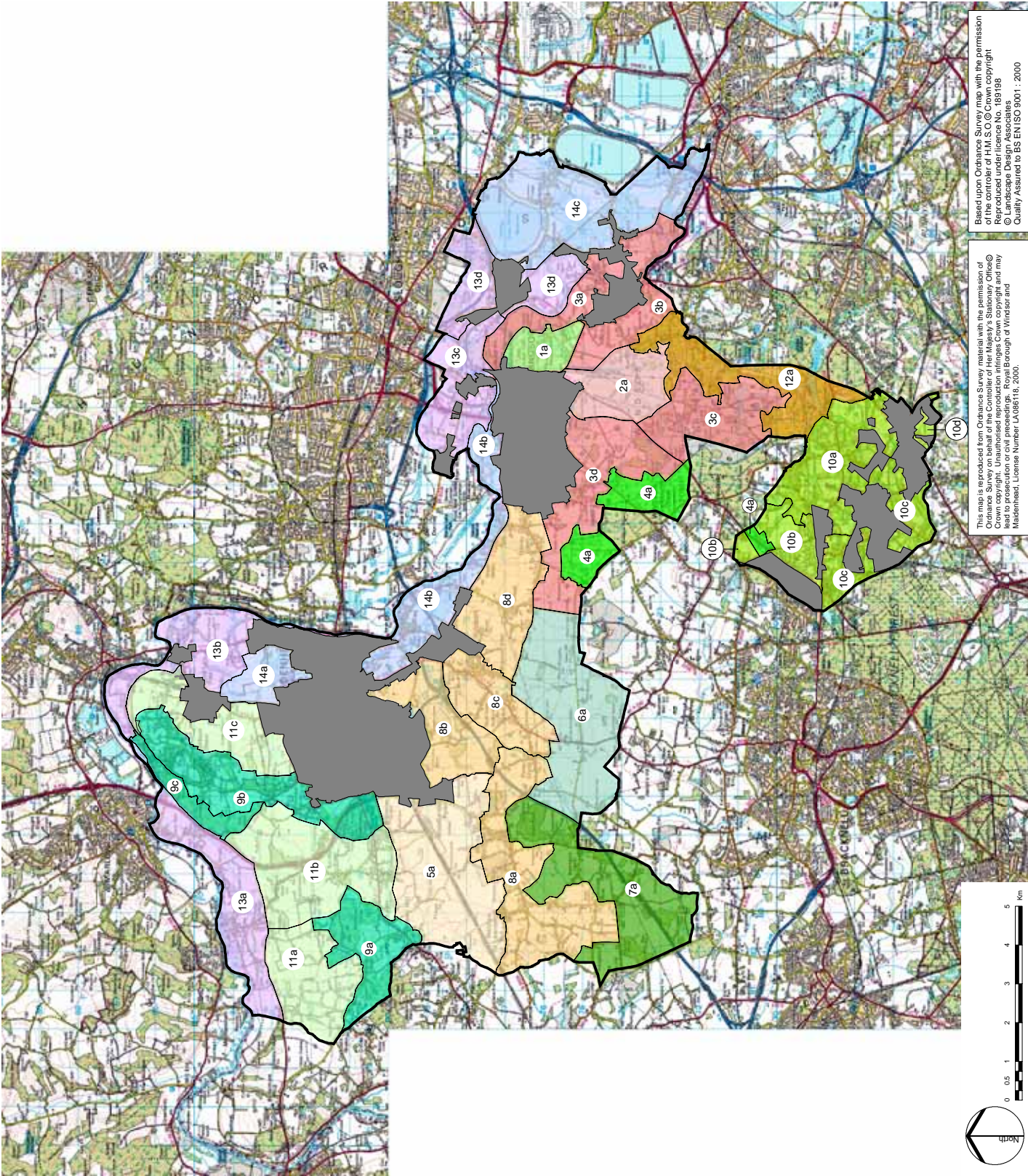
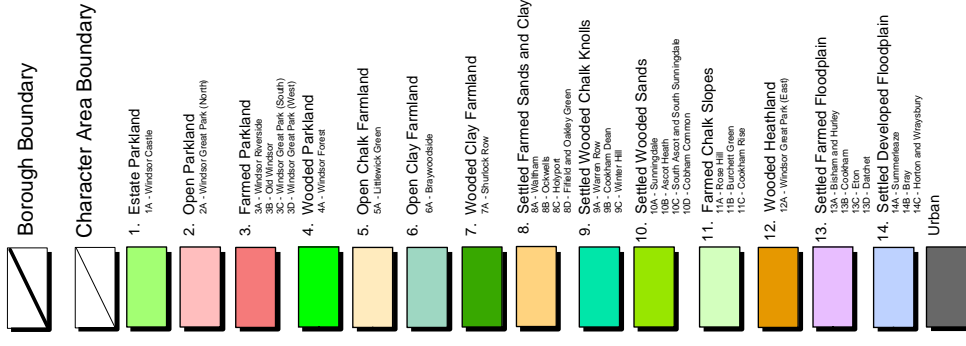
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Landscape Character Types and Areas



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Figure 1