

Shrivenham Neighbourhood Development Plan

Landscape Character Assessment

April 2018



LEPUS CONSULTING
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Shrivenham Neighbourhood Development Plan

Landscape Character Assessment

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Front cover: View towards North Wessex Downs AONB by William Ewart

Contents

1	Introduction	3
1.1	Appointment and scope of work	3
1.2	Aims of the NDP	3
1.3	Geographic context of Shrivenham	3
1.4	National landscape context.....	6
1.5	25 Year Environment Plan	8
1.6	County Landscape Context.....	9
1.7	District Landscape Context	11
1.8	Planning policy context.....	13
2	Method for Undertaking the Landscape Character Assessment	15
2.1	Overview	15
2.2	Step 1: Define purpose and scope of the project	15
2.3	Step 2: Desk study	15
2.4	Step 3: Field study	16
2.5	Step 4: Classification and description of landscape types and character areas.....	16
3	The Evolution of the Shrivenham NDP area.....	19
3.1	Natural factors	19
3.2	Cultural and social factors	25
3.3	Perceptual and aesthetic factors.....	28
3.4	Green Infrastructure	28
4	Landscape Character Areas.....	32
4.1	Identification of Landscape Character Areas.....	32
4.2	Landscape character areas	33
4.3	Scale	34
5	River Cole and Pennyhooks Brook (LCA 1)	36
5.1	Location and boundaries.....	38
5.2	Designations and policy.....	38
5.3	Landscape appraisal.....	38
5.4	Perceptual and aesthetic factors.....	39
5.5	Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness	39
6	Farmland Plateau (LCA 2).....	40
6.1	Location and boundaries.....	42
6.2	Designations and policy	42
6.3	Landscape appraisal.....	42
6.4	Perceptual and aesthetic factors.....	42
6.5	Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness	43
7	Western Farmland Slopes (LCA 3).....	44
7.1	Location and boundaries.....	46
7.2	Designations and policy	46
7.3	Landscape appraisal.....	46
7.4	Perceptual and aesthetic factors.....	46
7.5	Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness	47

8	Pennyhooks Farm and Surrounds (LCA 4).....	48
8.1	Location and boundaries.....	50
8.2	Designations and policy.....	50
8.3	Landscape appraisal.....	50
8.4	Perceptual and aesthetic factors.....	51
8.5	Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness	51
9	Tuckmill Meadows (LCA 5)	52
9.1	Location and boundaries.....	54
9.2	Designations and policy.....	54
9.3	Landscape appraisal.....	54
9.4	Perceptual and aesthetic factors.....	55
9.5	Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness	55
10	Golf Course and Surrounds (LCA 6)	57
10.1	Location and boundaries.....	59
10.2	Designations and policy.....	59
10.3	Landscape appraisal.....	59
10.4	Perceptual and aesthetic factors.....	60
10.5	Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness	60
11	Land North of the Village (LCA 7).....	61
11.1	Location and boundaries.....	63
11.2	Designations and policy.....	63
11.3	Landscape appraisal.....	63
11.4	Perceptual and aesthetic factors.....	63
11.5	Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness	64
12	Land Surrounding Stainswick Lane (LCA 8).....	65
12.1	Location and boundaries.....	67
12.2	Designations and policy.....	67
12.3	Landscape appraisal.....	67
12.4	Perceptual and aesthetic factors.....	68
12.5	Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness	68
13	Land West of Station Road (LCA 9).....	70
13.1	Location and boundaries.....	72
13.2	Designations and policy.....	72
13.3	Landscape appraisal.....	72
13.4	Perceptual and aesthetic factors.....	73
13.5	Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness	73
14	Stainswick Copse (LCA 10)	74
14.1	Location and boundaries.....	76
14.2	Designations and policy.....	76
14.3	Landscape appraisal.....	76
14.4	Perceptual and aesthetic factors.....	76
14.5	Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness	76
15	Land South of Railway (LCA 11).....	78
15.1	Location and boundaries.....	80
15.2	Designations and policy.....	80
15.3	Landscape appraisal.....	80
15.4	Perceptual and aesthetic factors.....	81

15.5	Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness	81
16	Eastern Pasture (LCA 12).....	82
16.1	Location and boundaries.....	84
16.2	Designations and policy.....	84
16.3	Landscape appraisal.....	84
16.4	Perceptual and aesthetic factors.....	84
16.5	Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness	85
17	Eastern Arable Farmland (LCA 13).....	86
17.1	Location and boundaries.....	88
17.2	Designations and policy.....	88
17.3	Landscape appraisal.....	88
17.4	Perceptual and aesthetic factors.....	89
17.5	Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness	89

Appendices

Appendix A	Landscape assessment proforma
Appendix B	Full details for each LT and LCA in the Vale of White Horse Landscape Character Assessment (2017)
Appendix C	NCA information
Appendix D	OWLS information

Abbreviations

AOD	Above Ordnance Datum
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BBOWT	Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust
DC	District Council
GI	Green Infrastructure
GWCF	Great Western Community Forest
GWR	Great Western Railway
km	Kilometres
LCA	Landscape Character Area
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LT	Landscape Type
m	Metres
NCA	National Character Area
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
OWLS	Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study
SAC	Special Areas of Conservation
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
VoWH	Vale of White Horse

List of Figures

Figure 2.1	Landscape Character Assessment - the process
Figure 2.2	What is Landscape?
Figure 1.1	Location of the NDP area in the context of Vale of White Horse
Figure 1.2	NCAs in the NDP area
Figure 1.3	OWLS LTs in the NDP area
Figure 3.1	Topography of the NDP area
Figure 3.2	Ancient Woodland in the NDP area
Figure 3.3	SSSI and LNR in the NDP area
Figure 3.4	Open Greenspace in the NDP area
Figure 3.5	Listed Buildings in the NDP area
Figure 4.1	LCAs in the NDP area

Executive summary

- E1 This report comprises the Landscape Character Assessment for Shrivenham Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).

What is Landscape Character?

- E2 Landscape character may be defined as a distinct and recognisable pattern of elements, or characteristics, in the landscape that make one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse¹.

How is this Landscape Character Assessment written?

- E4 This Landscape Character Assessment is written considering the latest and best guidance for conducting a landscape character assessment. The methodology for this study has been derived from aspects of:

- Guidelines for Visual and Landscape Impact Assessment 3 (2013)²;
- The Countryside Agency Topic Paper 6 (2002): Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity³; and
- Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment⁴.

What does this Landscape Character Assessment contain?

- E5 This Landscape Character Assessment divides the NDP area into Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). This Landscape Character Assessment is structured around the 13 LCAs in which recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness are based.

¹ Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment.

² Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition) Abingdon: Routledge

³ The Countryside Agency (2002) Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity. Accessed on 07/09/17. Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5601625141936128>

⁴ Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment. Accessed on 07/09/17. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscape-character-assessments-identify-and-describe-landscape-types>

For whom is this Landscape Character Assessment written?

E6 This Landscape Character Assessment is written to be included as part of the evidence base for the Shrivenham NDP.

The information included in this Landscape Character Assessment is for the use of a variety of stakeholders including planning applicants, developers, development management officers and neighbourhood development plan groups.

How should this Landscape Character Assessment be used?

E7 This Landscape Character Assessment should be used to understand the distinctive landscape qualities of an area to give context to scheme proposals. The prevailing character of the landscape will help to shape the design and layout of development.

Alongside each landscape area described in this report there is a 'checklist' for managing and mitigating change to help guide the creation of neighbourhood development plans, development proposals and schemes and to provide assistance to decision makers.

1 Introduction

1.1 Appointment and scope of work

1.1.1 Lepus Consulting Ltd has been appointed by Shrivenham NDP Steering Group to undertake a Landscape Character Assessment in the NDP area.

1.1.2 Lepus Consulting is an environmental assessment practice specialising in landscape and ecological impact assessment. This report has been prepared by William Ewart (BSc) and Neil Davidson (BSc, MSc, CEnv, CIEEM, CMLI).

1.2 Aims of the NDP

1.2.1 The outputs of this study are proportional to the aims of the NDP as well as providing a useful reference guide for the NDP area. This work is important for the following reasons:

- To identify, conserve and manage the landscape qualities of Shrivenham;
- The LCA will inform the neighbourhood plan and provide evidence for landscape and character policies;
- The LCA will identify the special qualities of the area to help ensure that new development proposals are of an appropriate design and complement the existing local character;
- The LCA can be used by developers and their architects to help them understand the local character.
- The LCA is also useful for development control officers to use when making decisions affecting planning applications; and

1.3 Geographic context of Shrivenham

1.3.1 The NDP area comprises the administrative boundary of Shrivenham Civil Parish (CP) excluding the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom and Cranfield University. The CP is predominantly a rural landscape with the majority of the population living within the village of Shrivenham.

- 1.3.2 The NDP area is located to the east of the town of Swindon within the district of Vale of White Horse (VoWH). The VoWH is located within the county of Oxfordshire in the south east region of England and comprises a high quality rural environment, with historic towns and villages. It has a high proportion of unspoilt and attractive countryside, a large area of which is nationally designated for its outstanding beauty, namely the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The district covers an area of approximately 579km². A map showing the context of Shrivenham in the context of the VoWH is presented in **Figure 1.1**.

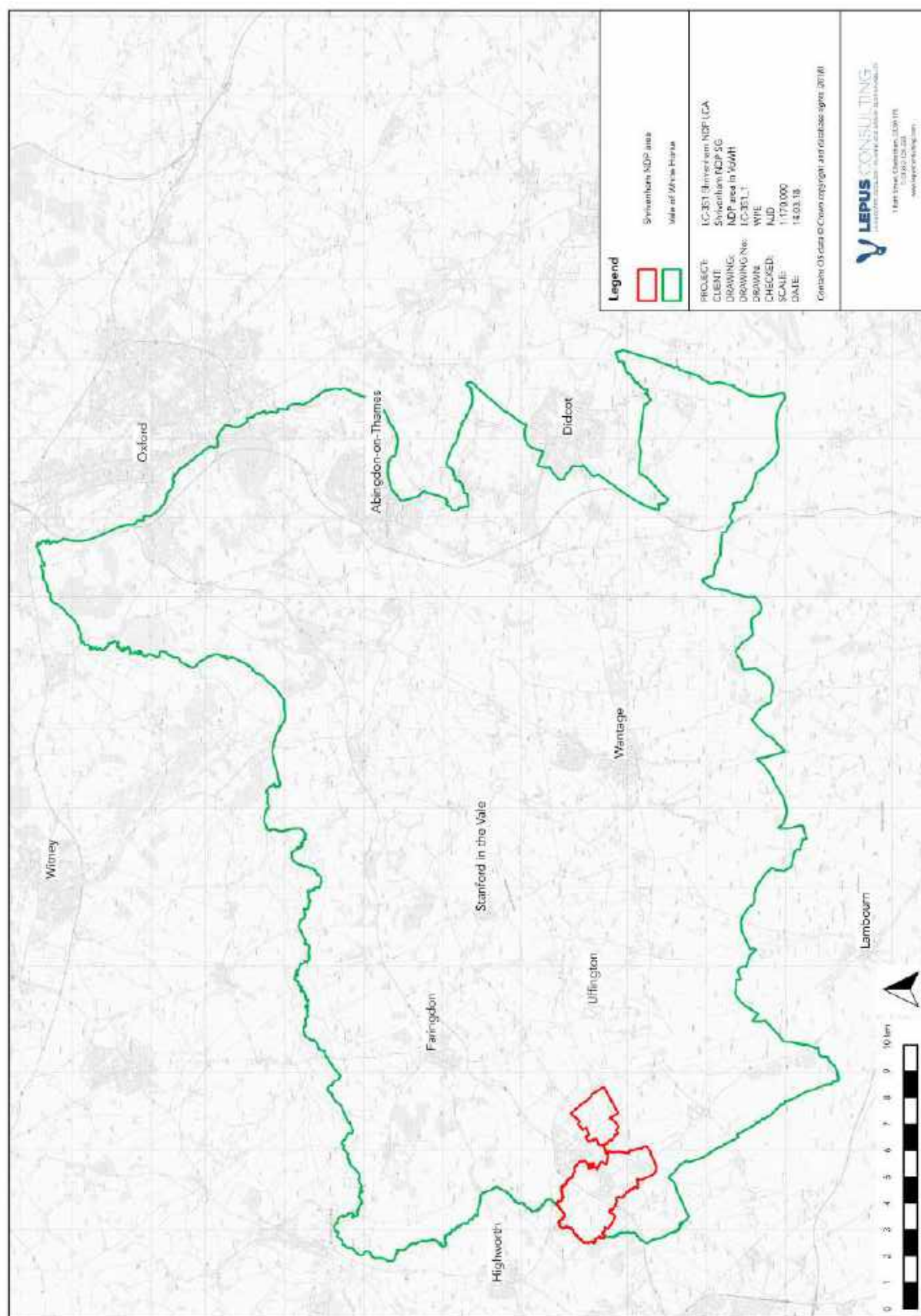


Figure 1.1: Location of the NDP area in the context of Vale of White Horse

1.4 National landscape context

- 1.4.1 At a national level, Landscape Character Assessment has been defined by the assessment work of Natural England, which has divided England into areas of similar landscape called National Character Areas (NCAs)⁵.
- 1.4.2 The NDP area is located within the Upper Thames Clay Vales NCA (No. 108)⁶ and the Midvale Ridge (No. 109)⁷ as designated by Natural England. A map showing the location of these NCAs within the NDP area is shown in **Figure 1.2**. Further information on these NCAs is presented in **Appendix C**.

⁵ Natural England (2014) National Character Area profiles: data for local decision making. Accessed on 18/08/17. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making>

⁶ Natural England (2014) NCA Profile: 108 Upper Thames Clay Vales (NE570). Accessed on 02/01/18. Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5865554770395136?category=587130>

⁷ Natural England (2013) NCA Profile: 109 Midvale Ridge (NE417). Accessed on 03/01/18. Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5431100?map=true&category=587130>

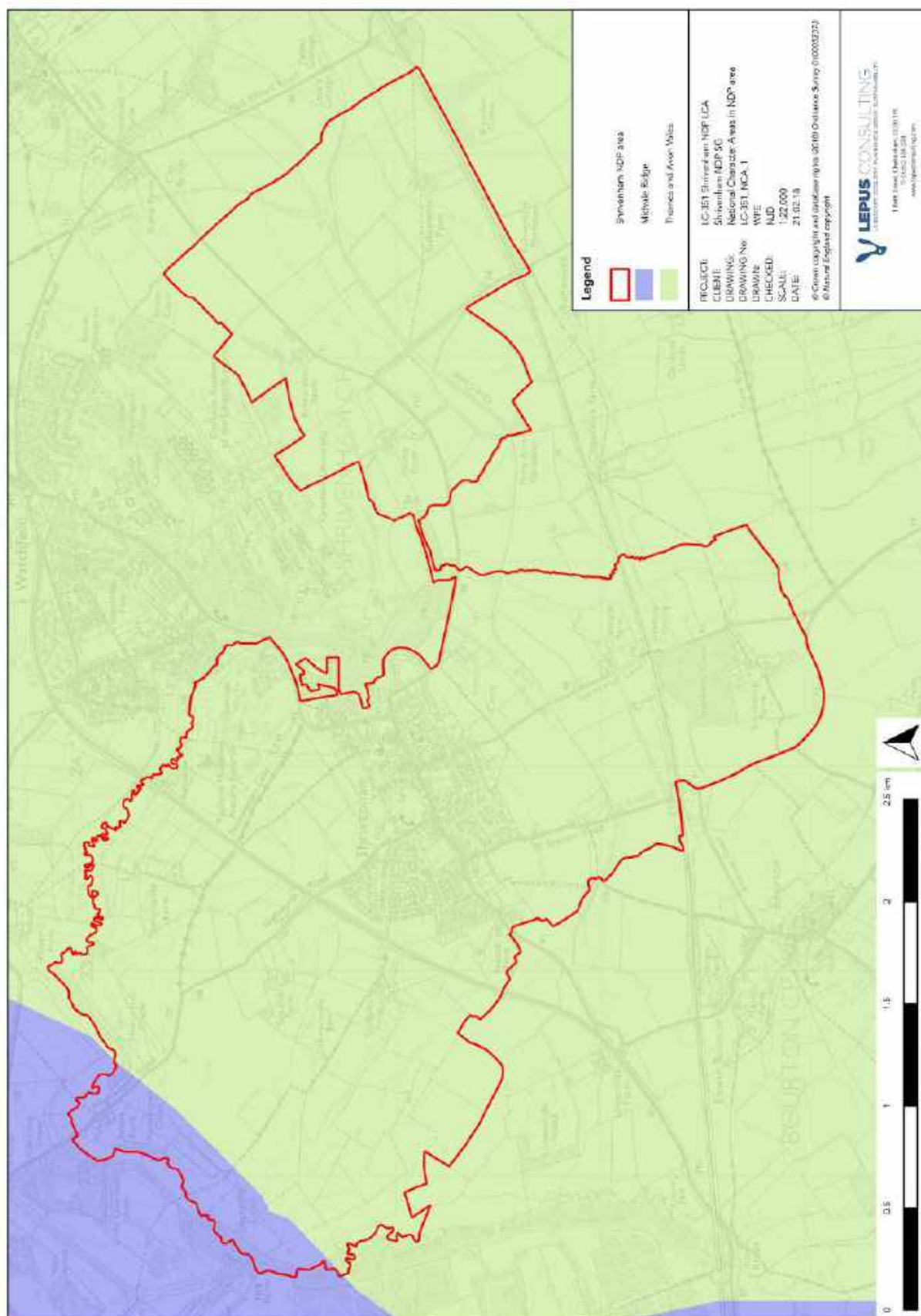


Figure 1.2: NCAs in the NDP area

1.5 25 Year Environment Plan

- 1.5.1 The document: 'A Green Future: Out 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' was published in January 2018 by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)⁸. A description of this plan is as follows:

"This 25 Year Environment Plan sets out government action to help the natural world regain and retain good health. It aims to deliver cleaner air and water in our cities and rural landscapes, protect threatened species and provide richer wildlife habitats. It calls for an approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing that puts the environment first."⁹

- 1.5.2 The plan identifies six key areas around which action will be focused, this includes the policy; 'recovering nature, and enhancing the beauty of landscapes'. An action identified within this policy relevant to this LCA is as follows:

"Identifying opportunities for environmental enhancement in all of England's 159 National Character Areas and monitoring indicators of our landscape's character and quality to improve landscapes for people, places and nature."¹⁰

- 1.5.3 The 25 Year Plan recognizes that; *"Our landscapes – our hills, valleys and plains – were created by age-old geological processes but the way our rural and urban environment looks now owes as much to the work of people as nature. Down the centuries, we have shaped and adapted our rural and urban landscape to suit our purpose, not always aware of the lasting effects of our actions – for good or ill – on the appearance and health of the environment"*.

⁸ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2018) 25 Year Environment Plan. Accessed on 26/02/18. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

1.6 County Landscape Context

- 1.6.1 The current landscape character assessment for the county of Oxfordshire is the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)¹¹. The OWLS is an investigation of landscape character and biodiversity across the county. The OWLS was published in 2004. Three landscape types (LT) from the OWLS are located within the NDP area¹². Each LT is subdivided into local character areas. A map showing the location of these three LTs in the NDP area is shown in **Figure 1.3**. Information on these three LTs is presented in **Appendix D**.

¹¹ OWLS (2004) Oxfordshire Wildlife & Landscape Study. Accessed on 03/01/18. Available at: <http://owls.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/OWLS/Home/>

¹² OWLS (2004) Oxfordshire Wildlife & Landscape Study. Accessed on 03/01/18. Available at: <http://owls.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/OWLS/Home/Oxfordshire+Landscape+Types/>

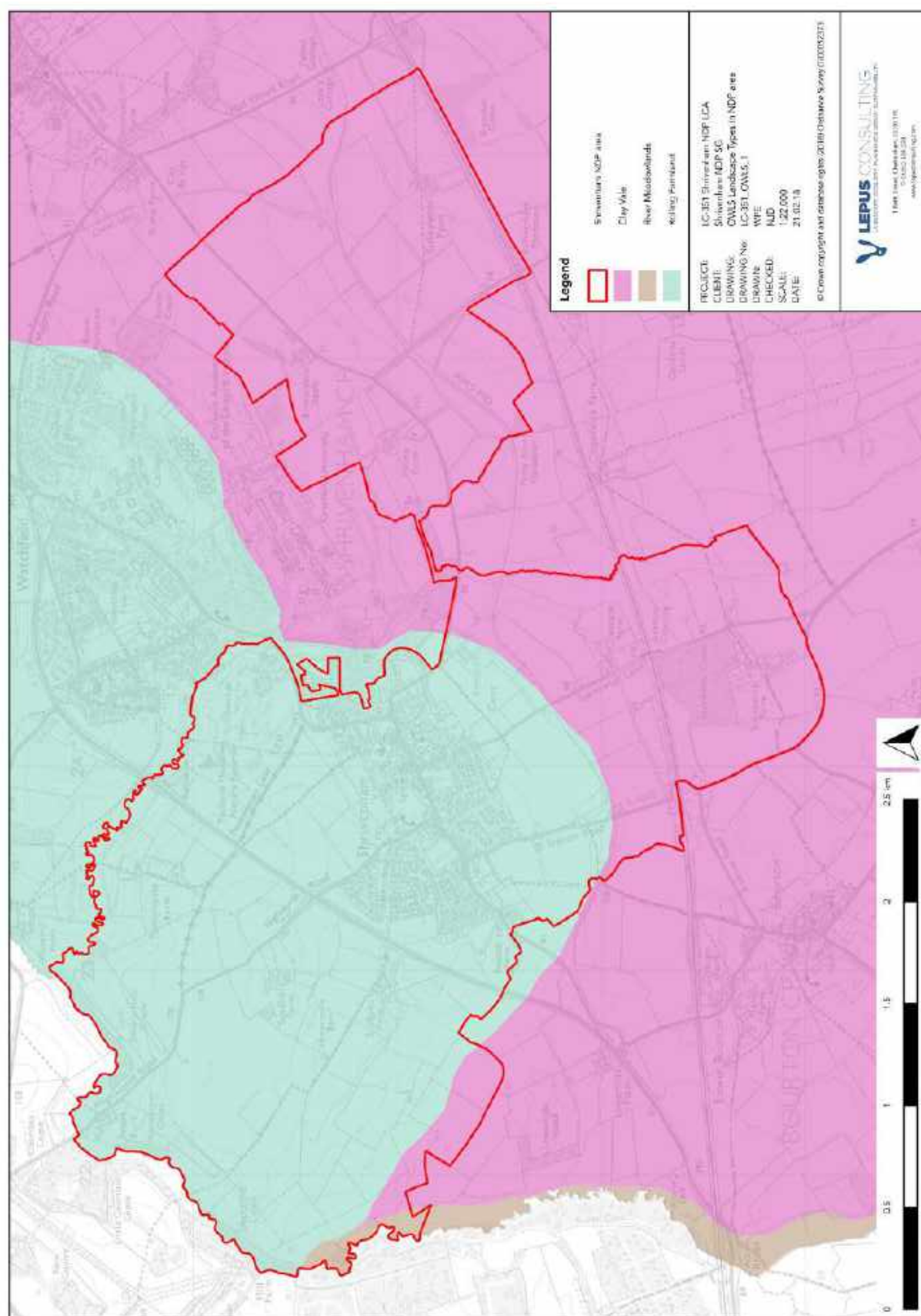


Figure 1.3: OWLS LTs in the NDP area

1.7 District Landscape Context

- 1.7.1 The Vale of White Horse Landscape Character Assessment was published in September 2017¹³ alongside the Local Plan 2031 Part 2. This study identifies 12 Landscape Types (LTs) which are further sub-divided into Landscape Character Areas (LCAs).
- 1.7.2 This study defines LTs as: “generic, often extensive areas of landscape that share common combinations of geology, topography, vegetation and human influences, e.g. ‘Downs Scarp’ or ‘Lower Vale Farmland’”.
- 1.7.3 This study defines LCAs as: “unique, discrete geographical areas of the Landscape Type, e.g. ‘Idstone to Chilton Downs Scarp’ or ‘Appleford Lower Vale Farmland’, which exhibit all, or the majority of, the recognisable characteristics of the Type, depending on the location of the Character Area”.
- 1.7.4 For each LCA, information is provided regarding location and boundaries and key characteristics. For each LT, information is provided regarding location and boundaries, key characteristics, key positive landscape attributes, forces for change/sensitivities/pressures, landscape strategy, land management and built development.
- 1.7.5 The NDP area is located within two LTs. These are:
- Upper Vale Farmland LT; and
 - Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland LT.
- 1.7.6 Forces for change/sensitivities/pressures of the Upper Vale Farmland LT are as follows:
- Fragmentation of hedgerows along field boundaries.
 - Disturbance from transport networks, including the A417 road and the Great Western Mainline railway.
 - Introduction of masts and wires along the length of the Great Western Mainline railway due to electrification.
 - Increase in small scale rural development along roads, and intensification of settlement edge uses such as subdivision of land for paddocks.

¹³ Vale of White Horse District Council (2017) Landscape Character Assessment. Accessed on 04/01/18. Available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/java/support/Main.jsp?MODULE=FolderView&ID=789122104&CODE=498F5A0A897C751630F233DEB1E72432&NAME=19.+Landscape+Character+Assessment&REF=Local%20Plan%202031%20Part%202:%20Publication%20Version%20Publicity%20Period>

1.7.7 Landscape strategy of the Upper Vale Farmland LT is as follows:

“The strategy for the Upper Vale Farmland is to conserve the rural nature of the landscape and resist urbanising influences from infrastructure and residential development. Hedges and trees should be planted to strength the hedgerow network along field boundaries”.

1.7.8 Forces for change/sensitivities/pressures of the Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland LT are as follows:

- Loss or poor management of woodland, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Increase in development, and edge uses such as paddocks, on the edges of existing settlements.
- Sprawling ribbon development along roads, particularly to the east.
- A small group of wind turbines north of Watchfield.
- Solar farm development, albeit less extensive than in the Lower Vale Farmland to the south.
- Overhead pylons crossing the eastern end of the ridge.
- Noise and light pollution from main roads which cross the ridge.
- Occasional golf courses.

1.7.9 Landscape strategy of the Upper Vale Farmland LT is as follows:

“The landscape strategy for the Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland is to conserve the woodlands, hedges and riparian vegetation which give the ridge its treed character, protect remaining semi-natural habitats and resist further urbanising sprawl of low density development”.

1.7.10 The NDP area is located within two LCAs within the Upper Vale Farmland LT. These are:

- VU3: Bourton to Garford Upper Vale Farmland LCA; and
- VU4: Watchfield South Upper Vale Farmland LCA.

1.7.11 The NDP area is located within two LCAs within the Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland LT. These are:

- LM1: West Shrivenham Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland LCA; and
- LM2: Pennyhooks Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland LCA.

1.7.12 Full details for each LT and LCA is presented in **Appendix B**.

1.8 Planning policy context

National Planning Policy

- 1.8.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) acts as guidance for local planning authorities and decision-makers, both in drawing up plans and formulating decisions about planning applications. The environmental role of the NPPF is:
- “...contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.”*
- 1.8.2 The NPPF identifies Landscape Character Assessment as a tool for protecting valued landscapes outside nationally designated areas without the need for designations. Para 170 states that *‘where appropriate, landscape character assessments should also be prepared, integrated with assessment of historic landscape character, and for areas where there are major expansion options assessments of landscape sensitivity’*.
- 1.8.3 Paragraph 109 states that *‘The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes’*.
- 1.8.4 Paragraphs 156-157 of the NPPF emphasise the importance of landscape and its heritage. Significant adverse impacts should be avoided, though mitigated where avoidance is impossible and compensated for if mitigation is not possible.
- 1.8.5 In 2015, the Department for Communities and Local Government drew the importance of landscape character to the attention of the Planning Inspectorate. The minister drew attention to several recent appeal cases in which harm to landscape character has been an important consideration in the appeal being dismissed. Writing about landscape character and prematurity in planning decisions Brandon Lewis (the minister) stated that, *“I have become aware of several recent appeal cases in which harm to landscape character has been an important consideration in the appeal being dismissed.”*

- 1.8.6 *These cases are a reminder of one of the twelve core principles at paragraph 17 of the National Planning Policy Framework, that plans and decisions should take into account the different roles and character of different areas, and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, to ensure that development is suitable for the local context”.*

District Planning Policy

- 1.8.7 VoWh District Council (DC) is developing a new Local Plan¹⁴. The emerging Local Plan sets out a vision for VoWH up to the year 2031.

- 1.8.8 Regarding the Local Plan, VoWH DC states that:

“Local Plan 2031 Part 1 was adopted in December 2016. The Part 1 plan sets out the 'spatial strategy' and strategic policies for the district to deliver sustainable development. It identifies the number of new homes and jobs to be provided in the area for the plan period up to 2031. It makes provision for retail, leisure and commercial development and for the infrastructure needed to support them”.

“The Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites complements the Part 1 plan and sets out policies and locations for housing for the Vale's proportion of Oxford's housing need up to 2031, which cannot be met within the City boundaries. It contains policies for the part of Didcot Garden Town that lies within the Vale of White Horse District, and detailed development management policies to complement the Local Plan 2031 Part 1, which replace the saved policies of the Local Plan 2011. It also allocates additional development sites for housing”.

- 1.8.9 Of particular relevance to this study are the following saved policies in the Local Plan 2011:

- NE10: Urban fringes and countryside gaps.
- NE11: Areas for landscape enhancement.
- NE12: Great Western Community Forest.
- L10: Safeguarding and improving public rights of way.

¹⁴ Vale of White Horse District Council (2017) The Local Plan 2031 Part 2. Accessed on 04/01/18. Available at: <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-plan-2031-part-2>

2 Method for Undertaking the Landscape Character Assessment

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 The methodology for this study has been derived from aspects of:

- Guidelines for Visual and Landscape Impact Assessment 3 (2013)¹⁵;
- The Countryside Agency Topic Paper 6 (2002): Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity¹⁶; and
- Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment¹⁷.

2.1.2 It can be summarised as having four steps:

- Define purpose and scope of the project
- Desk study
- Field study; and
- Classification and description of landscape character types and areas.

2.2 Step 1: Define purpose and scope of the project

2.2.1 Shrivenham NDP Steering Group requested a Landscape Character Assessment to be undertaken. Upon commencement of the project, Lepus met with the Shrivenham NDP Steering Group to confirm the precise aims and objectives of the project, defining the scope of assessment.

2.3 Step 2: Desk study

2.3.1 The desktop study stage consists of an information gathering exercise to prepare a baseline review of natural, cultural and social aspects of the NDP area. This will largely rely on information from the following sources:

- Shrivenham Village Plan.
- VoWH Landscape Character Assessment (2017).

¹⁵ Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition) Abingdon: Routledge

¹⁶ The Countryside Agency (2002) Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity. Accessed on 07/09/17. Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5601625141936128>

¹⁷ Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment. Accessed on 07/09/17. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscape-character-assessments-identify-and-describe-landscape-types>

- Planning applications in the parish.
- Listed buildings in Shrivenham.
- OWLS.

2.4 Step 3: Field study

2.4.1 As stated in Natural England guidance: *"the field study is an essential part of the Landscape Character Assessment process. It presents the opportunity to observe and understand how all the factors identified as part of the desk study interact and are perceived and experienced, to give us landscapes of distinct character. It also enables the identification of other factors that are not evident from the desk study and the chance to record aesthetic and perceptual aspects"*¹⁸.

2.4.2 Natural England's guidance, 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment'¹⁹, explains why landscape character assessment can be used to inform land use planning and specifically local plans. Figure 2.2 illustrates the various components that together make a landscape. These are under umbrella headings of (i) Natural, (ii) Cultural and Social, and (iii) Perceptual and Aesthetic factors.

2.4.3 **Figure 2.1** provides a summary of the stages and detail for each stage.

2.5 Step 4: Classification and description of landscape types and character areas.

2.5.1 The fourth stage of the landscape character assessment guidance from Natural England states that this part of the process deals with the final classification and description of landscape types and character areas, and explains: the difference between landscape types and landscape character areas, and their use; classification at different scales; involvement of people; boundary confirmation; naming landscape character types and areas; how to describe landscape character; mapping landscape character types and / or areas.

¹⁸ Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment. Accessed on 11/09/17. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscape-character-assessments-identify-and-describe-landscape-types>

¹⁹ Natural England (2014) An approach to Landscape Character Assessment. Christine Tudor, Natural England.

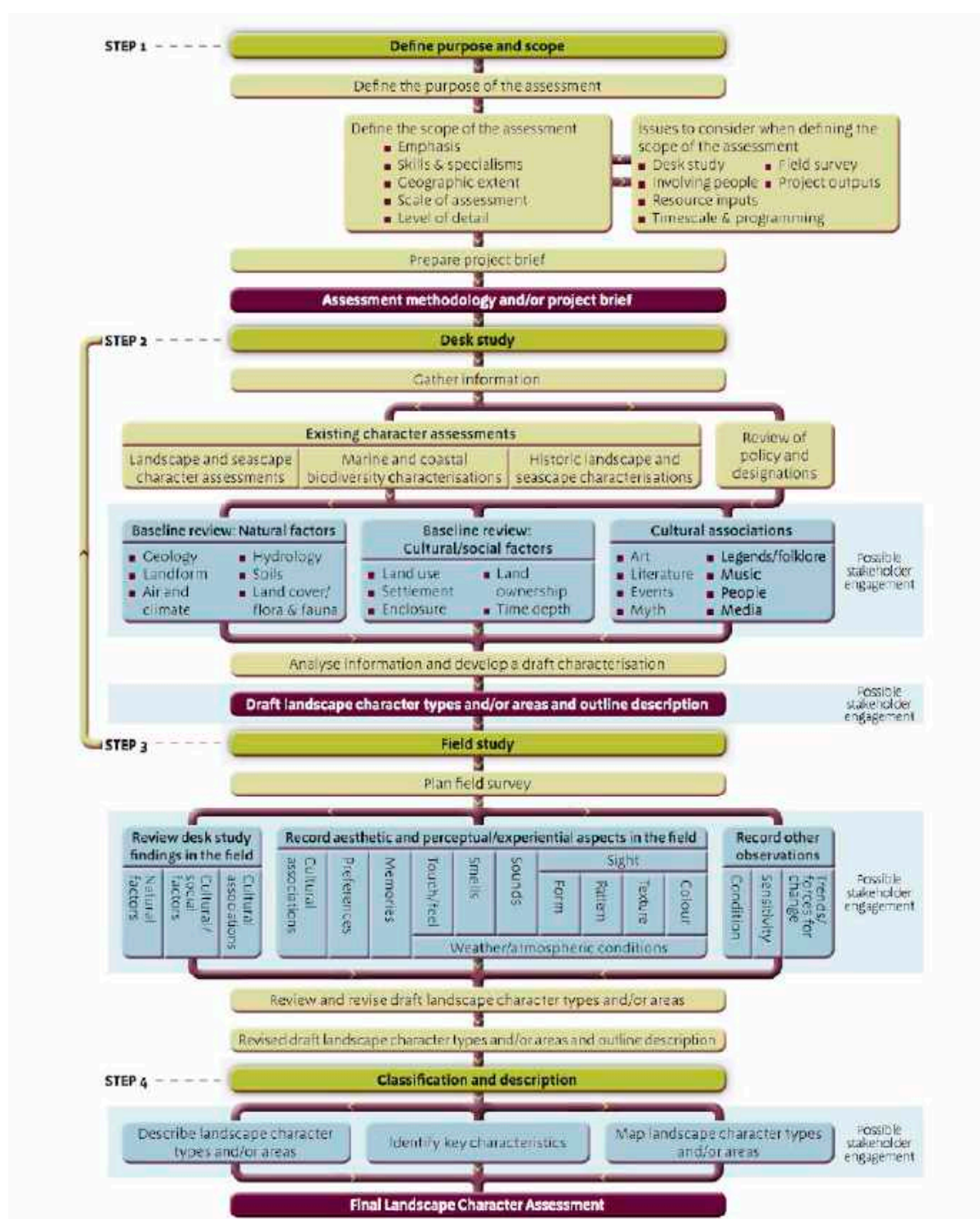


Figure 2.1: Landscape Character Assessment - the process²⁰

²⁰ Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment

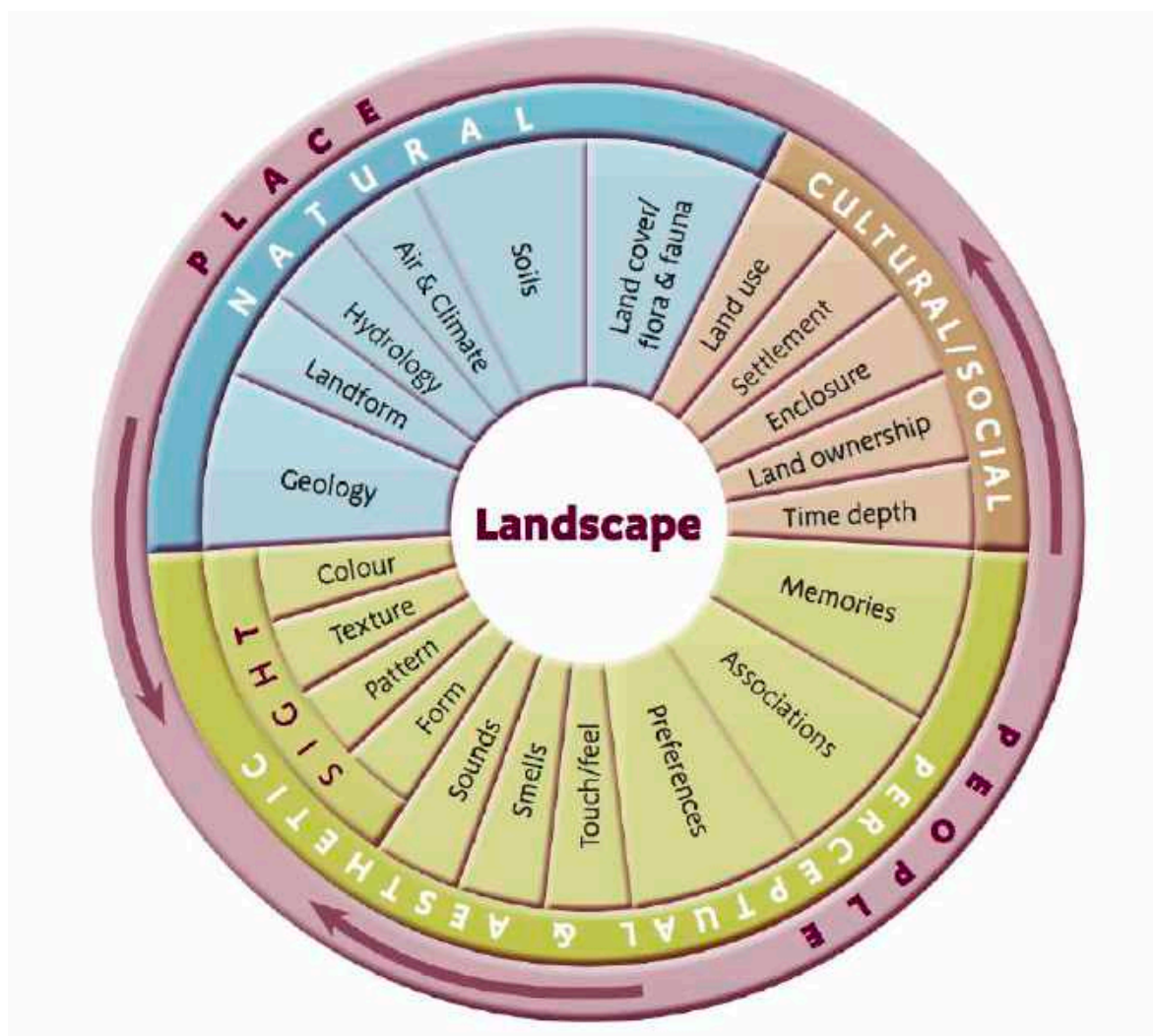


Figure 2.2: What is Landscape?²¹

²¹ Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment

3 The Evolution of the Shrivenham NDP area

3.1 Natural factors

Geology and landform

3.1.1 The geological strata of the NDP area contains the following types of bedrock:

- Ampthill Clay Formation - Mudstone.
- Ampthill Clay Formation and Kimmeridge Clay Formation - Mudstone.
- Gault formation – Mudstone.
- Hazelbury Bryan Formation and Kingston Formation – Sandstone, siltstone and mudstone.
- Kimmeridge Clay Formation - Sandstone.
- Lower Greensand Group – Sandstone.
- Red Down Sand Member - Sandstone, Ferruginous.
- Stanford Formation - Limestone²².

3.1.2 The topography of the NDP area is gently undulating. The highest area of land in the NDP area is at 113m above ordnance datum (AOD), located at Highworth Road near Sandhill Farm to the north of the village of Shrivenham.

3.1.3 Shrivenham is located within a shallow valley between the chalk of the North Wessex Downs AONB which rises sharply to the south of the NDP area and the limestone of the Corallian Ridge to the north.

3.1.4 A map showing topography data from the Ordnance Survey (OS Terrain 50) is shown in **Figure 3.1**.

²² British Geological Survey (2017) Geology of Britain. Accessed on 21/02/18. Available at: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain3d/index.html?>

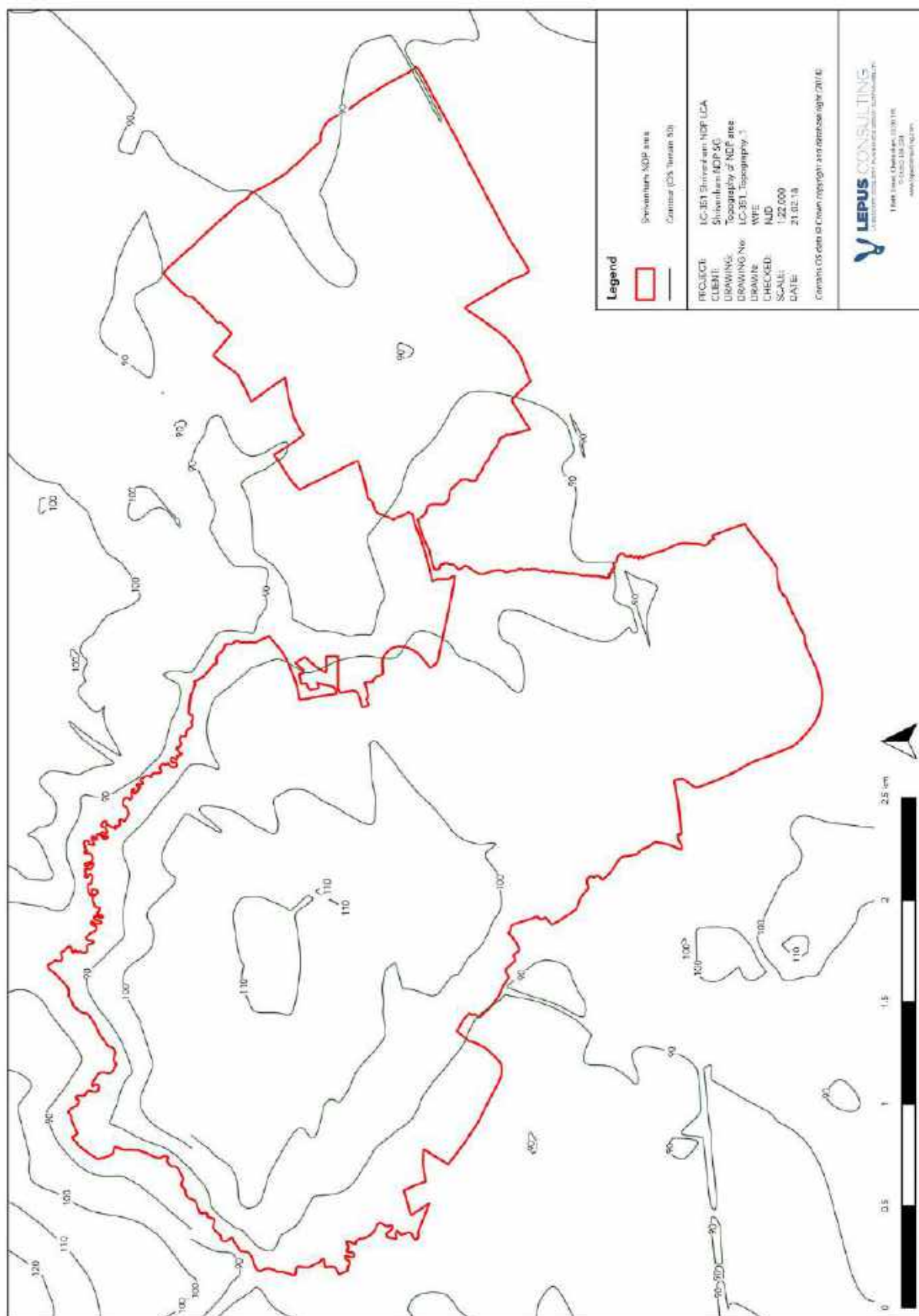


Figure 3.1: Topography of the NDP area (OS Terrain 50)

Hydrology

- 3.1.5 The River Cole and its associated floodplain have created a low-lying channel of land that travels north along the western and northern boundaries of the NDP area before heading north and east, eventually reaching the River Thames. Pennyhooks Brook and Tuckmill Brook travel along the north eastern boundary of the NDP area. A network of smaller watercourses cross through the NDP area.
- 3.1.6 In terms of flooding, areas of flood zone 2 and 3 are located within the NDP area which are associated with the River Cole, Pennyhooks Brook and Tuckmill Brook²³.
- 3.1.7 The NDP area is located within the Thames River Basin District²⁴ and within the Gloucestershire and the Vale Management Catchment²⁵.

Biodiversity/flora and fauna

- 3.1.8 The NDP area contains five areas of Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland (see **Figure 3.2**). These are:
- Beckett Park – Ash Copse.
 - Homegrown Copse.
 - Ratcoombe Copse.
 - Stainswick Copse.
 - Swans Nest Copse.
 - Little Wood²⁶.

²³ Environment Agency (2017) Flood map for planning. Accessed on 02/01/18. Available at: <https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/summary/459969.44/203096.88>

²⁴ DEFRA (2016) Thames river basin district river basin management plan. Accessed on 05/01/18. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/thames-river-basin-district-river-basin-management-plan>

²⁵ Environment Agency (2017) Catchment Data Explorer. Accessed on 02/01/18. Available at: <http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/>

²⁶ Natural England (2018) MAGiC. Accessed on 01/03/18. Available at: <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

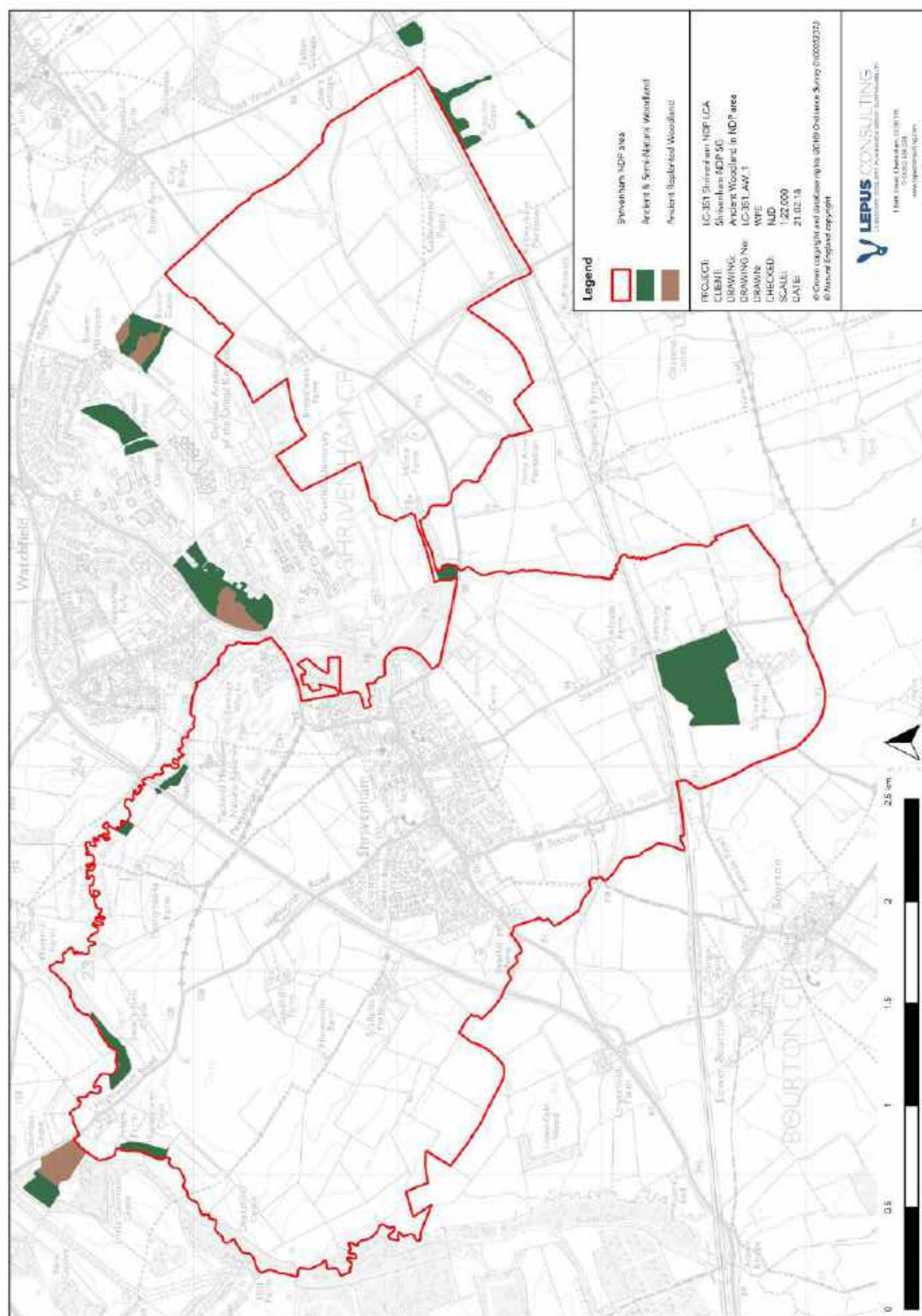


Figure 3.2: Ancient Woodland in the NDP area

- 3.1.9 The NDP area contains Tuckmill Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), located to the north west of Shrivenham Park Golf Club. Tuckmill Meadows comprises an area of 5.50 hectares²⁷. The description and reasons for notification for this SSSI are as follows:

"Tuckmill Meadows are of interest for their remnants of calcareous fen and complex of neutral and calcareous grassland. Calcareous fen is a nationally declining habitat and the number of such sites in Oxfordshire has been severely reduced by drainage and agricultural improvement. The history of the site is well documented and shows that part of the site was farmed under an open-field system during the medieval period.

Tuckmill Meadows lie between Shrivenham and Watchfield in a valley created by the Pennyhooks Brook. The site can be divided into two main sections, one lying along the brook on the alluvial plain and the other in a side valley. The fen has developed on poorly-drained alluvial soils which are rich in organic matter and receive base-rich water from springs arising at the junction of alluvium and Lower Corallian beds. The side valley cuts through alluvium, sands and silts of the Lower Corallian, and limestone of the Coral Rag. The latter rocks have weathered to produce a brown rendzina of the Sherborne Series.²⁸"

- 3.1.10 Tuckmill Meadows SSSI is also designated as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR)²⁹. A map showing the location of Tuckmill Meadows SSSI and LNR is presented in **Figure 3.3**.

- 3.1.11 Distinctive field boundaries, with hedgerow trees, help mark out the network of fields, small and large, that surround the village of Shrivenham.

²⁷ Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust (no date) Tuckmill Meadow. Accessed on 05/01/18. Available at: <http://www.bbwt.org.uk/reserves/tuckmill-meadow>

²⁸ Natural England (no date) Tuckmill Meadows SSSI. Accessed on 05/01/18. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=S1000491&SiteName=tuckmill%20meadows&countyCode=34&responsiblePerson=&unitId=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=>

²⁹ Natural England (no date) Tuckmill Meadows LNR. Accessed on 05/01/18. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteLNRDetail.aspx?SiteCode=L1009213&SiteName=tuckmill%20meadows&countyCode=34&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=>

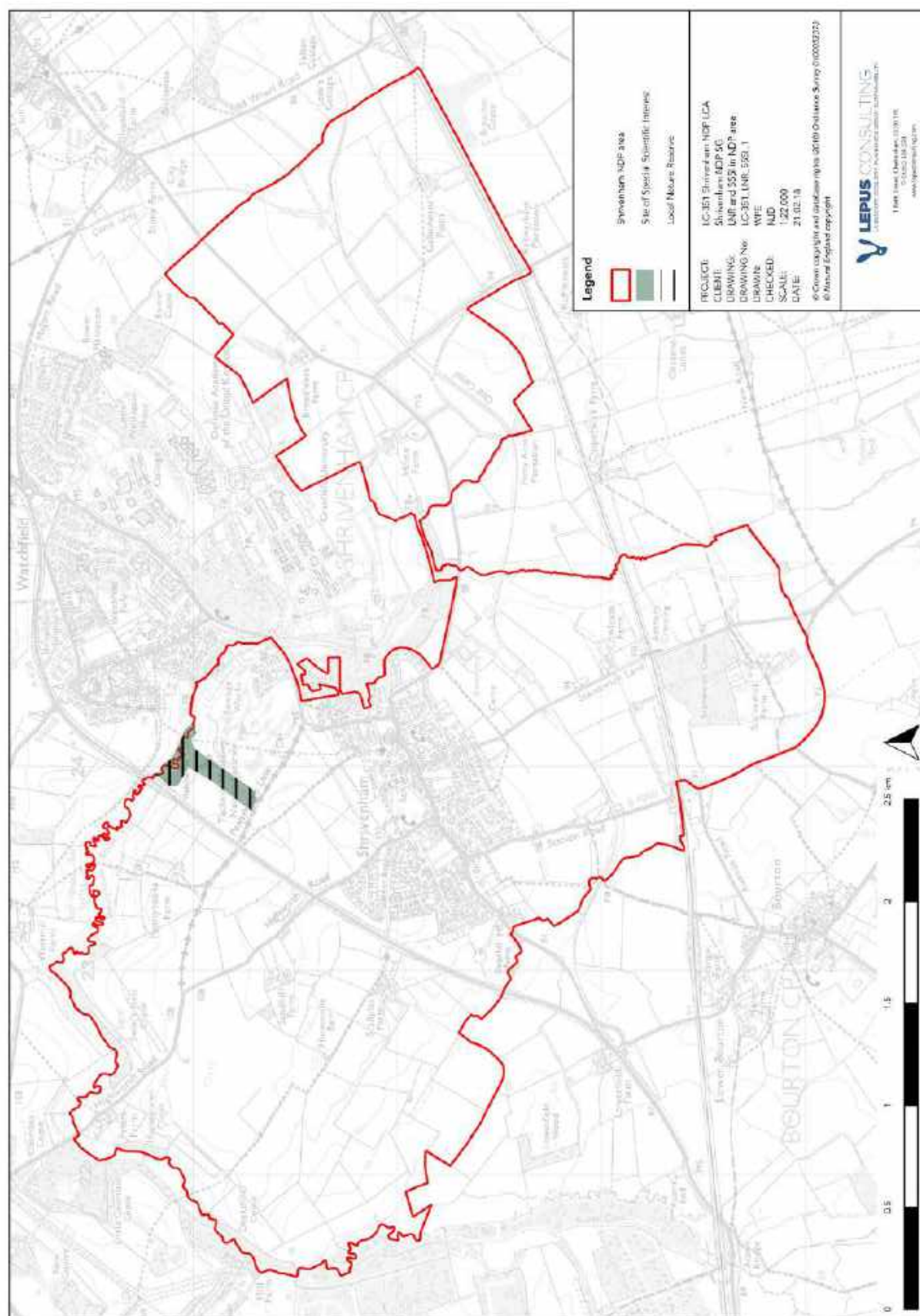


Figure 3.3: SSSI and LNR in the NDP area

3.2 Cultural and social factors

Land use and land management/settlement

- 3.2.1 The Domesday Book (1086) records that there was a substantial Anglo-Saxon settlement in the area in the “demesne” or personal estate of the king consisting of 46 hides or approximately 5,000 acres. Over the centuries Shrivenham remained a settled agricultural community until the Industrial Revolution and the expansion of Swindon following the introduction of Brunel’s Great Western Railway³⁰.

Great Western Community Forest

- 3.2.2 The NDP area is wholly located within the Great Western Community Forest (GWCF). GWCF is one of 12 community forests in England and covers an area of 168 square miles. The GWCF is creating and maintaining a high quality environment for local people by diversifying land-use, revitalising derelict landscapes, enhancing biodiversity and providing new opportunities for leisure, recreation, cultural activity, education, healthy living and social and economic development³¹.

Listed Buildings

- 3.2.3 The NDP area contains 40 Listed Buildings including one Grade I Listed Building (Church of St Andrew) and one Grade II* Listed Building (Elm Tree House)³². The majority of these Listed Buildings are located within the Conservation Area. A map showing the location of Listed Buildings in the NDP area is presented in **Figure 3.4**.

Public rights of way

- 3.2.4 A limited network of public rights of way (PRoW) including footpaths and bridleways cross through the NDP area. A byway open to all traffic is located along Pennyhooks Lane. As part of the Year 2000 celebrations, the Village Fete Committee constructed a circular walk around the village, named the ‘Shrivenham Circular Walk’.

³⁰ Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (2009) Shrivenham Village Plan.

³¹ Wiltshire Council (2015) Great Western Community Forest. Accessed on 05/01/18. Available at: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/recreation-trees-forests>

³² Historic England (2018) Search the list. Accessed on 05/01/18. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

Wilts & Berks Canal

- 3.2.5 A section of the disused Wilts & Berks Canal crosses through the NDP area to the south of Shrivenham. The following text regarding the canal has been provided by the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust³³.
- 3.2.6 The Wilts & Berks Canal was built between 1795 and 1810 primarily to bring coal into North Wiltshire and what was then North Berkshire from the Somerset Coalfields and to allow the agricultural produce of the VoWH to be traded further afield than the local area. In 1793 father and son Robert and William Whitworth were commissioned to survey the route and the Act of Parliament was passed on the 30th April 1795.
- 3.2.7 In the Vale, branches of the main line were built into Wantage and Longcot. The canal successfully paid dividends until the 1870s but the coming of the Great Western Railway (GWR) and subsequent opening of the many branch lines gradually took away the trade. The GWR had tried to get the canal company to re-route the canal south of the railway line between Acorn Bridge and Uffington but this was refused as the trade into the various wharfs including Longcot was still at that time substantial. By the time the Wantage Tramway was built in 1875 and had to pay the canal company for the right to build a bridge the canal was described as "a muddy" ditch" albeit that many thousand tons of coal continued to be delivered to the various wharfs across the Vale including those at Bourton and Shrivenham. In latter days coal came in from the midlands instead of Somerset. In 1901 an aqueduct near Chippenham collapsed cutting Swindon off from the south and trade collapsed. In 1914 the canal was officially abandoned by Act of Parliament, with the land reverting to the riparian landowners or Swindon Borough Council.
- 3.2.8 The movement for restoration of the canal network in England developed after the Second World War during which the Railway Companies had taken the opportunity to close parts of the network. Those that had been owned by the railways were taken into public ownership in 1948. These navigable waterways became British Waterways and more recently they were transferred to become the Canal & River Trust. In the 1950s and 60s much of the network was restored but rather than for freight this was for leisure purposes.

³³ Wilts & Berks Canal Trust (2018) <https://www.wbct.org.uk/>

- 3.2.9 The Wilts & Berks Amenity Group was formed in 1977 with the aim of preserving the remains of the canal and promoting restoration of small amenity areas. In 2002 this became the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust. At the same time the Wiltshire, Swindon and Oxfordshire Canal Partnership was established in support of the Trust, its members being the local authorities in which the historic line of the canal sits and other associated bodies.
- 3.2.10 The Wilts & Berks Canal is protected under Section 32 of the Vale of White Horse District Council Local Plan 2031, Development Management Policies
- 3.2.11 The aim of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust is to protect, conserve and improve the route of the Wilts & Berks and North Wilts Canals, and branches, for the benefit of the community and environment, with the ultimate goal of restoring a continuous navigable waterway linking the Kennet & Avon canal near Melksham, the River Thames near Abingdon, and the Thames & Severn canal near Cricklade.
- 3.2.12 The Canal Trust has a Chief Executive and committee tasked with the delivery of the restoration of the canal, overseen by a Board of Trustees. The Canal Trust is also formed of various branches along the route undertaking over the years,
- 3.2.13 The West Vale branch based in Shrivenham covers the historic line of the canal from the Swindon Unitary (Wiltshire)/Oxfordshire boundary west of Acorn Bridge through to the Baulking Road, Uffington.
- 3.2.14 Work undertaken includes clearing several lengths of canal south of Shrivenham, opening up 1500m of towpath to walkers. Two hectares of land east of Stainswick Lane, including 100m of canal was purchased some years ago, the land excavated and landscaped to produce a pocket park for the community.
- 3.2.15 Stepping stones bridleway to the west of Station Road was a traditional brick arch bridge but little remained. This has been re-built and once more carries the Bridleway. The rebuilding removes one blockage to restoration of the canal between Bourton and Stainswick Lane. The arch bridge carrying the B4000 Shrivenham to Ashbury road is the only extant canal bridge carrying road traffic.

- 3.2.16 The Wilts & Berks Canal Trust in conjunction with the Wiltshire, Swindon and Oxfordshire Canal Partnership and hence the various local authorities aims to substantially complete restoration with -in the next 10-15 years working through consultation with the relevant stakeholders, masterplanning and in accordance with our aims and the terms of the Local Plan Policy.

3.3 Perceptual and aesthetic factors

Views

- 3.3.1 Visual factors are important in assessing the character of a landscape. The most notable visual landmarks are outlined below.
- 3.3.2 The North Wessex Downs AONB dominates the skyline to the south of the NDP area with views ranging between White Horse Hill to Liddington Hill. The White Horse Hill Figure located on White Horse Hill is a scheduled ancient monument³⁴ that is highly visible from the NDP area. An iron age fort exists at Liddington Hill which is also highly visible.
- 3.3.3 The wind turbines at the Westmill Wind Farm to the north of the NDP area are a visual landmark that are visible from much of the area to the north of the village. Commercial buildings at the South Marston Industrial Estate to the east of Swindon are visible from the western parts of the NDP area.

Noise

- 3.3.4 The A420 road and the Great Western main line railway are the most notable aural detractors that cross through the NDP area.

3.4 Green Infrastructure

- 3.4.1 Natural England defines Green Infrastructure (GI) as:

“Green Infrastructure is a strategically planned and delivered network comprising the broadest range of high quality green spaces and other environmental features. It should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering those ecological services and quality of life benefits required by the communities it serves and needed to underpin sustainability. Its

³⁴ Historic England (2018) The White Horse hill figure 170m NNE of Uffington Castle on Whitehorse Hill. Accessed on 12/03/18. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1008413>

design and management should also respect and enhance the character and distinctiveness of an area with regard to habitats and landscape types.

Green Infrastructure includes established green spaces and new sites and should thread through and surround the built environment and connect the urban area to its wider rural hinterland. Consequently it needs to be delivered at all spatial scales from sub-regional to local neighbourhood levels, accommodating both accessible natural green spaces within local communities and often much larger sites in the urban fringe and wider countryside.”³⁵

3.4.2 As stated in the Natural England guidance, types of GI include the following:

- Parks and Gardens – urban parks, Country and Regional Parks, formal gardens.
- Amenity Greenspace – informal recreation spaces, housing green spaces, domestic gardens, village greens, urban commons, other incidental space, green roofs.
- Natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces - woodland and scrub, grassland (e.g. downland and meadow), heath or moor, wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and disturbed ground), bare rock habitats (e.g. cliffs and quarries).
- Green corridors – rivers and canals including their banks, road and rail corridors, cycling routes, pedestrian paths, and rights of way
- Other - allotments, community gardens, city farms, cemeteries and churchyards.³⁶

3.4.3 Regarding GI, the NPPF states that local planning authorities should:

“set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure.”

3.4.4 The NDP area contains valuable GI assets. These include the allotments, the bowling club, the recreation ground, the cemetery of St Andrew’s Church, the cemetery adjacent at Stainswick Lane, the golf course and the disused canal. A map showing open greenspace in the NDP area using data from the Ordnance Survey is presented in **Figure 3.4**.

³⁵ Natural England (2009) Natural England’s Green Infrastructure Guidance (NE176). Accessed on 29/03/18. Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35033>

³⁶ Natural England (2009) Natural England’s Green Infrastructure Guidance (NE176). Accessed on 29/03/18. Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35033>



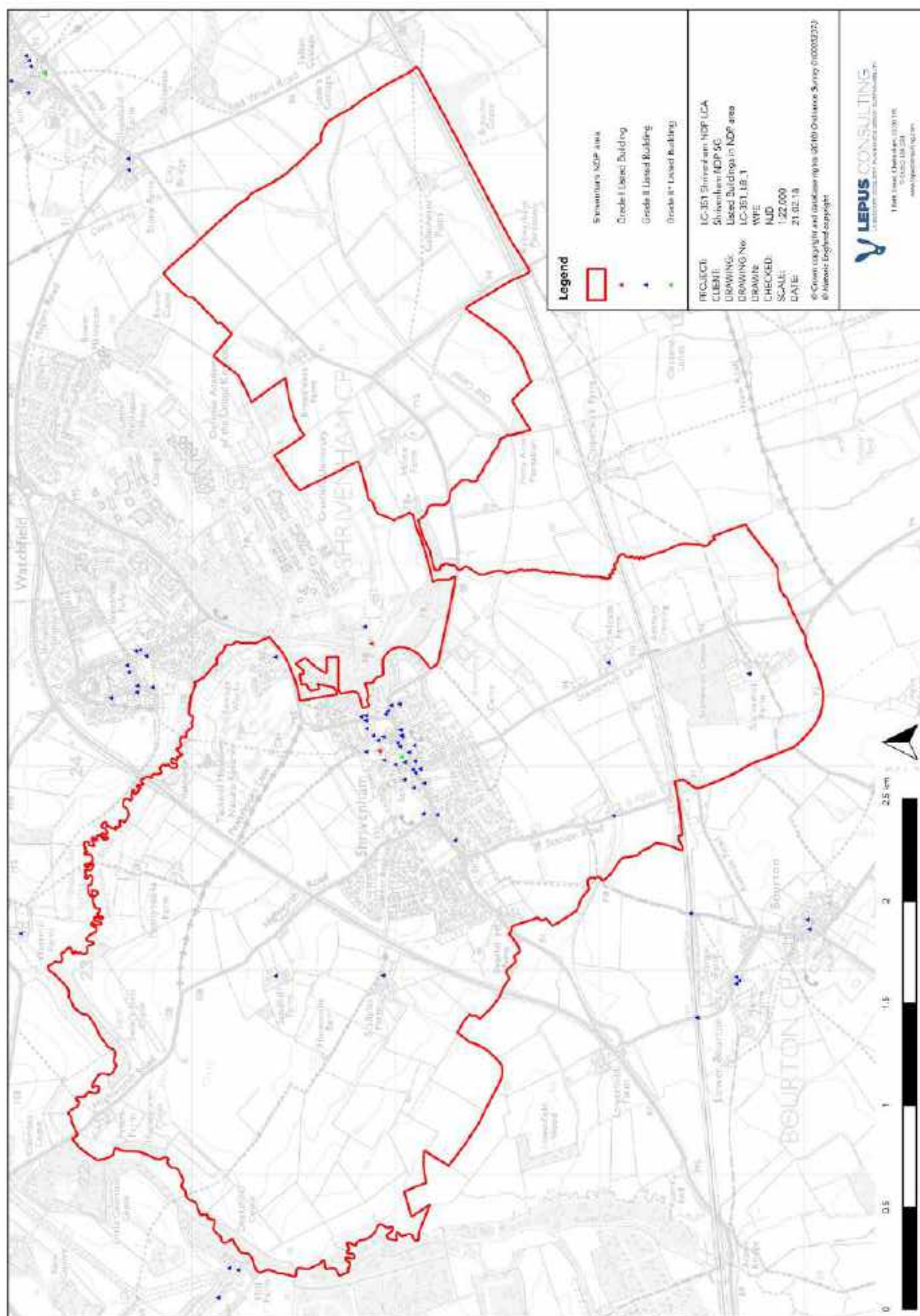


Figure 3.5: Listed Buildings in the NDP area

4 Landscape Character Areas

4.1 Identification of Landscape Character Areas

4.1.1 The method for identifying LCAs is presented in **Chapter 2** and has been derived from aspects of:

- Guidelines for Visual and Landscape Impact Assessment 3 (2013)³⁷;
- The Countryside Agency Topic Paper 6 (2002): Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity³⁸; and
- Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment³⁹.

4.1.2 It can be summarised as having four steps:

- Define purpose and scope of the project;
- Desk study;
- Field study; and
- Classification and description of landscape character areas.

4.1.3 Natural England's guidance, 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment'⁴⁰, explains why landscape character assessment can be used to inform land use planning and specifically local plans. **Figure 2.2** illustrates the various components that together make a landscape. These are under umbrella headings of (i) Natural, (ii) Cultural and Social, and (iii) Perceptual and Aesthetic factors.

4.1.4 Natural England's guidance, 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment'⁴¹ includes a definition of landscape character areas. These have been reproduced in **Box 5.1**.

³⁷ Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition) Abingdon: Routledge

³⁸ The Countryside Agency (2002) Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity. Accessed on 07/09/17. Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5601625141936128>

³⁹ Natural England (2014) An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment. Accessed on 07/09/17. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscape-character-assessments-identify-and-describe-landscape-types>

⁴⁰ Natural England (2014) An approach to Landscape Character Assessment. Christine Tudor, Natural England.

⁴¹ Natural England (2014) An approach to Landscape Character Assessment. Christine Tudor, Natural England.

Box 5.1: Landscape types and landscape character areas

Landscape character areas...

- are the unique individual geographical areas in which landscape types occur;
- share generic characteristics with other areas of the same type, but have their own particular identity;
- can often be more readily recognised and identified by non-specialists – sense of place is often important to local people and visitors for example;
- may often be more prevalent than landscape character types, because some types will occur in more than one area;
- can be identified at each level in the hierarchy of assessment;
- can provide a good spatially referenced framework from where patterns of local distinctiveness, and factors influencing sense of place, can be drawn; and
- can be used to develop tailored policies and strategies, that reflect the characteristics that make a given landscape different or special.

4.2 Landscape character areas

4.2.1 Following careful analysis of landscape character in the NDP area, the following 13 LCAs have been identified. These are presented in **Figure 4.1** and are listed below:

- River Cole and Pennyhooks Brook;
- Farmland Plateau;
- Western Farmland Slopes;
- Pennyhooks Farm and Surrounds;
- Tuckmill Meadows;
- Golf Course and Surrounds;
- Land North of the Village;
- Land Surrounding Stainswick Lane;
- Land West of Station Road;
- Stainswick Copse;
- Land South of Railway Line;
- Eastern Pasture; and
- Eastern Arable Farmland.

4.3

Scale

4.3.1

Landscape classification can be prepared at a variety of scales depending on the purpose and scope of the project. The scale of the area to be assessed determines the likely level at which the differences between homogeneous and distinctive factors are separated to identify character areas. The process of characterisation divides landscapes into areas of distinct, recognisable, and consistent character, and groups areas of similar character together. The characterisation provides the spatially referenced framework on which landscape character descriptions, and follow on judgements about future policy development, design strategies, or land management may be based.

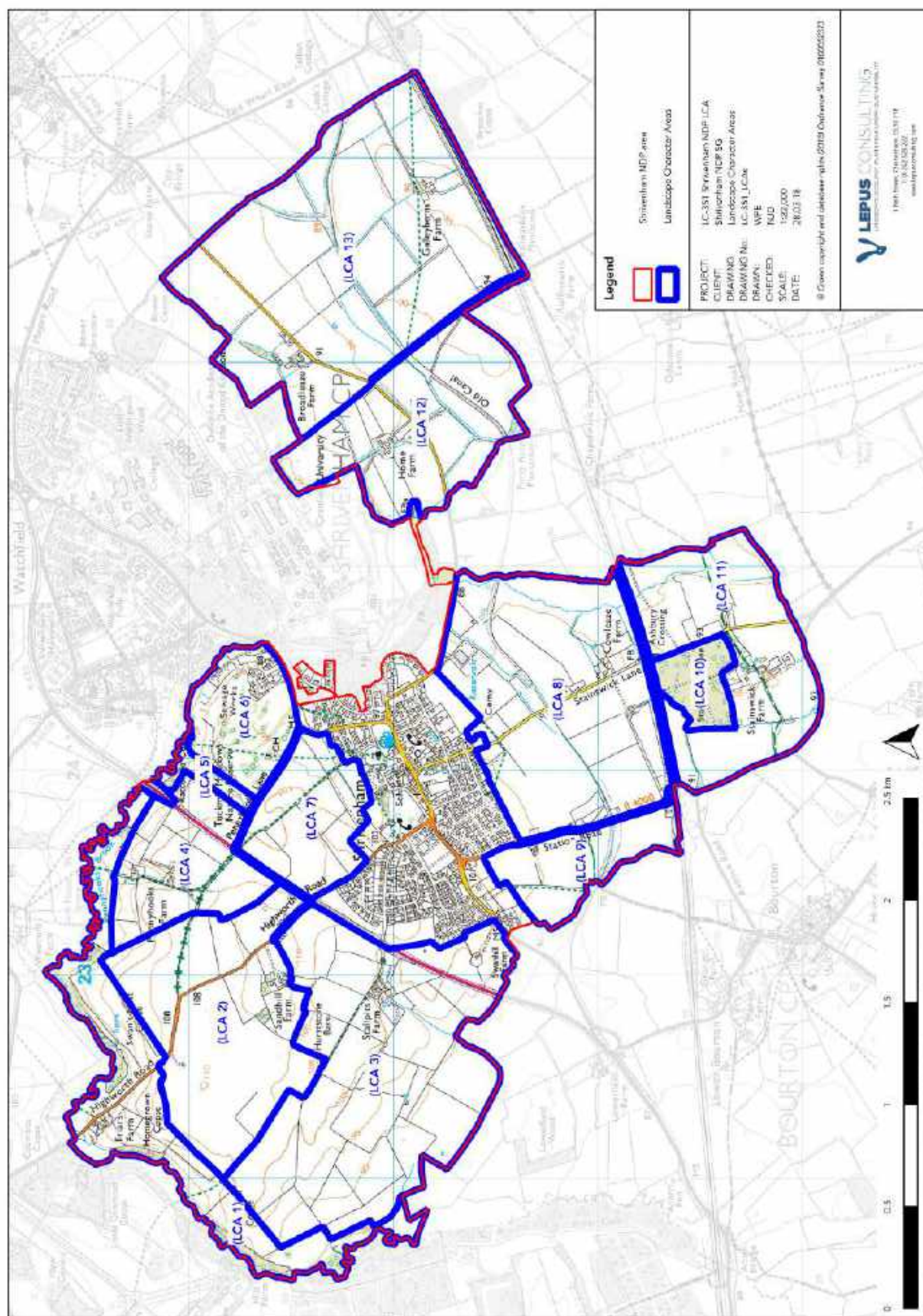
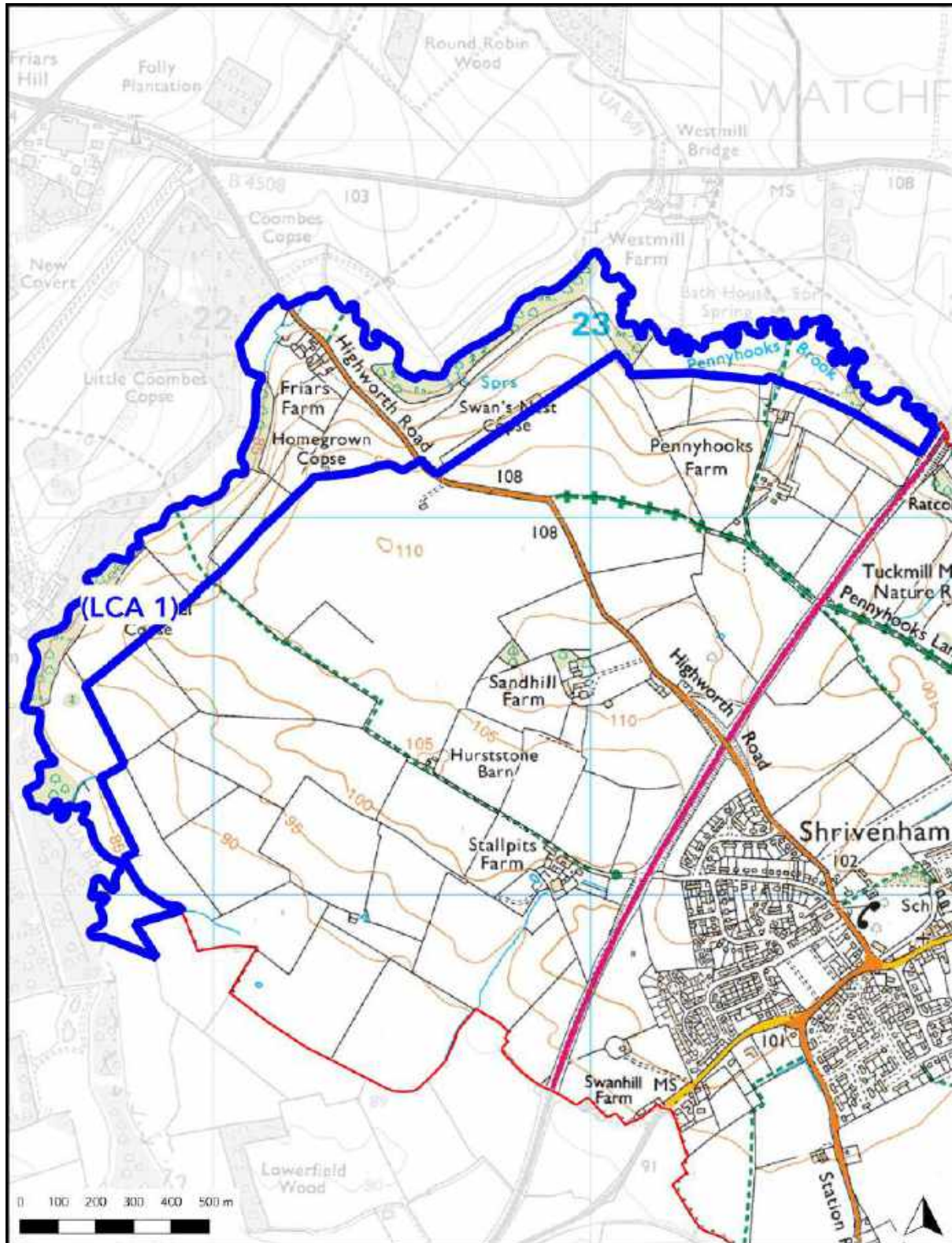


Figure 4.1: LCAs in the NDP area

5 River Cole and Pennyhooks Brook (LCA 1)



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View of Swan's Nest Copse across the River Cole



View of pasture adjacent to the River Cole near Friarsmill Bridge

5.1 Location and boundaries

- 5.1.1 *River Cole and Pennyhooks Brook LCA* comprises the watercourses of the River Cole and Pennyhooks Brook and associated alluvial plain. The NDP area boundary is defined by these watercourses.

5.2 Designations and policy

- Two footpaths cross through this area, one connecting Shrivenhampton with Sevenhampton and one connecting Pennyhooks Lane with Westmill Farm.
- This area contains three areas of Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland these are: Homegrown Copse, Swans Nest Copse and a small block of woodland adjacent to Pennyhooks Brook.

5.3 Landscape appraisal

- The geological bedrock of this area is comprised of:
 - Hazelbury Bryan Formation and Kingston Formation - Sandstone, siltstone and mudstone.
 - Stanford Formation – Limestone.
 - Highworth Limestone Member - Limestone⁴².
- Land cover in this area comprises watercourses, broadleaved woodland and pasture.
- The topography of this area rises from the watercourses and ranges between 85m AOD and 105m AOD. Steep slopes of pasture fall towards the flood plain adjacent to the watercourses.
- The River Cole and Pennyhooks Brook are located along the northern, eastern and western boundaries of this area, which is also the NDP area.
- The watercourses are lined with trees which vary in frequency along their lengths.
- In parts, the watercourses cross through blocks of broadleaved woodland.
- The alluvial plains located adjacent to the watercourses are divided by hedgerows.
- Species of flowers recorded in this area include: common spotted orchid, southern & early marsh orchid, marsh marigold, ladies smock, marsh valerian, ragged robin, marsh arrowgrass, common reed, hemp agrimony, yellow flag iris, reed sweet grass, plicate sweet grass, gypsywort, water figwort, purple loosestrife, water forget me not, comfrey, yellow water lily,

⁴² British Geological Survey (2017) Geology of Britain. Accessed on 21/02/18. Available at: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain3d/index.html?>

brooklime, blue water speedwell and watercress.

- Species of birds recorded in this area including: songthrush, lapwing, grey partridge, bullfinch, whitethroat, willow warbler, chiffchaff, blackcap, marsh tit, barn owl, little owl, tawny owl, heron, kingfisher, tree sparrow and water rail.
- Mammals recorded in this area include: water voles, otters, badgers, polecat, field voles and roe deer.
- A residential property at the northern extent of Pennyhooks Lane is located in this area. Friars Farm is located in this area adjacent to Highworth Road.
- Highworth Road crosses through this area.

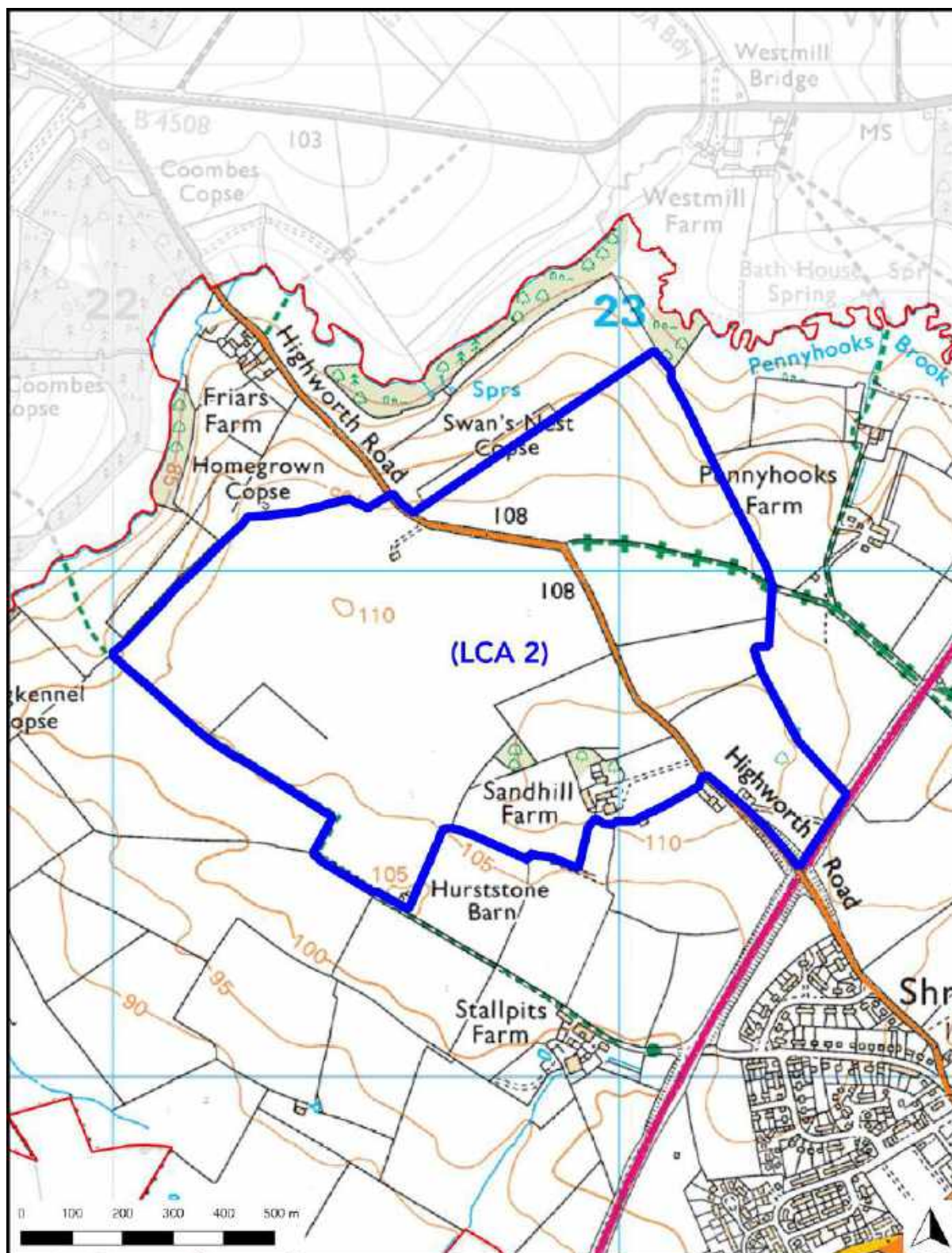
5.4 Perceptual and aesthetic factors

- Long distance views from this area are limited due to the sunken topography created by the watercourses.
- A tranquil and secluded area.
- Limited public access along the watercourses.

5.5 Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness

- Enhance and strengthen the character of tree-lined watercourses by planting willows and ash and, where appropriate, pollarding willows.
- Establish and maintain diverse banksides and aquatic vegetation through sympathetic management and the use of agri-environment schemes.
- The tranquil and secluded character of the area should be maintained.
- Ancient Woodland should be managed to maintain favourable condition.
- Pennyhooks farm should continue to be managed sympathetically with regard to biodiversity and meadow plants.

6 Farmland Plateau (LCA 2)



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View of Westmill Wind Farm from Highworth Road



View west towards Homegrown Copse from Highworth Road

6.1 Location and boundaries

- 6.1.1 *Farmland Plateau LCA* is located in the north western extent of the NDP area and spans across Highworth Road.

6.2 Designations and policy

- A byway open to all traffic crosses through part of this area connecting Pennyhooks Farm with Highworth Road.
- Sandhill Farmhouse (Grade II) Listed Buildings is located within the area.

6.3 Landscape appraisal

- The geological bedrock of this area is comprised of:
 - Ampthill Clay Formation - Mudstone.
 - Hazelbury Bryan Formation and Kingston Formation - Sandstone, siltstone and mudstone.
 - Red Down Sand Member - Sandstone, ferruginous.
 - Stanford Formation – Limestone⁴³.
- This area is comprised mostly of large scale fields of arable land and pasture.
- The topography of this area is located on a gentle plateau at c. 110m AOD. The northern extent of this area slopes gently downwards towards Pennyhooks Brook.
- Broadleaved trees are present in varying frequencies in field boundaries across this area.
- Hedgerows are present in field boundaries across this area.
- Highworth Road crosses through the centre of this area.
- The Vale of White Horse Gliding Centre is located in the centre of this area where there exists a runway and aircraft storage hangars.

6.4 Perceptual and aesthetic factors

- This area is disconnected from the village of Shrivenham and has a strong rural character.
- This area offers long distance panoramic views in all directions.
- The wind turbines at the Westmill Wind Farm are a visual landmark to the north.
- Filtered views of the Westmill Solar Farm may be possible from this area,

⁴³ British Geological Survey (2017) Geology of Britain. Accessed on 21/02/18. Available at: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain3d/index.html?>

particularly during winter months when foliage cover is reduced.

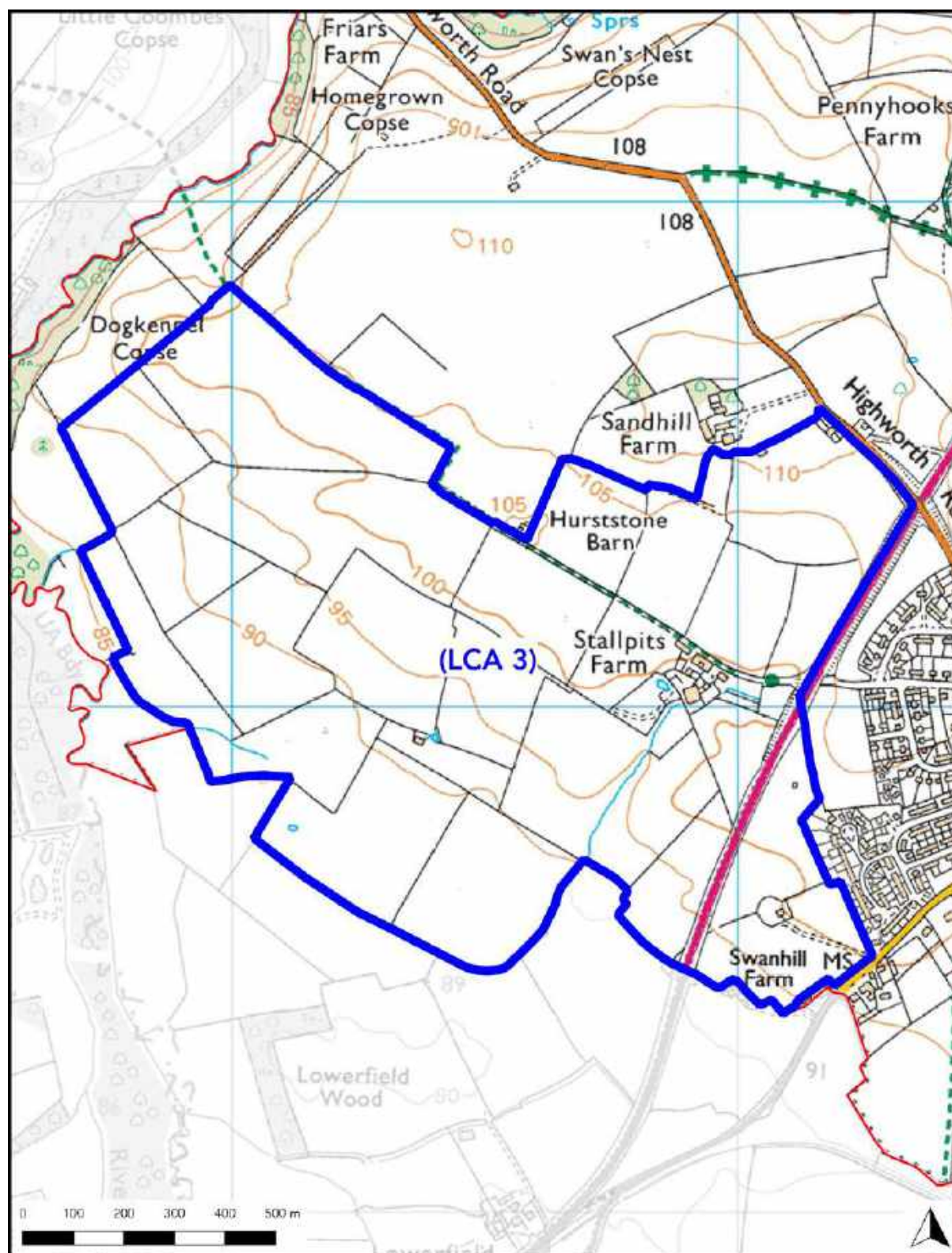
- Aircraft associated with the Vale of White Horse Gliding Centre are a feature in the skies.
- The topography, large-scale field sizes and limited woodland cover enhance the expansive and open character of this area.

6.5

Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness

- Strengthen the field pattern by conserving species rich hedgerows and sympathetically maintaining all hedgerows.
- Where appropriate, replant gappy hedges using species such as alder, apple crab, ash, blackthorn, buckthorn, dogwood, elder, elm (english), hawthorn, hazel, maple field, oak pedunculate, wild plum, rose, spindle, sycamore, wayfaring tree and willow goat.
- Maintain the presence of trees in this landscape.
- Plant new trees where possible.
- Introducing tall structures into this landscape would be visually intrusive and detract from the wide ranging and expansive views.
- Conserve the existing panoramic views.
- The tranquil character of the area should be maintained.

7 Western Farmland Slopes (LCA 3)



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View north towards Sandhill Farm from footpath at Stallpits Farm



View south towards North Wessex Downs AONB from footpath west of Stallpits Farm

7.1 Location and boundaries

- 7.1.1 *Western Farmland Slopes LCA* is located in the western extent of the NDP area.

7.2 Designations and policy

- A footpath crosses through this area connecting Shrivenham with Sevenhampton.
- Stallpits Farmhouse is a Grade II Listed Building which is located in this area.

7.3 Landscape appraisal

- The geological bedrock of this area is comprised of:
 - Hazelbury Bryan Formation and Kingston Formation - Sandstone, siltstone and mudstone.
 - Stanford Formation - Limestone.
 - Ampthill Clay Formation and Kimmeridge Clay Formation - Mudstone.
 - Red Down Sand Member - Sandstone, ferruginous.
 - Ampthill Clay Formation - Mudstone⁴⁴.
- This area comprises pasture and arable farmland.
- In this area there are some well-defined ridge and furrow fields from the pre-enclosure era.
- Broadleaved trees are present in varying frequencies in field boundaries across this area. A copse in a small, incised valley south of Stallpits Farm includes mature native trees including the only known Wych Elm in the parish.
- Hedgerows are present in field boundaries across this area.
- The topography of this area is located on western facing slopes and ranges between c. 90m AOD and c. 110m AOD.
- Drainage ditches are present along field boundaries.
- A small pond is located at Stallpits Farm.
- The A420 road crosses through the eastern part of the area. This road is surrounded by hedgerows and trees which screens views.

7.4 Perceptual and aesthetic factors

- This area offers long distance views to the south and west where the town

⁴⁴ British Geological Survey (2017) Geology of Britain. Accessed on 21/02/18. Available at: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain3d/index.html?>

of Swindon is visible, particularly commercial buildings at the South Marston Industrial Estate.

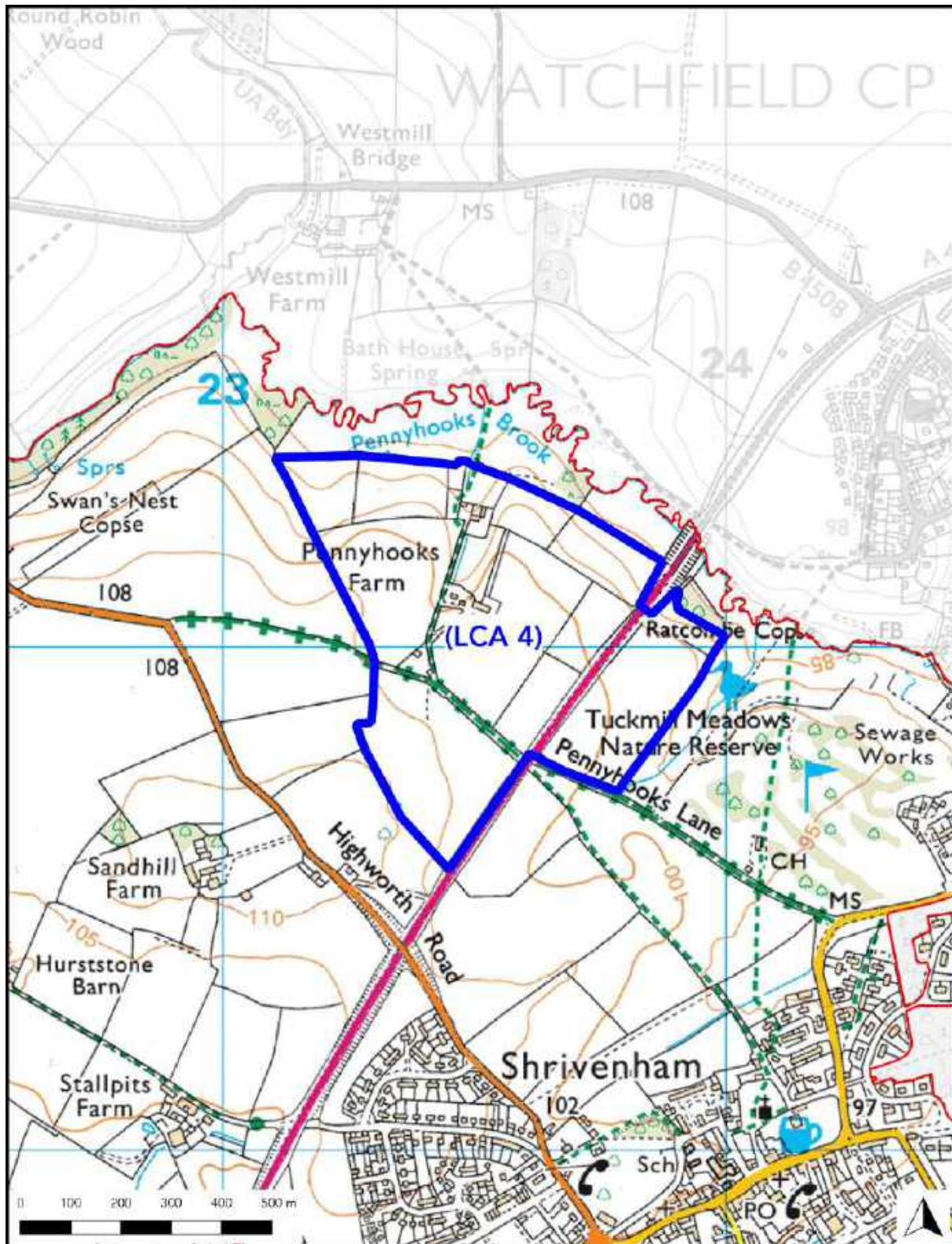
- Aircraft associated with the Vale of White Horse Gliding Centre are a feature in the skies.
- The A420 road is an aural detractor in the eastern part of the area.
- This area offers extensive views of the North Wessex Downs AONB to the south.

7.5

Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness

- Strengthen the field pattern by conserving species rich hedgerows and sympathetically maintaining all hedgerows.
- Where appropriate, replant gappy hedges using species such as alder, apple crab, ash, blackthorn, buckthorn, dogwood, elder, elm (english), hawthorn, hazel, maple field, oak pedunculate, wild plum, rose, spindle, sycamore, wayfaring tree and willow goat.
- Maintain the presence of trees in this landscape.
- Plant new trees where possible.
- Introducing tall structures into this landscape would be visually intrusive and detract from the wide ranging and expansive views.
- Conserve the existing panoramic views.
- The tranquil character of the area should be maintained.

8 Pennyhooks Farm and Surrounds (LCA 4)



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View west from Pennyhooks Lane



View south towards Watchfield from Pennyhooks Lane

8.1 Location and boundaries

- 8.1.1 *Pennyhooks Farm and Surrounds LCA* comprises an area located to the north of the village of Shrivenham surrounding Pennyhooks Farm.

8.2 Designations and policy

- 8.2.1 A byway open to all traffic (Pennyhooks Lane) and a public footpath cross through the centre of this area.

8.3 Landscape appraisal

- The geological bedrock of this area is comprised of:
 - Amphill Clay Formation - Mudstone.
 - Hazelbury Bryan Formation and Kingston Formation - Sandstone, siltstone and mudstone.
 - Highworth Limestone Member - Limestone.
 - Stanford Formation - Limestone⁴⁵.
- This area is comprised mostly of pasture.
- The topography of this area slopes gently to the north and north east ranging between c. 85m AOD and c. 105m AOD.
- Broadleaved trees are present in varying frequencies in field boundaries across this area, particularly along Pennyhooks Lane and adjacent to the A420 road. Over 1500 trees and hedgerow trees have been planted across the area.
- Pennyhooks Lane is lined with species-rich hedgerows. Hedgerows are also present in field boundaries across the area.
- There are 3 gently sloping green fields in this area: Green Twilley, Long Acre and Upper Bridge Ground. Geological and archaeological surveys have shown it to be the slopes of an ancient river valley.
- A drainage ditch is present adjacent to Pennyhooks Lane.
- Two residential properties are located in this area which are accessed via Pennyhooks Lane.
- Pennyhooks Autism Work Training Centre is located at Pennyhooks Farm. The Centre has proved successful at providing simple work, training and opportunities for young people with complex autism. This diversification makes an essential contribution financially and to the ongoing conservation work at the farm.
- The A420 road crosses through the centre of this area.

⁴⁵ British Geological Survey (2017) Geology of Britain. Accessed on 21/02/18. Available at: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain3d/index.html?>

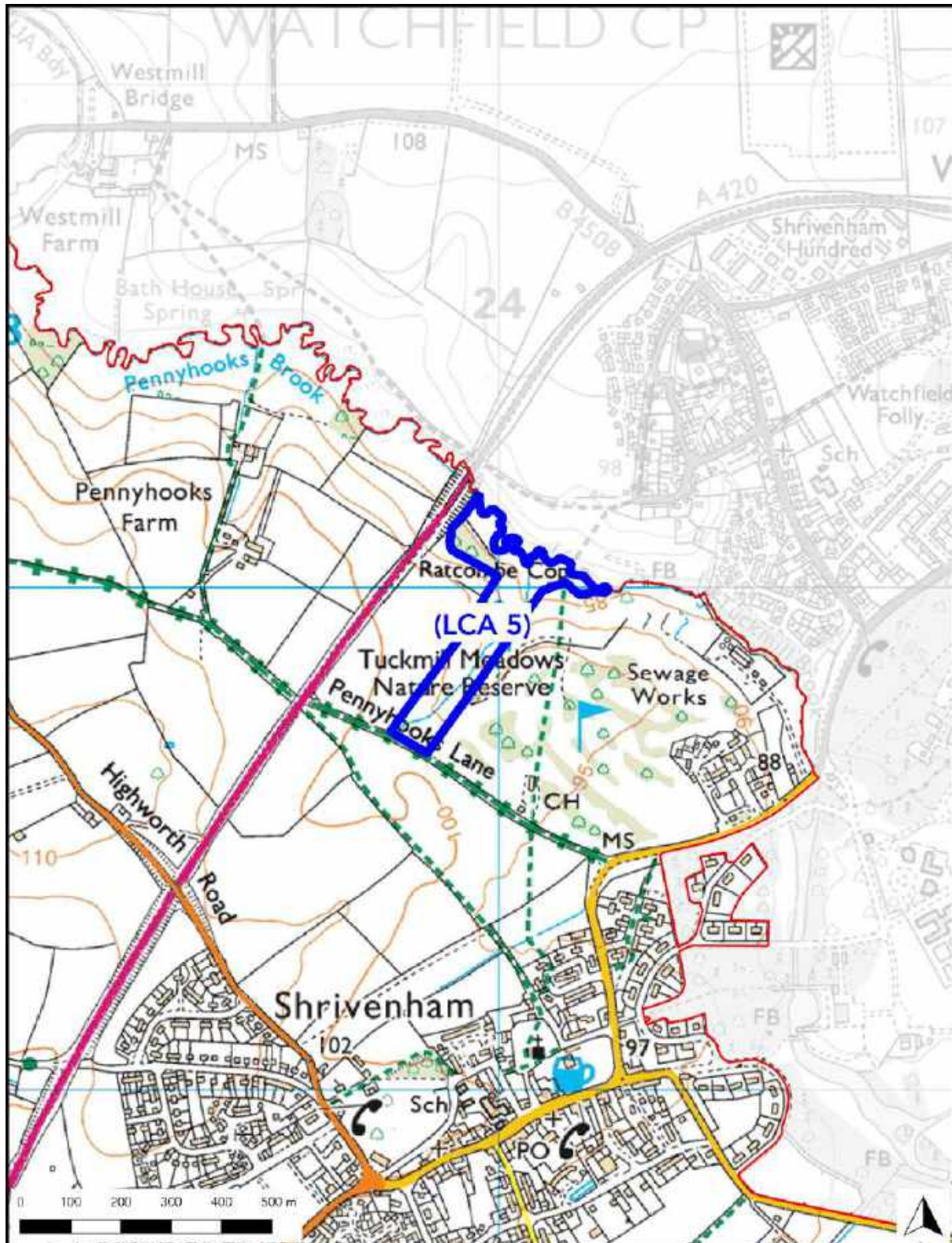
8.4 Perceptual and aesthetic factors

- Long distance views to the north are possible from Pennyhooks Lane.
- The Westmill Wind Farm is a visual landmark to the north.
- Filtered views of the Westmill Solar Farm may be possible from this area, particularly during winter months when foliage cover is reduced.
- The A420 road is an aural detractor.

8.5 Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness

- Strengthen the field pattern by conserving species rich hedgerows and sympathetically maintaining all hedgerows.
- Where appropriate, replant gappy hedges using species such as alder, apple crab, ash, blackthorn, buckthorn, dogwood, elder, elm (english), hawthorn, hazel, maple field, oak pedunculate, wild plum, rose, spindle, sycamore, wayfaring tree and willow goat.
- Maintain the presence of trees in this landscape.
- Plant new trees where possible.
- Conserve the existing panoramic views.

9 Tuckmill Meadows (LCA 5)



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View of mature trees in species-rich hedgerows on both sides of Tuckmill Meadows



Marsh at Tuckmill Meadows created by an old ox-bow lake

9.1 Location and boundaries

- 9.1.1 Tuckmill Meadows LCA comprises Tuckmill Meadows Nature Reserve which comprises area of 5.50 hectares⁴⁶ and is located to the north of the village of Shrivenham and north west of Shrivenham Park Golf Club.

9.2 Designations and policy

- This LCA is designated as a SSSI. The description and reasons for notification for this SSSI are as follows:

"Tuckmill Meadows are of interest for their remnants of calcareous fen and complex of neutral and calcareous grassland. Calcareous fen is a nationally declining habitat and the number of such sites in Oxfordshire has been severely reduced by drainage and agricultural improvement. The history of the site is well documented and shows that part of the site was farmed under an open-field system during the medieval period.

Tuckmill Meadows lie between Shrivenham and Watchfield in a valley created by the Pennyhooks Brook. The site can be divided into two main sections, one lying along the brook on the alluvial plain and the other in a side valley. The fen has developed on poorly-drained alluvial soils which are rich in organic matter and receive base-rich water from springs arising at the junction of alluvium and Lower Corallian beds. The side valley cuts through alluvium, sands and silts of the Lower Corallian, and limestone of the Coral Rag. The latter rocks have weathered to produce a brown rendzina of the Sherborne Series.⁴⁷"

- Tuckmill Meadows SSSI is also designated as a LNR⁴⁸. A map showing the location of Tuckmill Meadows SSSI and LNR is presented in **Figure 3.2**.
- A small area of Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland is located within this area at Ratcoombe Copse.
- A footpath crosses through the northern part of the area connecting Shrivenham Park Golf Club with Watchfield.

9.3 Landscape appraisal

- The geological bedrock of this area is comprised of:
 - Hazelbury Bryan Formation and Kingston Formation - Sandstone,

⁴⁶ Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust (no date) Tuckmill Meadow. Accessed on 05/01/18. Available at: <http://www.bbwt.org.uk/reserves/tuckmill-meadow>

⁴⁷ Natural England (no date) Tuckmill Meadows SSSI. Accessed on 05/01/18. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=S1000491&SiteName=tuckmill%20meadows&countyCode=34&responsiblePerson=&unitId=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=>

⁴⁸ Natural England (no date) Tuckmill Meadows LNR. Accessed on 05/01/18. Available at: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteLNRDetail.aspx?SiteCode=L1009213&SiteName=tuckmill%20meadows&countyCode=34&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=>

siltstone and mudstone.

- Stanford Formation - Limestone⁴⁹.

- Land cover at the site is comprised mostly of calcareous fen and of neutral and calcareous grassland.
- The topography in this area rises from Tuckmill Brook to the south east ranging between c. 85m AOD and c. 95m AOD.
- Tuckmill Brook runs along the northeastern area boundary which is also the NDP area boundary.
- A small tributary crosses through the area and joins Tuckmill Brook which forms a significant inflow for the calcareous fenland.
- A drainage ditch crosses through the area from Pennyhooks Lane to Tuckmill Brook.
- The boundaries of Tuckmill Meadows are lined with broadleaved trees.
- Isolated broadleaved trees are scattered across the meadows. This comprises hawthorn on the limestone zone and mainly willow and alder in the fenland.
- A small area of Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland is located within this area at Ratcoombe Copse.
- Field boundary to north of Tuckmill Nature Reserve is species rich.
- This area contains no built form.

9.4 Perceptual and aesthetic factors

- Residential properties at Watchfield are visible from the area to the north east.
- The Westmill Wind Farm is partially visible which is a visual landmark to the north.
- The A420 road is an aural detractor.

9.5 Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness

- Tuckmill Meadows is managed by Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT).⁵⁰
- Ancient Woodland should be managed to maintain favourable condition.
- Enhance and strengthen the character of tree-lined watercourses by planting willows and ash and, where appropriate, pollarding willows.
- Establish and maintain diverse banksides and aquatic vegetation through sympathetic management and the use of agri-environment schemes.

⁴⁹ British Geological Survey (2017) Geology of Britain. Accessed on 21/02/18. Available at: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain3d/index.html?>

⁵⁰ BBOWT (no date) Tuckmill Meadow. Accessed on 12/03/18. Available at: <http://www.bbowl.org.uk/reserves/tuckmill-meadow>

- The tranquil and secluded character of the area should be maintained.

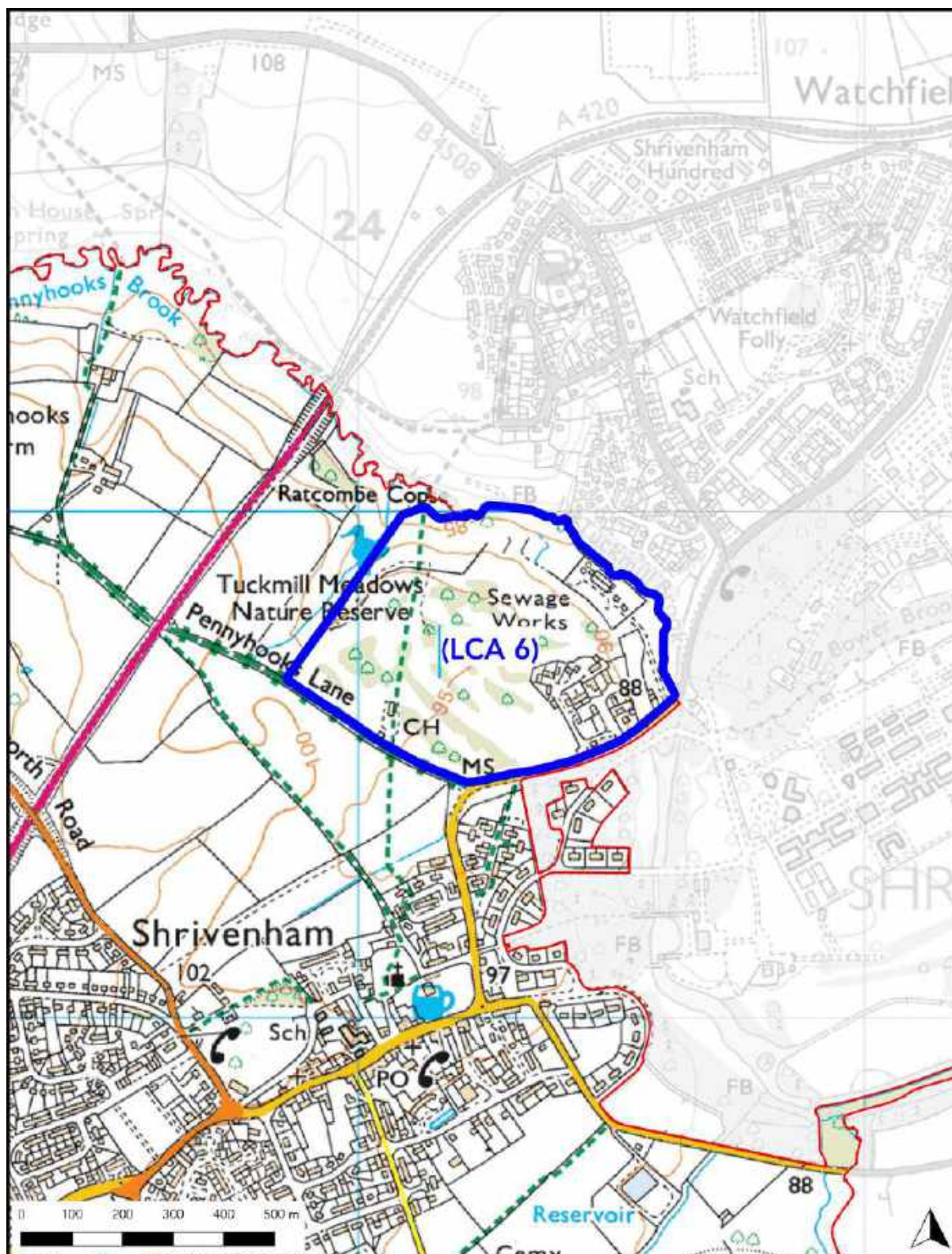
9.5.1

Operational guidelines for the management of semi-natural woodlands as taken from the Forestry Commission's Practice Guide 3: Lowland Mixed Broadleaved Woods⁵¹ are as follows:

- **Maintain semi-natural woodland types.** Management should be based on growing species native to the site and appropriate to the pattern of soils within the site. Existing abundant native species should remain a significant component;
- **Maintain or restore diversity of structure.** A full range of age classes within each site is normally preferable to the one or two age classes which are often found at present;
- **Maintain diversity of species and increase where appropriate.** Many lowland mixed woods in southern England have been simplified to almost pure hazel coppices;
- **Maintain diversity of habitat.** A diverse structure and mixture of species improves habitat diversity, but open areas are also extremely important. They can be temporary (recently cut areas) or permanent (e.g. rides).
- **Maintain a mature habitat.** This can be achieved by retaining old, dead or dying trees and/or by increasing rotation lengths;
- **Minimise rates of change.** Wildlife takes time to adjust, so change should not be too drastic. This applies both to the scale and sequence of felling, and the layout or rides; and
- **Use low-key restocking techniques.** Intensive working methods should be avoided. The general rule should be to do the minimum necessary to ensure adequate establishment and growth of the desired tree species.

⁵¹ Forestry Commission (2003) The Management of Semi-natural Woodlands. 3. Lowland Mixed Broadleaved Woods. Practice Guide.

10 Golf Course and Surrounds (LCA 6)



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Shrivenham Park Golf Club



Shrivenham Park Golf Club

10.1 Location and boundaries

- 10.1.1 *Golf Course and Surrounds LCA* comprises Shrivenham Park Golf Club, residential properties and commercial buildings at Northford Close and a sewage works. This area is located to the north of the village of Shrivenham and is bound by the NDP area boundary to the north and east, by Faringdon Road and Pennyhooks Lane to the south and by Tuckmill Meadows Nature Reserve to the west.

10.2 Designations and policy

- A footpath crosses through this area connecting Pennyhooks Lane with Tuckmill Meadows Nature Reserve and Watchfield.
- A Grade II Listed Building is located at Northford Close named 'Swiss Cottage'.

10.3 Landscape appraisal

- The geological bedrock of this area is comprised of:
 - Hazelbury Bryan Formation and Kingston Formation - Sandstone, siltstone and mudstone.
 - Stanford Formation - Limestone⁵².
- The land cover at this area is comprised mostly of amenity grassland associated with Shrivenham Park Golf Club.
- The topography at this area rises gently from Tuckmill Brook to the south ranging between c. 85m AOD and c. 95m AOD.
- Tuckmill Brook runs along the northern and eastern boundary of this area.
- Broadleaved and coniferous trees are scattered across the golf course which surround the fairways.
- Tuckmill Brook crosses through a small area of broadleaved woodland named Squire's Copse.
- Distinctive ancient boundary with a relict hedge continuing many mature native trees.
- Residential buildings including detached, semi-detached, bungalows and commercial buildings are located at Northfold Close are accessed from Faringdon Road.
- A sewage works is located within this area.
- A car park and clubhouse buildings associated with the golf course is also located within this area.

⁵² British Geological Survey (2017) Geology of Britain. Accessed on 21/02/18. Available at: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain3d/index.html?>

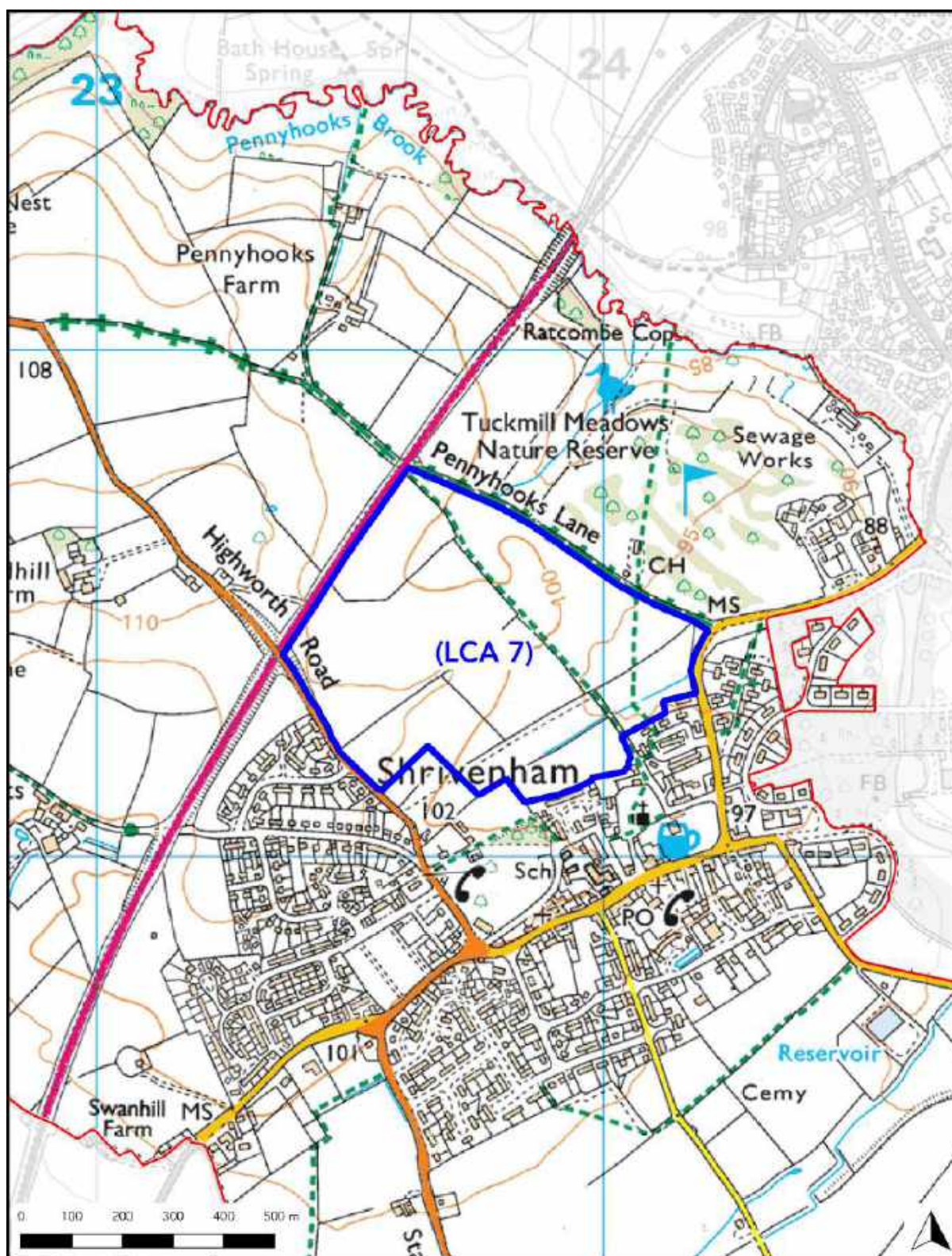
10.4 Perceptual and aesthetic factors

- Long distance views from this area are limited due to the presence of broadleaved and coniferous trees that are scattered across the golf course.

10.5 Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness

- Development at this location should be avoided as this will lead to coalescence of Shrivenham and Watchfield.
- Trees located across the area should be maintained.
- The golf course is considered to be a valuable GI asset and should be maintained.

11 Land North of the Village (LCA 7)



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View of south west towards Shrivenham beyond an ancient hedgerow from Pennyhooks Lane



View north towards Westmill Wind Farm from Highworth Road

11.1 Location and boundaries

- 11.1.1 *Land North of the Village* LCA comprises fields of arable land defined by the A420 to the north west, Pennyhooks Lane to the north east and by the northern fringes of the village of Shrivenham to the south.

11.2 Designations and policy

- Two footpaths cross through this area connecting Claypits Lane and Common Close with Pennyhooks Lane. These footpaths are ancient tracks.
- This LCA is currently in a state of transition. The majority of this LCA is allocated for strategic housing development in the VoWH Local Plan 2031 Part 1.

11.3 Landscape appraisal

- The geological bedrock of this area is comprised of:
 - Amphill Clay Formation - Mudstone.
 - Red Down Sand Member - Sandstone, ferruginous.
 - Stanford Formation - Limestone⁵³.
- This area is comprised mostly of arable land.
- The topography of this area rises gently from east to west ranging between c. 95m AOD and c. 105m AOD.
- A drainage ditch is located adjacent to a field boundary in the southern part of the area.
- Broadleaved trees are present in varying frequencies in field boundaries across this area.
- A woodland buffer adjacent to the A420 road lines the north western boundary of this area.
- Species-rich hedgerows are present in field boundaries across this area.
- Several isolated and mature trees are present in field boundaries, particularly in the central part of this area.

11.4 Perceptual and aesthetic factors

- This area is strongly connected to the northern edge of the village of Shrivenham. Residential properties adjacent to Highworth Road, Chestnut Gardens, Queens Crescent, Manor Close, Claypits Lane and Common Close look out across this area to the north.

⁵³ British Geological Survey (2017) Geology of Britain. Accessed on 21/02/18. Available at: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain3d/index.html?>

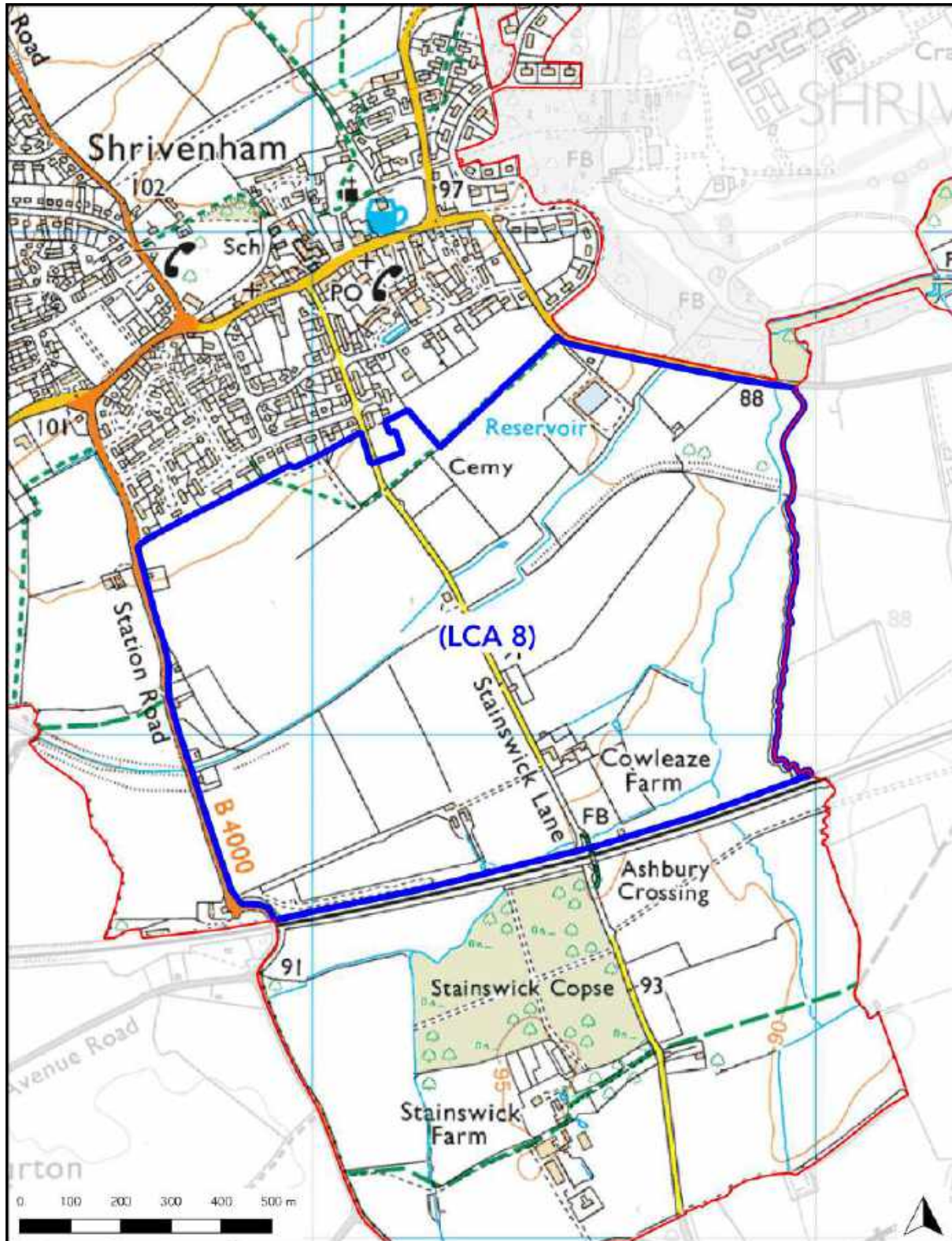
- The Westmill Wind Farm is visible to the north.
- The A420 road is an aural detractor.

11.5

Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness

- Strengthen the field pattern by conserving species rich hedgerows and sympathetically maintaining all hedgerows.
- Where appropriate, replant gappy hedges using species such as alder, apple crab, ash, blackthorn, buckthorn, dogwood, elder, elm (english), hawthorn, hazel, maple field, oak pedunculate, wild plum, rose, spindle, sycamore, wayfaring tree and willow goat.
- Maintain the presence of trees in this landscape.
- Conserve old field boundaries and significant mature trees.
- Plant new trees where possible.
- Conserve the existing views across the area.
- The field pattern should be reflected in future development scenarios.
- Avoid building on catchment of stream in Tuckmill Nature Reserve to ensure annual flow regime is maintained, to minimize sudden fast flow from built up zone during rainfall and to avoid water-borne contamination.

12 Land Surrounding Stainswick Lane (LCA 8)



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View south east towards Whitehorse Hill in North Wessex Downs AONB from Stainswick Lane



Disused canal at Stainswick Lane

12.1 Location and boundaries

- 12.1.1 *Land Surrounding Stainswick Lane LCA* is defined by the southern edge of the village of Shrivenham to the north, by Longcot Road and the NDP area boundary to the east, by the Great Western main line railway to the south and by Station Road to the west.

12.2 Designations and policy

- A footpath crosses through this area connecting Longcot Road with Charlbury Road.
- A bridleway crosses over the Great Western main line railway at Ashbury Crossing.
- Cowleaze Farmhouse is a Grade II Listed Building located in the southern part of this area.
- Canal Bridge is a Grade II Listed Building crossing over Station Road at the western boundary of this area.

12.3 Landscape appraisal

- The geological bedrock of this area is comprised of:
 - Amptill Clay Formation - Mudstone.
 - Amptill Clay Formation and Kimmeridge Clay Formation - Mudstone.
 - Red Down Sand Member - Sandstone, ferruginous⁵⁴.
- The land cover across this area is comprised mostly of pasture.
- The topography of this area is relatively flat, ranging between c. 90m AOD and c. 95m AOD.
- This area is divided into four quarters which are divided by the canal and Stainswick Lane. The north western quarter comprises a single large field. The southern and western quarters are divided into fields.
- Broadleaved trees are present in varying frequencies in field boundaries across this area. A plantation of conifers is located adjacent to the railway line. Isolated oak trees are scattered across the area.
- Hedgerows are present in field boundaries across the area.
- A small tree-lined watercourse travels north through the eastern part of this area.
- Drainage ditches are present across the area adjacent to field boundaries.
- Two ponds are located between the cemetery and the canal.

⁵⁴ British Geological Survey (2017) Geology of Britain. Accessed on 21/02/18. Available at: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain3d/index.html?>

- A section of the Wilts and Berks Canal crosses through the centre of this area. Recent work undertaken by the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust includes clearing several lengths of canal south of Shrivenham, opening up 1500m of towpath to walkers. Two hectares of land east of Stainswick Lane, including 100m of canal was purchased some years ago, the land excavated and landscaped to produce a pocket park for the community (see **Chapter 3** for more information).
- The Shrivenham Circular Walk crosses through this area adjacent to the disused canal.
- A reservoir is located in the north eastern part of this area.
- A cemetery is located in the north-central part of this area adjacent to Stainswick Lane.
- A car park is located adjacent to the disused canal at Stainswick Lane.
- A small number of residential properties are located within this area adjacent to Station Road, Stainswick Lane and Longcot Road.
- Telegraph poles and overhead lines cross through the central part of the area from east to west.
- The southern boundary of this area meets the Great Western main line railway.

12.4

Perceptual and aesthetic factors

- The escarpment of the North Wessex Downs AONB is a visual landmark to the south of the area.
- The northern part of this area is strongly connected to the southern part of the village of Shrivenham. Residential properties at the southern edge of the village look out across this area towards the North Wessex Downs AONB.
- The masts along the Great Western main line railway are a visual detractor to the south of this area.
- Trains along the Great Western main line railway are an intermittent aural detractor.

12.5

Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness

- Strengthen the field pattern by conserving species rich hedgerows and sympathetically maintaining all hedgerows.
- Where appropriate, replant gappy hedges using species such as alder, apple crab, ash, blackthorn, buckthorn, dogwood, elder, elm (english), hawthorn, hazel, maple field, oak pedunculate, wild plum, rose, spindle, sycamore, wayfaring tree and willow goat.
- Maintain the presence of trees in this landscape.

- Plant new trees where possible.
- Introducing tall structures into this landscape would be visually intrusive and detract from the wide ranging and expansive views.
- Conserve the existing panoramic views.
- The aim of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust is to: protect, conserve and improve the route of the Wilts & Berks and North Wilts Canals, and branches, for the benefit of the community and environment, with the ultimate goal of restoring a continuous navigable waterway.
- The Shrivenham Circular Walk should be maintained.



View north towards residential properties at West End Road



View west from Station Road

13.1 Location and boundaries

- 13.1.1 *Land West of Station Road LCA* is defined by the southern edge of the village of Shrivenham to the north, by Station Road to the east, by the Great Western main line railway to the south and by the NDP area boundary to the west.

13.2 Designations and policy

- A bridleway crosses through this area connecting Station Road with Bourton Church Bridge.
- A public footpath crosses through this area connecting Steppingstone Lane with Station Road.
- Canal Bridge is a Grade II Listed Building crossing over Station Road at the eastern boundary of this area.

13.3 Landscape appraisal

- The geological bedrock of this area is comprised of:
 - Amphill Clay Formation - Mudstone.
 - Amphill Clay Formation and Kimmeridge Clay Formation - Mudstone.
 - Red Down Sand Member - Sandstone, ferruginous⁵⁵.
- This area is comprised mostly of arable farmland.
- The topography of this area is relatively flat at c. 95m AOD.
- Broadleaved trees are present in varying frequencies in field boundaries across this area.
- The disused canal is lined with broadleaved trees.
- Hedgerows are present in field boundaries across the area.
- A drainage ditch is located in the north eastern corner of this area adjacent to Station Road and the rear of residential properties at West End Road.
- A section of the Wilts and Berks Canal crosses through the centre of this area. Stepping stones bridleway to the west of Station Road was a traditional brick arch bridge but little remained. This has been re-built and once more carries the Bridleway. The rebuilding removes one blockage to restoration of the canal between Bourton and Stainswick Lane (see **Chapter 3** for more information).
- The Shrivenham Circular Walk crosses through this area adjacent to the disused canal.
- Agricultural buildings are located in the north eastern part of the area

⁵⁵ British Geological Survey (2017) Geology of Britain. Accessed on 21/02/18. Available at: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain3d/index.html?>

adjacent to Station Road.

- Station Road cottages and a small commercial site is located in the far southern part of the area adjacent to the Great Western main line railway.
- Telegraph poles and overhead lines cross through the southern part of the area.

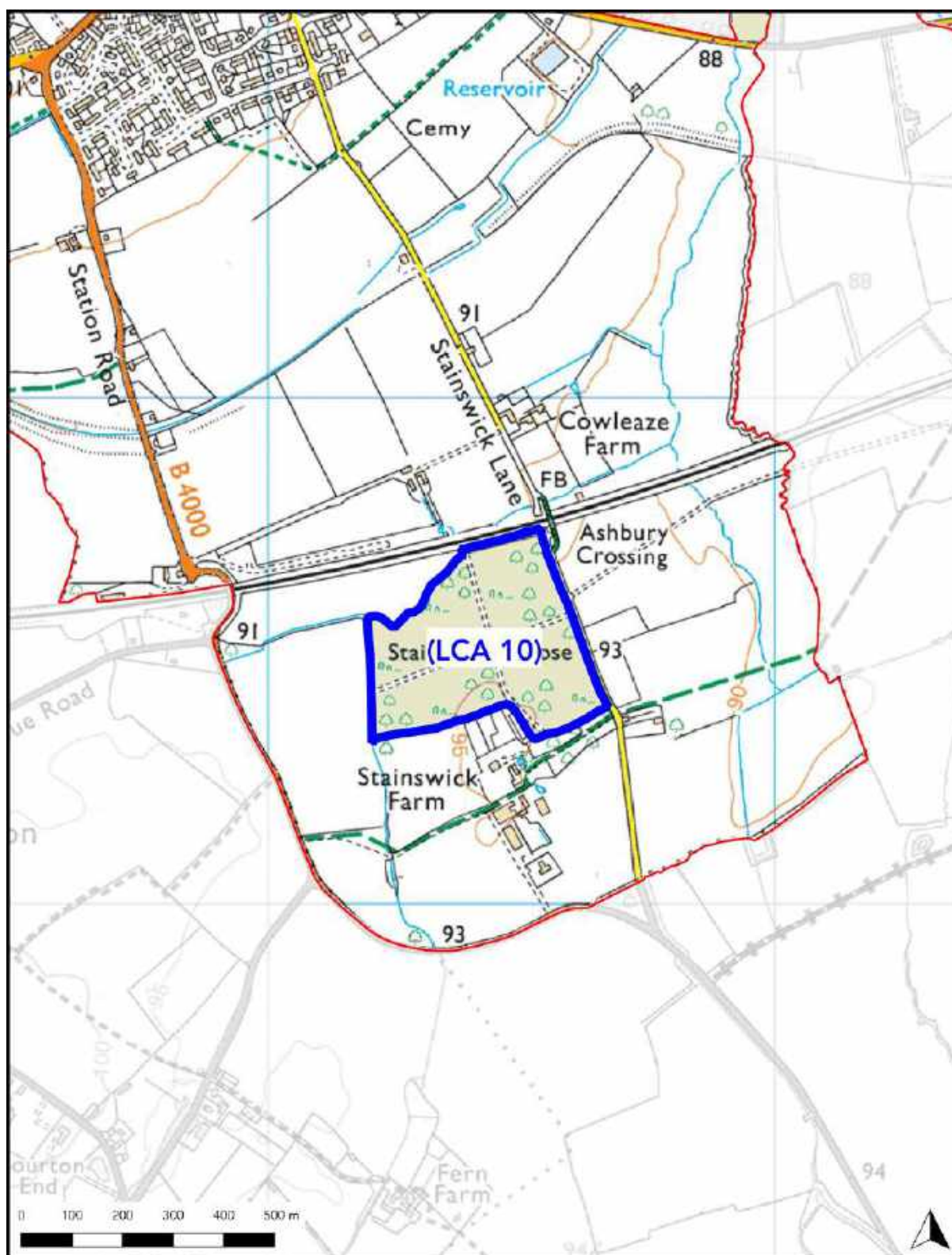
13.4 Perceptual and aesthetic factors

- The escarpment of the North Wessex Downs AONB is a visual landmark to the south of the area.
- The northern part of this area is strongly connected to the southern part of the village of Shrivenham. Residential properties at the southern edge of the village look out across this area towards the North Wessex Downs AONB.
- The masts along the Great Western main line railway are a visual detractor to the south of this area.
- Trains along the Great Western main line railway are an intermittent aural detractor.

13.5 Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness

- Strengthen the field pattern by conserving species rich hedgerows and sympathetically maintaining all hedgerows.
- Where appropriate, replant gappy hedges using species such as alder, apple crab, ash, blackthorn, buckthorn, dogwood, elder, elm (english), hawthorn, hazel, maple field, oak pedunculate, wild plum, rose, spindle, sycamore, wayfaring tree and willow goat.
- Maintain the presence of trees in this landscape.
- Plant new trees where possible.
- Introducing tall structures into this landscape would be visually intrusive and detract from the wide ranging and expansive views.
- Conserve the existing panoramic views.
- The aim of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust is to: protect, conserve and improve the route of the Wilts & Berks and North Wilts Canals, and branches, for the benefit of the community and environment, with the ultimate goal of restoring a continuous navigable waterway.
- The Shrivenham Circular Walk should be maintained.

14 Stainswick Copse (LCA 10)



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View east towards Stainswick Copse from Station Road



Stainswick Copse near Ashbury Crossing

14.1 Location and boundaries

- 14.1.1 *Stainswick Copse LCA* comprises an area of broadleaved woodland located adjacent to the south of the Great Western main line railway.

14.2 Designations and policy

- This area is comprised entirely of Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland.
- No PRow cross through this area.

14.3 Landscape appraisal

- The geological bedrock of this area is comprised of:
 - Amptill Clay Formation and Kimmeridge Clay Formation - Mudstone.
 - Kimmeridge Clay Formation - Sandstone.
 - Lower Greensand Group - Sandstone⁵⁶.
- This area is comprised entirely of broadleaved woodland.
- The topography of this area is relatively flat at 95m AOD.
- Tracks cross through the wood.
- A small watercourse runs adjacent to the northern and western edge of the woodland.
- A few thousand corvids roost in the copse particularly in the winter months.

14.4 Perceptual and aesthetic factors

- Trains along the Great Western main line railway are an intermittent aural detractor.
- The masts along the Great Western main line railway are a visual detractor to the north of this area.
- The location and scale of *Stainswick Copse* creates a sense of enclosure to the south of the Great Western main line railway.

14.5 Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness

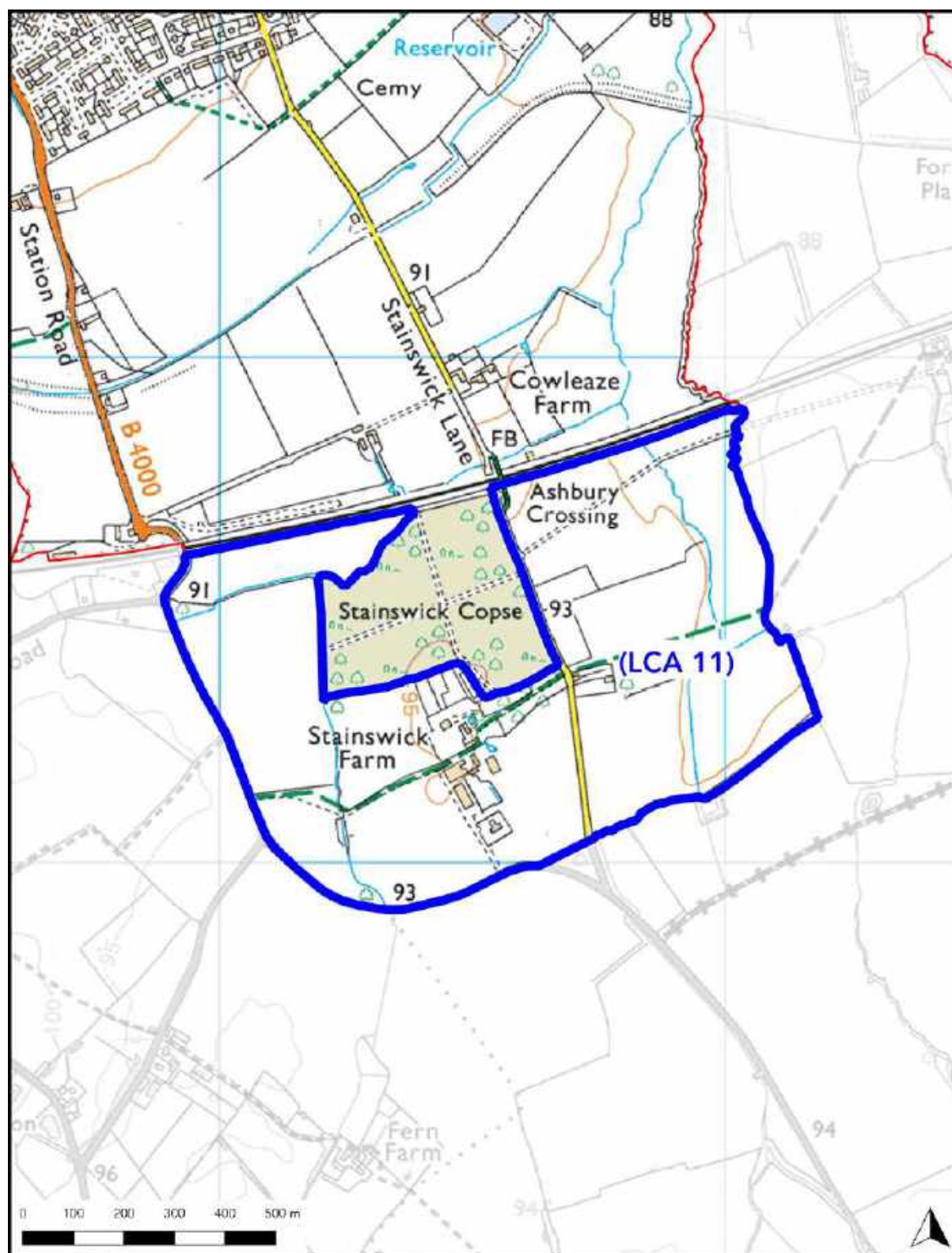
- Ancient Woodland should be managed to maintain favourable condition.
- 14.5.1 Operational guidelines for the management of semi-natural woodlands as taken from the Forestry Commission's Practice Guide 3: Lowland Mixed Broadleaved Woods⁵⁷ are as follows:

⁵⁶ British Geological Survey (2017) Geology of Britain. Accessed on 21/02/18. Available at: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain3d/index.html?>

- **Maintain semi-natural woodland types.** Management should be based on growing species native to the site and appropriate to the pattern of soils within the site. Existing abundant native species should remain a significant component;
- **Maintain or restore diversity of structure.** A full range of age classes within each site is normally preferable to the one or two age classes which are often found at present;
- **Maintain diversity of species and increase where appropriate.** Many lowland mixed woods in southern England have been simplified to almost pure hazel coppices;
- **Maintain diversity of habitat.** A diverse structure and mixture of species improves habitat diversity, but open areas are also extremely important. They can be temporary (recently cut areas) or permanent (e.g. rides).
- **Maintain a mature habitat.** This can be achieved by retaining old, dead or dying trees and/or by increasing rotation lengths;
- **Minimise rates of change.** Wildlife takes time to adjust, so change should not be too drastic. This applies both to the scale and sequence of felling, and the layout or rides; and
- **Use low-key restocking techniques.** Intensive working methods should be avoided. The general rule should be to do the minimum necessary to ensure adequate establishment and growth of the desired tree species.

⁵⁷ Forestry Commission (2003) The Management of Semi-natural Woodlands. 3. Lowland Mixed Broadleaved Woods. Practice Guide.

15 Land South of Railway (LCA 11)



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View south east towards North Wessex Downs AONB from Station Road



View north towards Great Western main line railway from Station Road

15.1 Location and boundaries

- 15.1.1 *Land South of Railway LCA* is an area located in the far south of the NDP area which is defined by the Great Western main line railway to the north and by the NDP area boundary to the east, south and west.

15.2 Designations and policy

- A bridleway crosses through this area from east to west.
- A bridleway crosses over the railway line at Ashbury Crossing.
- Stainswick Farmhouse is a Grade II Listed Building located at Stainswick Farm.

15.3 Landscape appraisal

- The geological bedrock of this area is comprised of:
 - Ampthill Clay Formation and Kimmeridge Clay Formation - Mudstone.
 - Gault Formation - Mudstone.
 - Kimmeridge Clay Formation - Sandstone.
 - Lower Greensand Group - Sandstone⁵⁸.
- This area comprises several irregular shaped fields of arable land and pasture.
- The topography in this area is relatively flat and ranges between c. 90m AOD and c. 95m AOD.
- This area surrounds Stainswick Copse on all sides except part of the copse's northern boundary.
- Hedgerows and hedgerow trees are present in field boundaries across the area.
- Small blocks of woodland are scattered across the area adjacent to field boundaries and surrounding parts of Stainswick Farm.
- Two small watercourses cross through this area, one travels north through the eastern part of this area and one travels north through the western part of this area before skirting along the western and northern boundaries of Stainswick Copse. These two watercourses meet to the north of the Great Western main line railway to the south east of Cowleaze Farm.
- Drainage ditches are present adjacent to field boundaries across this area.
- Two small ponds are located at Stainswick Farm.

⁵⁸ British Geological Survey (2017) Geology of Britain. Accessed on 21/02/18. Available at: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain3d/index.html?>

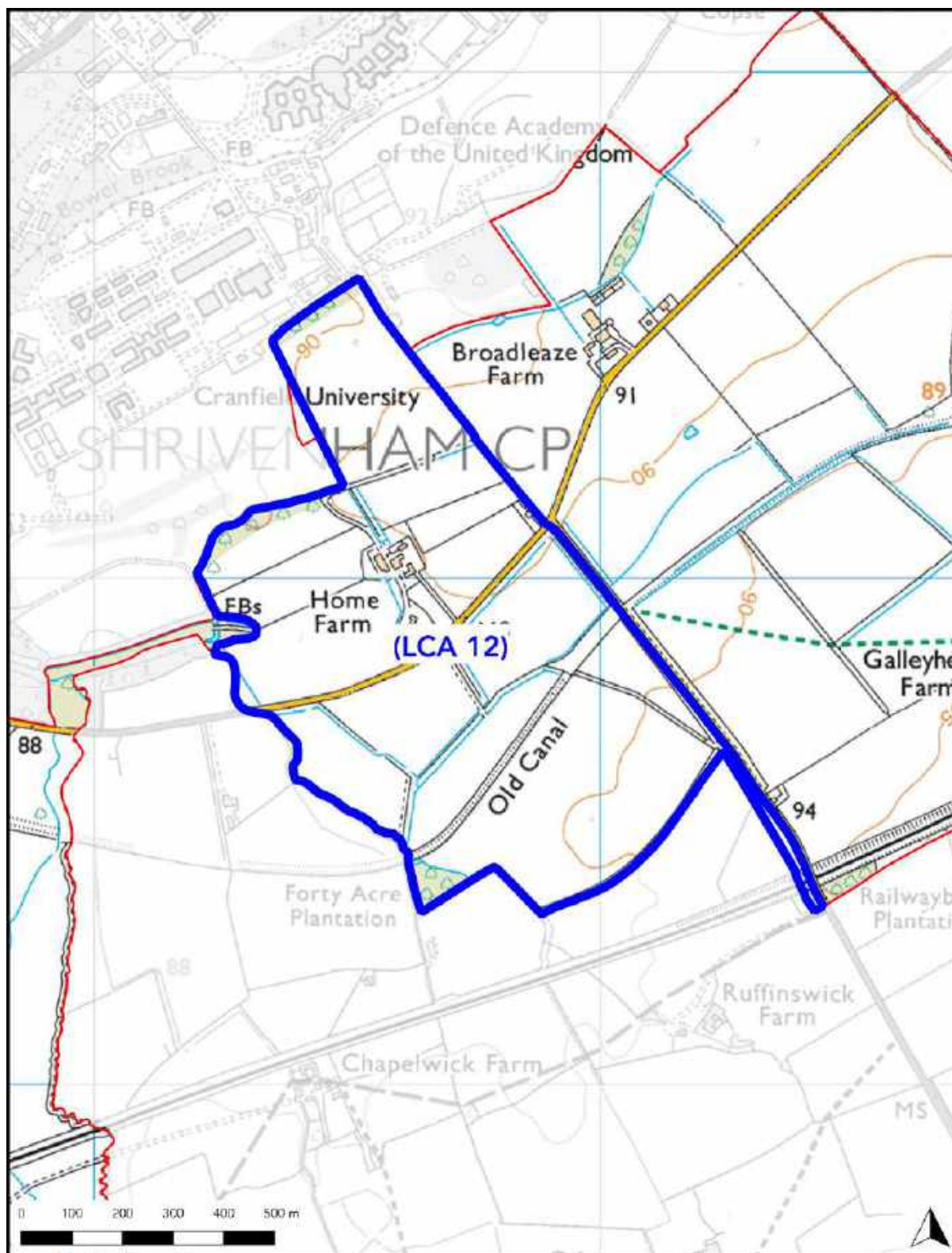
15.4 Perceptual and aesthetic factors

- The escarpment of the North Wessex Downs AONB is a visual landmark which dominates the skyline to the south of the area. Views extend from White Horse Hill to Liddington Hill.
- The masts along the Great Western main line railway are a visual detractor to the north of this area.
- Trains along the Great Western main line railway are an intermittent aural detractor.
- Large barns near Stainswick Farm are a visual detractor in the area.

15.5 Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness

- Strengthen the field pattern by conserving species rich hedgerows and sympathetically maintaining all hedgerows.
- Where appropriate, replant gappy hedges using species such as alder, apple crab, ash, blackthorn, buckthorn, dogwood, elder, elm (english), hawthorn, hazel, maple field, oak pedunculate, wild plum, rose, spindle, sycamore, wayfaring tree and willow goat.
- Maintain the presence of trees in this landscape.
- Plant new trees where possible.
- Introducing tall structures into this landscape would be visually intrusive and detract from the wide ranging and expansive views.

16 Eastern Pasture (LCA 12)



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View of pasture adjacent to Great Western main line railway



Pasture, hedgerows and isolated oak trees adjacent to Longcot Road near Home Farm

16.1 Location and boundaries

- 16.1.1 *Eastern Pasture LCA* comprises an area located in the eastern extent of the NDP area. This area is defined by the NDP area boundary to the north, south and west and by a minor road and arable farmland to the east.

16.2 Designations and policy

- 16.2.1 No footpaths cross through this area.

16.3 Landscape appraisal

- The geological bedrock of this area is comprised of:
 - Amphill Clay Formation - Mudstone.
 - Amphill Clay Formation and Kimmeridge Clay Formation - Mudstone.
 - Red Down Sand Member - Sandstone, ferruginous⁵⁹.
- This area is comprised mostly of fields of pasture.
- The topography of this area is relatively flat at c. 90m AOD.
- A section of the Wilts and Berks Canal crosses through the centre of this area (see **Chapter 3** for more information).
- Small watercourses and drainage ditches are present across this area adjacent to field boundaries.
- Broadleaved trees are present in field boundaries across the area.
- Two strips of broadleaved woodland are located adjacent to the northern area boundary.
- A small triangular shaped block of broadleaved woodland is present in the south east corner of the area named Forty Acre Plantation.
- The disused canal is lined with broadleaved trees.
- An isolated and mature oak tree is present to the west of Home Farm.
- Hedgerows are present in field boundaries across the area.
- Home Farm and two residential properties are located in this area adjacent to Longcot Road.

16.4 Perceptual and aesthetic factors

- The escarpment of the North Wessex Downs AONB is a visual landmark to the south of the area.
- The masts along the Great Western main line railway are a visual detractor

⁵⁹ British Geological Survey (2017) Geology of Britain. Accessed on 21/02/18. Available at: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain3d/index.html?>

to the north of this area.

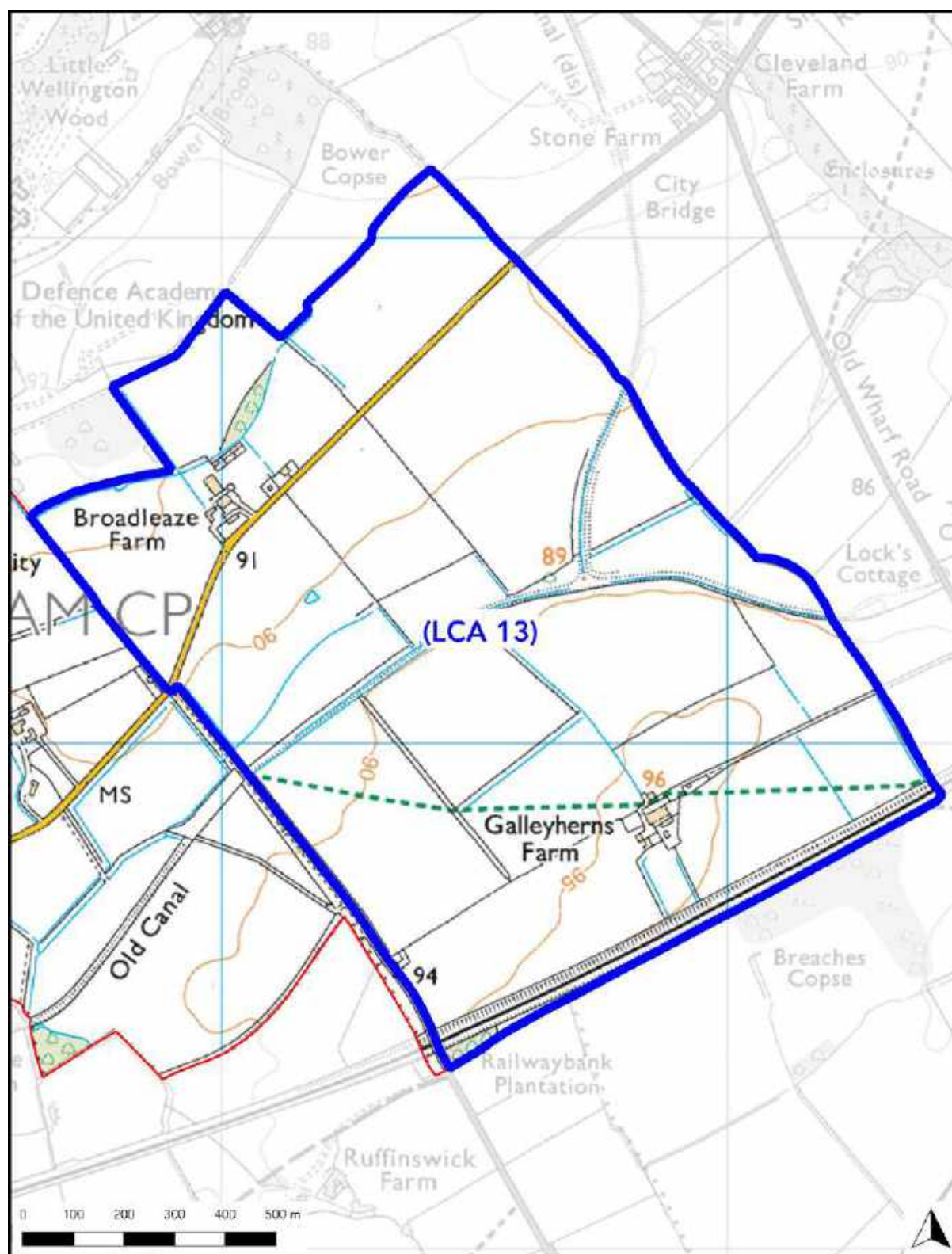
- Trains along the Great Western main line railway are an intermittent aural detractor.

16.5

Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness

- Strengthen the field pattern by conserving species rich hedgerows and sympathetically maintaining all hedgerows.
- Where appropriate, replant gappy hedges using species such as alder, apple crab, ash, blackthorn, buckthorn, dogwood, elder, elm (english), hawthorn, hazel, maple field, oak pedunculate, wild plum, rose, spindle, sycamore, wayfaring tree and willow goat.
- Promote arable reversion to pasture, particularly on land adjacent to watercourses.
- Maintain the presence of trees in this landscape.
- Plant new trees where possible.
- Introducing tall structures into this landscape would be visually intrusive and detract from the wide ranging and expansive views.
- The aim of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust is to: protect, conserve and improve the route of the Wilts & Berks and North Wilts Canals, and branches, for the benefit of the community and environment, with the ultimate goal of restoring a continuous navigable waterway.

17 Eastern Arable Farmland (LCA 13)



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View south east towards Whitehorse Hill from Longcot Road



Arable farmland adjacent to Great Western main line railway

17.1 Location and boundaries

- 17.1.1 *Eastern Arable Farmland LCA* is located in the far eastern extent of the NDP area. This area is defined by the NDP area boundary to the north, east and south and by a minor road and fields of pasture to the west.

17.2 Designations and policy

- 17.2.1 A single footpath crosses through this area connecting Knighton Copse with Galleyherns Farm and the disused canal.

17.3 Landscape appraisal

- The geological bedrock of this area is comprised of:
 - Ampthill Clay Formation and Kimmeridge Clay Formation - Mudstone.
 - Lower Greensand Group - Sandstone.
 - Red Down Sand Member - Sandstone, ferruginous⁶⁰.
- This area has a strong rural context and is comprised of medium to large scale fields of arable land divided by hedgerows and trees.
- This area is distant from the settlement edge of the village of Shrivenham.
- The topography of this area is relatively flat and ranges between 89m AOD and 96m AOD.
- A section of the Wilts and Berks Canal crosses through the centre of this area (see **Chapter 3** for more information).
- Drainage ditches are also present adjacent to field boundaries across the area.
- Broadleaved trees are present in field boundaries across this area.
- The disused canals are lined with broadleaved trees.
- Hedgerows are present in field boundaries across this area.
- A small pond is present within a field to the south of Broadleaze Farm.
- Longcot Road crosses through this area.
- Broadleaze Farm and a small number of residential properties are located adjacent to Longcot Road. Galleyherns Farm and a residential property named 'The Hawthorns' are located in the southern extent of this area.
- A railway line runs through this LCA adjacent to the southern area boundary.

⁶⁰ British Geological Survey (2017) Geology of Britain. Accessed on 21/02/18. Available at: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain3d/index.html?>

17.4 Perceptual and aesthetic factors

- This is an open and expansive landscape which feels disconnected from the village of Shrivenham and other surrounding settlements.
- The escarpment of the North Wessex Downs AONB is a visual landmark to the south of the area.
- The masts along the Great Western main line railway are a visual detractor to the north of this area.
- Trains along the Great Western main line railway are an intermittent aural detractor.

17.5 Recommendations to plan, manage and protect distinctiveness

- Strengthen the field pattern by conserving species rich hedgerows and sympathetically maintaining all hedgerows.
- Where appropriate, replant gappy hedges using species such as alder, apple crab, ash, blackthorn, buckthorn, dogwood, elder, elm (english), hawthorn, hazel, maple field, oak pedunculate, wild plum, rose, spindle, sycamore, wayfaring tree and willow goat.
- Promote arable reversion to pasture, particularly on land adjacent to watercourses.
- Maintain the presence of trees in this landscape.
- Plant new trees where possible.
- Introducing tall structures into this landscape would be visually intrusive and detract from the wide ranging and expansive views.
- The aim of the Wilts & Berks Canal Trust is to: protect, conserve and improve the route of the Wilts & Berks and North Wilts Canals, and branches, for the benefit of the community and environment, with the ultimate goal of restoring a continuous navigable waterway.

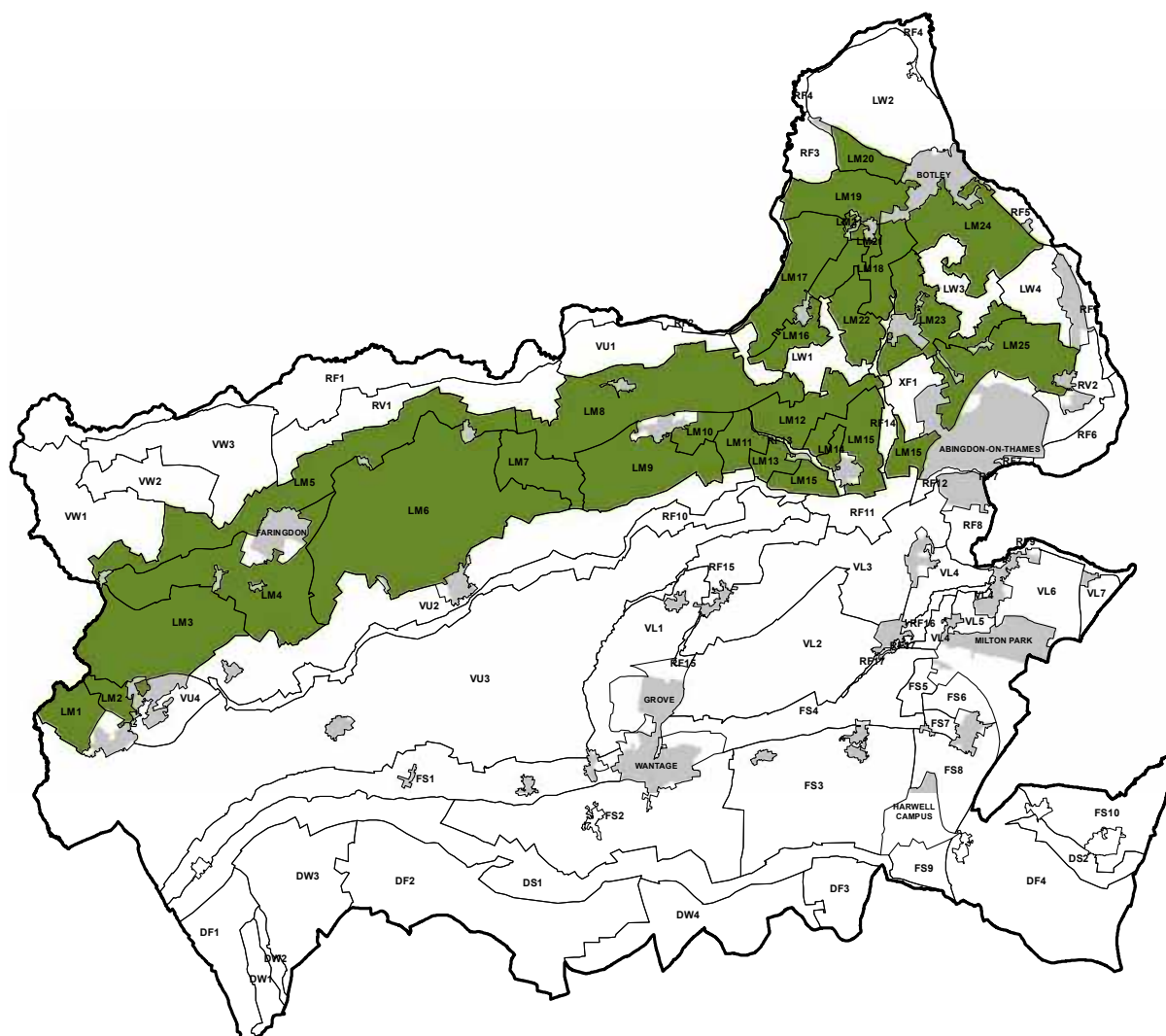
APPENDIX A

Landscape assessment proforma

Landscape assessment		
Category	Features	Comments
	Land cover	
	Agricultural land use	
	Topography	
	Hydrology	
	PRoW	
	Views	
Biodiversity/flora and fauna	Woodland	
	Hedgerows	
	Tree Preservation Order	
	Lakes/Ponds	
	Designations	
Archaeology and cultural designations	Listed buildings	
	Other	
Settlement	Buildings	
	Roads, streets and routes	
	Spaces	
	Layout	
	Landmarks	
	Streetscape	
	Other built form	
Perceptual and aesthetic factors		

APPENDIX B

Full details for each LT and LCA in the Vale of White Horse
Landscape Character Assessment (2017)



LANDSCAPE TYPE LM: CORALLIAN LIMESTONE RIDGE WITH WOODLAND

Landscape Character Areas

LM1	West Shrivenham Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland
LM2	Pennyhooks Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland
LM3	North Watchfield Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland
LM4	Coleshill to Faringdon and Fernham Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland
LM5	Coleshill to Buckland Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland
LM6	Faringdon to Pusey Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland
LM7	Pusey Limestone Corallian Ridge with Woodland
LM8	Hinton Waldrist to Fyfield Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland
LM9	Lovell's Court Farm to Pickwick Farm Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland
LM10	Kingston Bagpuize to Woodhouse Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland
LM11	South Fyfield Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland
LM12	Tubney to Cothill Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland
LM13	Frilford West Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland
LM14	Sheepstead Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland

LM15	Marcham Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland
LM16	South Appleton Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland
LM17	Appleton to Cumnor Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland
LM18	Bradley Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland
LM19	Whitley Copse to Chawley Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland
LM20	Farmoor to Botley Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland
LM21	Cumnor Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland
LM22	Bessels Leigh Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland
LM23	Henwood to Corallian Bayworth Limestone Ridge with Woodland
LM24	Chawley to South Hinksey Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland
LM25	Abingdon to Kennington Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland

LANDSCAPE TYPE LM: CORALLIAN LIMESTONE RIDGE WITH WOODLAND

Location and Boundaries

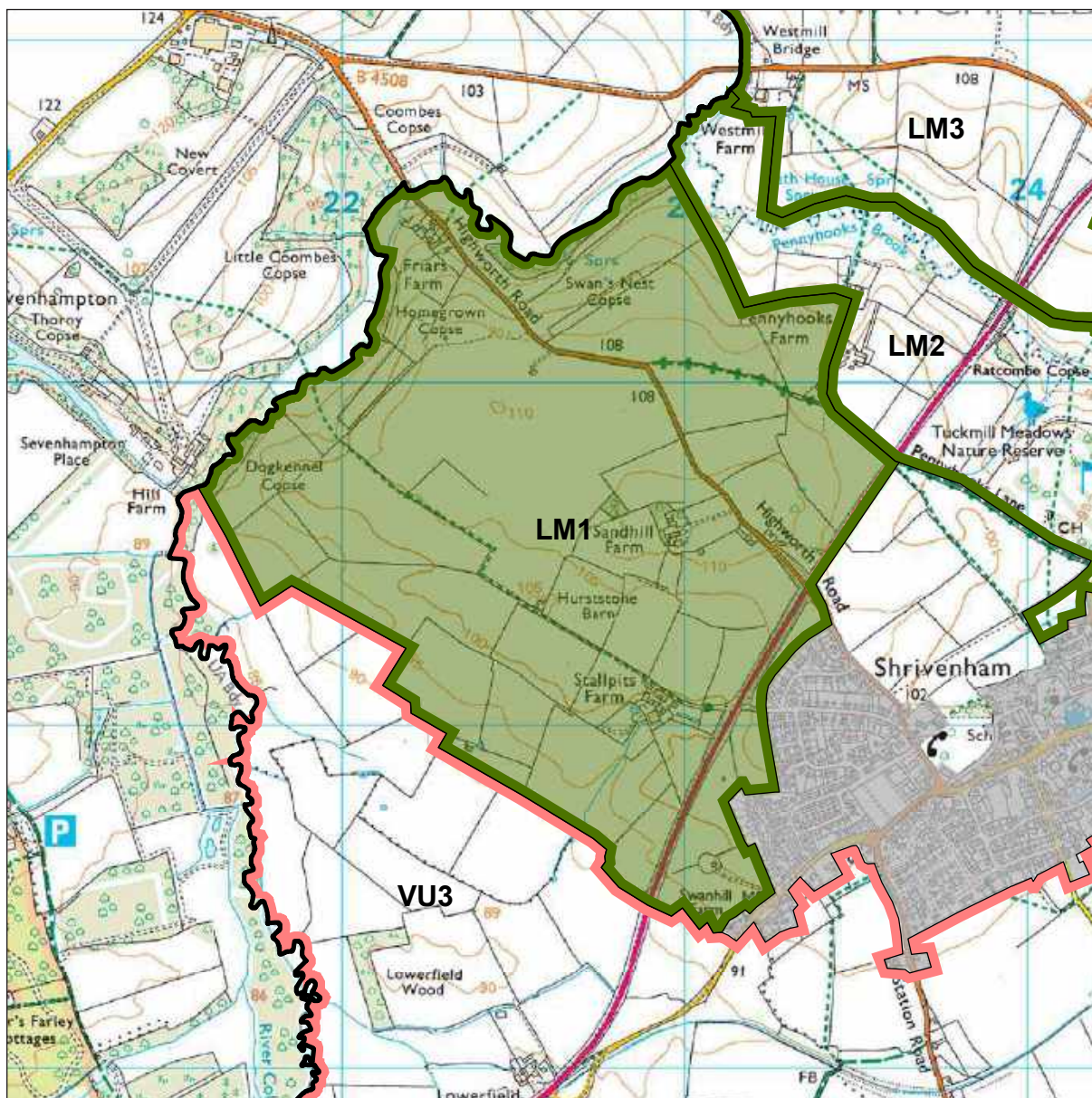
The Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland Type stretches east-west through the northern half of the District. The Landscape Type is located between the Vale landscape associated with the River Ock (to the south), and the Vale and valley floor landscapes associated with the River Thames (to the north). The Type is defined by its topography, underlying geology, land use and more limited tree cover compared to the Wooded Ridge (Type LW), with boundaries following easily recognisable features including roads, woodland edges and field boundaries. The Landscape Type is approximately 3 miles (5km) from the North Wessex Downs AONB at its closest point to the south.



Key Characteristics

- Underlying Corallian Limestone contributes to form a low ridge which protrudes above the clay and alluvial landscapes to the north and south.
- The north facing slopes of the ridge are relatively steep, whilst the south facing slopes are gentler and form a transition to the Upper Vale to the south.

- The Corallian Limestone Ridge features a mixture of relatively large scale arable and pastoral farmland, with areas of estate land, and smaller scale parcels of land including paddocks associated with settlement.
- There are dispersed blocks of significant woodland across the landscape, including areas of ancient woodland.
- The hedgerow network along field boundaries varies, but there is a greater intactness than other Types within the District. Hedges frequently contain mature trees such as Oaks.
- Minor watercourses flow from the ridge towards the Thames and Ock.
- There are areas of rare semi-natural habitats including fens, wet woodland, and calcareous grass heaths, including fens around Frilford and Cothill.
- There are nucleated settlements, of varying size, across the Corallian Limestone Ridge, as well as scattered large country house and farmsteads, often located on high points with views over the Vale landscapes to the north and south.
- The eastern end of the Corallian Limestone Ridge has intervisibility with the city of Oxford, and the Downs are frequently seen on the horizon to the south.



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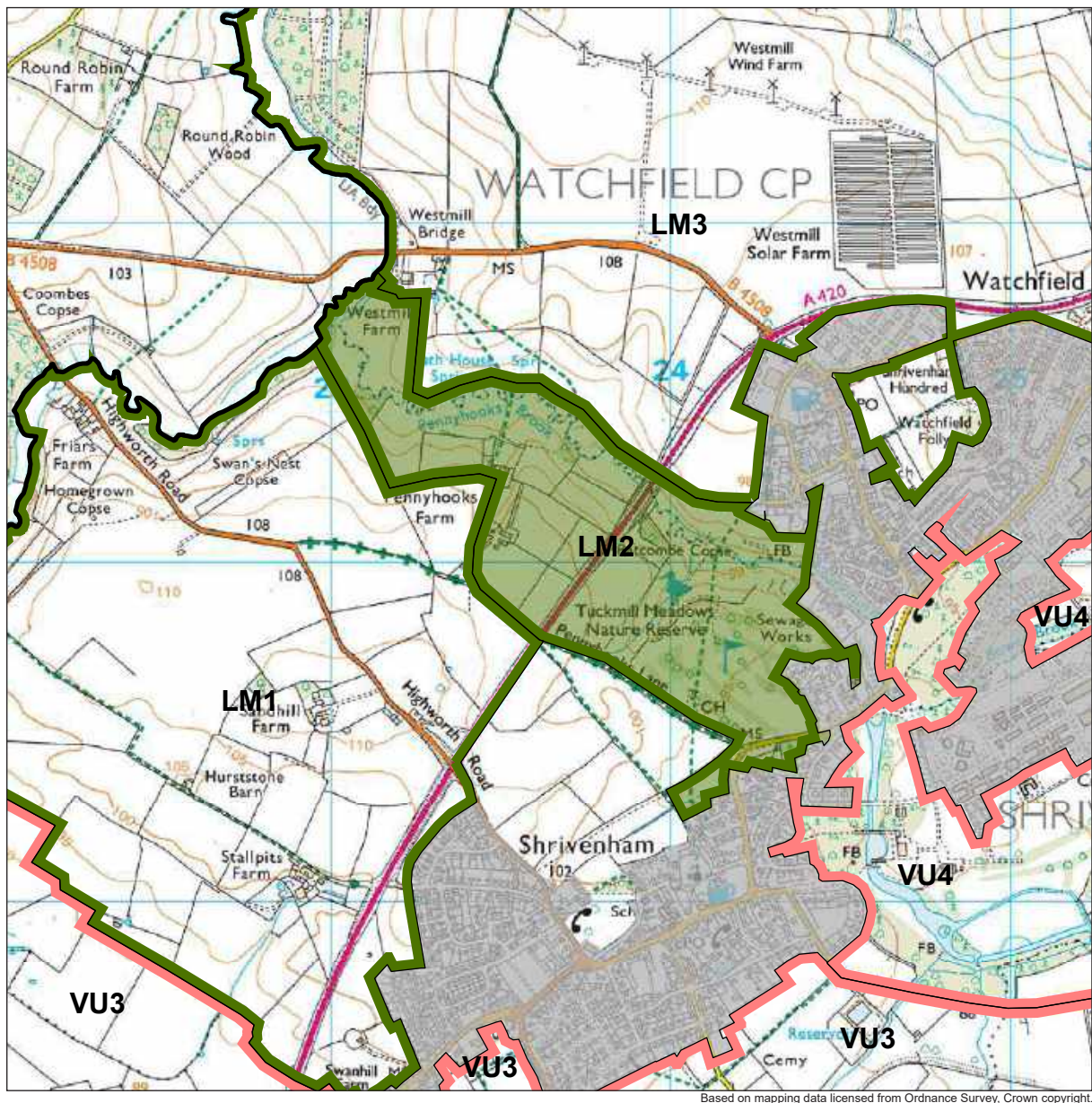
LM1: WEST SHRIVENHAM CORALLIAN LIMESTONE RIDGE WITH WOODLAND

Location and Boundaries

The West Shrivenham Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland Character Area is located at the western end of the District, to the west of Shrivenham. The area is defined by the northern extent of the low lying Vale to the south, and by the north edge of a valley feature to the north. The western edge of the Character Area is defined by the River Cole, along which the western District boundary follows. The town of Shrivenham determines the eastern edge of the Character Area. The southern edge of the Character Area is approximately 3 miles (4.8km) north of the North Wessex Downs AONB.

Key Characteristics

- The Character Area is predominantly underlain by the Stanford Limestone Formation.
- A ridge feature rises to Sandhill in the centre of the Character Area at approximately 110m AOD. The ridge slopes fall to the Vale to the south, the River Cole to the west, and a local valley feature along Pennyhooks Brook to the north.
- The area predominately consists of large arable fields.
- Fields are predominately classified as grade 3 agricultural land.
- Hedgerows where they exist, including hawthorn and blackthorn along field boundaries and Highworth Road, are frequently clipped to low heights.
- There is riparian woodland along the eastern side of the River Cole, which is recorded as ancient woodland.
- There are occasional groups of mature trees, such as oak and sycamore, and occasional hedge trees, including vegetation associated with farmsteads at Sandhill Farm and Stallpits Farm.
- Settlement is limited to the occasional farmstead and small isolated group of dwellings, however the eastern edge of the Character Area abuts the town of Shrivenham.
- There are listed buildings at Sandhill Farm and Stallpits Farm.
- Two roads pass through the area, including the A420, however vehicle access to the majority of the Character Area consists of farm tracks.
- There are limited public rights of way, but a footpath crosses the width of the Character Area, linking Shrivenham to the River Cole to the west.
- Low hedge heights and relatively limited woodland, allows long distance views from vantage points on the ridge, including from roads and the two public rights of way, with intervisibility with the Downs on the horizon to the south. Wind turbines at Westmill are prominent in views north.
- The area forms part of the wider northern setting to the North Wessex Downs AONB located to the south.
- The area is identified as a mixture of post medieval and modern fieldscapes.
- This is a rural, relatively tranquil, farmland landscape, providing the rural western setting to Shrivenham. There is a sense of exposure on elevated positions, although the sense of remoteness is tempered by low key human influence.



LM2: PENNYHOOKS CORALLIAN LIMESTONE RIDGE WITH WOODLAND

Location and Boundaries

The Pennyhooks Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland Character Area is located at the western end of the District, to the west of Watchfield. The extent of area is formed by the sides of a local valley feature along which Pennyhooks Brook flows. The western edge of the Character Area is defined by the River Cole, along which the western District boundary follows. The town of Watchfield determines the eastern edge of the Character Area. The southern edge of the Character Area is approximately 3 miles (4.8km) north of the North Wessex Downs AONB.

Key Characteristics

- The Character Area is predominantly underlain by Sandstone, Siltstone and Mudstone bedrock geology of the Hazelbury Bryan Formation and Kingston Formation.
- The area includes a minor valley feature, located at approximately 85m AOD within the wider ridge. Pennyhooks Brook flows along the valley towards the River Cole, and has areas of Flood Zone located either side of the brook.
- The area predominately consists of an irregular small scale pattern of pasture and significant tree cover associated with the meandering Pennyhooks Brook. Some small areas of woodland, on the southern slopes above the brook, are identified as ancient woodland. There are also wet grassland and fen adjacent to the brook.
- In the eastern portion of the Character Area lies Tuckmill Meadows Local Nature Reserve, which includes areas of calcareous grassland and fen.
- A golf course abuts the edge of Shrivenham at the eastern edge of the Character Area and includes tree cover which filters the settlement edge in views from the countryside to the west.
- The quality and intactness of field boundaries varies, with gaps in boundary vegetation or species-poor hedges away from the brook. However, mature trees along Pennyhooks Lane form a robust boundary along the south-eastern edge of the area.
- The area is classified as grade 3 agricultural land.
- There is very limited settlement internally, however the area abuts the western settlement edge of Shrivenham along the western side of the Character Area.
- The A420 road passes briefly across the middle of the area, and is assimilated into the landscape by significant roadside vegetation. Elsewhere, vehicle access is limited to tracks.
- Two public footpaths cross the width of the area, linking across Pennyhooks Brook.
- Truckmill Meadow Nature Reserve is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest with remnants of calcareous fen and complex of neutral and calcareous grassland.
- Tree cover creates enclosure which restricts views within the valley feature, and creates a sense of intimacy. There are more distant views over the valley vegetation and towards the Downs on the horizon, from the upper, south facing slopes, including from public rights of way in the north-western part of the Character Area.
- The area is predominantly identified as having modern fieldscapes.
- This is a rural, relatively tranquil, landscape focused on the brook and its associated vegetation. Trees enclose the landscape along the brook, but the upper slopes, particularly to the north, are more open. Tree cover along the brook, along the A420 and within the golf course provide a treed western setting to Shrivenham. However, human influence, such as the A420 and golf course reduce the sense of remoteness.

LANDSCAPE TYPE LM: CORALLIAN LIMESTONE RIDGE WITH WOODLAND EVALUATION AND GUIDANCE

EVALUATION

Key positive landscape attributes

The key positive features that contribute to the character of the area and that should be conserved and enhanced are:

- Steep north facing slopes prominent in views across the low-lying landscape associated with the Thames to the north.
- Named high points within the wider ridge feature which are prominent in the local landscape.
- Blocks of woodland, including ancient woodland, which provided a wooded backdrop in views, including from the Vale to the south.
- A more intact network of hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees, than in other parts of the District.
- Rare semi-natural habitats including areas of fen, wet woodland, and calcareous grass heaths.
- Meandering streams, edged with riparian vegetation, which flow down the ridge slopes.
- Rural settlement, including small nucleated villages and traditional market towns.
- A network of public rights of way providing public access across most parts of the ridge.
- A number of conservation areas.
- Areas of historic parkland.
- Views to the 'dreaming spires' of Oxford to the east.
- Provides a rural backdrop and skyline in views from the low lying Vale to the south, in views from the river Thames, and views west from Oxford.

Forces for change/sensitivities/pressures

- Loss or poor management of woodland, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Increase in development, and edge uses such as paddocks, on the edges of existing settlements.
- Sprawling ribbon development along roads, particularly to the east.
- A small group of wind turbines north of Watchfield.
- Solar farm development, albeit less extensive than in the Lower Vale Farmland to the south.
- Overhead pylons crossing the eastern end of the ridge.
- Noise and light pollution from main roads which cross the ridge.
- Occasional golf courses.

GUIDANCE

Landscape Strategy

The landscape strategy for the Corallian Limestone Ridge with Woodland is to conserve the woodlands, hedges and riparian vegetation which give the ridge its treed character, protect remaining semi-natural habitats and resist further urbanising sprawl of low density development.

Landscape Guidelines

Land Management

- Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional farming techniques where these will conserve and enhance landscape features such as ancient woodland, semi-natural habitats and hedgerows.
- Conserve and enhance connectivity of areas of high biodiversity value and key positive landscape attributes, such as riparian woodland.

- Respect the setting to conservation areas and sensitivity historic settlement edges, by resisting changes to the landscape which are not in keeping with the landscape character.
- Resist introduction of further pylons, and encourage underground routing of cables where possible.
- Raise awareness of the historic dimension and underlying archaeology of the landscape to landowners including the woodlands, field patterns and streams.
- Encourage consistent management and restocking of hedgerows and nurture new hedgerow trees to maintain stock, including the use of locally appropriate species such as oak, ash and elm.
- Enhance riparian vegetation along watercourses by planting willows and ash, and pollarding willows where appropriate.
- Maintain, and enhance where possible, key views out from the ridge, in particular views east to the 'dreaming spires' of Oxford through responsible management of tree cover.
- Resist sporadic placement of wind turbines across the ridge, and consider placing any new turbines in locations adjacent to existing turbines in order to restrict cumulative visual effects to a minimal zone of influence.
- Restrict the placement of any new solar farms to the least visually sensitive areas and develop in combination with landscape planting proposals in keeping with the local landscape character.
- Promote responsible management of existing public rights of way, with appropriate surfacing, materials and signage for footpaths to retain the rural, unsettled character of the landscape.
- Encourage landowners to maintain or enhance accessibility and provide additional routes where opportunities arise.

Built Development

- Protect the sensitivity historic edges of settlements from development and resist an increase in settlement edge uses such as paddocks and horse keeping.
- Where extensions to larger settlements are planned, develop landscape strategies which minimise effects on the surrounding landscape and are in keeping with its characteristics. Planting within development should utilise species of local provenance, such as beech, poplar, oak and hawthorn, and disease resistant varieties of elm and ash. Open spaces, planting and housing with low densities and height, should be located along the edges of settlements where they adjoin the countryside.
- Resist the spread of low density development, including ribbon or sporadic development along roads.
- Conserve gaps between settlements to prevent coalescence and retain separate settlement identities.
- Improve understanding of the general pattern of settlements and their relationship to the landscape and maintain development control to ensure that new development is sympathetic to the wider pattern of settlement.
- Conserve the rural roads minimising small-scale incremental change such as signage and fencing, which would change their character.



VU1	Duxford to Appleton Lower Common Upper Vale Farmland
VU2	Longcot to North Garford Upper Vale Farmland
VU3	Bourton to Garford Upper Vale Farmland
VU4	Watchfield South Upper Vale Farmland

LANDSCAPE TYPE VU: UPPER VALE FARMLAND

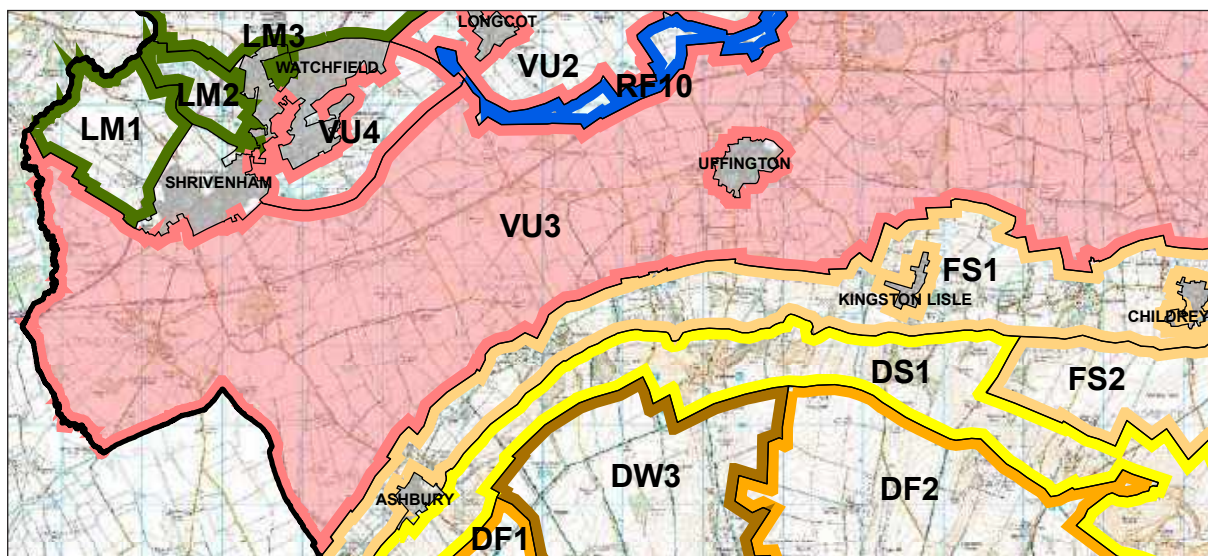
Location and Boundaries

The Upper Vale Farmland Type, together with the Lower Vale Farmland (Type VL) form a band of lower lying farmland through the centre of the District between the rising slopes of the Corallian Limestone Ridge to the north and North Wessex Downs to the south. To the north is an additional area of Upper Vale Farmland located between the Corallian Limestone Ridge and the Thames floodplain. The Upper Vale Farmland is defined by underlying geology, topography, land use and the degree of openness and field pattern scale. Boundaries follow easily recognisable features including roads, woodland edges, watercourses and field boundaries. At its closest, the Type is approximately half a mile (0.8km) from the northern edge of the AONB.



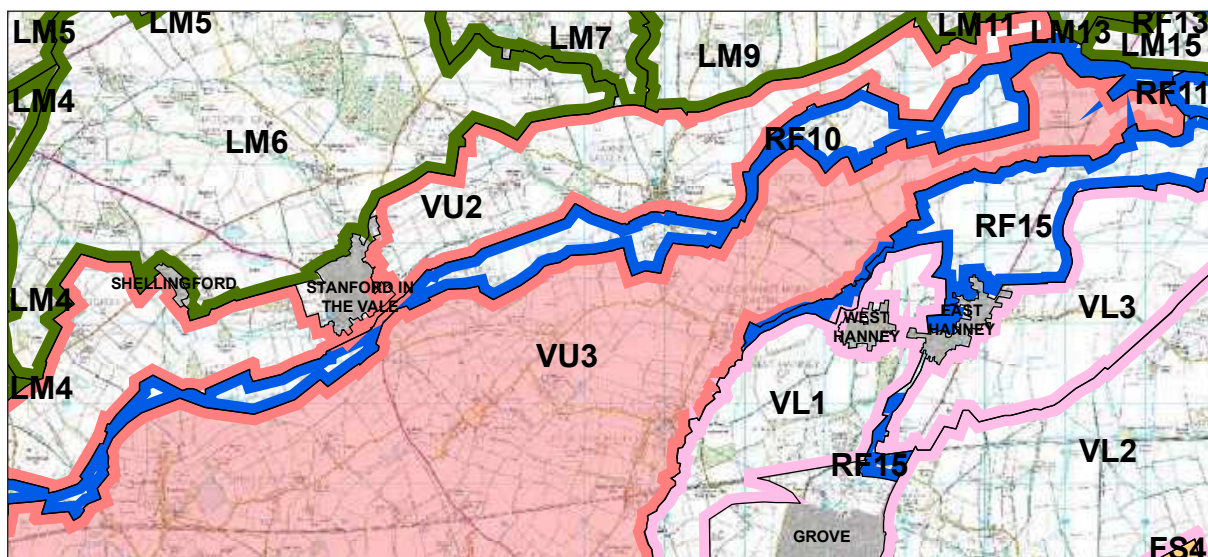
Key Characteristics

- The area is low lying and relatively flat with heavy clay soils, albeit slightly more elevated and gently undulating than the Lower Vale Farmland to the east.
- There is a patchwork of small to medium scale arable fields, interspersed with occasional areas of pasture.
- The intactness of the hedgerow pattern varies, particularly along arable field boundaries, but the Upper Vale Farmland has a more extensive network of boundary vegetation, and more mature field Oaks than the Lower Vale Farmland to the east. There are also small blocks of woodland dispersed through the Upper Vale Farmland.
- Streams and brooks, such as Stutfield Brook and Land Brook, flow north through the Upper Vale towards the River Ock.
- A number of small nucleated settlements and scattered farmsteads are linked by rural lanes across the Vale. A network of public rights of way cross the Upper Vale Farmland, including the D'Arcy Dalton Way Long Distance Path.
- The Great Western Main Line railway crosses east-west through the centre of the area, and the route of the disused Wiltshire and Berkshire canal winds its way through the middle of the Type.
- The nearby Corallian Limestone Ridge and North Wessex Downs form backdrops in views to the north and south, aiding the sense of the containment associated with the Upper Vale location.



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Map continues below



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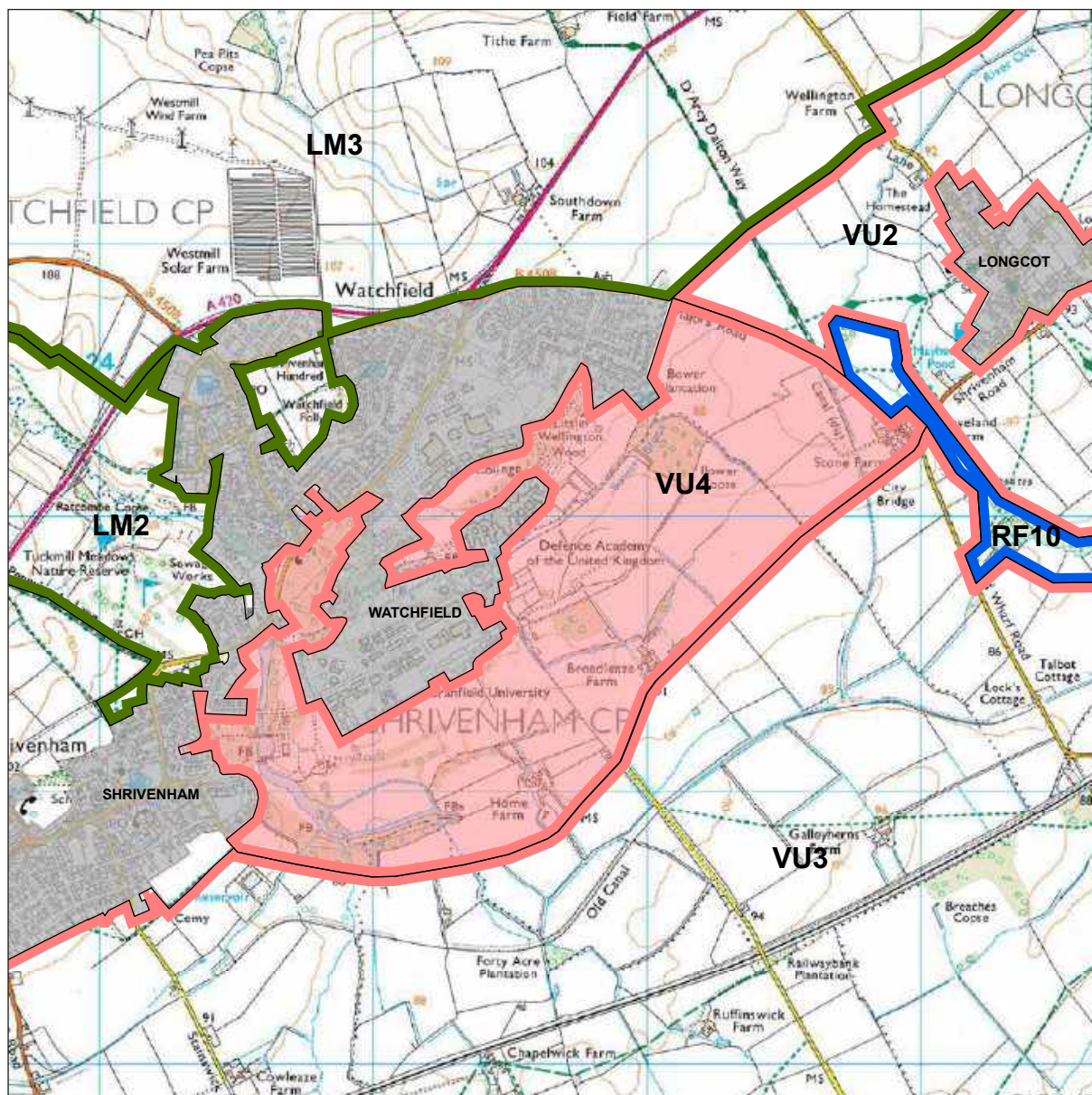
VU3: BOURTON TO GARFORD UPPER VALE FARMLAND

Location and Boundaries

The Bourton to Garford Upper Vale Farmland Character Area is a broad swathe of Vale across the District, to the west of Grove, below the Downs to the south and the Corallian Limestone Ridge to the north. The extent of the area is defined by the foot of the Downs Footslopes to the south, and areas of River Floodplain and settlement to the north. To the east, there is a transition to the slightly lower lying Lower Vale Farmland (Type VL), with the course of Childrey Brook and Woodhill Brook used as a logical boundary between the two Landscape Types. The Character Area is contiguous with the landscape to the west, however, the area is confined by the District boundary. At its closest, the southern edge of the area is approximately 500 yards (450m) from the northern edge of the North Wessex Downs AONB.

Key Characteristics

- The Character Area is predominately underlain by a combination of Gault Formation Mudstone Sedimentary Bedrock, Ampthill Clay Formation and Kimmeridge Clay Formation, and areas of Kimmeridge Clay Formation Sandstone, and Lower Greensand Group Sandstone.
- The area consist of a broad swathe of low lying, but gently undulating, landscape, drained by numerous ditches and minor watercourses. The landscape rises slightly from the River Ock to the north, up to meet the footslopes of the North Wessex Downs to the south.
- The Character Area is predominantly well maintained farmland, with a pattern of varying size arable fields, and areas of grazed pasture.
- The agricultural land classification of the area is predominately grade 4, although there are also areas of grade 3 and 2.
- Boundaries are generally well vegetated with hawthorn and elm hedges and trees, there are small scattered blocks of oak and ash woodland, including areas of ancient woodland, and occasional matures trees, such as oaks, located within fields.
- Small streams and brooks, include Stutfield Brook and Land Brook, which flow from the North Wessex Downs to the Ock
- The disused, partly overgrown, but partially restored, Wilts and Berks canal winds from east to west through the southern portion of the Character Area.
- The area is lightly settled generally, but includes an even spread of scattered settlement across the Character Area, including the villages of Bourton, Uffington, and Denchworth, which have conservation areas and listed buildings adjoining the wider countryside, and Garford. There are several examples of small hamlets focused on small greens of common land, sitting within the countryside, including Baulking and Goosey, which both have conservation areas and a number of listed buildings. The Character Area also adjoins Shrivenham to the north, although its conservation area does not immediately abut the rural landscape.
- Elsewhere across the area there are scattered farmsteads, many of which include listed buildings.
- The A417, B4000 and a network of rural roads and lanes criss-cross the Vale, often with roadside hedges, linking village within and beyond the Character Area. There is also a comprehensive network of public rights of way, including the D'Arcy Dalton Way Long Distance Path, providing pedestrian access to most parts of the area and links to the Downs to the south.
- The Great West Mainline railway line crosses east-west through the centre of the Character Area, raised slightly above the surrounding farmland. Overhead electrification infrastructure, recently installed at close, regularly spaced intervals along the railway, are a noticeable feature across adjacent fields.
- Boundary vegetation and woodland frequently shorten views within the Character Area. However, between tree cover, there are views to high ground of the Corallian Limestone Ridge to the north, and the Downs to the south, emphasising the location of the Character Area within a wider Vale. The Character Area forms a significant part of the wider setting to the north of the North Wessex Downs AONB, with the area visible in the distance from vantage points within the Downs, including from The Ridgeway and Open Access land surrounding the Uffington White Horse.
- A large proportion of the Character Area has fieldscapes identified as post medieval, although there are also significant areas of modern field pattern which have been subject to further amalgamation.
- Tree cover provides enclosure and aids the sense of peace and tranquillity in some parts of the Character, although human influence including settlement and transport corridors such as the railway with its overhead masts, often reduces the sense of remoteness across the area.



VU4: WATCHFIELD SOUTH UPPER VALE FARMLAND

Location and Boundaries

The Watchfield South Upper Vale Farmland Character Area is a relatively small part of the wider Vale landscape, associated with the southern edge of Watchfield, incorporating the parcels of land which wrap around the convoluted settlement edge. There is a transition to the broader scale, less enclosed landscape of the wider Upper Vale Farmland to the south-east, with the alignment of Longcot Road used as a logical identifiable south-eastern boundary to the Character Area. The southern edge of the area is approximately 2 miles (3.2km) from the northern edge of the North Wessex Downs AONB.

Key Characteristics

- The Character Area is underlain by a combination of Ampthill Clay Formation and Kimmeridge Clay Formation, Ampthill Clay Formation - Sedimentary Bedrock Mudstone, and Down Sand Member - Sandstone, Ferruginous
- The low lying area gently undulates, which falls generally towards Bower Brook to the north, and an area of Flood Zone to the west.
- The area consists of a mixture of land uses, including arable fields, pasture, paddocks associated with farmsteads, areas of woodland, riparian vegetation along streams and lakes, the grounds of the Royal Military College, and a small golf course.
- The area is largely classified as grade 3 agricultural land, with some small areas of grade 2 and 4.
- For its relatively small size, the Character Area has some significant areas of ancient woodland, including Wellington Wood and Bower Copse. There are hedges, occasionally clipped to low heights, and belts of mature trees, along field boundaries.
- Settlement within the area is limited to the occasional farmstead, however the Character Area wraps around the convoluted southern edge of Watchfield, including the Cranfield University campus.
- The The D'Arcy Dalton Way Long Distance Path cuts through the eastern corner of the area, but the rest of the Character Area has limited public access, with no other public rights of way.
- Longcot Road and Majors Road wrap around the Character Area to the south and west, however there are no significant roads within the area.
- Tree cover, particularly within the western end of the area, encloses views. However, more open areas to the east have views across the farmland, including distant views south towards the Downs on the horizon.
- Buildings within the Royal Military College, including Beckett Hall, are grade II listed buildings.
- Encircled by roads and adjacent to settlement and other urban influences, the Character Area has limited sense of remoteness, however tree cover offers a degree of tranquillity, and provides a wooded setting to the south-eastern edge of Watchfield.

LANDSCAPE TYPE VU: UPPER VALE FARMLAND EVALUATION AND GUIDANCE

EVALUATION

Key positive landscape attributes

The key positive features that contribute to the character of the area and that should be conserved and enhanced are:

- Tranquil, rural farmland.
- Distinctive views to rising ground to the north and south, including the Corallian Limestone Ridge nearby to the north, and the North Wessex Downs AONB on the horizon to the south.
- A network of drainage ditches and minor watercourses.
- A varying network of hedgerows along field boundaries, with mature hedge trees.
- Scattered blocks of woodland, including ancient woodland.
- A substantially rural landscape, with settlement consisting predominantly of scattered farmsteads and occasional small villages with conservation areas and listed buildings which abut directly onto the surrounding countryside.
- Rural lanes and a network of public rights of way, including the D'Arcy Dalton Long Distance Path.
- The course of the old Wilts and Berks canal, under various stages of restoration.

Forces for change/sensitivities/pressures

- Fragmentation of hedgerows along field boundaries.
- Disturbance from transport networks, including the A417 road and the Great Western Mainline railway.
- Introduction of masts and wires along the length of the Great Western Mainline railway due to electrification.
- Increase in small scale rural development along roads, and intensification of settlement edge uses such as subdivision of land for paddocks.

GUIDANCE

Landscape Strategy

The strategy for the Upper Vale Farmland is to conserve the rural nature of the landscape and resist urbanising influences from infrastructure and residential development. Hedges and trees should be planted to strength the hedgerow network along field boundaries.

Landscape Guidelines

Land Management

- Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional farming techniques where these will conserve and enhance key landscape features such as the hedgerows, hedgerow trees, and woodland.
- Conserve, enhance and restore hedgerows through effective long term management and restocking of hedgerows and nurture new hedgerow trees to maintain stock, including the use of appropriate species of local provenance.
- Promote traditional woodland management techniques such as coppicing with local landowners and the farming community.
- Encourage sustainable and multi-purpose woodlands.
- Raise awareness of the historic dimension of the field patterns and boundaries to landowners, and conserve local historic dimension of the landscape, alongside local hydrology to encourage sustainable drainage.

- Conserve and enhance connectivity of areas of high biodiversity value and key positive landscape attributes, such as riparian woodland.
- Respect the setting to conservation areas and sensitivity historic settlement edges, by resisting changes to the landscape which are not in keeping with the landscape character.
- Promote responsible management of existing public rights of way, with appropriate surfacing, materials and signage for footpaths to retain the rural, unsettled character of the landscape.
- Encourage landowners to maintain or enhance accessibility and provide additional routes where opportunities arise.

Built Development

- Retain the rural and undeveloped character of the area, and avoid the development of sporadic dwellings and infrastructure.
- Promote the use of traditional buildings materials and signage features with particular regard to local style and materials.
- Ensure that any new development does not impact adversely on rural views, and resist development which would have a detrimental effect on views from the North Wessex Downs AONB, and its wider northern setting.
- Ensure any new development has regard for retaining local views of the high ground to the north and south, which help emphasise the Vale location.
- Improve understanding of the general pattern of settlements and their relationship to the landscape and maintain development control to ensure that new development is sympathetic to the wider pattern of settlement.
- Conserve gaps between settlements to prevent coalescence and retain separate settlement identities.
- Conserve the rural roads minimising small-scale incremental change such as signage, fencing or improvements to the road network or bridges which would change their character.
- Maintain and enhance vegetated boundaries to transport corridors and adjacent infrastructure.

APPENDIX C

NCA information

A summary of the Upper Thames Clay Vales NCA is as follows:

“The Upper Thames Clay Vales National Character Area (NCA) is a broad belt of open, gently undulating lowland farmland on predominantly Jurassic and Cretaceous clays. Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site falls within the NCA, along with around 5,000 ha of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and smaller areas of the Chilterns AONB and the Cotswolds AONB. Two of its Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) are designated for their lowland meadow vegetation communities, while Little Wittenham SAC has one of the most studied great crested newt populations in the UK. There are contrasting landscapes, including enclosed pastures of the claylands with wet valleys, mixed farming, hedges, hedge trees and field trees and more settled, open, arable lands. Mature field oaks give a parkland feel in many places”.

Key characteristics of the Upper Thames Clay Vales NCA are as follows:

- Low-lying clay-based flood plains encircle the Midvale Ridge. Superficial deposits, including alluvium and gravel terraces, spread over 40 per cent of the area, creating gently undulating topography. The Upper Jurassic and Cretaceous clays and the wet valley bottoms give rise to enclosed pasture, contrasting with the more settled, open, arable lands of the gravel.
- The large river system of the River Thames drains the Vales, their headwaters flowing off the Cotswolds to the north or emitting from the springline along the Chilterns and Downs escarpments. Where mineral extraction takes place, pits naturally fill with water, and limestone gravels from the Cotswolds give rise to marl formation. There are a high number of nationally important geological sites.
- Woodland cover is low at only about 3 per cent, but hedges, hedgerow trees and field trees are frequent. Watercourses are often marked by lines of willows and, particularly in the Aylesbury Vale and Cotswold Water Park, native black poplar.
- Wet ground conditions and heavy clay soils discourage cultivation in many places, giving rise to livestock farming. Fields are regular and hedged, except near the Cotswolds, where there can be stone walls. The Vale of White Horse is made distinct by large arable fields, and there are relict orchards on the Greensand.

- In the river corridors, grazed pasture dominates, with limited areas of historic wetland habitats including wet woodland, fen, reedbed and flood meadow. There are two areas of flood meadow designated for their importance at a European level as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). There are also rich and extensive ditch systems.
- Gravel extraction has left a legacy of geological exposures, numerous waterbodies and, at the Cotswold Water Park, a nationally important complex of marl lakes.
- Wetland habitat attracts regionally important numbers of birds including snipe, redshank, curlew and lapwing and wintering wildfowl such as pochard. Snake's head fritillary thrives in the internationally important meadows. The area also supports typical farmland wildlife such as brown hare, bats, barn owl, tree sparrow and skylark.
- Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site, including its Capability Brown landscape, is the finest of many examples of historic parkland in this NCA. There are many heritage features, including nationally important survivals of ridge and furrow, Roman roads, deserted medieval villages and historic bridges.
- Brick and tile from local clays, timber and thatch are traditional building materials across the area, combined with limestone near the Cotswolds and occasional clunch and wickert near the Chilterns.
- Settlement is sparse on flood plains, apart from at river crossings, where there can be large towns, such as Abingdon. Aylesbury and Bicester are major urban centres, and the outer suburbs of Oxford and Swindon spread into this NCA. Market towns and villages are strung along the springlines of the Chilterns and Downs. Major routes include mainline rail, canals, a network of roads including the M40 and M4 and The Ridgeway and Thames Path National Trails.

A summary of the Midvale Ridge NCA is as follows:

"The Midvale Ridge National Character Area (NCA) is a band of low-lying limestone hills stretching east-west from the Vale of Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire to Swindon. It is surrounded by the flat lands of the Oxfordshire clay vales, giving extensive views across the surrounding countryside. It is a predominantly agricultural area with a mixed arable/ pastoral farming landscape, cereals being the most important arable crop. The main towns are Swindon, at the western end, and Oxford, which lies across the centre of the area, but otherwise the settlement pattern is characterised by small nucleated villages along the top of the ridge and along the springline. The soils types are a mix of heavy rendzinas, stagnogleys and lighter sandy brown earths with small patches of sandy soils".

Key characteristics of the Midvale Ridge NCA are as follows:

- Low, irregular wooded limestone ridge giving way to a series of isolated steep-sided tabular hills in the east which rise from the surrounding clay vales.
- Contrast between the moderately elevated limestone hills and ridges and the surrounding low-lying clay vales.
- Drained mostly by small springs and streams which run into the Thames, Thame and Ock.
- Well wooded – a third of the woodland is designated ancient woodland.
- Mixed pastoral and arable landscape with large, geometric fields divided by hedges and regularly spaced hedgerow trees punctuated by blocks of woodland.
- Fragmented but rare and important semi-natural habitats, including acid grassland, calcareous fens and flushes, wet woodland and calcareous grass heaths particularly around Frilford and Cothill.
- Evidence of previous land use such as iron-age and Romano-British settlements and ridge and furrow through to old quarries still visible in the landscape.
- Locally quarried limestone commonly used as building material for local houses.
- Settlement pattern of nucleated villages on the hill tops and along the springline with low density of dispersed settlement.
- Recreational opportunities include the Thames Path National Trail.

APPENDIX D

OWLS information

Clay Vale – Local Character Area: Uffington (WH/24)

Key characteristics of the Clay Vale LT are as follows:

- A flat, low-lying landform.
- Mixed land uses, dominated by pastureland, with small to medium-sized hedged fields.
- Many mature oak, ash and willow hedgerow trees.
- Dense, tree-lined streams and ditches dominated by pollarded willows and poplars.
- Small to medium-sized nucleated villages.

A description of the Uffington Local Character Area (WH/24) is as follows:

"There is a mix of medium to large-sized fields with both arable land and pasture. The grassland is largely confined to the smaller fields close to the river Ock and its tributaries. Large arable fields occupy the land to the west of Grove. Fields are enclosed by hawthorn and elm hedges which, in turn, are often adjacent to ditches. Dense linear strips of willow, ash, field maple and oak border watercourses and are a prominent visual feature which give structure to an otherwise flat low-lying landscape. Densely scattered hedgerow trees of ash, oak, willow and dead elm, particularly within roadside hedges, add to the tree cover. Ash and willow trees in hedges next to ditches are particularly prominent. There are small to medium-sized blocks of ancient and semi-natural oak and ash woodland, as well as deciduous plantations of oak, ash, willow and poplar, scattered throughout the area. Hedges are generally in good condition but some of the internal field hedges are gappy. To the west of Grove they have been removed, resulting in a very open landscape."

The landscape strategy for Clay Vale LT is as follows:

"Conserve the intimate, tranquil and small-scale pastoral character of the landscape. Conserve and enhance the well-defined pattern of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and tree-lined watercourses."

River Meadowlands – Local Character Area: River Cole (WH/26)

Key characteristics of the River Meadowlands LT are as follows:

- Flat, low-lying topography with seasonally flooded alluvial floodplains.
- Meandering river channels.
- Grazing meadows and small fields of permanent pasture.
- Riparian character with a strong pattern of riverside willows and tree-lined ditches.
- Sparsely settled with a few roads.

A description of the River Cole Local Character Area (WH/26) is as follows:

"In this area there are small regularly-shaped fields of improved grassland enclosed by gappy hawthorn hedges with scattered dead elm and willows. Roadside hedges are tall, dense and with willow and poplar trees. There are also some ditches lined with willows."

The landscape strategy for River Meadowlands LT is as follows:

"Conserve and enhance the tranquil, small-scale, intimate pastoral character and visual unity of the river corridors."

Rolling Farmland - Local Character Area: Watchfield (CR/1)

Key characteristics of the Rolling Farmland LT are as follows:

- Prominent rolling landform.
- Large, geometric arable fields enclosed by a weak hedgerow pattern.
- Thinly distributed hedgerow trees.
- Locally prominent blocks of ancient woodland.
- Small to medium-sized villages.

A description of the Watchfield Local Character Area (CR/1) is as follows:

"This area is dominated by large, rectangular arable fields. There are some smaller fields consisting of wet grassland bordering Pennyhooks Brook. Fields are generally enclosed by hawthorn and blackthorn hedges, and tree cover is limited to mature oak and sycamore in the hedges and a few scattered tree clumps. On some slopes there are surviving blocks of small to medium-sized ancient semi-natural woodland. Most of the field boundaries are low, and many internal field boundaries have either been removed or replaced by fences, thus creating an open landscape with distant views over to the Vale of White Horse."

The landscape strategy for Rolling Farmland LT is as follows:

"Conserve and enhance the surviving pattern of woodlands, hedgerows, hedgerow trees and tree-lined watercourses. Minimise the impact of built

development through appropriate location, choice of building materials, and the use of locally characteristic tree and shrub species."

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Ecological Services

Green Infrastructure

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Landscape Character Assessment

Habitats Regulations Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment

Sustainability Appraisal



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