

Development of Evidence for Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan:

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Final Report
Prepared by LUC
July 2019



Project Title: Development of Evidence for Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan: Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

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Planning & EIA
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 LUC was commissioned by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council in March 2019 to prepare a Landscape Sensitivity Assessment specifically to potential built development. The outputs of this assessment provide evidence to support the development of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan. The Landscape Sensitivity Assessment was undertaken alongside, but discrete from, the LUC Green Belt, Green Corridor and Settlement Gap studies.

Purpose and scope of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

- 1.2 At the examination session on the Green Belt Stage 3 Study there was considerable debate about the need to protect sensitive landscapes within Welwyn Hatfield. There are no locally designated landscapes in Welwyn Hatfield, and while the Green Belt designation has protected many of the borough's more sensitive landscapes from built development up to this point, protecting sensitive landscapes from built development is not one of the five purposes of the Green Belt as set out in the NPPF.
- 1.3 The overall aim of this study was to undertake a robust and transparent comparative assessment of landscape sensitivity by landscape character area, to inform decision making in relation to site selection as part of the Local Plan review process. This information provides useful context for more detailed assessment of specific site options and **Section 3** of this report includes a diagram that indicates how the assessment can be used when appraising a specific site. It is a strategic-level study undertaken at a scale of 1:25,000; more detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) will be required on a site by site basis in relation to the development of any specific site and to inform masterplanning.
- 1.4 The study concentrates on understanding the sensitivities to residential development and does not address potential landscape capacity in terms of quantity of built development, which is a further stage of assessment that is dependent on a much wider range of considerations other than landscape and visual effects and consideration of cumulative development, landscape objectives and thresholds of acceptable change.
- 1.5 Using the Borough's Landscape Character Assessment¹ as a basis for defining assessment areas, this study considers the sensitivity to residential development of all land within Welwyn Hatfield other than:
- Settlements large enough to be inset (ie excluded) from the Green Belt: Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield, Welwyn, Welham Green, Brookmans Park, Cuffley, Woolmer Green, Oaklands & Mardley Heath, Digswell and Little Heath;
 - Areas which have 'absolute' constraints that preclude such development (see paragraph 2.15 below).

Policy context

International

- 1.6 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) came into force in the UK in March 2007. It establishes the need to recognise landscape in law; to develop landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management and planning of landscapes; and to establish procedures for the participation of the general public and other stakeholders in the creation and implementation of landscape policies.

¹ Welwyn Hatfield Landscape Character Assessment (part of the Hertfordshire Landscape Strategy, 2005)

- 1.7 The ELC definition of 'landscape' recognises that all landscapes matter, be they ordinary, degraded or outstanding:

"Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors."

- 1.8 Signing up to the ELC means that the UK is committed on the one hand to protect, manage and develop our landscapes and on the other to raise landscape awareness, involvement and enjoyment amongst local and visiting communities. Landscape character is defined by the ELC as "a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse".

National

- 1.9 The Government published the latest update to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which sets out the environmental, social and economic planning policies for England, in February 2019. The NPPF does not specifically address the topic of landscape sensitivity, but one of its overarching objectives, set out in Paragraph 8, is "an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment".
- 1.10 At Paragraph 170 the NPPF is explicit in its requirement for development plan policies to protect and where appropriate, enhance the landscape, stating that "*planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes*" and "*recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside*".
- 1.11 At paragraph 127(c) it states that "*Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments ... are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding environment and landscape setting*".

Local

- 1.12 The Welwyn Hatfield Draft Local Plan (August 2016) identifies one of its borough-wide strategic objectives (paragraph 3.2) as being "*to protect, maintain and where possible enhance the borough's historic and natural environment, its cultural assets and network of open spaces, urban and rural landscapes*".
- 1.13 The principal policy of relevance to landscape is SADM 16 Ecology and Landscape, which states that:
- "Proposals will be expected to help conserve and enhance the borough's natural and historic landscape and sit comfortably within the wider landscape setting. Proposals will be assessed for their impact on landscape features to ensure that they conserve or improve the prevailing landscape quality, character and condition. Proposals should take full account of the relevant Landscape Character Assessment and adopt the strategy and guidelines for managing change set out therein. Regard should also be had to relevant advice contained within the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record."*

2 Methodology

- 2.1 This section sets out the methodology for the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment, undertaken alongside but discrete from the Green Belt, Green Corridor and Settlement Gap studies for Welwyn Hatfield. This includes information on the study area and spatial framework, the key sources of evidence used, the assessment criteria, and the process followed.

The approach to assessing landscape sensitivity

- 2.2 There is no prescribed method for evaluating the sensitivity of landscape to development. However, the approach taken in this study builds on *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity* (Scottish Heritage and the former Countryside Agency, 2004) as well as LUC's considerable experience from previous and on-going studies of a similar nature. LUC sensitivity assessments have been accepted at Local Plan examination and used to defend development appeal decisions. The methodology is also in line with the approach to landscape sensitivity assessment published by Natural England on 1/7/2019².
- 2.3 Section 2.3 of the Natural England approach states that:
- "Landscape sensitivity assessment is a process that assesses the resilience / robustness of landscape character and the visual resource – and what we value – to a defined change, or changes."*
- 2.4 In this study the following definition of sensitivity has been used, which is based on the principles set out in Topic Paper 6 and in Natural England's approach to landscape sensitivity assessment:

Landscape sensitivity is the relative extent to which the character and quality of an area is likely to change as a result of introducing a particular type of development combined with the value placed on that landscape

- 2.5 This landscape sensitivity assessment considers the landscape's sensitivity to the principle of 2-3 storey residential development, without knowing the specific size or exact location. It is not an impact assessment and cannot therefore conclude what the exact impacts of a development on the landscape would be. **Table 2.1** below shows how Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (LSA) and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) relate to each other and where this assessment sits in relation to these other types of study.

Relationship with previous landscape assessment work

- 2.6 This Landscape Sensitivity Assessment is intended to complement the 2005 Landscape Character Assessment, and both documents should be referenced when formulating or assessing development proposals. The 2005 study presented a more detailed analysis of the landscape features/aspects considered important in defining different parts of the borough, and requirements for conserving or enhancing key elements, whereas the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment focuses on consideration of the extent to which development in different locations might impact on valued landscape characteristics. The sensitivity study reflects some changes that have occurred since 2005, such as expansion of urban areas in places, but the character assessment nonetheless provides descriptions, analysis, and strategy and guidelines which are largely still applicable.

² An approach to landscape sensitivity assessment – to inform spatial planning and land management (Natural England, June 2019)

Table 2.1: Types of Landscape Study/ Assessment

		SCALE OF STUDY AREA			
		Strategic level (regional)	District/ borough level	Sub-district level/ settlement edge	Specific site
SPECIFICITY OF PROPOSAL	Inherent sensitivity (no proposal)	LCA ³ (identify key sensitivities/ valued attributes of LCAs)	LCA (identify key sensitivities/ valued attributes of LCAs)	LCA/LSA ⁴ (identify key sensitivities/ valued attributes of parcels)	LSA (identify key sensitivities/ valued attributes of a site)
	Sensitivity to the principle of a type of development (e.g. housing, wind energy, roads)	LSA (identify sensitivity of regional scale character areas to a type of development)	LSA (identify sensitivity of district/ borough level character areas to a type of development)	LSA (identify sensitivity of sub-LCA land parcels to a type of development)	LSA / baseline assessment for an LVIA (identify sensitivity of a site to a type of development)
	Sensitivity to a range of options associated with a development type (e.g. 500 houses, 1000 houses, 1500 houses)	LSA (identify sensitivity of regional scale character areas to different development options)	LSA (identify sensitivity of district scale character areas to different development options)	LSA (identify sensitivity of sub-LCA land parcels to different development options)	LSA/option appraisal (identify sensitivity of a site to different development options or identify potential effects of options)
	Sensitivity to a specific proposal (e.g. 250 houses in a defined area including known layout and supporting infrastructure)	LSA/ comparative site assessment (identify potential effects on different sites, perhaps for comparison purposes)	LSA/ comparative site assessment (identify potential effects on different sites, perhaps for comparison purposes)	LSA/ comparative site assessment (identify potential effects on different sites, perhaps for comparison purposes)	LVIA ⁵ (Identify potential effects)

2.7 Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council has previously undertaken a series of landscape sensitivity and capacity assessments⁶ targeted at potential development locations, focusing initially on broad locations for development identified in the Core Strategy Issues and Options document (2009), and subsequently at sites identified through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and the later Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA).

2.8 These assessments were based on guidance provided in Topic Paper 6, but used a more detailed and formulaic methodology in which landscape capacity was considered to derive from a combination of ecological sensitivity, cultural sensitivity and landscape value. Each of these factors had a score which was in turn derived from scores given to a number of separate criteria.

³ Landscape Character Assessment

⁴ Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

⁵ Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

⁶ Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study (2012), Part 2 (2014) and Part 3 (2016)

Topic Paper 6 was discursive and non-prescriptive, and consequently open to a range of interpretations, but in recent years there has been some movement away from the more complex type of approach that the Welwyn Hatfield Sensitivity and Capacity studies employed and towards methodologies which provide more focus on the key factors that contribute towards sensitivity in a study area, as reflected in Natural England's newly published approach.

- 2.9 The concept of 'capacity' has in practice caused some confusion with its dual meaning, and there has been something of a move away from use of this term. The definitions for different 'capacity' ratings in these studies indicate the use of the term more in the sense of ability to accommodate development than the extent of development that could be accommodated. The recently published Natural England notes (in section 1.1) the difficulty in simply quantifying the amount of development that a specific area can accommodate, and does not deal with how to carry out such an assessment.

Study area and assessment parcels

- 2.10 The assessment is organised by landscape character area (LCA), using the character areas defined by the Welwyn Hatfield Landscape Character Assessment as shown in **Figure 2.1** below.
- 2.11 It should be noted that several character areas are split into geographically separate locations. This reflects the fact that LCA's were defined at a county level, so land outside of Welwyn Hatfield borough in some instances divides parts of the same LCA within Welwyn Hatfield.
- 2.12 Where an LCA lies adjacent to a settlement, the LCA is divided into sub-areas and an assessment is presented for each settlement edge in that LCA, considering sensitivity to urban expansion, as well as an assessment for the wider LCA.
- 2.13 Assessment areas away from settlement edges are referenced by the LCA number, and assessment areas adjacent to inset edges are referenced by the LCA number appended by a letter – e.g. 35 for the main part of Ayot St Peter Wooded Upland, 35a for the area adjacent to Welwyn and 35b for the area adjacent to Welwyn Garden City.
- 2.14 Areas subject to 'absolute constraints' - i.e. where development will not be permitted - have been identified and are not assessed in terms of their sensitivity to development; however it is important to note that constrained areas may also have an impact on the sensitivity of adjacent, unconstrained land. The following areas are treated as absolute development constraints, and have been defined in keeping with the definitions used in the Welwyn Hatfield Green Belt Study Stage 3 (February 2019):
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
 - Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
 - Scheduled Monument
 - Historic Park and Garden
 - Ancient Woodland
 - National Nature Reserve
 - Local Nature Reserve
 - Local Wildlife Site.
- 2.15 As a result of exclusion of constrained areas, one entire character area, Northaw Great Wood (LCA 52) has been excluded from the assessment.

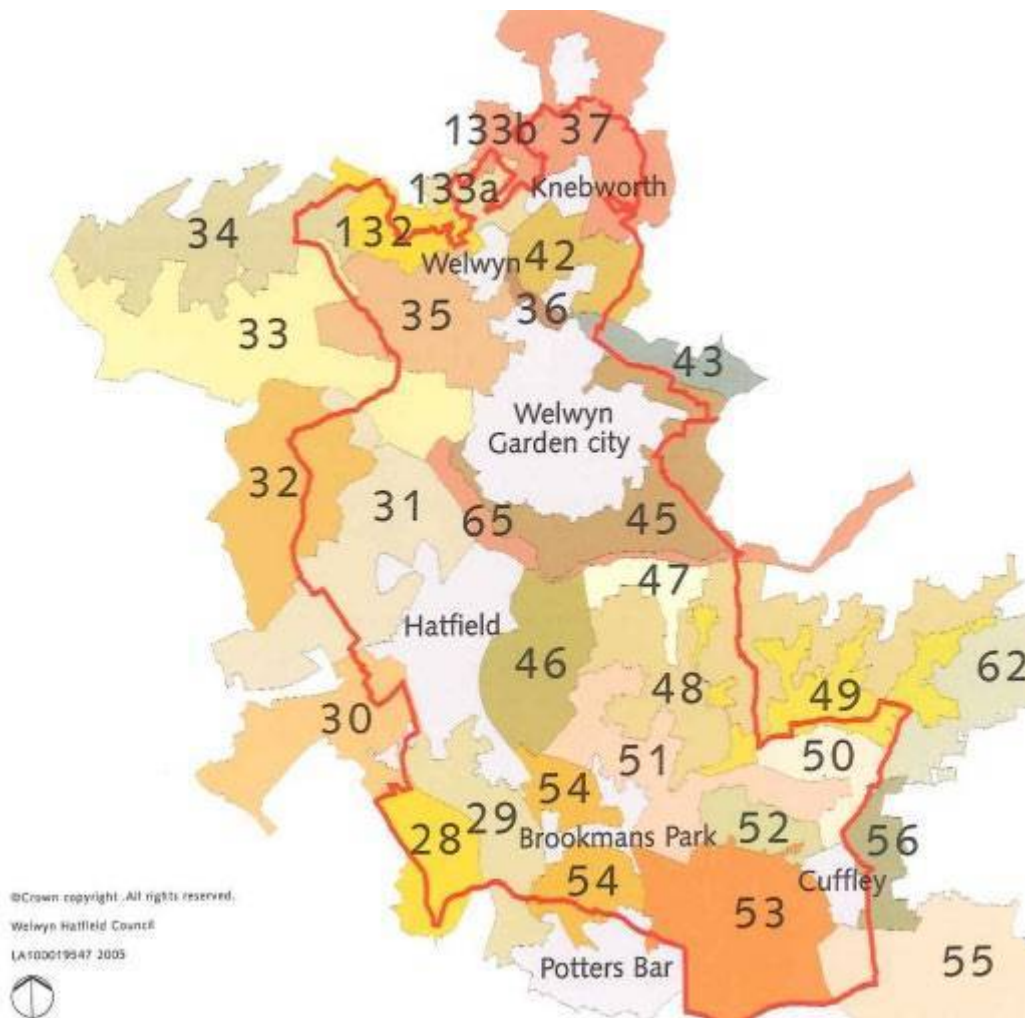


Figure 2.1 Landscape Character Areas (taken from the Welwyn Hatfield Landscape Character Assessment 2005)

GIS data

2.16 All relevant mapped data was compiled in GIS. A full list of data is in Table 2.2 below.

Table 2.2: GIS data

GIS layers	Source
OS 50K	Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
OS 25K	Emapsite
Local Authority boundaries	Ordnance Survey
Aerial imagery	ESRI
Rivers and lakes	Ordnance Survey
Flood Zone 2 and 3	Environment Agency
Local Wildlife Sites	Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Ancient Woodland Inventory	Natural England

GIS layers	Source
Local Nature Reserves (LNR)	Natural England
National Nature Reserves (NNR)	Natural England
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Natural England
Priority Habitat Inventory	Natural England
IBA	RSPB
RSPB Reserves	RSPB
Conservation Areas	Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Listed Buildings	Historic England
Registered Battlefields	Historic England
Registered Parks & Gardens	Historic England
Scheduled Monuments	Historic England
Landscape Character Areas	Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
National Character Areas	Natural England
National cycle routes	Sustrans
National trails	Natural England
Open access land	Natural England
Registered common land	Natural England
Country park	Natural England
Site allocations	Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
2019 Call for Sites locations	Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Settlements identified in settlement hierarchy ('specified settlements')	Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Indicators of landscape sensitivity

- 2.17 In line with good practice the assessment uses carefully defined transparent criteria so that judgements can be clearly traced back to the underlying landscape baseline. These indicators of landscape sensitivity are set out in **Table 2.3** below.
- 2.18 Criteria selection is based on the attributes of the landscape most likely to be affected by development and considers both 'landscape' and 'visual' aspects of sensitivity. The criteria provide examples of the types of landscape character or features that could indicate low, medium or high sensitivity in each.

- 2.19 With regard to landscape value, there are no nationally or locally designated landscapes in Welwyn Hatfield, but all of the criteria identified below may reflect value attached to landscape, whether in terms of specific physical or natural features, perceptual qualities, cultural heritage interest, views or recreational use.

Table 2.3 Criteria to determine landscape sensitivity

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Criteria		
<p>Landform</p> <p><i>This considers the shape of the landscape. Smooth, gently undulating or flat landforms are likely to be less sensitive to development than a landscape with distinct landform features, such as hills and valleys, as development may mask distinctive topographical features that contribute to landscape character.</i></p>		
Low	Medium	High
Absence of strong topographical variety. Featureless, smooth, very gently undulating or flat landform.	Undulating landform or some distinct landform features.	Presence of strong topographical variety or distinctive landform features e.g. incised valley with prominent slopes.
<p>Landscape pattern and time depth</p> <p><i>This considers the field pattern and historic origin of the landscape area. Landscapes with more irregular field patterns, particularly those of historic origin, are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than landscape with regular scale field patterns because of the risk of losing characteristic landscape patterns.</i></p>		
Low	Medium	High
Simple. Regular or uniform field patterns (mainly of modern origin).	Mixture of simple and complex landscape field patterns.	Complex. Irregular and varied field patterns (including historic field patterns i.e. piecemeal enclosure with irregular boundaries, ridge and furrow).
<p>'Natural' character</p> <p><i>This considers the 'naturalistic' qualities of the landscape area in terms of the coverage of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features (e.g. trees and hedgerows) which contribute to landscape character and could be vulnerable to loss from development. Areas with frequent natural features (including large areas of designated habitats) result in increased sensitivity to development, while landscape with limited natural features will be less sensitive.</i></p>		
Low	Medium	High
Lack of semi-natural habitat coverage or valued natural features. e.g. intensively farmed or areas with high levels of existing development or brownfield sites.	Areas of valued semi-natural habitats and features in parts of the landscape, whilst other parts are intensively farmed or developed.	Frequent occurrence of valued natural features (tree, hedgerows, woodland) or areas of semi-natural habitats.
<p>Built character</p> <p><i>This considers the built character of the landscape area with particular reference to the presence of heritage assets that contribute to landscape character (i.e. valued features that may be designated as Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, archaeological features or remains or other features). Landscapes with a high density of historic features important to the character of the area are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than areas where such development already exists.</i></p>		

Low	Medium	High
Presence or adjacent to modern development or contemporary structures that detract from landscape character, e.g. utility, infrastructure or industrial elements.	Mixture of modern development and historic features important to landscape character.	Presence of small-scale, historic or vernacular settlement or historic features important to landscape character (e.g. Listed Buildings, archaeological features).
<p>Recreational value</p> <p><i>This criterion considers the presence of features and facilities which enable enjoyment of the landscape, and the importance of these. This may include public rights of way, bridleways, open access land and outdoor tourist/ visitor attractions with facilities. Recreation activities such as walking, cycling, horse riding or more formal recreation activities where enjoyment of the landscape is important to the experience. Importance of features may be indicated by designation such as long distance footpaths or recreation routes, national cycle routes, proximity to areas of local population (such as local parks) and outdoor tourist attractions often marked on Ordinance Survey maps.</i></p>		
Low	Medium	High
Publically inaccessible or limited provision of access routes likely to be of community importance. Recreational value limited to community sports facilities (where enjoyment of the landscape is not integral to the activity).	Some Public Rights of Way and footpaths. Landscapes with green spaces or recreation areas valued in the local context.	Landscapes important for access and enjoyment of the landscape e.g. open access land, country parks or outdoor tourist attractions with visitor facilities. Presence of well-connected long distance routes and public rights of way linking centres of population.
<p>Perceptual aspects</p> <p><i>This considers qualities such as rurality (traditional land uses with few modern, human influences), sense of remoteness or tranquillity. High scenic value, freedom from human activity/ disturbance and 'dark skies' would add to sensitivity in this criterion. This is because development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from a sense of tranquillity and or remoteness.</i></p>		
Low	Medium	High
Close to visible or audible signs of human activity and modern development.	Some sense of rural character but with some signs of human activity and modern development.	A rural landscape, remote from visible or audible signs of human activity and modern development.
<p>Settlement setting</p> <p><i>The extent to which the landscape area i) contributes to the identity and distinctiveness of a settlement by way of its character and/ or scenic quality, for example by providing an attractive backdrop or setting, or playing an important part in views from a settlement; and ii) relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement and the character of the adjacent settlement edge, including the role of significant landscape elements in either separating an undeveloped area from a settled area or linking it to it.</i></p>		
Low	Medium	High
Does not provide an attractive backdrop to adjacent settlement or play an important part in views from it. The existing settlement edge may be improved through development, enhancing the relationship between the settlement and wider countryside.	Provides some contribution as a backdrop/ setting to the adjacent settlement. Development would not represent a step-change in settlement form but may adversely affect the existing settlement edge to some extent.	Contributes positively as an attractive backdrop to adjacent settlement, providing a distinctive element in views that are key to the character of the settlement. Development would adversely affect settlement edge (which may be historic or distinctive) or would have a poor relationship with it (crossing a boundary feature or

		extending into an area with a distinctly different landscape).
<p>Visual prominence</p> <p><i>This considers the visual prominence of the landscape area, reflecting the extent of openness or enclosure in the landscape (due to landform and land cover), and extent to which potential development would be visible. It also considers the skyline character of the area – for instance whether it has features that form a visually distinctive skyline – and any role the landscape area plays in contributing to valued views, such as from promoted viewpoints, routes or recreational areas.</i></p>		
Low	Medium	High
<p>Non-prominent. Visually enclosed landscape screened by landform or land cover. Does not form a visually distinctive skyline, e.g. natural bowls.</p>	<p>A mixture of prominent and non- prominent. Semi-enclosed or has some enclosed and some open areas or visually distinctive skylines.</p>	<p>Visually prominent. Very open in views from the wider landscape. e.g. open plains/ plateau with no screening land cover. Forms a visually distinctive skyline, e.g. undeveloped skylines or skylines with important landmarks (might include historic monuments or features).</p>

Making judgements on levels of landscape sensitivity

- 2.20 The landscape of each area and its surroundings has been appraised against the individual criteria set out above to provide an indication of the relative sensitivity of the landscape to development. The overall rating is based on professional judgement, taking account of all the criteria. In some cases one criterion alone may be sufficient to result in a judgement of high sensitivity but more often the judgement is informed by a number of criteria.
- 2.21 A five-point rating from 'low' to 'high' landscape sensitivity is used to indicate the typical landscape sensitivity within each assessment parcel, with supporting justification. There may be small-scale variations within this which are too localised to map in the context of this strategic scale study, but any clear geographical distinctions in sensitivity within an assessment sub-area have been reflected by assigning more than one rating, with text and mapping to support the judgements.
- 2.22 To aid the assessment of sensitivity of a specific site for which development is being considered, key sensitivities and the potential for mitigation are detailed in the form of a list of considerations to which development proposals should adhere in order to minimise adverse landscape impact.
- 2.23 Broad definitions are provided in **Table 2.4** below for 'high', 'moderate' and 'low' sensitivity, between which there are interim categories represented by the 'low-moderate' and 'moderate-high' ratings.
- 2.24 Whilst landscape sensitivity assessment results provide an initial indication of landscape sensitivity, they should not be interpreted as a definitive statement on the suitability of individual sites for a particular development or land use change. All proposals will need to be assessed on their own merits.

Table 2.4: Sensitivity ratings

Sensitivity	Definition
High	The landscape has strong character and qualities with notable features which are highly sensitive to change as a result of introducing built development
Moderate-high	
Moderate	The landscape has some distinctive characteristics and valued qualities, with some sensitivity to change as a result of introducing built development.
Low-moderate	
Low	The landscape lacks distinct character and qualities and has few notable features, or is robust with regard to introducing built development.

Field verification

- 2.25 A structured process of field survey verification has been undertaken by landscape environment experts in order to test and refine the outputs from the desk study. Each assessment area was visited in turn to record information and take photographs. The field survey was undertaken from roads and public rights of way.

Reporting

- 2.26 The evaluation for each LCA includes the following information:
- Overall summary of the location and context of the LCA;
 - Outline of assessment areas i.e. whether the LCA has been divided into settlement edge sub-areas;
 - Presentation of descriptive information against the landscape sensitivity indicators for the overall LCA;
 - For each assessment sub-area:
 - A 1:25,000 scale Ordnance Survey map showing the boundaries of the assessment area with key landscape designations that represent a constraint to development and absolute constraints;
 - A justification of the landscape sensitivity rating(s) applicable to the area, drawing on information from the individual criteria assessments, and a list of guidelines in relation to minimising impact on the key sensitivities that apply to the assessment area. Where there are clear geographical variations within an assessment area, more than one rating has been given, with separate paragraphs of text relating to each;
 - An aerial view of the assessment area;
 - Representative photographs of the assessment area
 - A map of the sensitivity ratings applicable to the LCA, including any variations identified with individual sub-areas. Areas with absolute constraints which preclude development are indicated, and do not have shading to indicate any harm rating.

- 2.27 With reference to LCA's adjacent to the borough boundary which are split into separate parts (see paragraph 2.11): in cases where a small, isolated fragment of an LCA lies alongside another LCA within the Borough, and has no significant distinction from it in terms of landscape sensitivity, it has been presented alongside that larger LCA.
- 2.28 In two instances, where character areas are mostly constrained with respect to development, the small remaining unconstrained areas have been presented in the output alongside neighbouring LCA's with which they share a strong relationship. This provides a clearer context for the assessment outputs. The two cases are the Mimram Valley Parklands (LCA 43), which is assessed alongside Welwyn Fringes (LCA 45), and Hatfield Park (LCA 46) which is assessed alongside Potters Bar Parkland (LCA 54).

3 Project findings

Overall landscape sensitivity assessment results

- 3.1 **Table 3.1** provides a summary of the overall landscape sensitivity ratings for each of the assessment areas. Where sensitivity was considered to vary significantly within an area or sub-area, more than one rating is listed. These scores are also shown in mapped format in **Figure 3.1**
- 3.2 Detailed findings are presented in **Appendix 1**. Please note that the overall judgement scores should always be interpreted in conjunction with the information contained in the detailed profiles.

Table 3.1 Summary of results

LCA name	Assessment area / sub-area	Landscape Sensitivity
28 North Mymms Park and Redwell Woods	28	Moderate-high / high
29 Mimms Hall Valley	29 ⁷	Low-moderate / moderate / moderate-high
	29a	Moderate
	29b	Moderate
	29c	Moderate-high
30 Colney Heath Farmland	30	Moderate
31 De Havilland Plain	31	Low-moderate / moderate
	31a	Low-moderate / moderate
32 Symondshyde Ridge	32	Moderate-high
33 Upper Lea Valley	33	Moderate-high
	33a	Low-moderate
34 Blackmore End Plateau	34 ⁸	Moderate-high

⁷ Including a fragment of LCA 30

⁸ Incorporating a fragment of LCA 33

LCA name	Assessment area / sub-area	Landscape Sensitivity
35 Ayot St Peter Wooded Upland	35	Moderate-high
	35a	Low-moderate / moderate
	35b	Low / low-moderate
36 Upper Mimram Valley	36a	Moderate
	36b	Moderate / moderate-high
	36c	Moderate
37 Datchworth Settled Slopes	37a	Moderate-high
	37b	Moderate-high
42 Tewin	42	High
	42a	Moderate-high
	42b	Moderate / moderate-high
43 Mimram Valley Parkland	43 ⁹	Moderate
45 Welwyn Fringes	45a	Low-moderate / moderate
	45b	Moderate / moderate-high
46 Hatfield Park	46 ¹⁰	Low
47 Essendon-Brickendon Farmed Slopes	47	High

⁹ Assessed alongside LCA 45, sub-area 45b

¹⁰ Assessed alongside LCA 54, as sub-area 46

LCA name	Assessment area / sub-area	Landscape Sensitivity
48 West End - Brickendon Wooded Slopes	48	High
49 Little Berkhamsted Settled Plateau	49	Moderate-high
50 Ponsbourne and Tolmers Parkland Estates	50	Moderate-high
	50a	Moderate-high
51 North Mymms Common and Newgate Street Farmed Plateau	51	Moderate-high / high
	51a	Low-moderate / moderate / moderate-high
52 Northaw Great Wood	-	Entirely constrained ¹¹
53 Northaw Common Parkland	53	Low-moderate / moderate / moderate-high
	53a	Low-moderate
	53b	Moderate-high
	53c	Moderate-high
54 Potters Bar Parkland	54a	Low-moderate / moderate
	54b	Low-moderate / moderate / moderate-high
	54c	Moderate / moderate-high
55 Theobalds Estate	55	Moderate
	55a	Low-moderate / moderate
56 Cheshunt Common	56	Low-moderate
65 Middle Lea Valley West	65 (west)	Low-moderate / moderate

¹¹ By SSSI, Local Wildlife Site and Ancient Woodland designations

LCA name	Assessment area / sub-area	Landscape Sensitivity
	65 (east)	Moderate / moderate-high
	65a	Low-moderate / moderate
132 Codicote Bottom Arable Valley	132	Moderate-high
	132a	Moderate
133a Danesbury Settled Slopes	133a	Low-moderate / moderate
	133a-a	Low / moderate
	133a-b	Low-moderate
133b Rableyheath Settled Upland	133b	Low / low-moderate / moderate

User guide

- 3.3 As this is a borough-wide study it cannot assess the landscape on a field by field basis. It considers sensitivity of landscape character areas, or subdivisions of them, to the 'principle' of 2-3 storey residential development.
- 3.4 As well as providing an overall indication of relative landscape sensitivity of different areas, it provides some guidelines relating to key sensitivities and the potential for mitigation. This information provides useful context for more detailed assessment of specific site options. The following questions provide a structure for appraising a specific site within a broader assessment area:

Which assessment area /sub-area does the site fall within, and what is its sensitivity level?



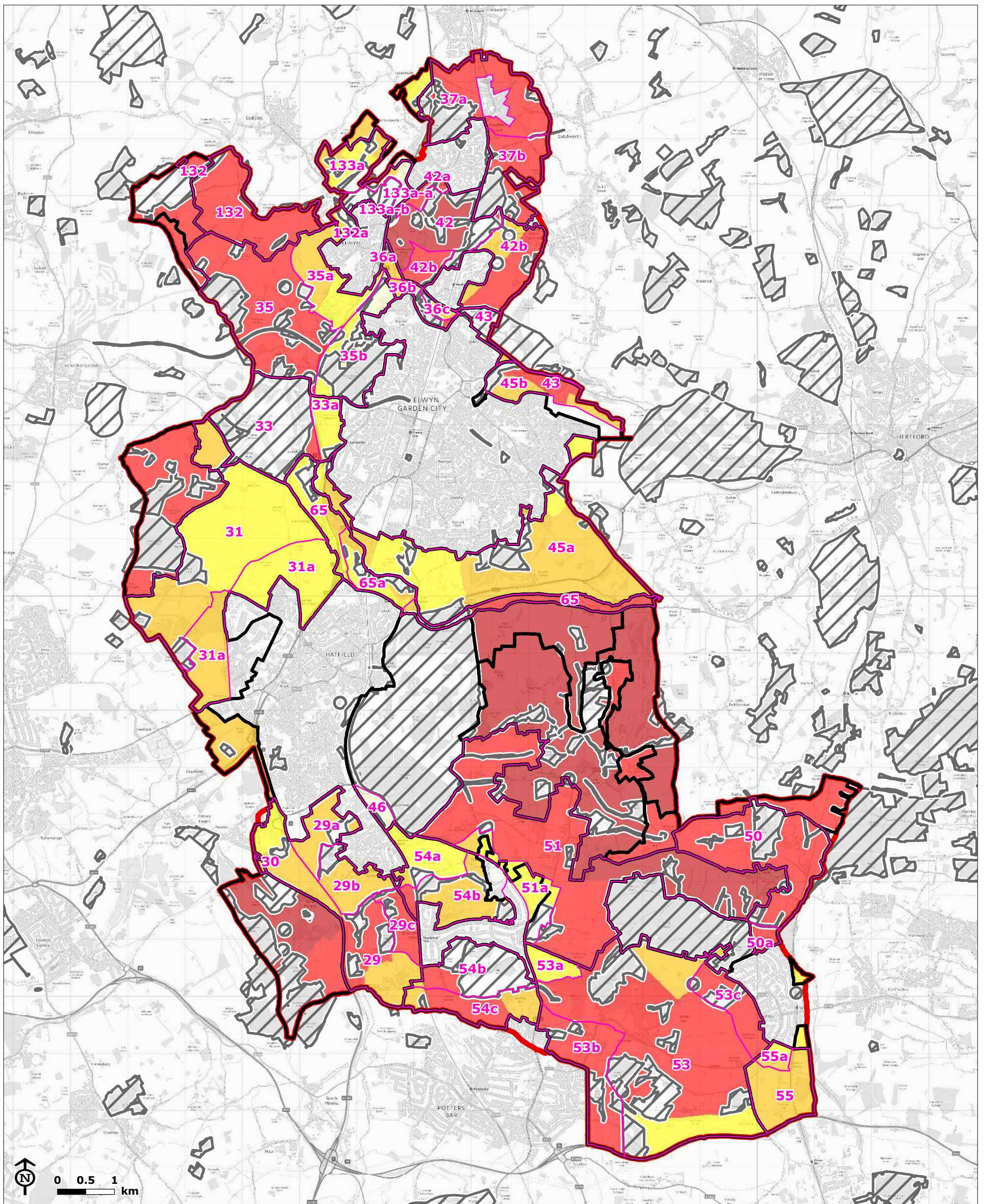
Are there any indications of which areas would have higher or lower sensitivity and how does the site fit with this?



Would development on the site affect any of the 'key sensitivities'?



Could development on the site be designed so as to avoid effects on the key sensitivities highlighted, and/or provide mitigation in line with any suggested opportunities?



Development of Evidence for Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan: Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

Figure 3.1: Landscape Character Area (LCA) Sensitivity

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Welwyn Hatfield Boundary | Sensitivity |
| LCA | Low |
| LCA Subdivision | Low-moderate |
| All absolute constraints | Moderate |
| | Moderate-high |
| | High |

Source: LUC, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Map Scale @A3: 1:65,000



Appendix 1

Landscape Sensitivity Assessments by LCA

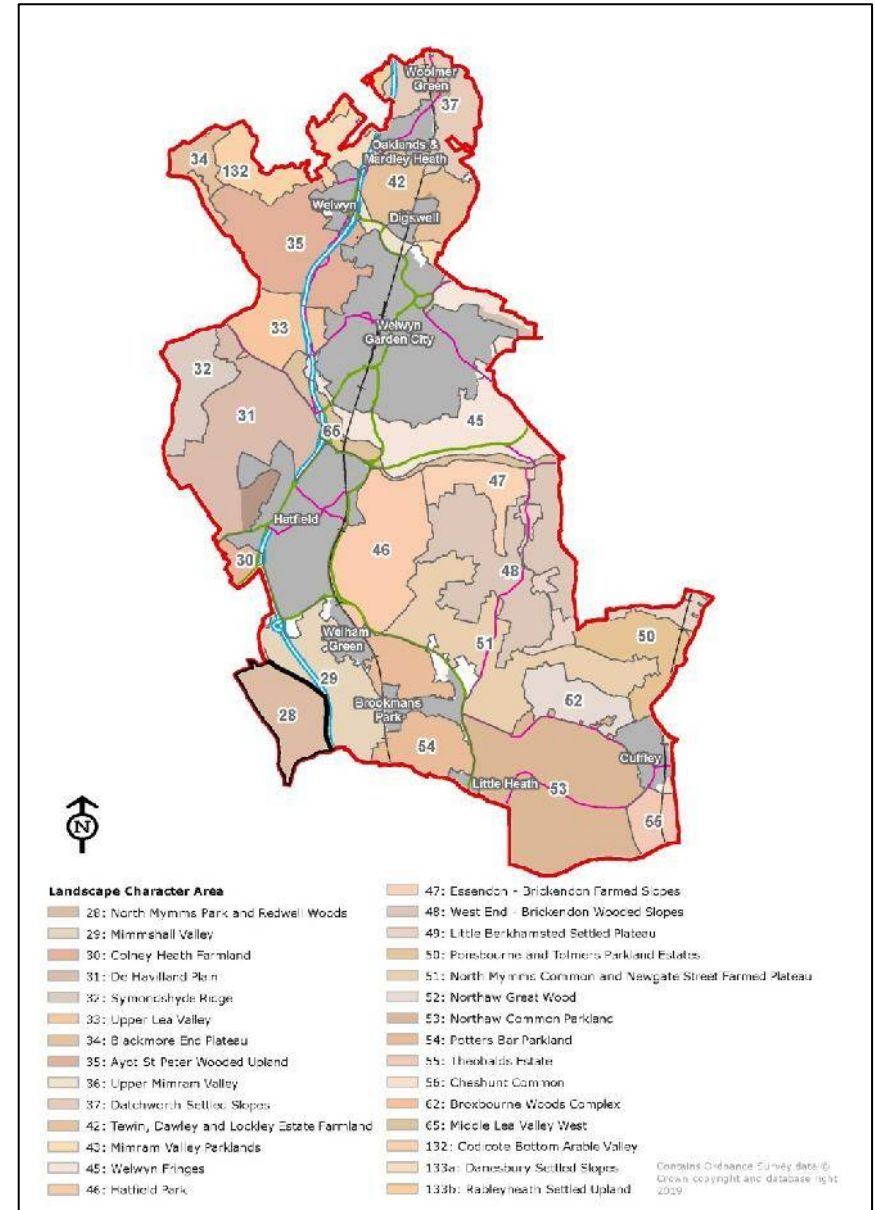
North Mymms Park and Redwell Woods

Location and Landscape Character Summary

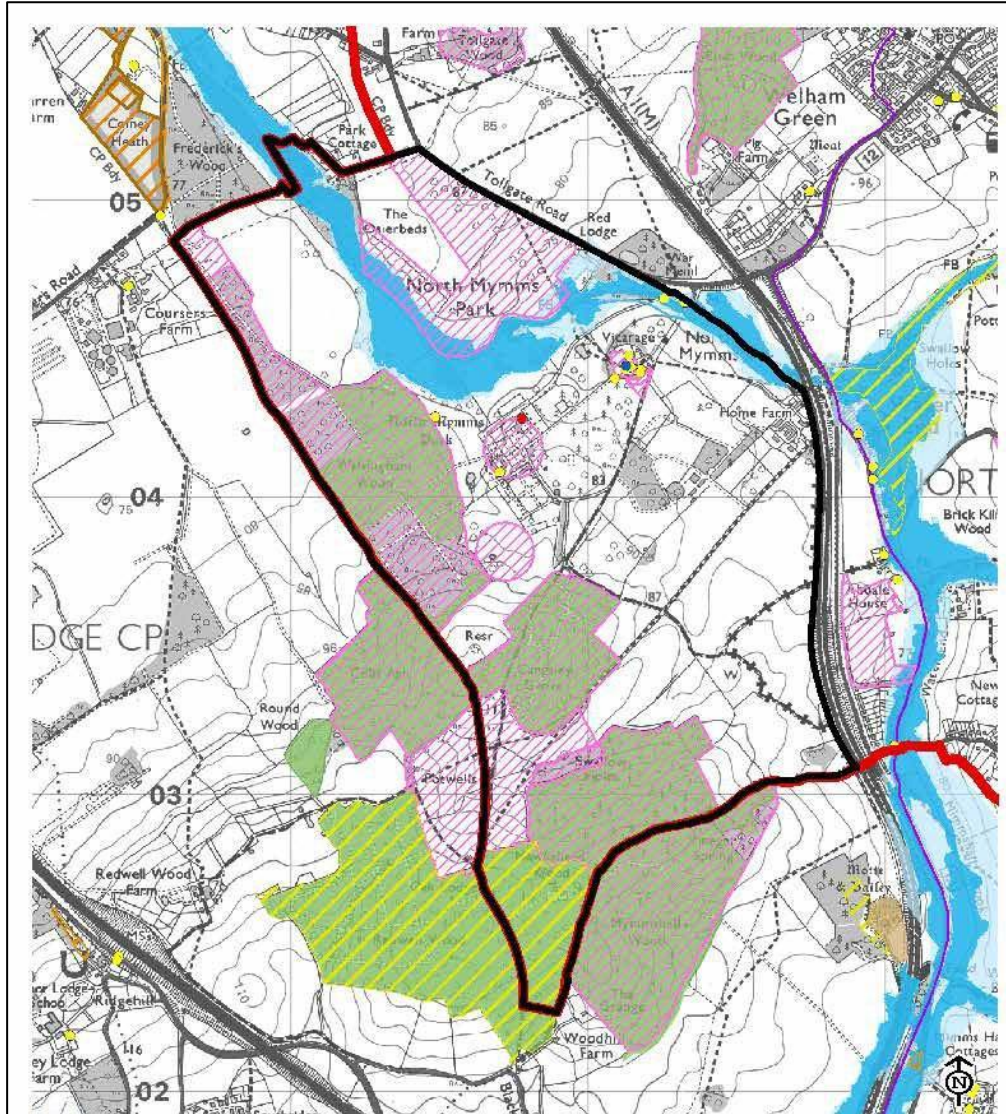
The assessment area is situated on the southwestern edge of the Borough, to the south of Colney Heath and west of the A1(M), and comprises the majority of the North Mymms Park and Redwell Woods LCA. The area is largely historic parkland, with a sizeable woodland component, together with moderate to large sized arable fields to the south.

Assessment Areas

The assessment area does not abut any specified settlements, and so has not been subdivided.



Landscape Character Area 28: North Mymms Park and Redwell Woods



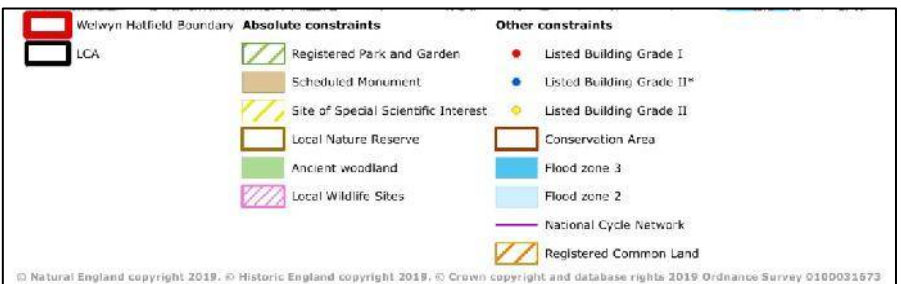
Absolute Constraints and Designations

The following absolute constraints apply to LCA 28:

- Redwell Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest.
- Several Local Wildlife Sites including; Walsingham Wood, Cagsley Grove, Hawkshead Wood and Mymmshall Wood, Scrubby Grassland by Frederick's Wood, Potwells, North Mymms Park, North Mymms Park Area, North Mymms Icehouse, Hawkshead Wood Swallow Holes and North Mymms Churchyard.
- Ancient Woodland including that at Cobs Ash Wood and Redwell Wood.

Other designations that apply to LCA 28 of relevance to landscape are:

- Several Listed buildings including the Grade I listed North Mymms Park with adjoining garden walls and ha ha, the Grade II* Church Of St Mary The Virgin and several Grade II listed buildings.



Landscape Character Area 28: North Mymms Park and Redwell Woods

Analysis of Landscape Sensitivity in the Character Area

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Criteria		
Landform		
<i>This considers the shape of the landscape. Smooth, gently undulating or flat landforms are likely to be less sensitive to development than a landscape with distinct landform features, such as hills and valleys, as development may mask distinctive topographical features that contribute to landscape character.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
	Landform is gently undulating in the north of the assessment area, with the shallow river valley of the Upper River Colne passing through the park. Although engineered and generally dry, the meandering course of the river is a feature of the parkland.	In the southwest of the assessment area lie two prominent hills, divided by a small stream valley, forming the eastern end of the Shenley Ridge.
Landscape pattern and time depth		
<i>This considers the field pattern and historic origin of the landscape area. Landscapes with more irregular field patterns, particularly those of historic origin, are likely to more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than landscape with regular scale field patterns because of the risk of losing characteristic landscape patterns.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
	In the southeast lies an area of moderate to large sized arable agricultural fields following an irregular pattern. Some of which are pre-18th century organic enclosure, with others being post war amalgamated fields.	North Mymms Park was a medieval deer park which retains its historic parkland character with large open fields enclosed with wooden or wire fencing in places. Fields here are mostly used for sheep pasture.
'Natural' character		
<i>This considers the 'naturalistic' qualities of the landscape area in terms of the coverage of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features (e.g. trees and hedgerows) which contribute to landscape character and could be vulnerable to loss from development. Areas with frequent natural features (including large areas of designated habitats) result in increased sensitivity to development, while landscape with limited natural features will be less sensitive.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
	Many in-field trees following typical parkland style planting.	Frequent woodland areas including many BAP Priority Habitat deciduous woodlands, which play an important role in interconnecting the adjacent ancient woodlands and woodlands within Local Wildlife Sites.
Built character		
<i>This considers the built character of the landscape area with particular reference to the presence of heritage assets that contribute to landscape character (i.e. valued features that may be designated as Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, archaeological features or remains or other features). Landscapes with a high density of historic features important to the character of the area are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than areas where such development already exists.</i>		

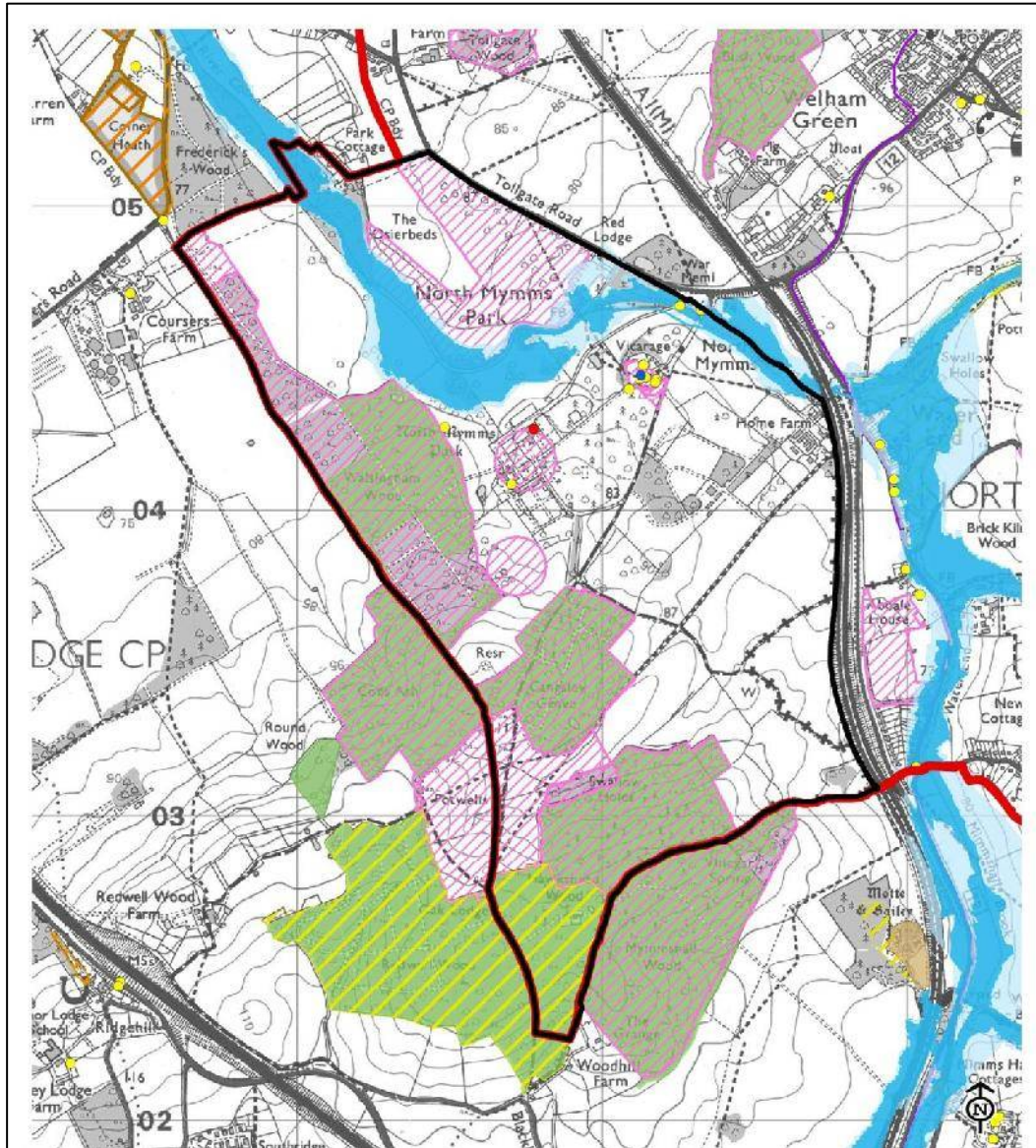
Landscape Character Area 28: North Mymms Park and Redwell Woods

Low	Moderate	High
A pylon route crosses the north of the assessment area and has localised visual prominence because of the open parkland character here.	Home Farm is located in the east of the assessment area, near Water End.	Built features include many listed buildings such as the Grade I listed North Mymms Park with adjoining garden walls and ha ha, the Grade II* Church Of St Mary The Virgin and several Grade II listed buildings.
<p>Recreational value</p> <p><i>This criterion considers the presence of features and facilities which enable enjoyment of the landscape, and the importance of these. This may include public rights of way, bridleways, open access land and outdoor tourist/ visitor attractions with facilities. Recreation activities such as walking, cycling, horse riding or more formal recreation activities where enjoyment of the landscape is important to the experience. Importance of features may be indicated by designation such as long distance footpaths or recreation routes, national cycle routes, proximity to areas of local population (such as local parks) and outdoor tourist attractions often marked on Ordnance Survey maps.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
		There is a well-developed and interconnected network of public rights of way, particularly in and around the woodlands in the south of the assessment area. There are fewer public rights of way in the north of the assessment area, but a right of way does cross the open parkland.
<p>Perceptual aspects</p> <p><i>This considers qualities such as rurality (traditional land uses with few modern, human influences), sense of remoteness or tranquility. High scenic value, freedom from human activity/ disturbance and 'dark skies' would add to sensitivity in this criterion. This is because development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from a sense of tranquility and or remoteness.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
The A1(M) and busy Tollgate Road run along the eastern edge of the assessment area these produce considerable sound pollution. However, the areas wooded character diffuses some of this traffic noise. A pylon route crosses the north of the assessment area with localised visual prominence. In distant skylines to the east the masts of the telecommunication transmitting station are visible.	Although the A1(M) and Tollgate Road have some adverse influence, the absence of public roads within the parkland and fields to the south, and the strong wooded backdrop to the south and west, enhance scenic character.	In the west of the assessment area there are few built features and the area's woodlands and elevation give it tranquillity and a sense of isolation from urban intrusion.
<p>Settlement setting</p> <p><i>The extent to which the landscape area i) contributes to the identity and distinctiveness of a settlement by way of its character and/ or scenic quality, for example by providing an attractive backdrop or setting, or playing an important part in views from a settlement; and ii) relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement and the character of the adjacent settlement edge, including the role of significant landscape elements in either separating an undeveloped area from a settled area or linking it to it.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
The assessment area is removed from settlements and largely contained within the wider landscape.		There is no urban settlement in the assessment area, but parkland here provides an important setting for the listed buildings, particularly the Grade I listed North

Landscape Character Area 28: North Mymms Park and Redwell Woods

		Mymms Park with adjoining garden walls and ha ha and the properties at the vicarage.
<p>Visual prominence</p> <p><i>This considers the visual prominence of the landscape area, reflecting the extent of openness or enclosure in the landscape (due to landform and land cover), and extent to which potential development would be visible. It also considers the skyline character of the area – for instance whether it has features that form a visually distinctive skyline – and any role the landscape area plays in contributing to valued views, such as from promoted viewpoints, routes or recreational areas.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
There is a higher level of enclosure provided by parkland planting near the vicarage and the North Mymms House and therefore this area is not visually prominent.		The more open northern parkland parts of the assessment area are visible from Tollgate Road in the east and the rolling arable fields in the south are notable from the A1(M). The wooded high ground to the south has a wide skyline presence, although tree cover also offers containment.

**Landscape Character Area 28: North Mymms Park and Redwell Woods
Landscape assessment area (28)**



Sensitivity to development (28)

The intact parkland qualities of North Mymms Park, its time-depth (both in terms of built elements and 'natural' landscape), the frequency of BAP Priority Habitat and its association with the ecologically-important and visually-prominent wooded slopes to the south mean that this area has a **high** landscape sensitivity to residential development. Although there is greater intrusion from traffic on the eastern side of the LCA, and the intrusive influence of a pylon line to the north, the parkland area has a homogeneous, open character that elevates sensitivity throughout.

The sloping arable fields to the south are similarly remote from urban area and benefit from their visual association with the parkland and woodlands, but are considered less sensitive in terms of land use and historic character. This area therefore has **moderate-high** sensitivity.

Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
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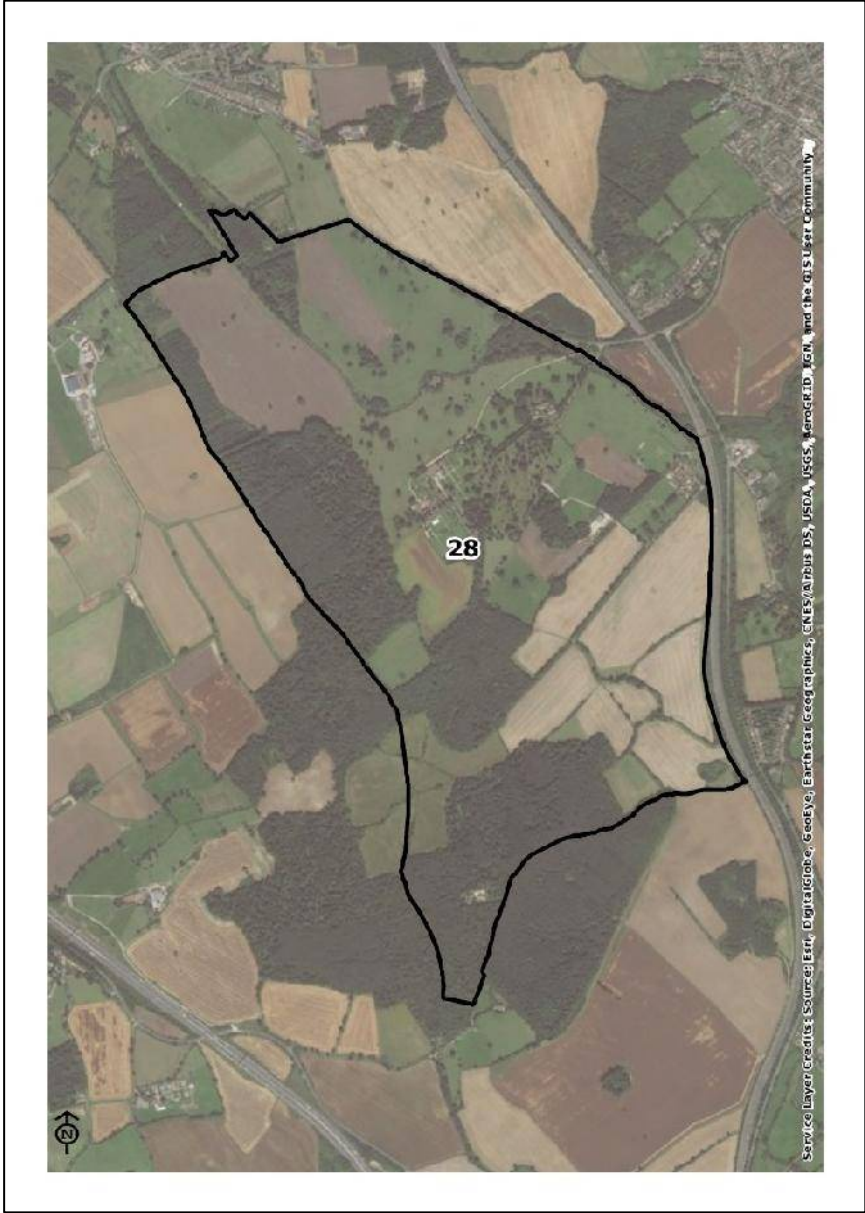
* Rating variations are mapped on the last page of the LCA 28 assessment

Key sensitivities and mitigation potential (28)

To minimise adverse impact on landscape and visual character, development proposals should:

- Conserve the historic parkland features (including trees and the course of the river) and general parkland character, including its rural setting, absence of through-routes and relationship with Listed buildings.
- Protect BAP Priority Habitat deciduous woodlands.
- Preserve the area's rural character.
- Consider opportunities to enhance public access to the parkland.

Landscape Character Area 28: North Mymms Park and Redwell Woods



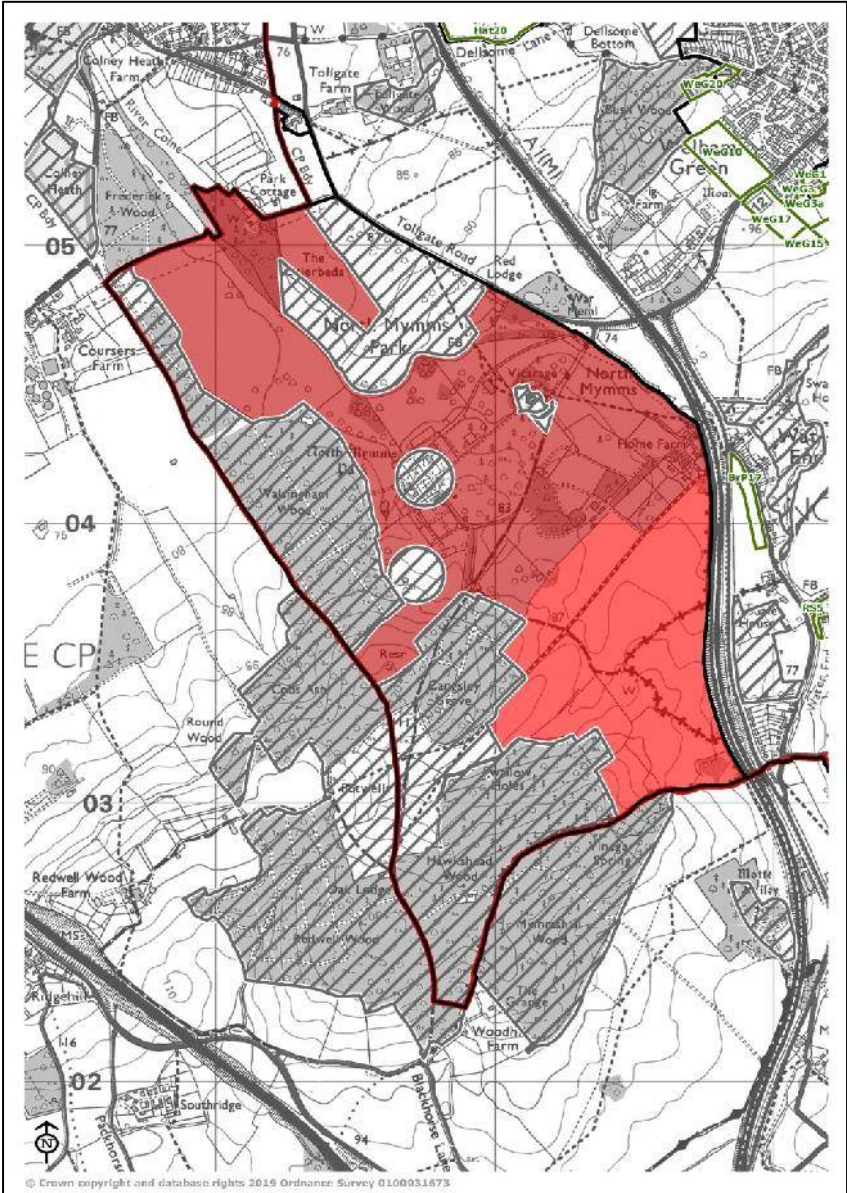
View southwest across the parkland fields from near the churchyard of the Grade II* listed Church Of St Mary The Virgin.














View to the southeast across open sheep pasture fields with some parkland planting, the communications tower is visible on distant skylines.

Landscape Character Area 28: North Mymms Park and Redwell Woods

Sensitivity ratings across assessment area



Sensitivity ratings key

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|---------------|
|  | Welwyn Hatfield Boundary | Sensitivity rating | |
|  | Landscape Character Area (LCA) |  | Low |
|  | LCA Subdivision |  | Low-moderate |
|  | All absolute constraints |  | Moderate |
|  | Promoted Sites |  | Moderate-high |
|  | Site allocations |  | High |

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Landscape Character Area 29: Mimmshall Valley

Mimmshall Valley

Location and Landscape Character Summary

The assessment area encompasses the majority of the Mimmshall Valley LCA and is situated in the south west of the District. The north of the area forms a gap between Hatfield and Welham Green, and the south east forms a gap between Welham Green and Brookmans Park. This area is confined by the A1(M) and railway in the west and east, and the District boundary in the north west and south.

The area has a wooded farmland character, but with significant influence from settlement and the transport network.

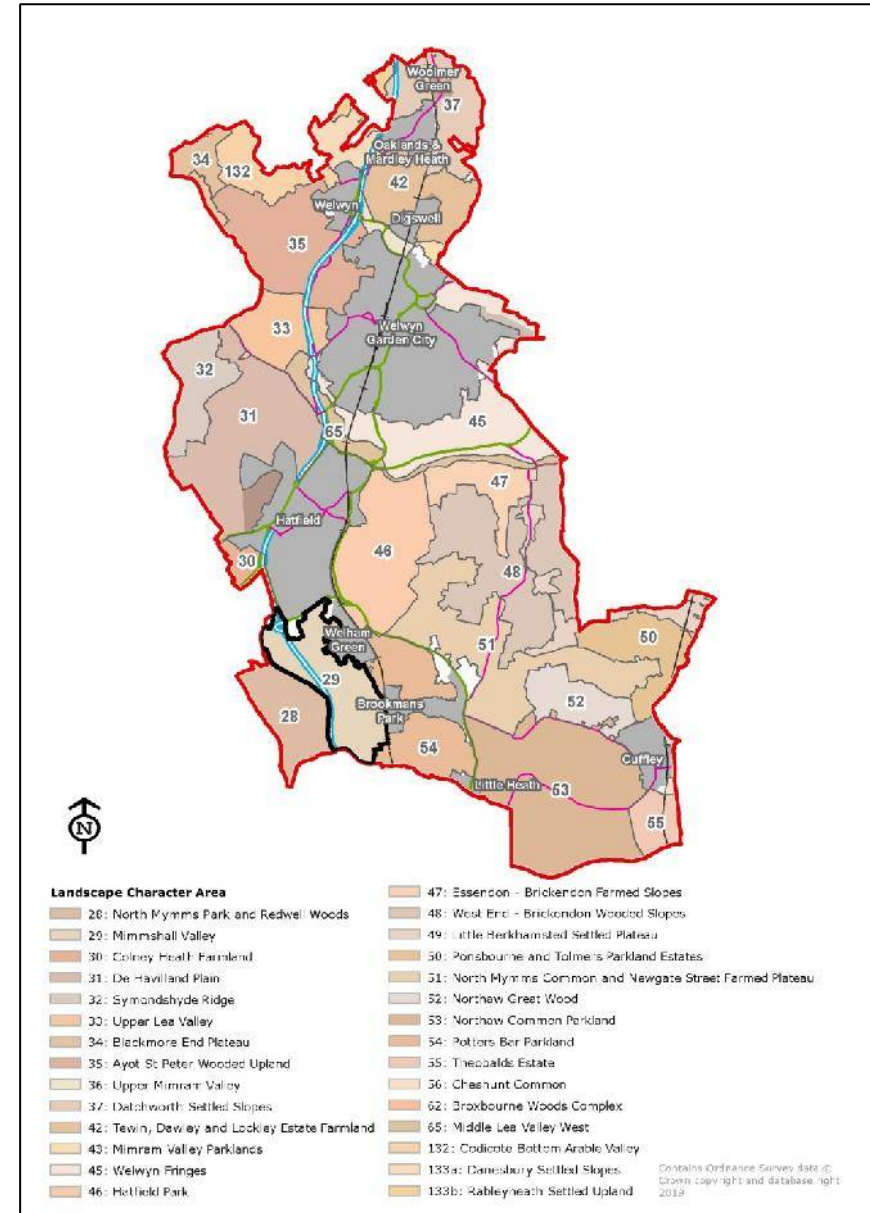
Assessment Areas

The assessment area has been divided into the following sub-areas:

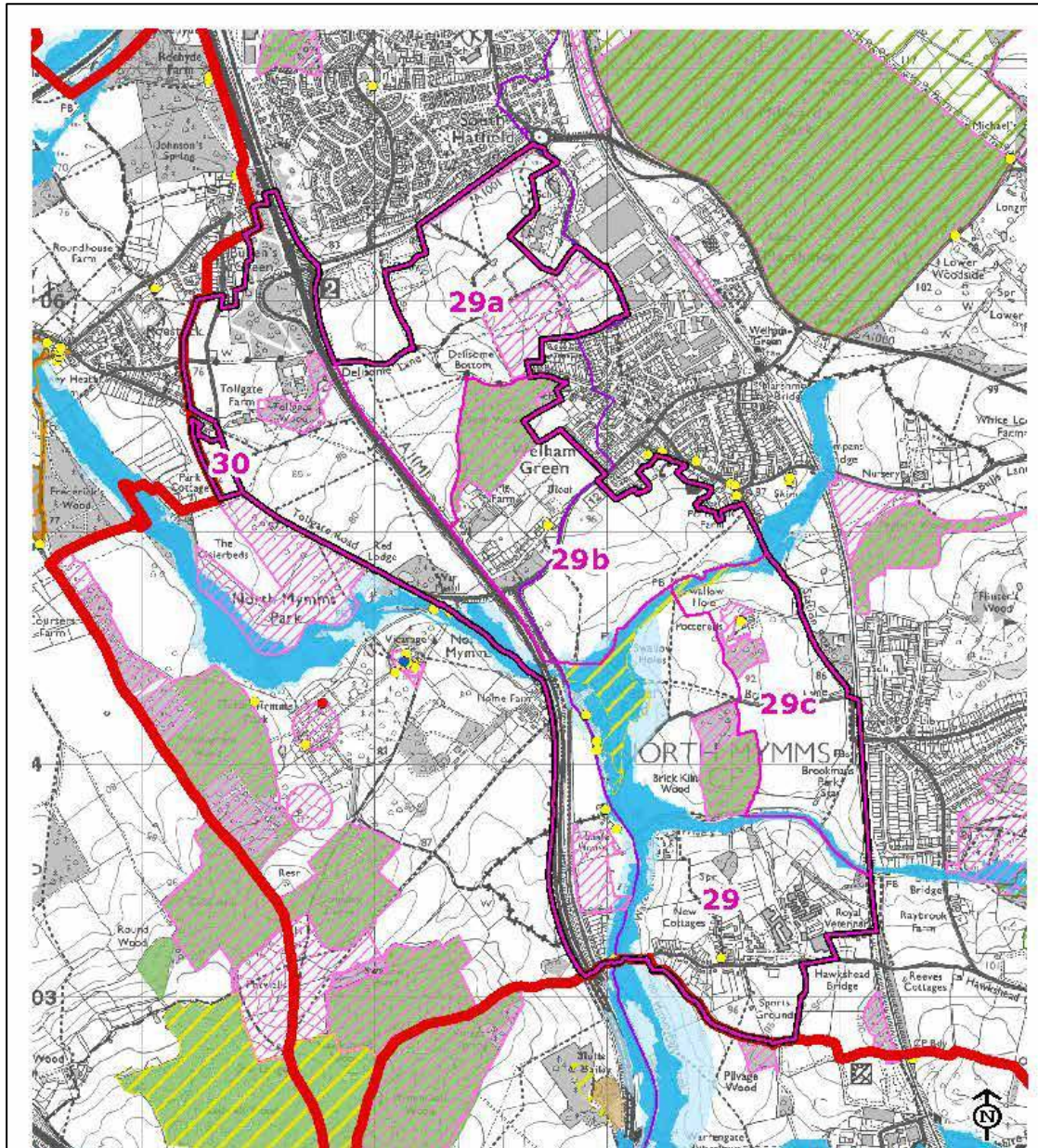
- Area away from settlement edge (29)
- Settlement edges of Hatfield and north of Welham Green (29a)
- Southern settlement edge of Welham Green (29b)
- Settlement edge of Brookmans Park (29c)

The A1(M) has been used to define the outer edge of the sub-area encompassing the settlement edges of Hatfield and the northern side of Welham Green (29a). This assessment area also incorporates land which lies outside both the LCA and the specified settlements: the park and ride and adjacent scrub (former playing fields) and the school and adjacent redundant building at Barnfield. Bush Wood creates separation between this area and the settlement edge south of Welham Green (29b). The area alongside the urban edge at Brookmans Park (29c) is contained to the north and south by watercourses.

The assessment area away from settlement edges (29) incorporates a fragment of LCA 30 (Colney Heath Farmland) alongside North Mymms Park to the east of Tollgate Farm.



Landscape Character Area 29: Mimmshall Valley



Absolute Constraints and Designations

The following absolute constraints apply to LCA 29:

- Water End Swallow Holes SSSI.
- Local Wildlife Sites at: Brick Kiln Wood, Potterells Wood, Bush Wood, Tollgate Wood, Grasslands north of Parsonage Road, South – southern road verge, Grasslands by Abdale House and Grassland north of Potterells Wood.

Other designations that apply to LCA 29 of relevance to landscape are:

- Flood Zone of the Mimmshall Brook.
- Grade II Listed buildings.



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Landscape Character Area 29: Mimmshall Valley

Analysis of Landscape Sensitivity in the Character Area

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Criteria		
Landform		
<i>This considers the shape of the landscape. Smooth, gently undulating or flat landforms are likely to be less sensitive to development than a landscape with distinct landform features, such as hills and valleys, as development may mask distinctive topographical features that contribute to landscape character.</i>		
Low	Medium	High
	A ridge of higher ground runs north-south through the centre of the area, with land typically falling gently away to the east and west although more distinctly down towards Mimmshall Brook to the west of Pilvage Wood and New Cottages. The shallow valley of Ray Brook, a tributary of Mimmshall Brook, bisects the ridge to the south of Brick Kiln Wood, alongside the Wise's Lane track.	
Landscape pattern and time depth		
<i>This considers the field pattern and historic origin of the landscape area. Landscapes with more irregular field patterns, particularly those of historic origin, are likely to more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than landscape with regular scale field patterns because of the risk of losing characteristic landscape patterns.</i>		
Low	Medium	High
The construction of the A1(M) has removed any relationship between the area to the east of the road and North Mymms Park to the west.	A variety of field scales, with smaller fields in the south and larger fields north of Wise's Lane and west of the A1(M). Some field patterns survive from the 1898 OS map, however these have been interrupted by the expansion of Hatfield and Welham Green.	
'Natural' character		
<i>This considers the 'naturalistic' qualities of the landscape area in terms of the coverage of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features (e.g. trees and hedgerows) which contribute to landscape character and could be vulnerable to loss from development. Areas with frequent natural features (including large areas of designated habitats) result in increased sensitivity to development, while landscape with limited natural features will be less sensitive.</i>		
Low	Medium	High
	There are small areas of priority habitat traditional orchard and priority habitat floodplain grazing marsh. Away from the woodland this is a predominantly arable area, with hedgerows largely still intact.	Water End Swallow Holes SSSI, which runs through the centre of this area, is an unusual landscape feature comprising more than 15 sinkholes. A lake forms in the sinkhole basin in times of flood and eventually drains back into the natural sinks. The willow carr/swamp community is also of biological importance. There are several priority habitat deciduous woodlands, including two ancient woodlands, and Local Wildlife Sites representing both woodland and grassland habitats.

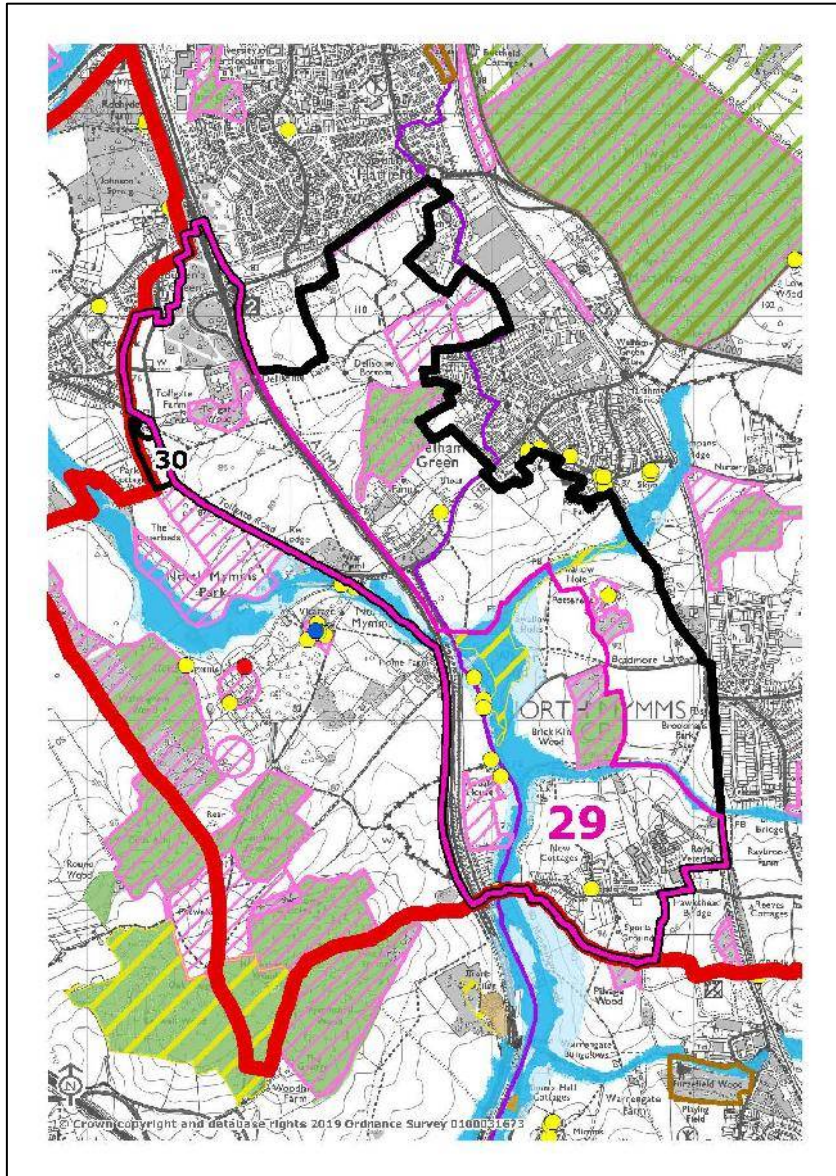
Landscape Character Area 29: Mimmshall Valley

Built character		
<p><i>This considers the built character of the landscape area with particular reference to the presence of heritage assets that contribute to landscape character (i.e. valued features that may be designated as Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, archaeological features or remains or other features). Landscapes with a high density of historic features important to the character of the area are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than areas where such development already exists.</i></p>		
Low	Medium	High
<p>The area is bound by the A1(M) to the west and railway line to the east, although these are largely contained by vegetation.</p> <p>Isolated rows of 20th century housing (e.g. at Dixons Hill Close and along Hawkshead Lane) and the Royal Veterinary College detract from landscape character locally, but are contained within the wider landscape.</p>	<p>The area is largely undeveloped although contained by surrounding residential development at Hatfield, Welham Green and Brookmans Park. The linear settlement at Water End has a number of listed buildings, otherwise there are only isolated listed buildings which do not give any areas a distinctive historic character.</p>	
Recreational value		
<p><i>This criterion considers the presence of features and facilities which enable enjoyment of the landscape, and the importance of these. This may include public rights of way, bridleways, open access land and outdoor tourist/ visitor attractions with facilities. Recreation activities such as walking, cycling, horse riding or more formal recreation activities where enjoyment of the landscape is important to the experience. Importance of features may be indicated by designation such as long distance footpaths or recreation routes, national cycle routes, proximity to areas of local population (such as local parks) and outdoor tourist attractions often marked on Ordnance Survey maps.</i></p>		
Low	Medium	High
	<p>There are a number of public rights of way throughout the area, which are accessible from the settlements within and outside of the area. This includes the National Cycle Route 12, which runs along the edge of Welham Green and its industrial estate.</p>	
Perceptual aspects		
<p><i>This considers qualities such as rurality (traditional land uses with few modern, human influences), sense of remoteness or tranquility. High scenic value, freedom from human activity/ disturbance and 'dark skies' would add to sensitivity in this criterion. This is because development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from a sense of tranquility and or remoteness.</i></p>		
Low	Medium	High
<p>The A1(M) detracts from tranquillity, although it is largely screened by vegetation along its route. There are power lines and pylons in the north of the area. The industrial estate between Hatfield and Welham Green is largely screened from public view by vegetation.</p>	<p>The centre of the area, away from transport corridors and settlement edges, has a relatively rural character, with enclosure created by hedgerows and woodland.</p>	
Settlement setting		
<p><i>The extent to which the landscape area i) contributes to the identity and distinctiveness of a settlement by way of its character and/ or scenic quality, for example by providing an attractive backdrop or setting, or playing an important part in views from a settlement; and ii) relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement and the character of the adjacent settlement edge, including the role of significant landscape elements in either separating an undeveloped area from a settled area or linking</i></p>		

Landscape Character Area 29: Mimmshall Valley

<i>it to it.</i>		
Low	Medium	High
<p>There is little relationship between the area and Brookmans Park as the properties are inward-facing and there is screening by vegetation and separation by the railway line.</p> <p>Fields and tree cover to the west of the A1(M) form a setting to Bullen's Green and Roestock, but the modern character of these settlements does not reflect any particular relationship with landscape.</p>	<p>The area provides a strong edge to the south of Hatfield, as defined by the A1001, associated planting and slope from the settlement edge.</p> <p>The settlement edges of Welham Green are partially screened by vegetation. Where views are available the area provides an open backdrop to the settlement, with areas of woodland, e.g. Bush Wood, visible and providing containment.</p> <p>The north-south ridge through the LCA supplements separation between Hatfield and Welham Green, other than where the two settlements already almost merge at the A1001/Travellers Lane roundabout.</p>	
Visual prominence		
<p><i>This considers the visual prominence of the landscape area, reflecting the extent of openness or enclosure in the landscape (due to landform and land cover), and extent to which potential development would be visible. It also considers the skyline character of the area – for instance whether it has features that form a visually distinctive skyline – and any role the landscape area plays in contributing to valued views, such as from promoted viewpoints, routes or recreational areas.</i></p>		
Low	Medium	High
<p>A large proportion of the area is visually enclosed by woodland and hedgerows. There is little or no inter-visibility with promoted viewpoints or recreational routes.</p>	<p>There are some longer views from footpaths to the west to the woodland of North Mymms Park and beyond.</p>	

Landscape Character Area 29: Mimmshall Valley
Landscape assessment area (29)



Sensitivity to development away from settlement edges (29)

The area to the west of the A1(M), with relatively flat arable farmland and plantation woodland around the A1(M)/A1001 junction, has no particularly distinctive landscape characteristics. In the vicinity of Roestock the association with modern development means that landscape sensitivity to residential development is **low-moderate** but adjacent to the more sensitive North Mymms Park this rises to **moderate** despite proximity to the A1(M).

Woodlands, sloping terrain down to the Mimmshall Brook and the more historic, rural character of Water End increase sensitivity to **moderate-high** in the vicinity of Warrengate Road and Bradmore Lane, but this reduces to **moderate** to the south, where modern development in the vicinity of Hawkshead Lane, and visibility of Brookmans Park, have an influence on rural character.

Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
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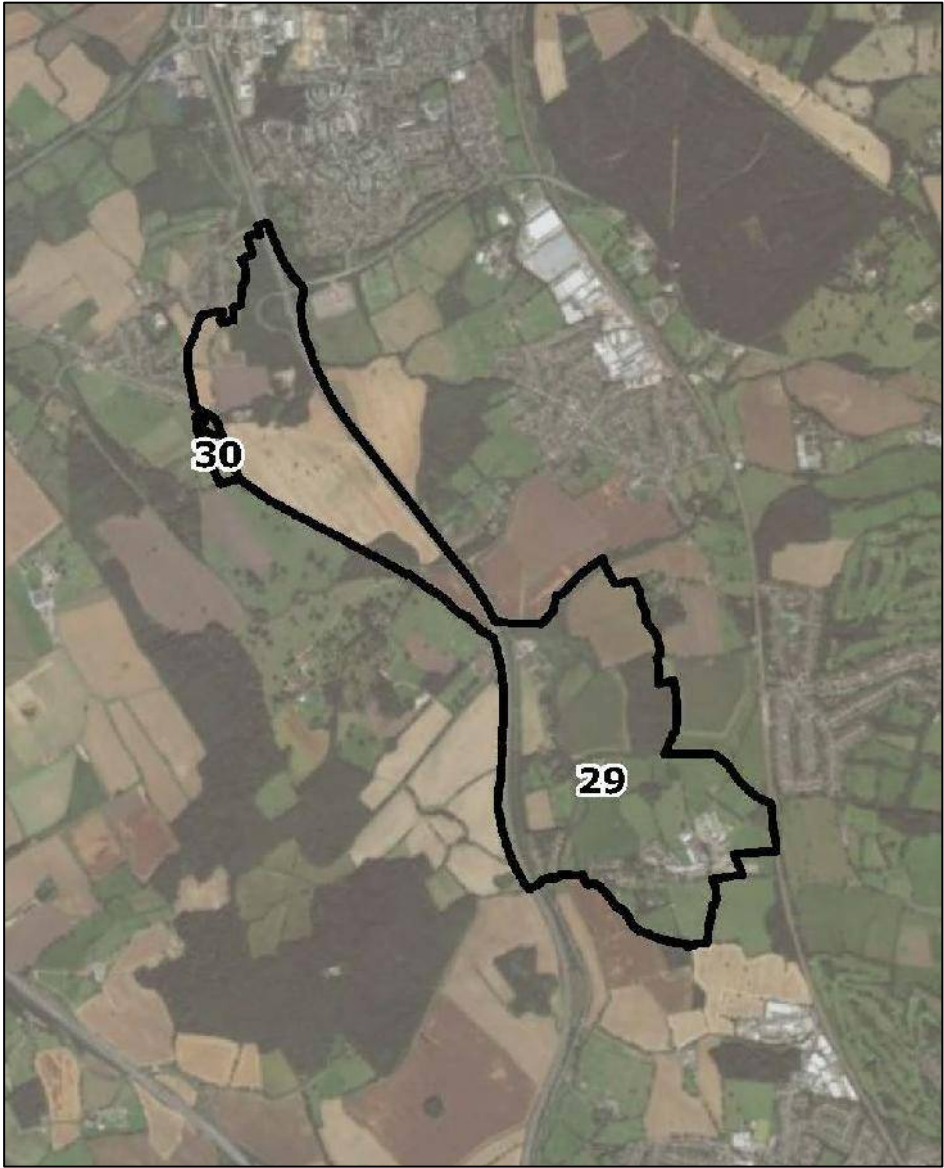
* Rating variations are mapped on the last page of the LCA 29 assessment

Key sensitivities and mitigation potential away from settlement edges (29)

To minimise adverse impact on landscape and visual character, development proposals should:

- Minimise impact on woodland and intact hedgerows, and promote woodland planting where appropriate to screen detracting features including roads and development
- Preserve the stronger rural character that exists away from modern settlement edges.

Landscape Character Area 29: Mimmshall Valley
Representative views (29)

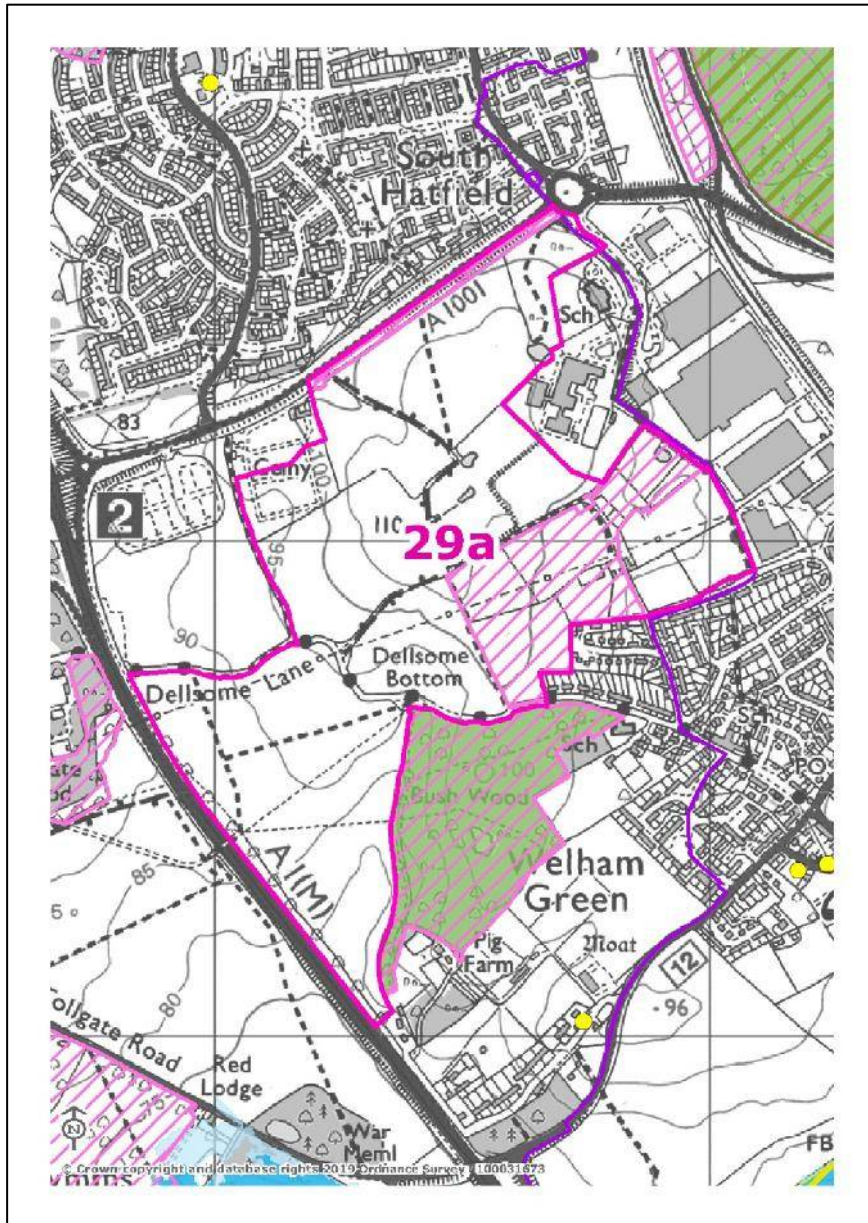


View east from Bullen's Green Lane



View north across field to the north of Bradmore Lane

Landscape Character Area 29: Mimmshall Valley
Landscape assessment area (29a)



Sensitivity to development on the edge of Hatfield and Welham Green (29a)

There is a strong settlement edge to Hatfield, marked by the A1001 in the north of the area, but rural character is weakened by the presence of urbanising influences to the south of the main road: the park and ride, cemetery and development at Barnfield. However the higher ground and associated tree cover is important in maintaining separate settings for Hatfield and the residential area of Welham Green, and the area contains a number of public rights of way and an area of priority habitat deciduous woodland. Fields are well defined by intact hedgerows, although any sense of rural isolation is diminished by proximity to main roads and by the overhead pylon line which runs east-west through the centre of the area. For these reasons the landscape sensitivity of this area to residential development is **moderate**.

Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
-----	--------------	----------	---------------	------

* Rating variations are mapped on the last page of the LCA 29 assessment

Key sensitivities and mitigation potential on the edge of Hatfield and Welham Green (29a)

To minimise adverse impact on landscape and visual character, development proposals should:

- Retain the role of the A1001 and associated landform and vegetation in providing a strong settlement edge to Hatfield.
- Preserve visual and physical separation between Hatfield and Welham Green, retaining tree cover but also maintaining rights of way that permit an intervening experience of openness and rurality.
- Preserve the role of Bush Wood as marking an edge to the urban area.
- Conserve and manage the strong hedgerow field boundaries.

Landscape Character Area 29: Mimmshall Valley
Representative views (29a)

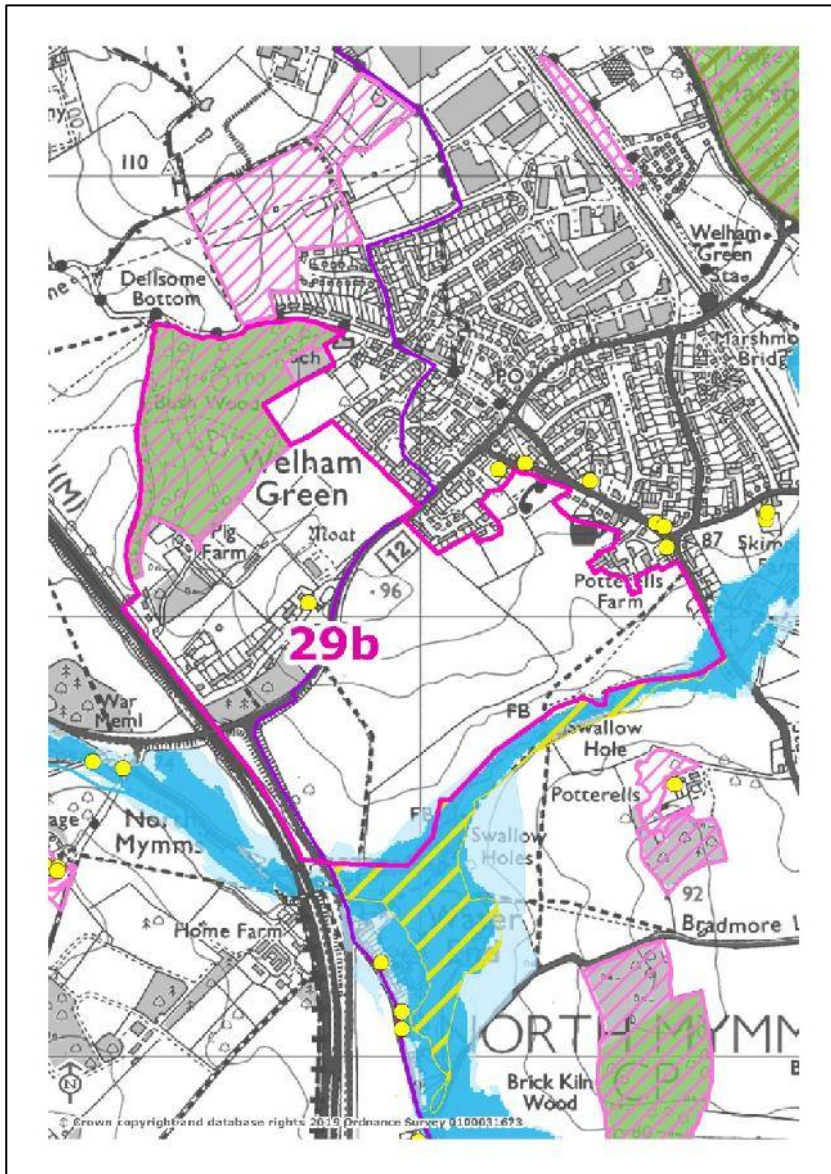


Looking north towards trees along the A1001 South Way



Looking southeast towards Bush Wood and the edge of Welham Green

Landscape Character Area 29: Mimmshall Valley
Landscape assessment area (29b)



Sensitivity to development on the edge of Welham Green (29b)

Arable fields and woodland elements provide a rural setting to Welham Green, and form part of a wider rural landscape extending southwards, although the settlement in turn has some urbanising influence on the adjacent countryside. The A1(M) to the west of the area reduces the tranquility, although it is well screened by vegetation. These factors result in a **moderate** sensitivity to residential development.

Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
-----	--------------	----------	---------------	------

* Rating variations are mapped on the last page of the LCA 29 assessment

Key sensitivities and mitigation potential on the edge of Welham Green (29b)

To minimise adverse impact on landscape and visual character, development proposals should:

- Maintain a transition from settlement to open fields to wooded backdrop.
- Maintain and enhance hedgerow boundaries.

Landscape Character Area 29: Mimmshall Valley
Representative views (29b)



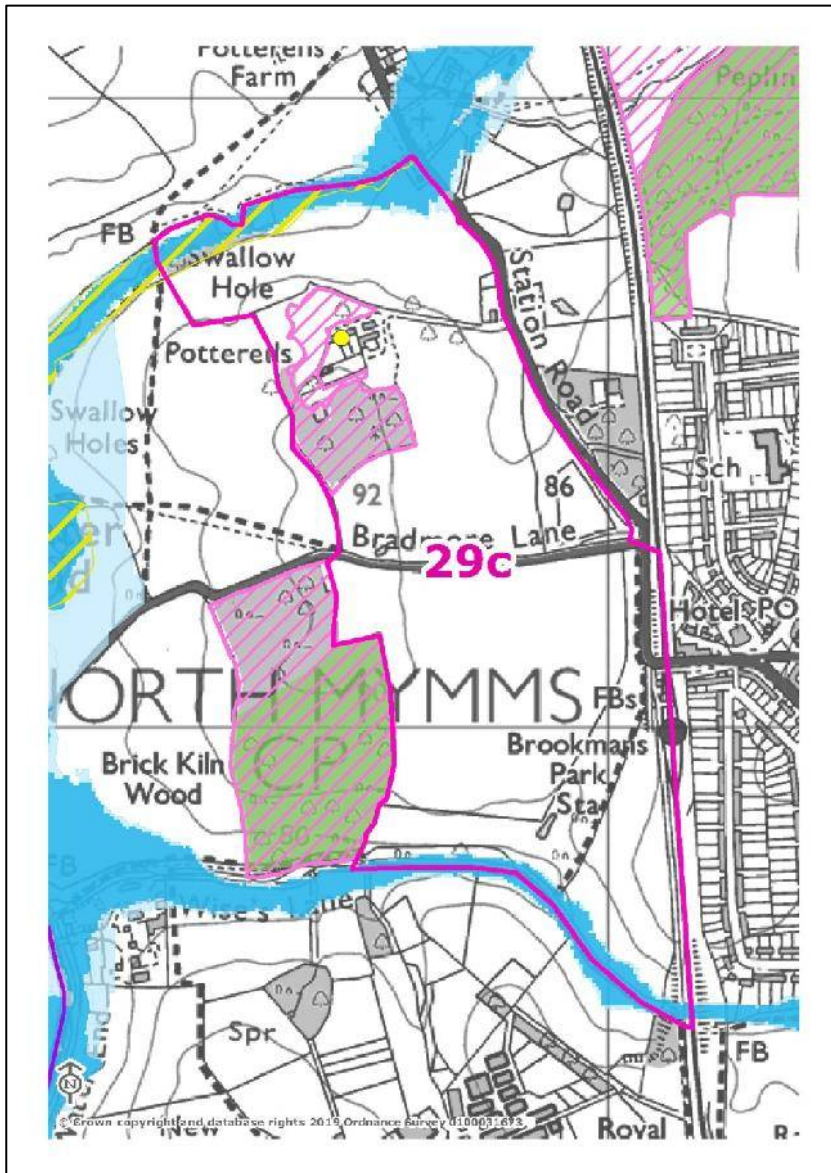
Looking northeast towards the southern edge of Welham Green on Station Road



Looking north towards the western edge of Welham Green at Welham Manor

Landscape Character Area 29: Mimmshall Valley

Landscape assessment area (29c)



Sensitivity to development on the edge of Brookmans Park (29c)

The area contains no development except for the Grade II house and walled gardens at Potterells. Although close to two urban settlements the area has a rural, wooded, enclosed character and therefore an important role in maintaining distinct settlement settings. Any development crossing the railway line would mark a significant change in the form of Brookmans Park. These factors result in **moderate-high** sensitivity to residential development.

Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
-----	--------------	----------	---------------	------

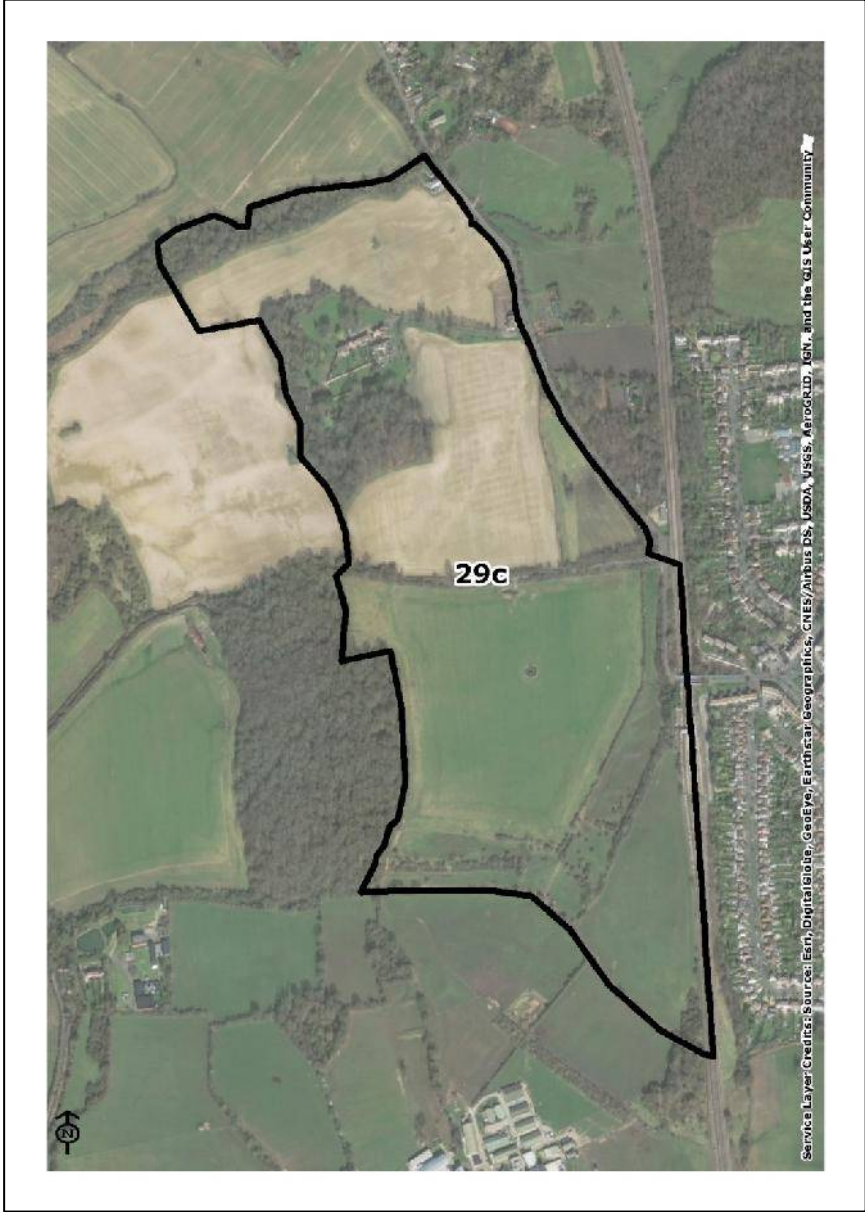
* Rating variations are mapped on the last page of the LCA 29 assessment

Key sensitivities and mitigation potential on the edge of Brookmans Park (29c)

To minimise adverse impact on landscape and visual character, development proposals should:

- Maintain the enclosed, rural character of the area.
- Conserve and manage the strong hedgerow boundaries.

Landscape Character Area 29: Mimmshall Valley
Representative views (29c)



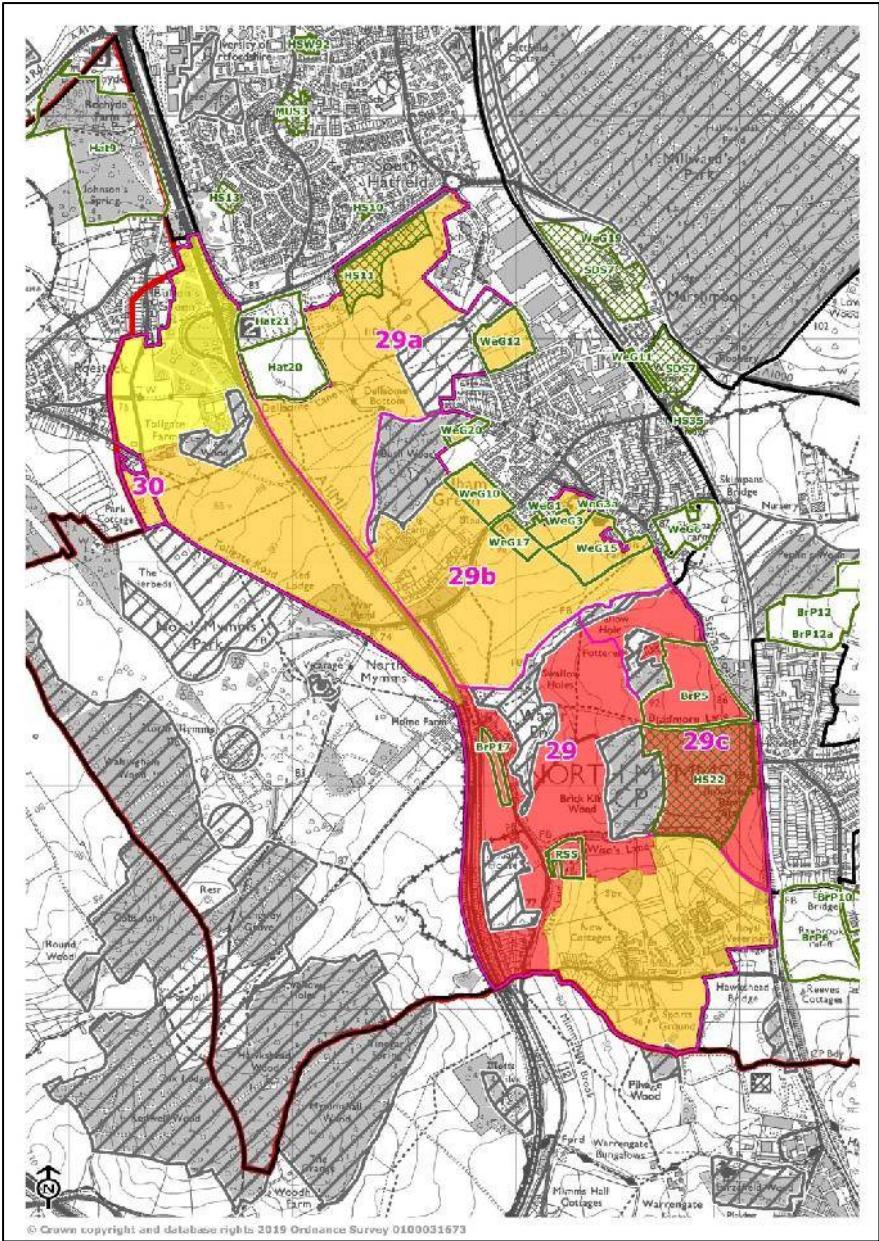
View south from Bradmore Lane














View east from north of Bradmore Lane

Landscape Character Area 29: Mimmshall Valley

Sensitivity ratings across assessment area



Sensitivity ratings key

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|---------------|
|  | Welwyn Hatfield Boundary | Sensitivity rating | |
|  | Landscape Character Area (LCA) |  | Low |
|  | LCA Subdivision |  | Low-moderate |
|  | All absolute constraints |  | Moderate |
|  | Promoted Sites |  | Moderate-high |
|  | Site allocations |  | High |

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Landscape Character Area 30: Colney Heath Farmland

Colney Heath Farmland

Location and Landscape Character Summary

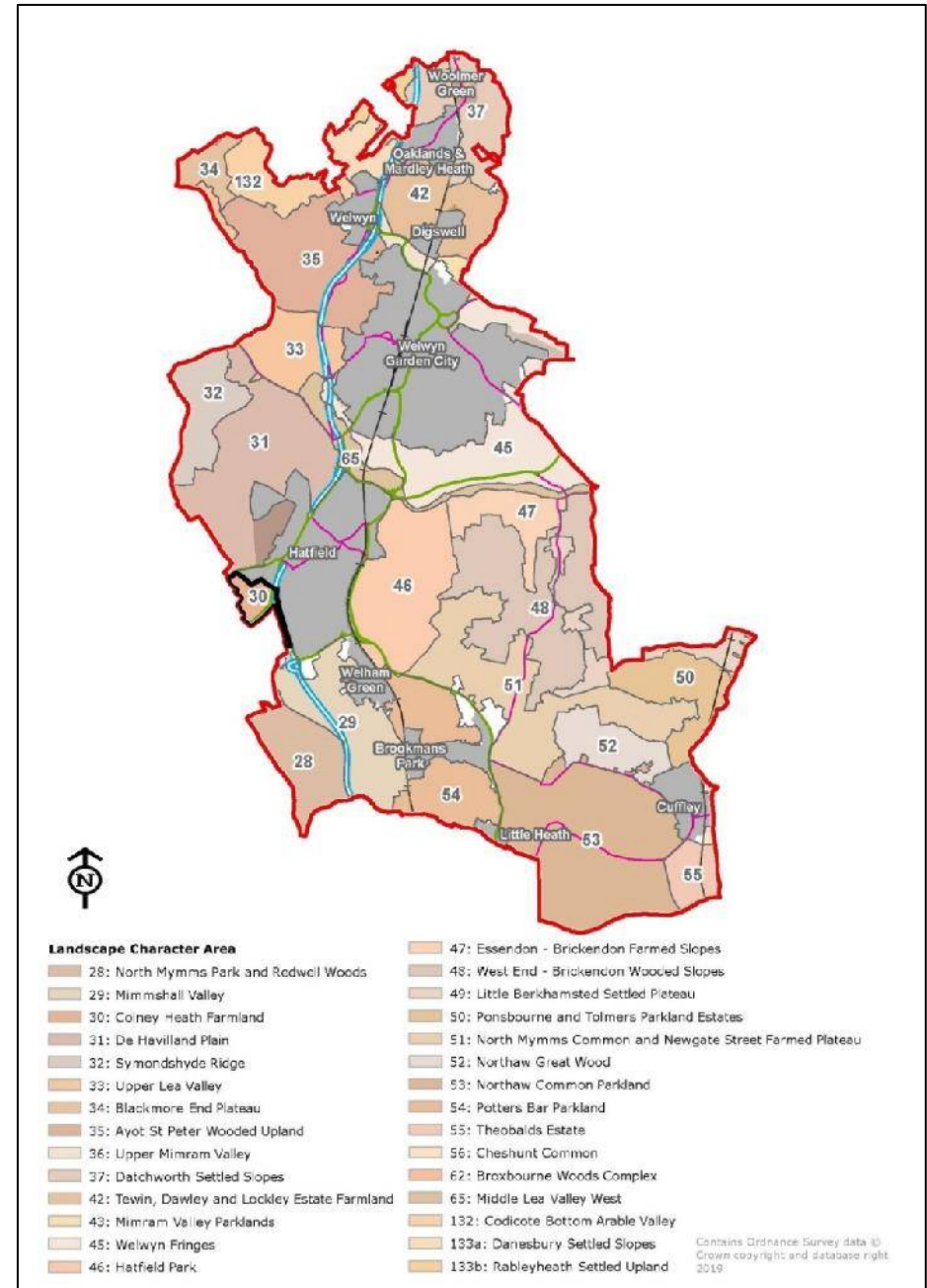
The assessment area encompasses a small part of the Colney Heath Farmland LCA in the west of the Welwyn Hatfield borough. The area is situated on the settlement edge of Hatfield, with the A10 running along the northern boundary, the A414 within the southern boundary and the A1 (M) running along the eastern boundary. The closest residential area of Hatfield is Ellenbrook, directly to the north.

The area comprises arable land with some irregular narrow pasture fields, enclosed by tall mature tree hedgerows. There are some important BAP Priority Habitats (deciduous woodland) located within the area. It is largely unsettled; however its perceptual qualities are adversely affected by the surrounding transport infrastructure.

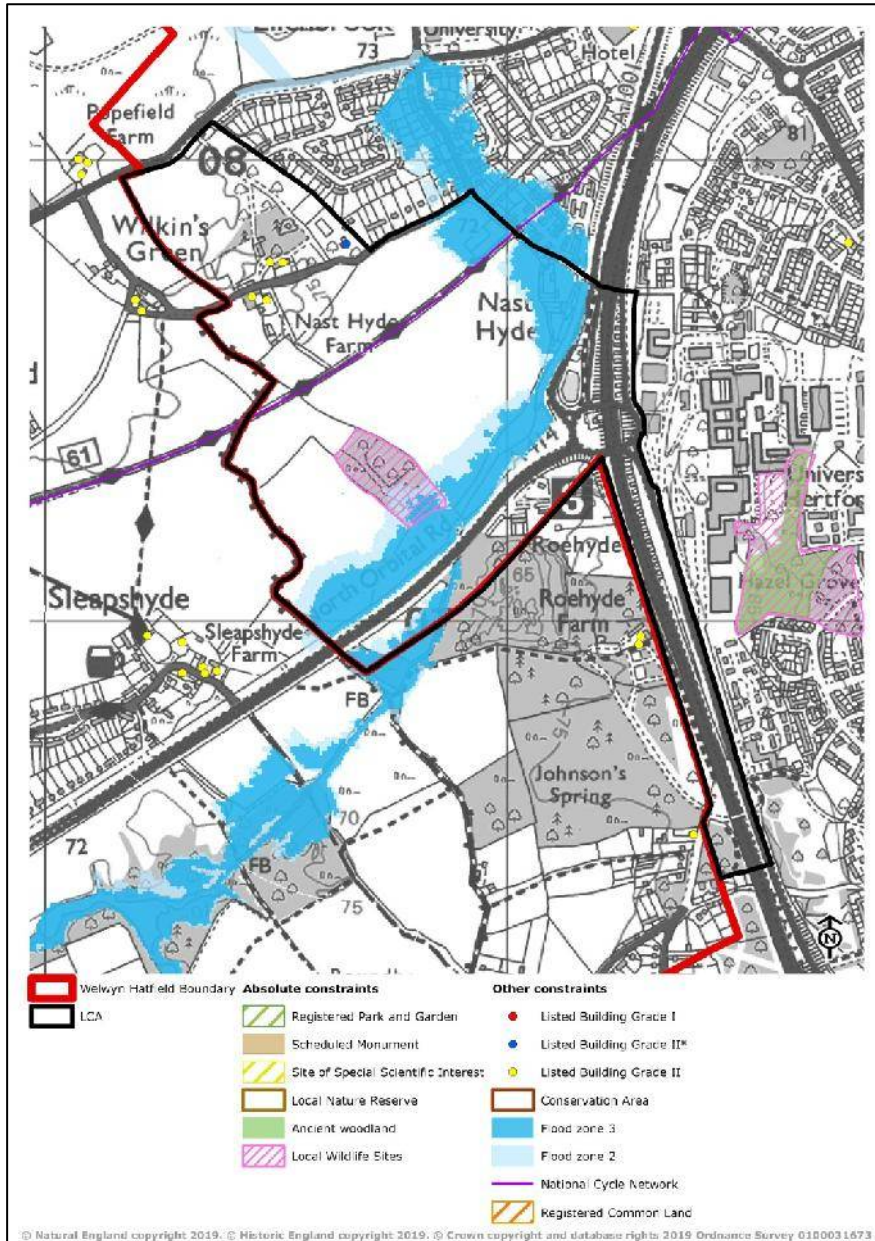
A small, isolated strip of the Colney Heath Farmland LCA alongside the A1(M), to the north of North Mymms Park and east of Tollgate Farm, is considered as part of the LCA 29 assessment.

Assessment Areas

The assessment area has not been subdivided.



Landscape Character Area 30: Colney Heath Farmland



Absolute Constraints and Designations

The following absolute constraints apply to LCA 30:

- The Copse at Nast Hyde Local Wildlife Site.

Other designations of relevance to landscape that apply to LCA 30 are:

- Four Grade II listed buildings and one Grade II* listed building along Wilkin's Green Lane (Great Nast Hyde House and Nast Hyde Farm).
- The flood zone along the southern edge of the assessment area and part of the settlement edge of Ellenbrook.

Landscape Character Area 30: Colney Heath Farmland

Analysis of Landscape Sensitivity in the Character Area

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Criteria		
<p>Landform</p> <p><i>This considers the shape of the landscape. Smooth, gently undulating or flat landforms are likely to be less sensitive to development than a landscape with distinct landform features, such as hills and valleys, as development may mask distinctive topographical features that contribute to landscape character.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
Landform is almost entirely flat.		
<p>Landscape pattern and time depth</p> <p><i>This considers the field pattern and historic origin of the landscape area. Landscapes with more irregular field patterns, particularly those of historic origin, are likely to more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than landscape with regular scale field patterns because of the risk of losing characteristic landscape patterns.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
	Fields are medium to large in scale and follow an irregular pattern, showing evidence of parliamentary enclosure. The narrower edge fields are likely to be a result of building the A1(M) and A414.	
<p>'Natural' character</p> <p><i>This considers the 'naturalistic' qualities of the landscape area in terms of the coverage of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features (e.g. trees and hedgerows) which contribute to landscape character and could be vulnerable to loss from development. Areas with frequent natural features (including large areas of designated habitats) result in increased sensitivity to development, while landscape with limited natural features will be less sensitive.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
Fields are predominately used for arable agriculture. There are some smaller irregular fields under equestrian use, which are subdivided by horse tape.	There is a relatively strong hedgerow network, with many mature trees, throughout the area.	There is a block of deciduous woodland a little to the west of Junction 3 of the A1(M), and a small area of traditional orchard at Great Nast Hyde House (both BAP Priority Habitats, and the former also a Local Wildlife Site).
<p>Built character</p> <p><i>This considers the built character of the landscape area with particular reference to the presence of heritage assets that contribute to landscape character (i.e. valued features that may be designated as Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, archaeological features or remains or other features). Landscapes with a high density of historic features important to the character of the area are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than areas where such development already exists.</i></p>		

Landscape Character Area 30: Colney Heath Farmland

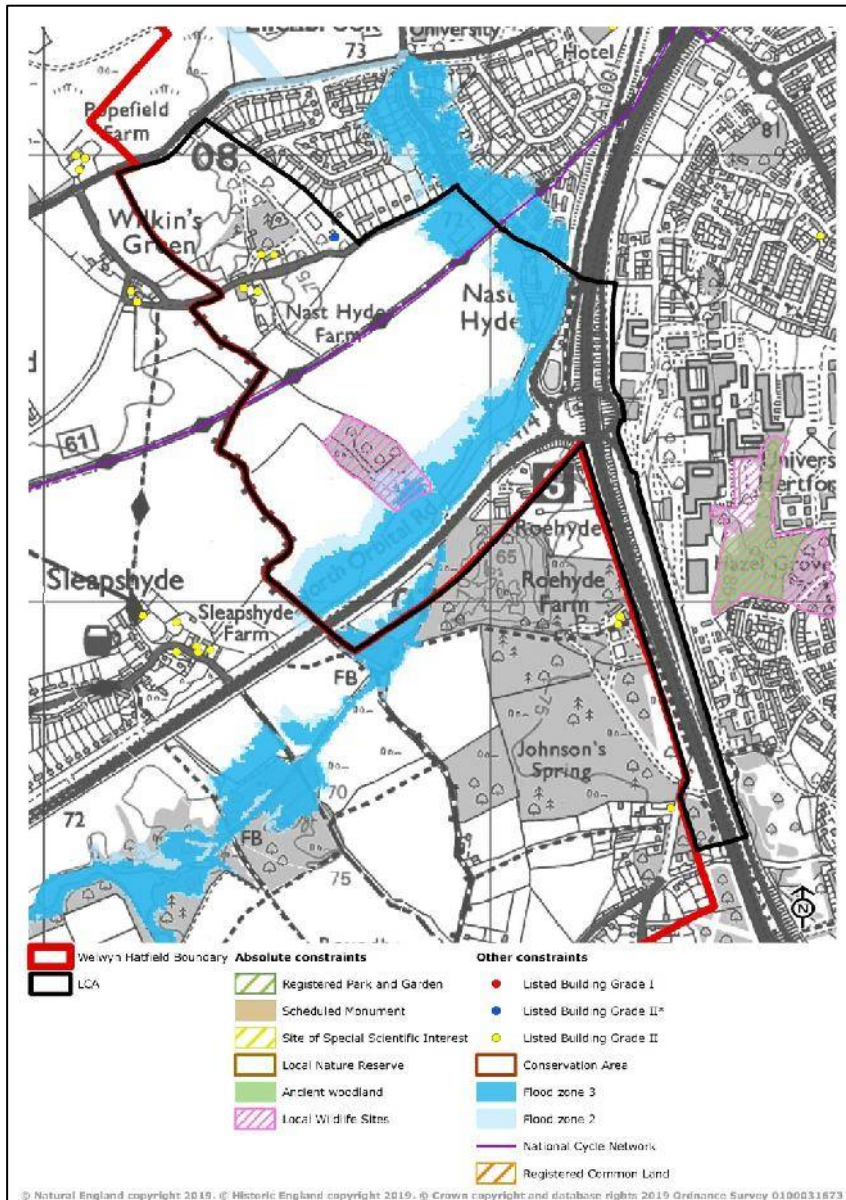
Low	Moderate	High
<p>The A1(M) runs along the eastern edge of the area, and the A414 in the south of the area. The settlement edge of Ellenbrook lies to the north and north east of the area and contains 20th Century housing, and to the south of the A414 there are houses and commercial development on Ryders Avenue. Both of these detract from the local landscape character.</p>		<p>The grounds associated with the historic buildings at Great Nast Hyde House, Nast Hyde Farm, and the Grade II* 'Torilla' house provide a wooded character on the edge of Ellenbrook .</p>
<p>Recreational value</p> <p><i>This criterion considers the presence of features and facilities which enable enjoyment of the landscape, and the importance of these. This may include public rights of way, bridleways, open access land and outdoor tourist/ visitor attractions with facilities. Recreation activities such as walking, cycling, horse riding or more formal recreation activities where enjoyment of the landscape is important to the experience. Importance of features may be indicated by designation such as long distance footpaths or recreation routes, national cycle routes, proximity to areas of local population (such as local parks) and outdoor tourist attractions often marked on Ordinance Survey maps.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
	<p>There are several PRowS in the area, including the Alban Way long distance recreational route, which follows the route of a disused railway and is lined by mature vegetation, enclosing it from the wider landscape.</p>	
<p>Perceptual aspects</p> <p><i>This considers qualities such as rurality (traditional land uses with few modern, human influences), sense of remoteness or tranquility. High scenic value, freedom from human activity/ disturbance and 'dark skies' would add to sensitivity in this criterion. This is because development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from a sense of tranquility and or remoteness.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
	<p>The area lies between three busy major roads (the A1057, A414 and the A1(M)) which provide aural intrusion, and there are occasional views of University of Hertfordshire buildings above the tree line to the east, providing an urbanising element, but the adjacent major roads and urban are largely blocked from view by tree cover and hedge banks. The narrow Wilkin's Green Lane and Ellenbrook Lane retain a rural character.</p>	
<p>Settlement setting</p> <p><i>The extent to which the landscape area i) contributes to the identity and distinctiveness of a settlement by way of its character and/ or scenic quality, for example by providing an attractive backdrop or setting, or playing an important part in views from a settlement; and ii) relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement and the character of the adjacent settlement edge, including the role of significant landscape elements in either separating an undeveloped area from a settled area or linking it to it.</i></p>		

Landscape Character Area 30: Colney Heath Farmland

Low	Moderate	High
	Narrow lanes, tree cover and historic buildings combine to give a rural character to this edge of Hatfield, despite the intrusion from busy roads on the fringes of the LCA.	
<p>Visual prominence</p> <p><i>This considers the visual prominence of the landscape area, reflecting the extent of openness or enclosure in the landscape (due to landform and land cover), and extent to which potential development would be visible. It also considers the skyline character of the area – for instance whether it has features that form a visually distinctive skyline – and any role the landscape area plays in contributing to valued views, such as from promoted viewpoints, routes or recreational areas.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
The landscape area is visually enclosed by tall hedgerows and mature trees, which limits views into the assessment area from surrounding roads and PRowS.		

Landscape Character Area 30: Colney Heath Farmland

Landscape assessment area (30)



Sensitivity to development (30)

The sensitivity of the area is raised by the presence of BAP Priority Habitat deciduous woodland, which creates a buffer to the edge of Ellenbrook and enhances rural character, by the historic character of built development along Wilkin's Green Lane, by the rural character of the lanes along the settlement edge and by the presence of the Alban Way long distance recreational route. However, sensitivity is reduced by the surrounding major road network, the simple and flat landform and the sense of enclosure created by mature hedgerows and trees. Overall the area has a **moderate** landscape sensitivity, although this is locally lower where there is existing development of Ryders Avenue to the south of the A414.

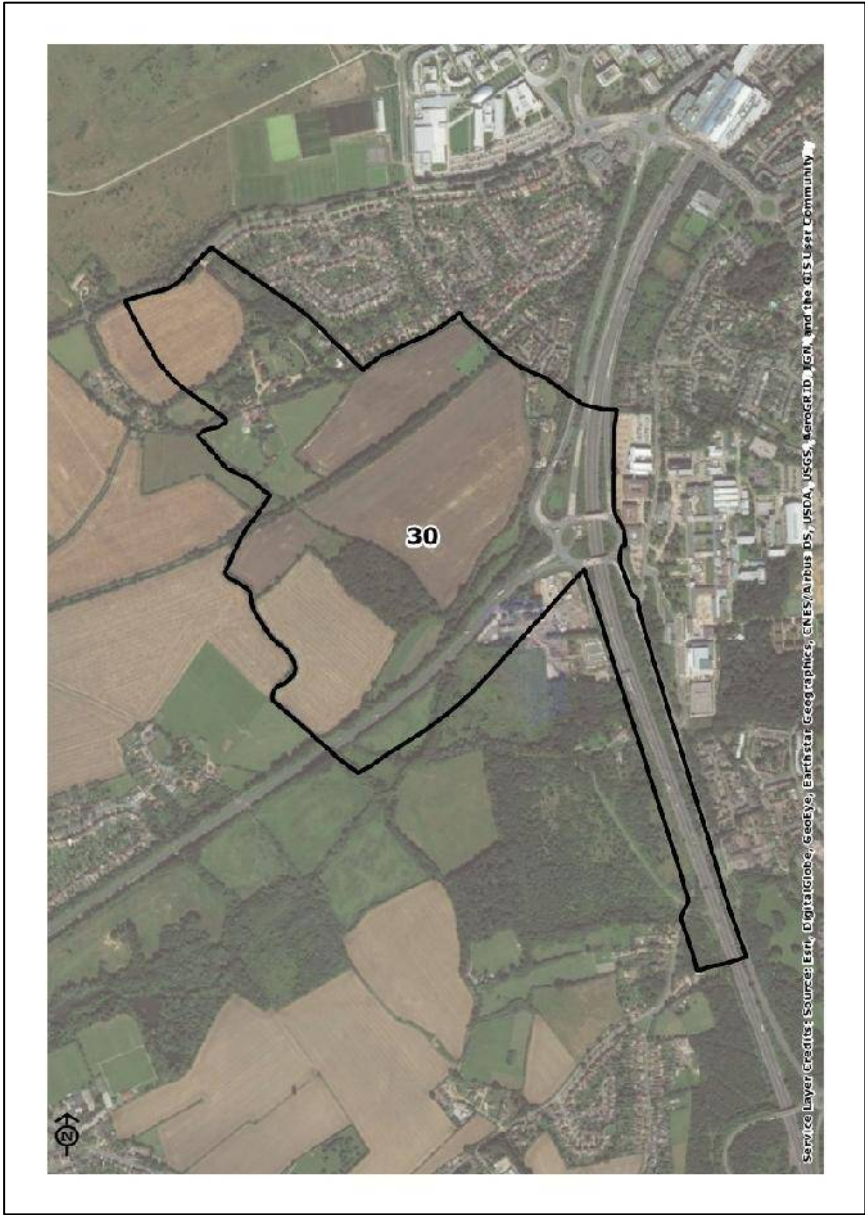
Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
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Key sensitivities and mitigation potential (30)

To minimise adverse impact on landscape and visual character, development proposals should:

- Maintain the areas of BAP Priority Habitat deciduous woodlands.
- Minimise encroachment on the historic buildings off Wilkin's Green Lane.
- Retain the rural character of Wilkin's Green Lane and Ellenbrook Lane.
- Minimise impact on the setting of The Alban Way Long Distance Footpath.

**Landscape Character Area 30: Colney Heath Farmland
Representative views (30)**



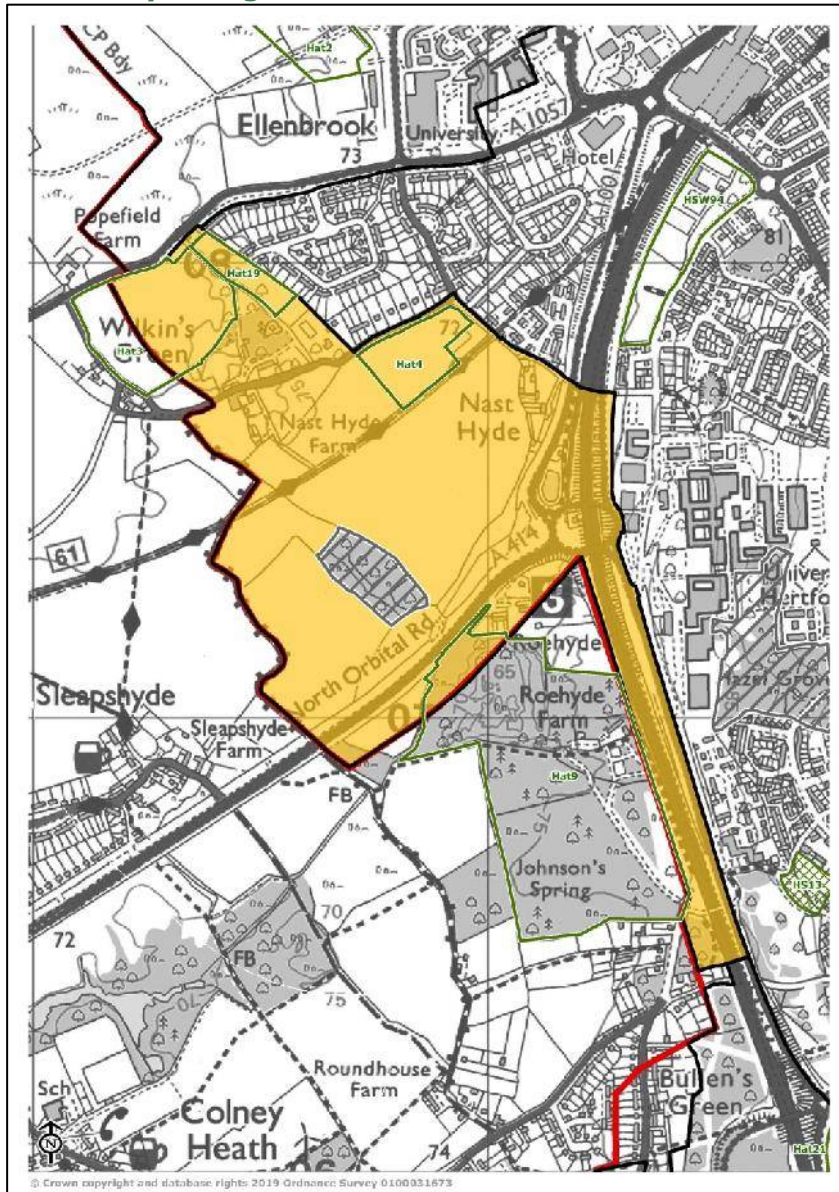
View towards BAP Priority Habitat deciduous woodland






Surrounding major road network

Landscape Character Area 30: Colney Heath Farmland

Sensitivity ratings across assessment area



Sensitivity ratings key

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|
|  | Welwyn Hatfield Boundary | Sensitivity rating |
|  | Landscape Character Area (LCA) |  Low |
|  | LCA Subdivision |  Low-moderate |
|  | All absolute constraints |  Moderate |
|  | Promoted Sites |  Moderate-high |
|  | Site allocations |  High |

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Landscape Character Area 31: De Havilland Plain

De Havilland Plain

Location and Landscape Character Summary

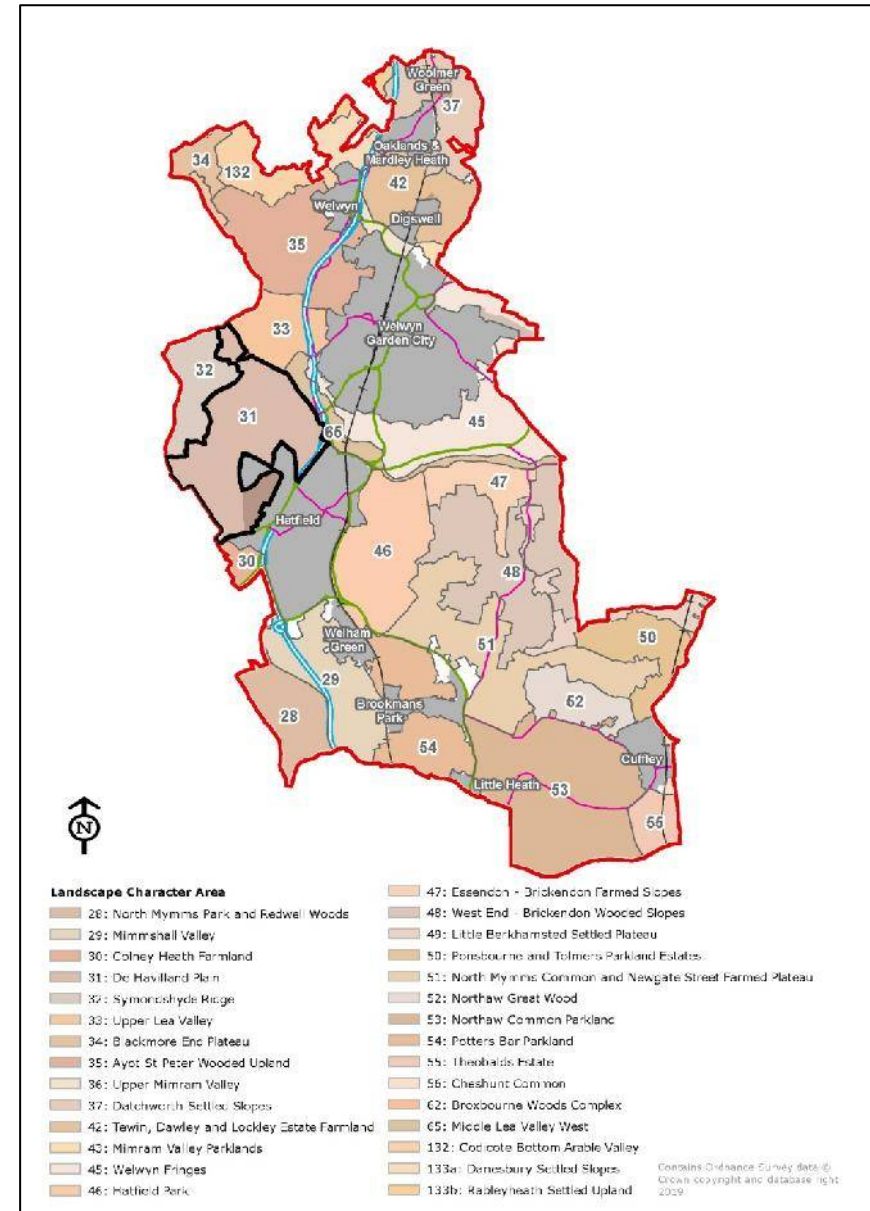
The assessment area contains the majority of the De Havilland Plain LCA, situated in the west of the Welwyn Hatfield Borough, directly to the northwest of Hatfield and to the southwest of Welwyn Garden City. The area extends beyond the district boundary to the west. The landscape is largely of modern origin with the large scale field pattern reflecting agricultural expansion of the last century, the creation of parkland on the site of a former airfield, and past and existing mineral extraction.

Assessment Areas

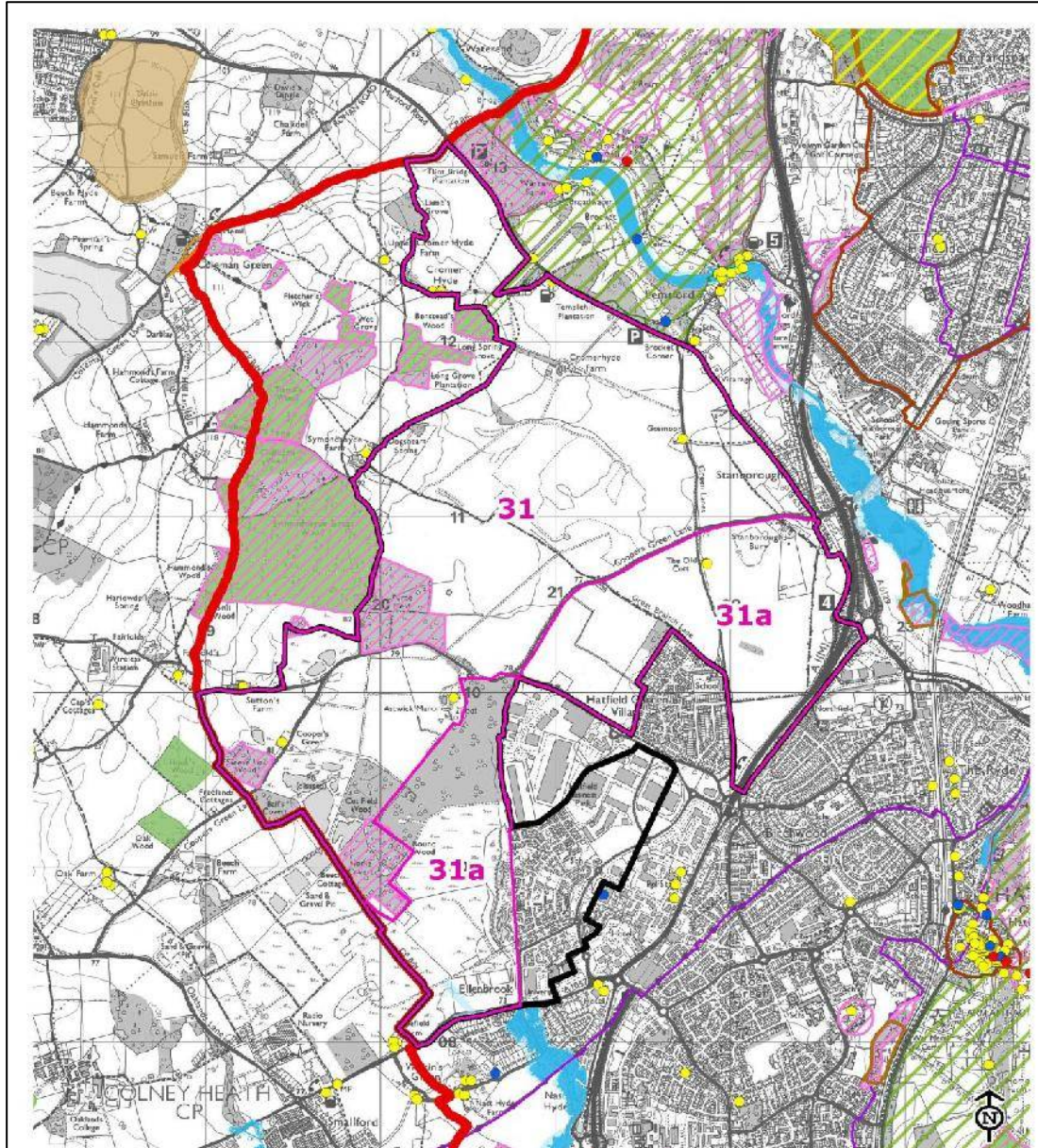
The assessment area has been divided into the following sub-areas:

- LCA 31 away from main settlement edges
- The settlement edge of Hatfield (31a)

The Hatfield settlement edge area has been defined to the north of Hatfield Business Park by Coopers Green Lane, and to the west of the Business Park by the extent of the Ellenbrook Fields country park. Both have associated vegetation that provides a degree of visual separation from the wider LCA.



Landscape Character Area 31: De Havilland Plain



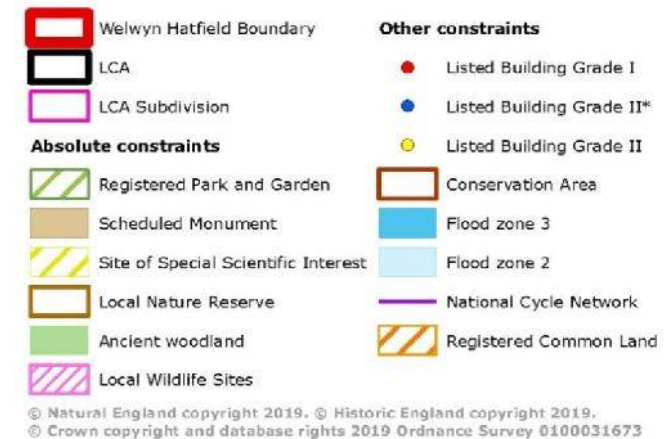
Absolute Constraints and Designations

The following absolute constraints apply to LCA 31:

- The northern edge abuts Bocket Hall Grade II listed Registered Park and Garden.
- Local Wildlife Sites including Furzefield Wood (near Hatfield), Home Covert & Round Wood, Benstead's Wood, Copse S. of Symondshyde Great Wood and Sleeve Hall Wood.

Other designations of relevance to landscape that apply to LCA 31 are:

- Eight Grade II listed buildings.



Landscape Character Area 31: De Havilland Plain

Analysis of Landscape Sensitivity

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Criteria		
Landform		
<i>This considers the shape of the landscape. Smooth, gently undulating or flat landforms are likely to be less sensitive to development than a landscape with distinct landform features, such as hills and valleys, as development may mask distinctive topographical features that contribute to landscape character.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
The topography is relatively flat with elevation ranging from 75m to 80m AOD. There are localised variations within the landform as a result of mineral extraction.		
Landscape pattern and time depth		
<i>This considers the field pattern and historic origin of the landscape area. Landscapes with more irregular field patterns, particularly those of historic origin, are likely to more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than landscape with regular scale field patterns because of the risk of losing characteristic landscape patterns.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
Fields in the north are large with few field divisions. This is a result of post-1950s agricultural intensification. Field pattern in the south has been altered by extensive mineral extraction and subsequent restoration; creating a large-scale irregular pattern.	<p>The northern part of the area provides some setting for the Grade II Brocket Hall Registered Park and Garden, although this area is mostly enclosed by woodland or mature tree hedges so there is limited intervisibility.</p> <p>The south of the area, now Ellenbrook Fields, is of historic interest as the site of Hatfield Aerodrome.</p>	
'Natural' character		
<i>This considers the 'naturalistic' qualities of the landscape area in terms of the coverage of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features (e.g. trees and hedgerows) which contribute to landscape character and could be vulnerable to loss from development. Areas with frequent natural features (including large areas of designated habitats) result in increased sensitivity to development, while landscape with limited natural features will be less sensitive.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
Expansive arable fields with minimal hedgerow field divisions.	Former mineral workings contain areas of pasture grassland and flooded gravel pits, which provide scrub, young planting and marshland habitats. A large area of scrubby planted woodland lies on the former Hatfield airfield between Hatfield Business park and Round Wood and Cut Field Wood.	Pockets of BAP Priority Habitat deciduous woodlands.
Built character		
<i>This considers the built character of the landscape area with particular reference to the presence of heritage assets that contribute to landscape character (i.e. valued features that may be designated as Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, archaeological features or remains or other features). Landscapes with a high density of historic features important to the character of the area are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than areas where such development already exists.</i>		

Landscape Character Area 31: De Havilland Plain

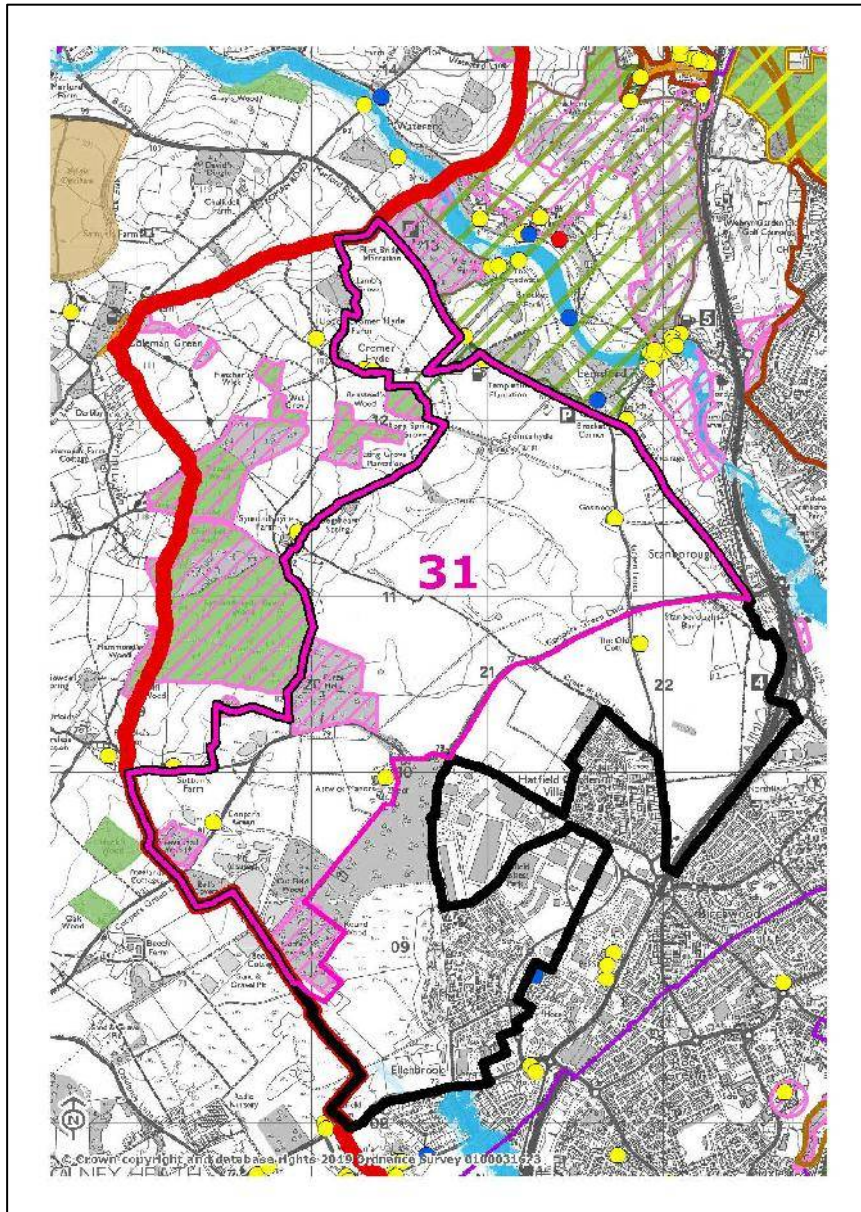
Low	Moderate	High
Part of the A1(M) is located along the eastern boundary of the assessment area.	A largely unsettled agricultural area, with scattered farms, manor houses and cottages, including eight Grade II listed buildings.	
<p>Recreational value</p> <p><i>This criterion considers the presence of features and facilities which enable enjoyment of the landscape, and the importance of these. This may include public rights of way, bridleways, open access land and outdoor tourist/ visitor attractions with facilities. Recreation activities such as walking, cycling, horse riding or more formal recreation activities where enjoyment of the landscape is important to the experience. Importance of features may be indicated by designation such as long distance footpaths or recreation routes, national cycle routes, proximity to areas of local population (such as local parks) and outdoor tourist attractions often marked on Ordinance Survey maps.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
The public rights of way network is less comprehensive than the majority of the borough. There are outdoor sports pitches in the south which, with associated buildings and some floodlighting, have some urbanising influence.		There are areas of open access west of Hatfield Garden Village and at Ellenbrook Fields which, although in terms of landscape character they do not have many elements to add distinction, are valued for their proximity to the urban edge.
<p>Perceptual aspects</p> <p><i>This considers qualities such as rurality (traditional land uses with few modern, human influences), sense of remoteness or tranquility. High scenic value, freedom from human activity/ disturbance and 'dark skies' would add to sensitivity in this criterion. This is because development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from a sense of tranquility and or remoteness.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
Active mineral works east of Symondshyde Farm and noise from the A1(M) disturb the landscape. Roads in this area tend to be well-used, providing access to nearby residential and employment areas.	Although the landscape has been degraded by field expansion and mineral extraction there is still a sense of rurality in the north and center of the area.	
<p>Settlement setting</p> <p><i>The extent to which the landscape area i) contributes to the identity and distinctiveness of a settlement by way of its character and/ or scenic quality, for example by providing an attractive backdrop or setting, or playing an important part in views from a settlement; and ii) relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement and the character of the adjacent settlement edge, including the role of significant landscape elements in either separating an undeveloped area from a settled area or linking it to it.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
Expansive open fields provide a setting for the edges of Hatfield and for development at Stanborough but offer no distinctive characteristics have a significant impact on settlement character or extents.	The north east of the area provides a rural gap and sense of separation between Hatfield Garden Village and Stanborough, giving them separate identities but with no distinct characteristics derived from the landscape.	

Landscape Character Area 31: De Havilland Plain

Visual prominence
This considers the visual prominence of the landscape area, reflecting the extent of openness or enclosure in the landscape (due to landform and land cover), and extent to which potential development would be visible. It also considers the skyline character of the area – for instance whether it has features that form a visually distinctive skyline – and any role the landscape area plays in contributing to valued views, such as from promoted viewpoints, routes or recreational areas.

Low	Moderate	High
	<p>Large parts are visually prominent due to the open character of the large fields with limited field boundaries. There is a more enclosed character where hedgerows exist along roads e.g. Cooper’s Green Lane/Green Lane and where there are woodland blocks.</p>	

Landscape Character Area 31: De Havilland Plain
Landscape assessment area (31)



Sensitivity to development away from urban edges (31)

For the most part the area lacks distinctive landscape character, although visual openness, lack of settlement and pockets of BAP Priority Habitat deciduous woodlands do create some sensitivity. The evidence of mineral extraction reduces the sensitivity where it has altered the field pattern and limited the coverage of habitats. Most of the area to the north of Coopers Green Lane is therefore of a **low-moderate** landscape sensitivity to residential development. Sensitivity rises to **moderate** to the north of Cromer Hyde where woodlands, including the adjacent Bocket Hall parkland, play a stronger containing role.

Sensitivity is also moderate at the southern end of the LCA, to the west of Astwick Manor, as although there is evidence of mineral extraction through the remnant ponds that remain much of the land has regenerated to form important habitats.

Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
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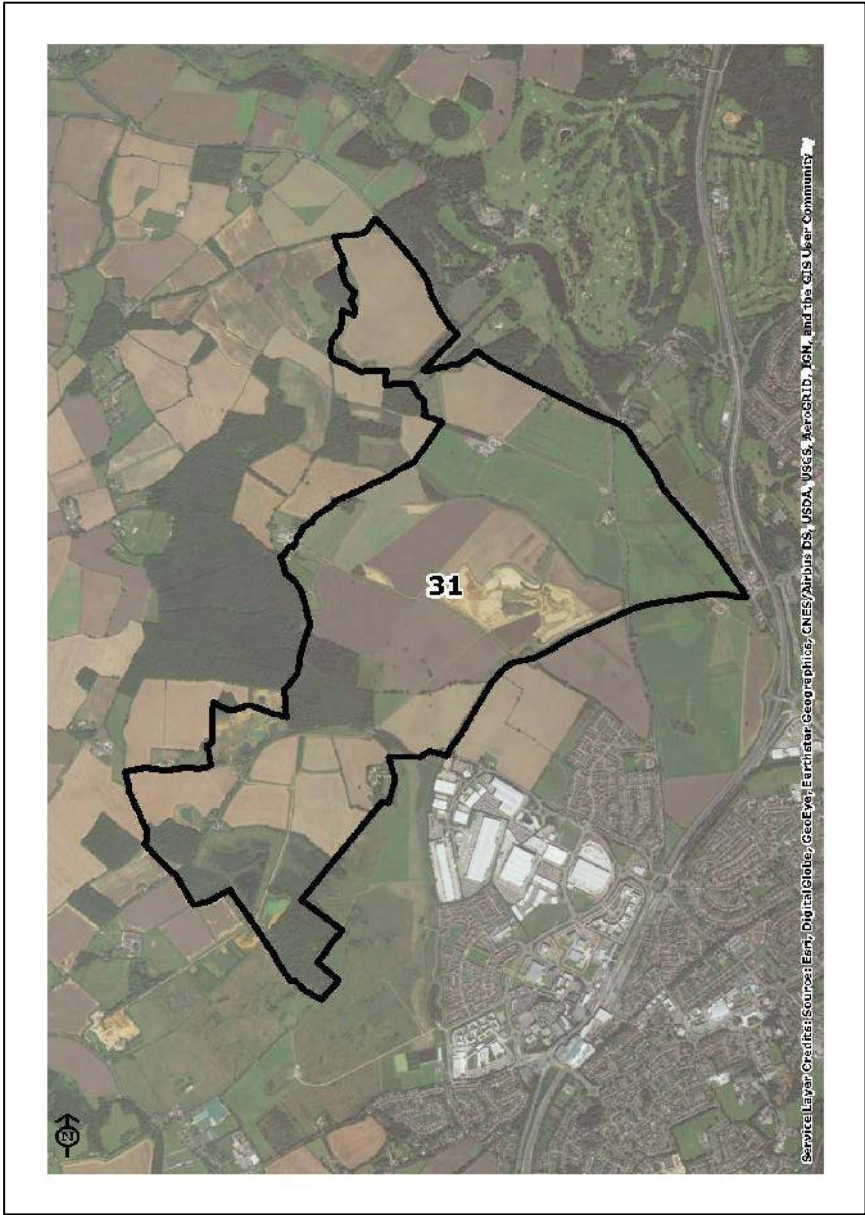
* Variations in landscape sensitivity are mapped on the last page of the LCA 31 assessment

Key Sensitivities and mitigation potential of area 31

To minimise adverse impact on landscape and visual character, development proposals should:

- Protect and conserve the pockets of BAP Priority Habitat deciduous woodlands, as well as other large areas of semi-natural or restored habitats associated with past mineral extraction.
- Retain the rural agricultural character.
- Limit development within visually prominent areas that have an open character.
- Consider potential to enhance landscape character through restoration of mineral workings.

Landscape Character Area 31: De Havilland Plain
Representative views (31)

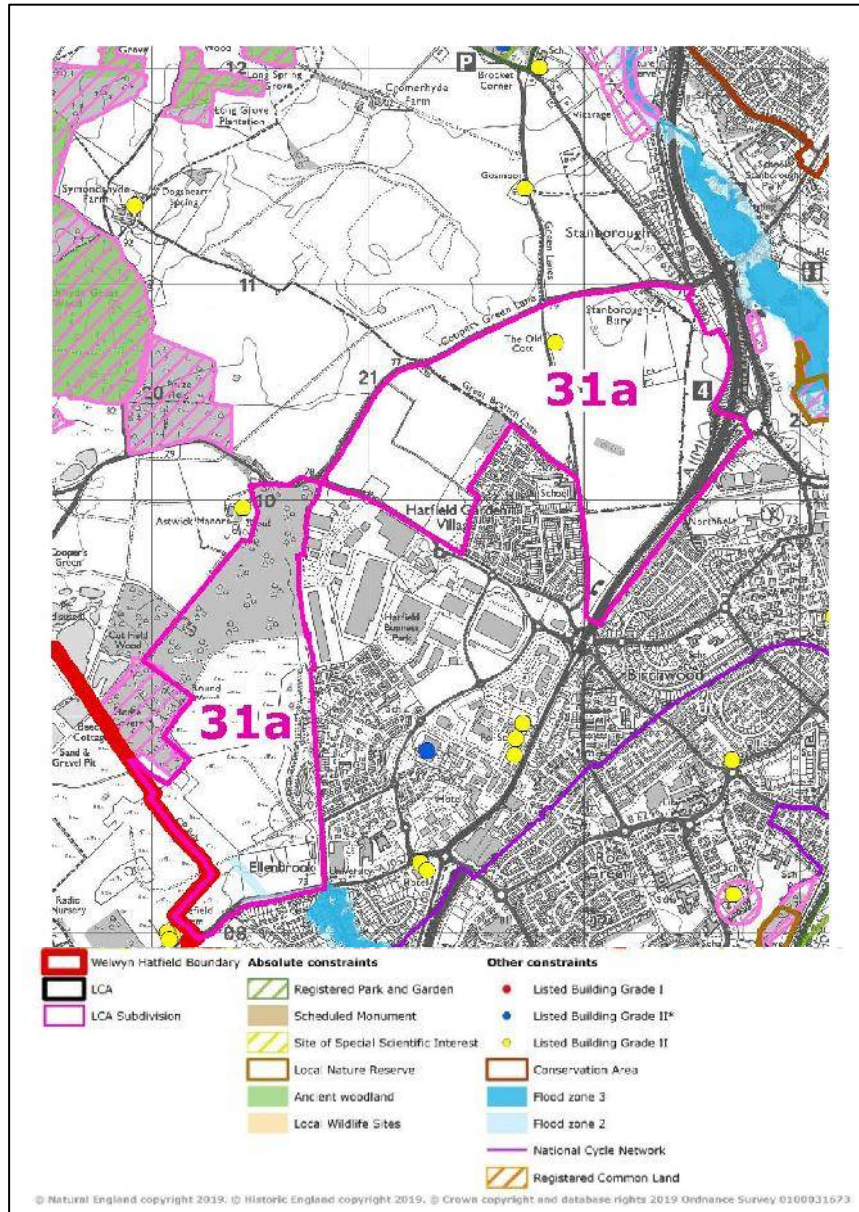


Fields of an open character



Pockets of BAP Priority Habitat deciduous woodland

Landscape Character Area 31: De Havilland Plain Landscape assessment area (31a)



Sensitivity to development on the edge of Hatfield (31a)

Within the northern part of 31a visible urban edge influences, particularly Hatfield Business Park, and traffic diminish landscape character, although there is some sensitivity associated with the area's role in preserving distinction between Hatfield and Stanborough, and in the open access provision to the west of the Garden Village. This part of the area has an overall **low-moderate** landscape sensitivity to residential development.

The southern part of 31a comprises Ellenbrook Fields, which although influenced by the urban fringe has a stronger natural character associated with the parkland vegetation and adjacent woodlands, and has recreational value with some heritage interest. This part of the area has a **moderate** landscape sensitivity to residential development.

Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
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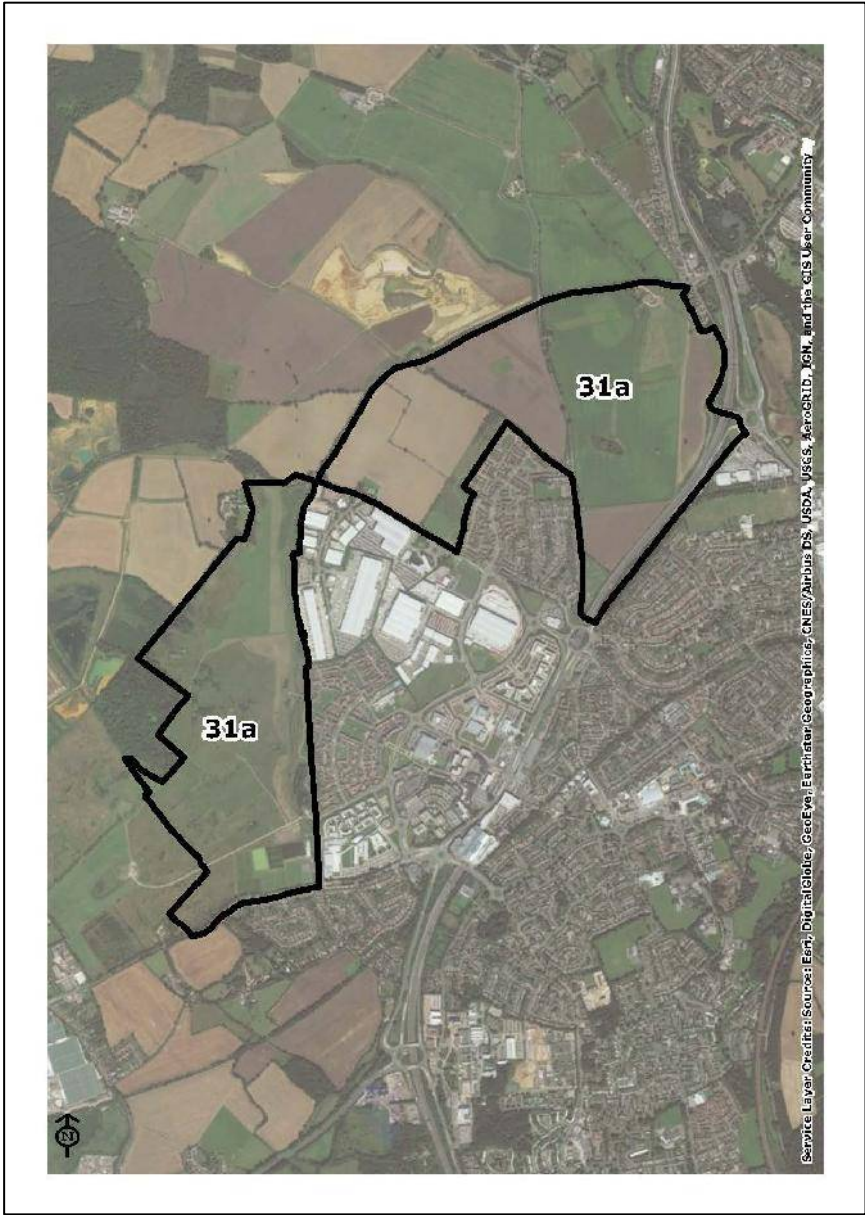
* Rating variations are mapped on the last page of the LCA 31 assessment

Key Sensitivities and Mitigation Potential on the edge of Hatfield (31a)

To minimise adverse impact on landscape and visual character, development proposals should:

- Limit development within visually prominent areas that have an open character.
- Preserve the extensive public access enjoyed in this area.
- Preserve BAP Priority Habitat deciduous woodland as well as other small copses.

Landscape Character Area 31: De Havilland Plain
Representative views (31a)



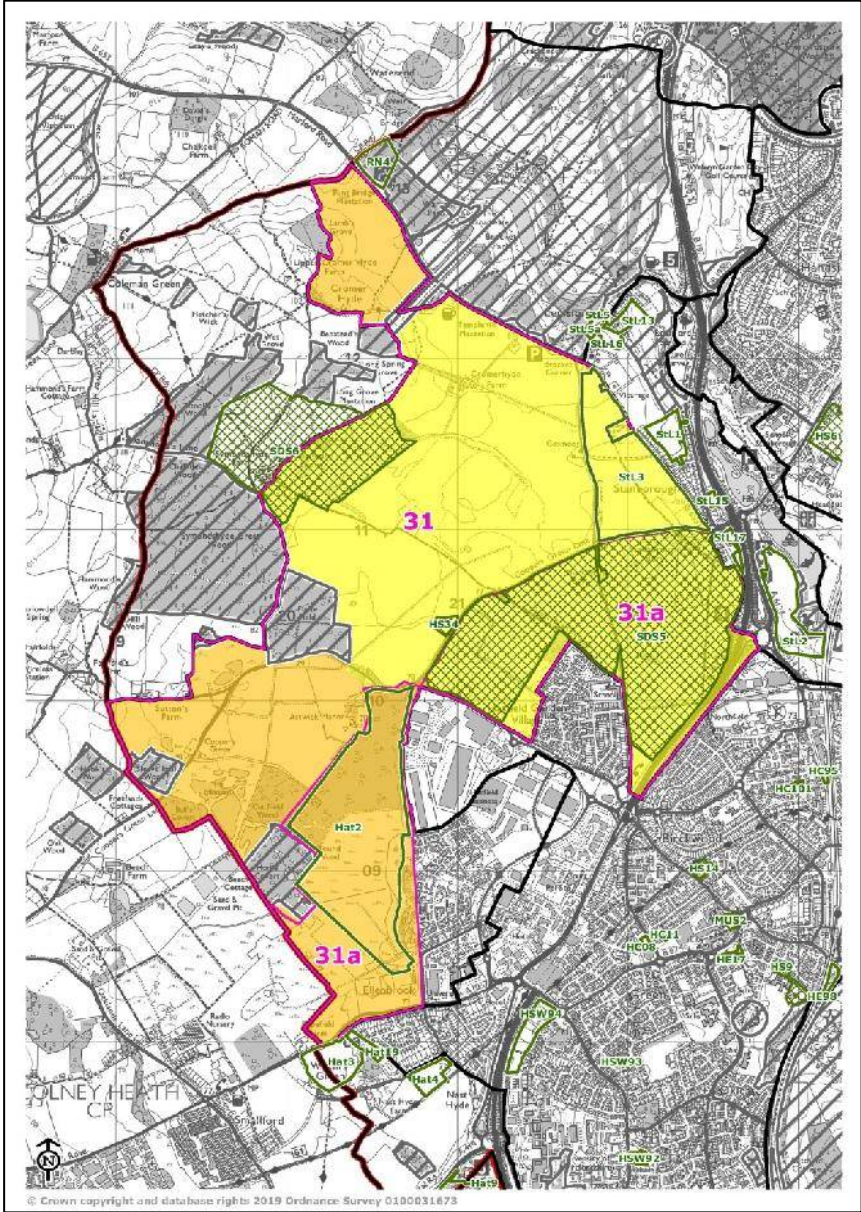
Informal recreation opportunities on the settlement edge









Rural setting provided for properties on the settlement edge

Landscape Character Area 31: De Havilland Plain

Sensitivity ratings across assessment area



Sensitivity ratings key

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|
|  | Welwyn Hatfield Boundary | Sensitivity rating |
|  | Landscape Character Area (LCA) |  Low |
|  | LCA Subdivision |  Low-moderate |
|  | All absolute constraints |  Moderate |
|  | Promoted Sites |  Moderate-high |
|  | Site allocations |  High |

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Landscape Character Area 32: Symondshyde Ridge

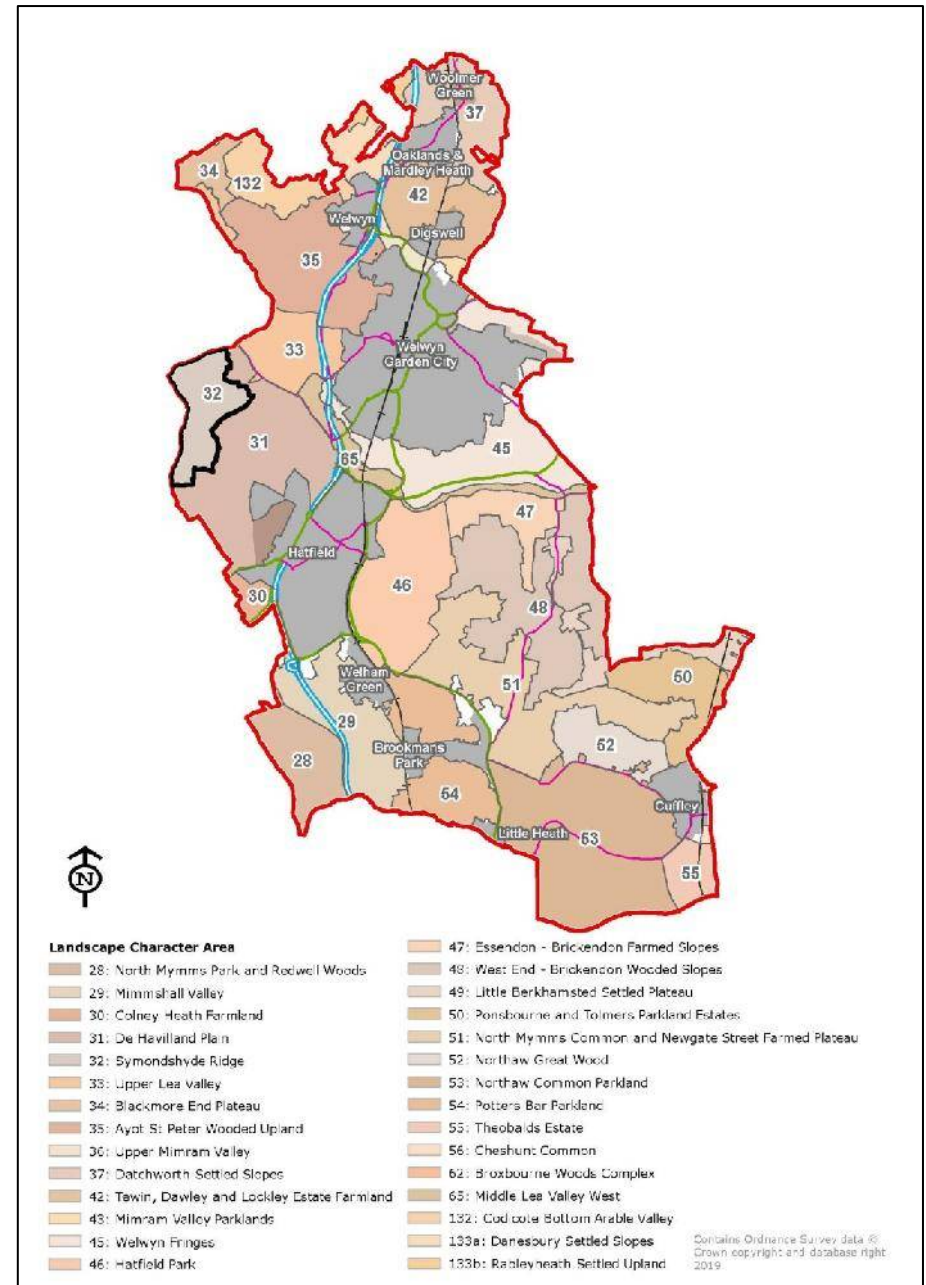
Symondshyde Ridge

Location and Landscape Character Summary

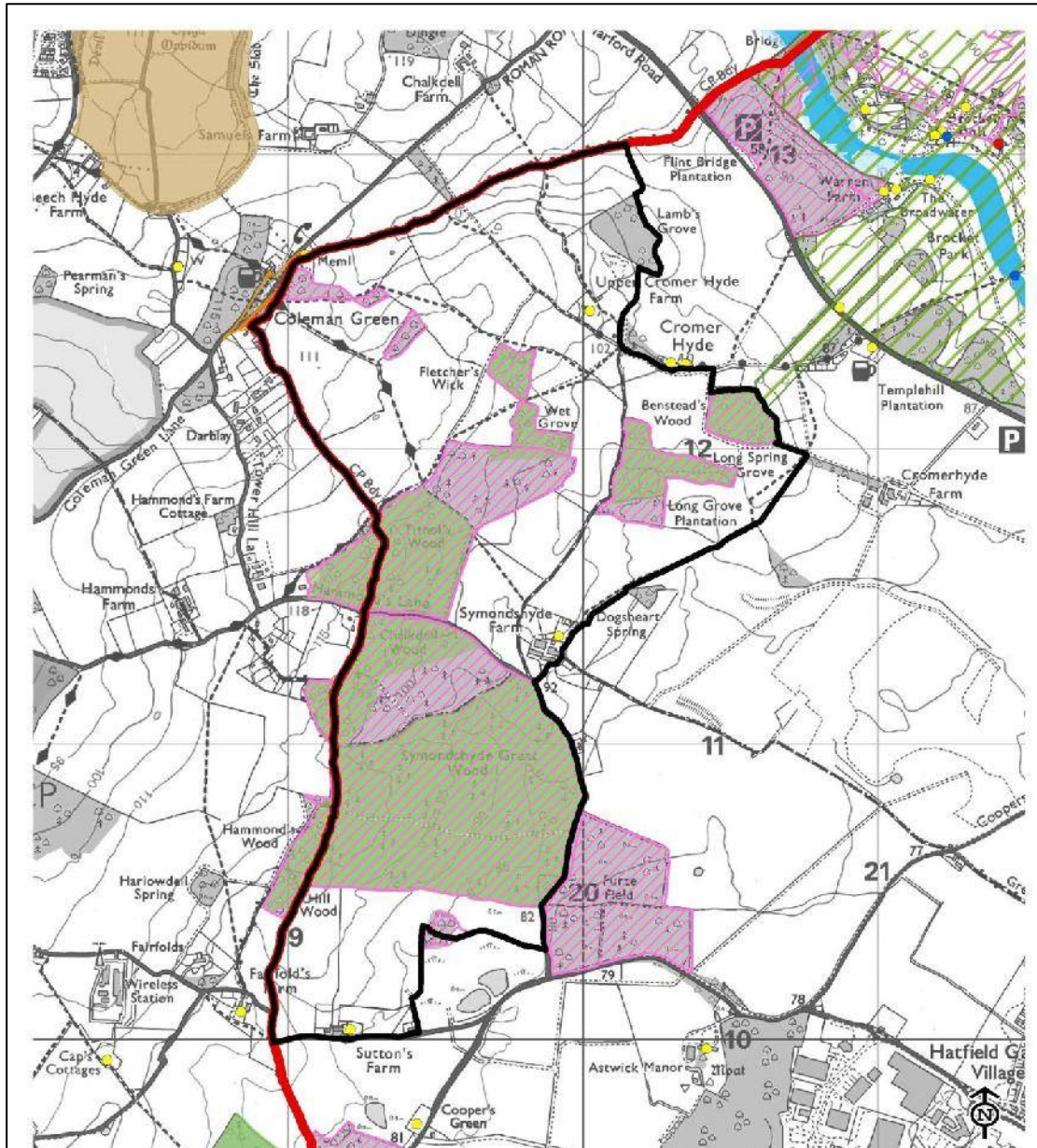
The assessment area encompasses the eastern flanks of the Symondshyde Ridge LCA and is situated along the western edge of the borough boundary. It lies approximately 1km northwest of Hatfield and less than 2km southwest of Welwyn Garden City. The area is largely undeveloped with high levels of woodland coverage on the east facing slopes.

Assessment Areas

The assessment area has not been subdivided.



Landscape Character Area 32: Symondshyde Ridge



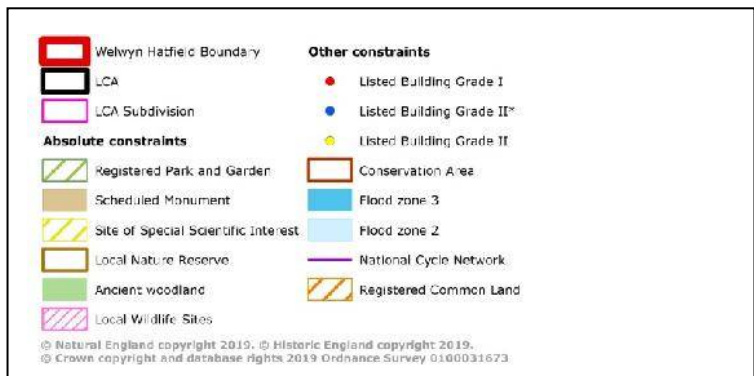
Absolute Constraints and Designations

The following absolute constraints apply to LCA 32:

- Local Wildlife Sites at Coleman Green, Green Lane, Fletcher's Wick, Wet Grove, Titnol's Wood, Symondshyde Great Wood, Colemangreen Spring and Kents Dell, Sprite Field Spring, Copse S. of Symondshyde Great Wood and Long Spring and Long Grove Plantation.
- Several areas of ancient woodland including Symondshyde Great Wood and Long Spring Grove.

Other designations of relevance to landscape that apply to LCA 32 are:

- Three Grade II listed buildings (Upper Cromer Hyde Farmhouse, Symondshyde Farmhouse and Sutton Farm Farmhouse).
- Hertfordshire Way Long Distance Footpath.



Landscape Character Area 32: Symondshyde Ridge

Analysis of Landscape Sensitivity in the Character Area

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Criteria		
Landform		
<i>This considers the shape of the landscape. Smooth, gently undulating or flat landforms are likely to be less sensitive to development than a landscape with distinct landform features, such as hills and valleys, as development may mask distinctive topographical features that contribute to landscape character.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
The majority of the area comprises a gently undulating east facing slope.		The western edge of the area forms part of a ridge running north-south.
Landscape pattern and time depth		
<i>This considers the field pattern and historic origin of the landscape area. Landscapes with more irregular field patterns, particularly those of historic origin, are likely to more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than landscape with regular scale field patterns because of the risk of losing characteristic landscape patterns.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
	Much of the pre-18th century field pattern here remains intact, although some fields have been enlarged. Fields are generally moderate to large in scale and some removal of hedgerows has occurred. Where hedgerows remain these are in good condition, and combined with blocks of woodland provide enclosure to the area.	
'Natural' character		
<i>This considers the 'naturalistic' qualities of the landscape area in terms of the coverage of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features (e.g. trees and hedgerows) which contribute to landscape character and could be vulnerable to loss from development. Areas with frequent natural features (including large areas of designated habitats) result in increased sensitivity to development, while landscape with limited natural features will be less sensitive.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
Medium to large scale arable fields with limited hedgerows.		There are many areas of BAP Priority Habitat deciduous woodland within the area.
Built character		
<i>This considers the built character of the landscape area with particular reference to the presence of heritage assets that contribute to landscape character (i.e. valued features that may be designated as Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, archaeological features or remains or other features). Landscapes with a high density of historic features important to the character of the area are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than areas where such development already exists.</i>		

Landscape Character Area 32: Symondshyde Ridge

Low	Moderate	High
	The majority of the area is undeveloped with development limited to scattered farmsteads. Some historic farmhouses are present although these are generally enclosed from the wider area by vegetation.	
<p>Recreational value</p> <p><i>This criterion considers the presence of features and facilities which enable enjoyment of the landscape, and the importance of these. This may include public rights of way, bridleways, open access land and outdoor tourist/ visitor attractions with facilities. Recreation activities such as walking, cycling, horse riding or more formal recreation activities where enjoyment of the landscape is important to the experience. Importance of features may be indicated by designation such as long distance footpaths or recreation routes, national cycle routes, proximity to areas of local population (such as local parks) and outdoor tourist attractions often marked on Ordinance Survey maps.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
		There is an extensive network of public rights of way running throughout the area including part of the Hertfordshire Way Long Distance Footpath which is open in places and affords views of woodland.
<p>Perceptual aspects</p> <p><i>This considers qualities such as rurality (traditional land uses with few modern, human influences), sense of remoteness or tranquility. High scenic value, freedom from human activity/ disturbance and 'dark skies' would add to sensitivity in this criterion. This is because development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from a sense of tranquility and or remoteness.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
There is some aural intrusion from the A1(M), although this is experienced at a distance.		The area is removed from existing settlement with very few built features. Woodland blocks help to enclose the area resulting in a tranquil and remote character. There are no major roads passing through the area.
<p>Settlement setting</p> <p><i>The extent to which the landscape area i) contributes to the identity and distinctiveness of a settlement by way of its character and/ or scenic quality, for example by providing an attractive backdrop or setting, or playing an important part in views from a settlement; and ii) relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement and the character of the adjacent settlement edge, including the role of significant landscape elements in either separating an undeveloped area from a settled area or linking it to it.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
There are no substantial settlements on the edge of the area. The small hamlet of Coleman Green on the north-western edge is secluded from the area by vegetation.		

Landscape Character Area 32: Symondshyde Ridge

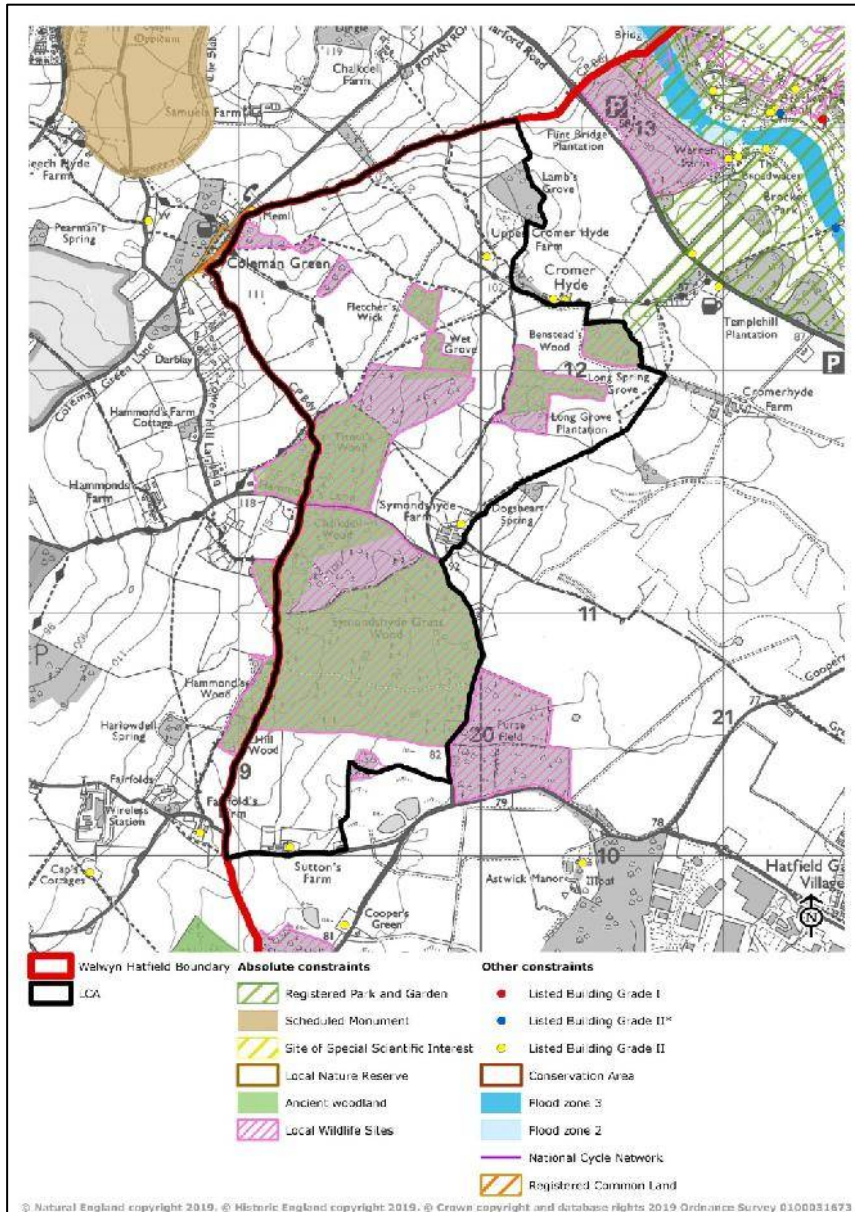
Visual prominence

This considers the visual prominence of the landscape area, reflecting the extent of openness or enclosure in the landscape (due to landform and land cover), and extent to which potential development would be visible. It also considers the skyline character of the area – for instance whether it has features that form a visually distinctive skyline – and any role the landscape area plays in contributing to valued views, such as from promoted viewpoints, routes or recreational areas.

Low	Moderate	High
Woodland encloses many parts of the area and therefore the intervisibility with the local landscape is limited.	Some elevated parts are visible within the local landscape where woodland blocks form features on the skyline.	

Landscape Character Area 32: Symondshyde Ridge

Landscape assessment area (32)



Sensitivity to development (32)

Woodland is a dominant feature within the area, but although this would in places limit the visual impact of new development it also, through isolating areas from the wider landscape, adds to perceptual qualities of remoteness and tranquillity. In other parts the sloping landform with large scale fields makes parts of the area (such as the northwest facing slopes near Coleman Green) visually prominent within the local landscape. The undeveloped nature of the area, tranquil perceptual qualities, high coverage of BAP Priority Habitat deciduous woodlands and the extensive network of public rights of way, result in the area having **moderate-high** sensitivity to residential development.

Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-high	High
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Key sensitivities and mitigation potential (32)

To minimise adverse impacts on landscape and visual character, development proposals should:

- Maintain the wooded ridgeline on the west and east facing slopes.
- Minimise encroachment on the elevated parts of the landscape that are visually prominent (particularly those with limited hedgerow boundaries).
- Preserve the rural and tranquil perceptual qualities.
- Retain areas of BAP Priority Habitat deciduous woodland which also characterise the skyline.
- Maintain the extensive network of public rights of way including the Hertfordshire Way Long Distance Footpath.

Landscape Character Area 32: Symondshyde Ridge
Representative views (32)

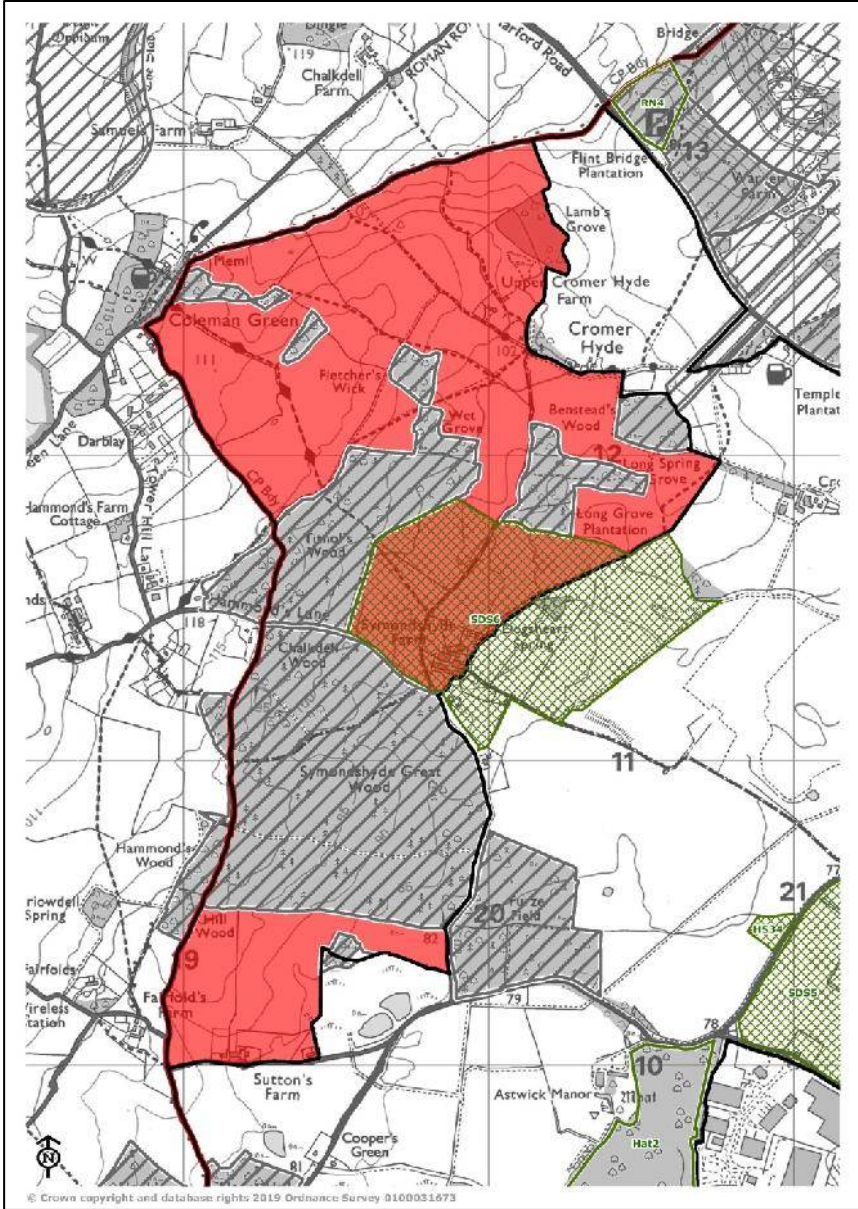


Agricultural fields of large scale














Enclosure provided by mature vegetation

Landscape Character Area 32: Symondshyde Ridge
Sensitivity ratings across assessment area



Sensitivity ratings key

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
|  | Welwyn Hatfield Boundary |  | Sensitivity rating
Low |
|  | Landscape Character Area (LCA) |  | Low-moderate |
|  | LCA Subdivision |  | Moderate |
|  | All absolute constraints |  | Moderate-high |
|  | Promoted Sites |  | High |
|  | Site allocations | | |

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Landscape Character Area 33: Upper Lea Valley

Upper Lea Valley

Location and Landscape Character Summary

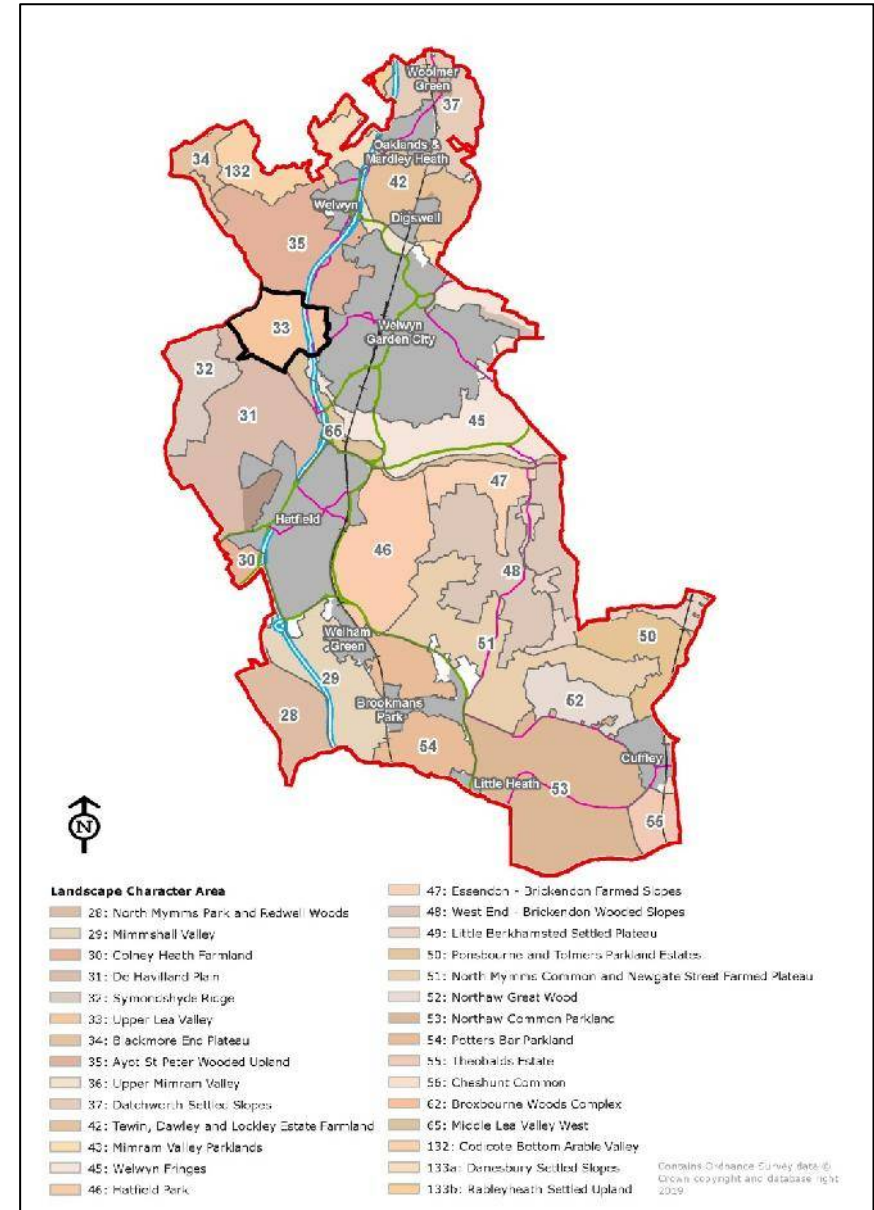
The Upper Lea Valley LCA follows the river valley between Lemsford and Harpenden, a clearly defined landform dominated by arable farmland, woodland and parkland. Most of the LCA lies outside of Welwyn Hatfield but there are two separate segments within the borough: a small linear strip to the southeast of Ayot St Lawrence and a larger area consisting principally of the Bocket Hall parkland to the west of the A1(M) and Welwyn Garden City Golf Club to the east.

Assessment Areas

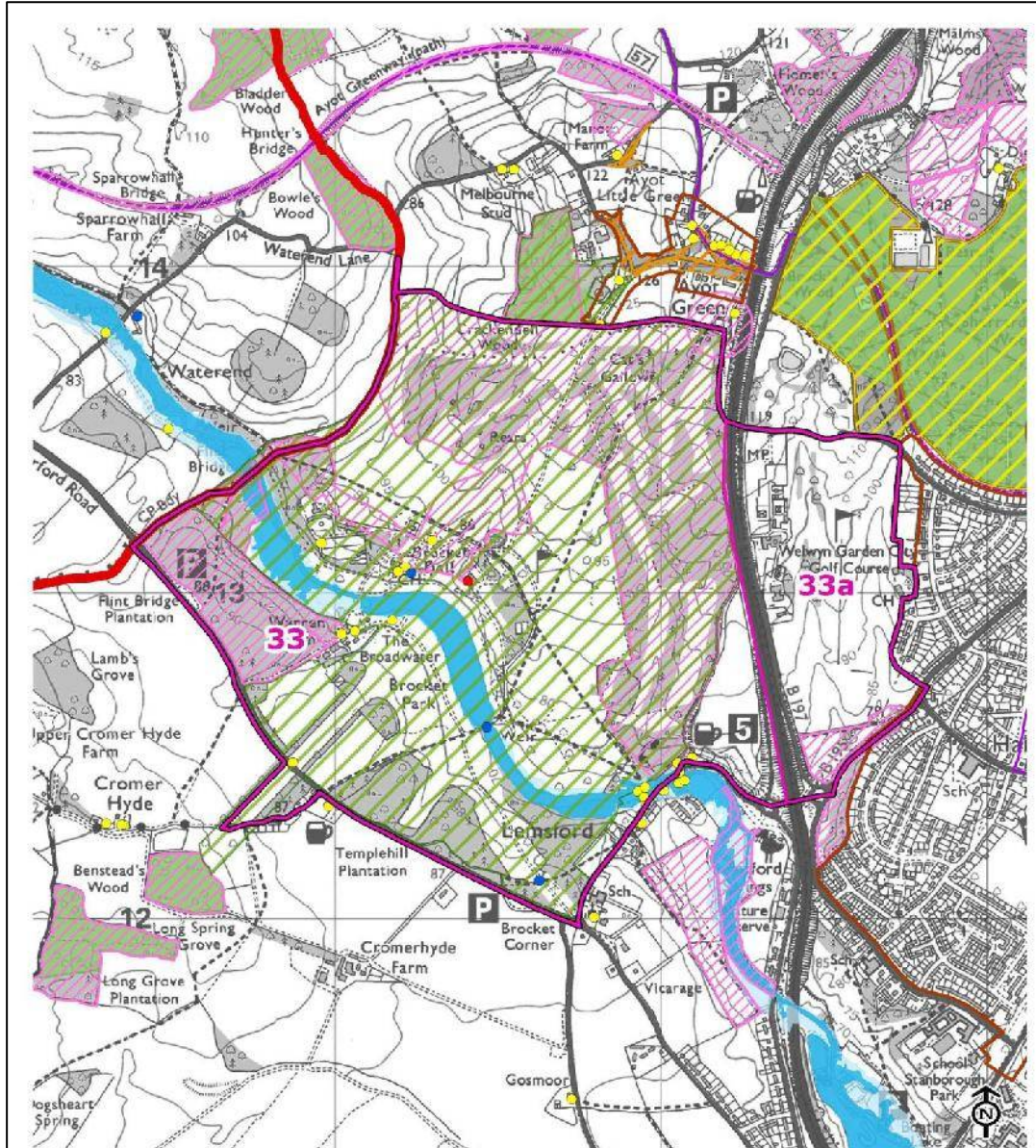
The strip of land near Ayot St Lawrence is assessed alongside the village and its closer environs as LCA 34: the Blackmore End Plateau. Bocket Hall is constrained from development by Registered Park and Garden and Local Wildlife Site designations, and these constraints isolate several fragments of land which are too small to warrant assessment. The area covered by this assessment is therefore limited to the following sub-areas:

- 33 - land to the west of the A1(M)
- 33a – the edge of Welwyn Garden City

LCA 33 consists of a single field along with the northern side of the village of Lemsford, and sub-area 33a contains the majority of the Welwyn Garden City Golf Course.



Landscape Character Area 33: Upper Lea Valley



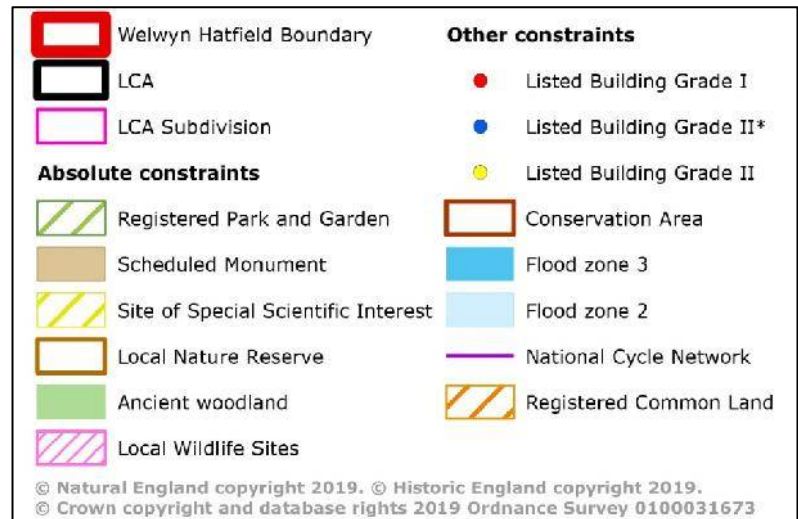
Absolute Constraints and Designations

The following absolute constraints apply to LCA 33:

- The Brocket Park North and Valley Road Open Space Local Wildlife Sites.
- Brocket Hall Grade II listed Registered Parks and Gardens.

Other designations that apply to LCA 33 of relevance to landscape are:

- Listed buildings within the Brocket Hall estate, including the Grade I listed Brocket Hall, the Grade II* listed the Temple Brocket Hall, Gates, Lodges and Screen Wall at south-east entrance to Brocket Hall and Bridge over The Lake at Brocket Hall, and in Lemsford village.



Landscape Character Area 33: Upper Lea Valley

Analysis of Landscape Sensitivity in the Character Area

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Criteria		
Landscape form		
<i>This considers the shape of the landscape. Smooth, gently undulating or flat landforms are likely to be less sensitive to development than a landscape with distinct landform features, such as hills and valleys, as development may mask distinctive topographical features that contribute to landscape character.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
	Undulating landform with narrow north-south valleys at Welwyn Garden City Golf Course incised into a slope ranging in elevation from 80m AOD in the south to 115m AOD in the north.	A sharp slope separates Lemsford from the more gently sloping field to the north of the village.
Landscape pattern and time depth		
<i>This considers the field pattern and historic origin of the landscape area. Landscapes with more irregular field patterns, particularly those of historic origin, are likely to more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than landscape with regular scale field patterns because of the risk of losing characteristic landscape patterns.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
	Welwyn Garden City Golf Course has parkland characteristics and there is an area of allotments south of Brockswood Lane.	
'Natural' character		
<i>This considers the 'naturalistic' qualities of the landscape area in terms of the coverage of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features (e.g. trees and hedgerows) which contribute to landscape character and could be vulnerable to loss from development. Areas with frequent natural features (including large areas of designated habitats) result in increased sensitivity to development, while landscape with limited natural features will be less sensitive.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
	At Welwyn Garden City Golf Course there are frequent planted parkland trees.	There are small areas of BAP Priority Habitat deciduous woodlands on sloping ground at the edge of Lemsford and in Welwyn Garden City Golf Course. There is also a small area of BAP Priority Habitat traditional orchard at Lemsford.
Built character		
<i>This considers the built character of the landscape area with particular reference to the presence of heritage assets that contribute to landscape character (i.e. valued features that may be designated as Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, archaeological features or remains or other features). Landscapes with a high density of historic features important to the character of the area are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than areas where such development already exists.</i>		

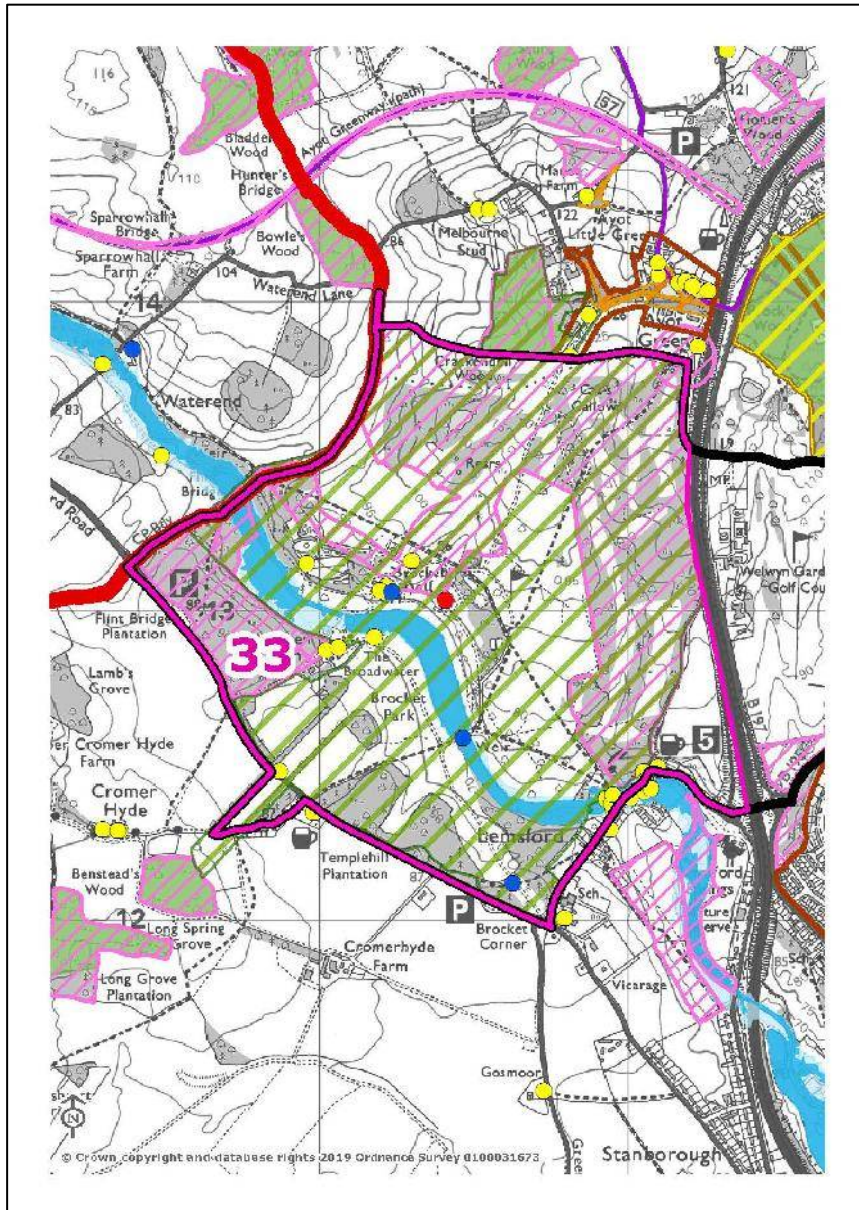
Landscape Character Area 33: Upper Lea Valley

Low	Moderate	High
Some larger buildings including a plant nursery and care homes are located alongside the B197 (which runs immediately parallel to the A1(M)).		Lemsford contains a high concentration of Grade II listed buildings in a riverside setting. Brocket Hall is Grade I listed, and there are a number of other listed buildings within the historic parkland, but these are well-contained from the unconstrained parts of the assessment area.
<p>Recreational value</p> <p><i>This criterion considers the presence of features and facilities which enable enjoyment of the landscape, and the importance of these. This may include public rights of way, bridleways, open access land and outdoor tourist/ visitor attractions with facilities. Recreation activities such as walking, cycling, horse riding or more formal recreation activities where enjoyment of the landscape is important to the experience. Importance of features may be indicated by designation such as long distance footpaths or recreation routes, national cycle routes, proximity to areas of local population (such as local parks) and outdoor tourist attractions often marked on Ordinance Survey maps.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
There are no public rights of way in the assessment area. Welwyn Garden City Golf Course has access for club members only.	There are rights of way from Lemsford into Brocket Park, linking through to Ayot Green to the north, and along the River Lea towards Wheathampstead.	
<p>Perceptual aspects</p> <p><i>This considers qualities such as rurality (traditional land uses with few modern, human influences), sense of remoteness or tranquility. High scenic value, freedom from human activity/ disturbance and 'dark skies' would add to sensitivity in this criterion. This is because development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from a sense of tranquility and or remoteness.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
The A1(M), B197 and Brockwood Lane all produce traffic noise that detract from the perceptual qualities of the assessment area.		
<p>Settlement setting</p> <p><i>The extent to which the landscape area i) contributes to the identity and distinctiveness of a settlement by way of its character and/ or scenic quality, for example by providing an attractive backdrop or setting, or playing an important part in views from a settlement; and ii) relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement and the character of the adjacent settlement edge, including the role of significant landscape elements in either separating an undeveloped area from a settled area or linking it to it.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
Tree cover limits intervisibility between the golf course and the edge of Welwyn Garden City.		Trees and sloping higher ground form a containing backdrop to the northern edge of Lemsford, alongside the Brocket Hall parkland.

Landscape Character Area 33: Upper Lea Valley

Visual prominence		
<i>This considers the visual prominence of the landscape area, reflecting the extent of openness or enclosure in the landscape (due to landform and land cover), and extent to which potential development would be visible. It also considers the skyline character of the area – for instance whether it has features that form a visually distinctive skyline – and any role the landscape area plays in contributing to valued views, such as from promoted viewpoints, routes or recreational areas.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
The golf course is well enclosed by surrounding mature tree cover.	The sloping field to the west of the A1(M) is more visually prominent from the south but otherwise contained by the main road and a belt of trees.	

Landscape Character Area 33: Upper Lea Valley
Landscape assessment area (33)



Sensitivity to development to the west of the A1(M) (33)

Lemsford retains a historic character, with many listed buildings within the LCA, and has a distinct riverside setting alongside the Brocket Hall parkland. There is little open space within the LCA on the north side of the road through Lemsford, so sensitivity to residential development is **moderate-high**. The same rating applies to the field to the north which, although contained and affected by traffic noise from the A1(M), is visually prominent from the south with a strong distinction from Lemsford, for which it forms a backdrop.

Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
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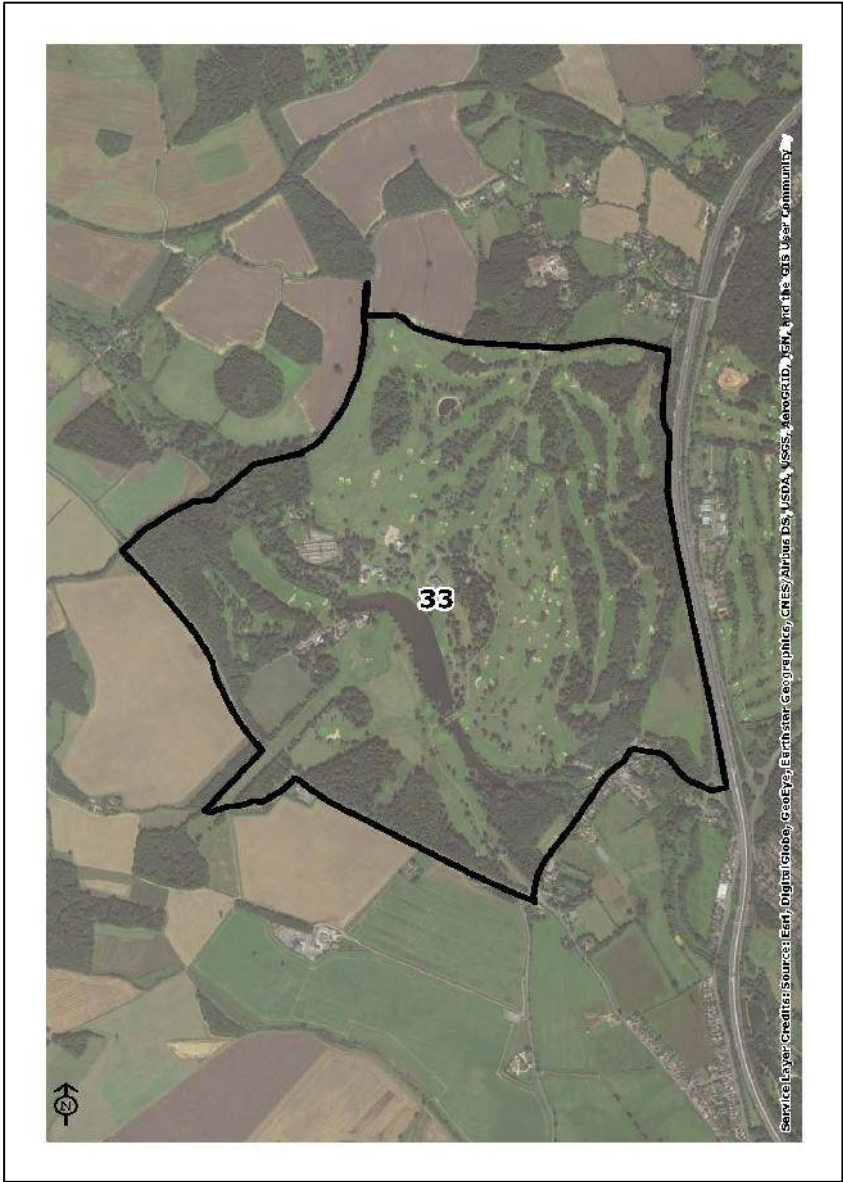
* Rating variations are mapped on the last page of the LCA 33 assessment

Key sensitivities and mitigation potential to the west of the A1(M) (33)

To minimise adverse impact on landscape and visual character, development proposals should

- Ensure development is not placed on landform with visual prominence.
- Conserve important ecological resources including BAP Priority Habitats and mature tree hedgerows.
- Ensure development does not detract from the historic character of Lemsford or Brocket Hall parkland.

**Landscape Character Area 33: Upper Lea Valley
Representative views (33)**

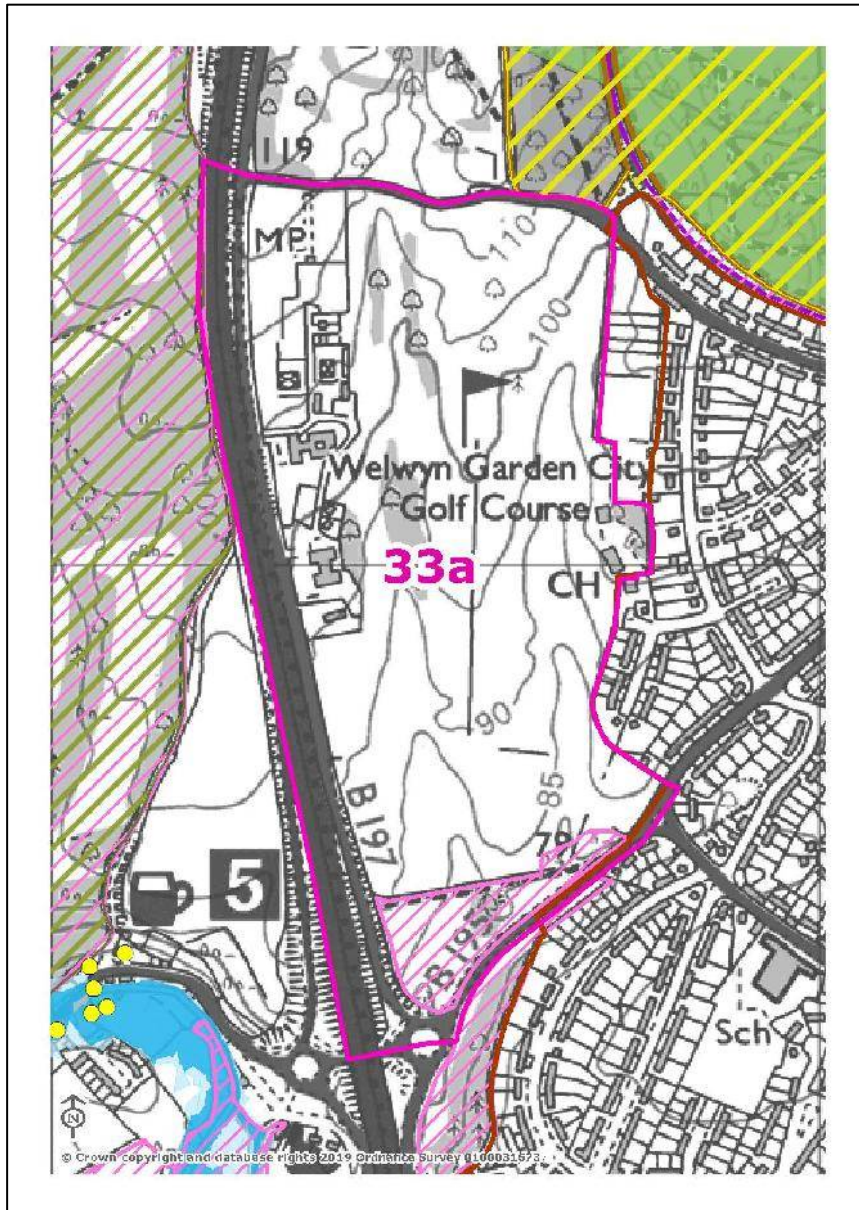


The mill in Lemsford (used as commercial office space).



Looking north past the Long Arm Short Arm pub in Lemsford towards the field alongside the A1(M).

Landscape Character Area 33: Upper Lea Valley
Landscape assessment area (33a)



Sensitivity to development on the edge of Welwyn Garden City (33a)

Although it is largely contained visually from the urban edge the golf course is likewise separated from the wider countryside by the A1(M), B197 and some adjacent development. There is some sensitivity associated with the undulating landform and parkland-style tree cover, but rural character and public access are limited.

Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
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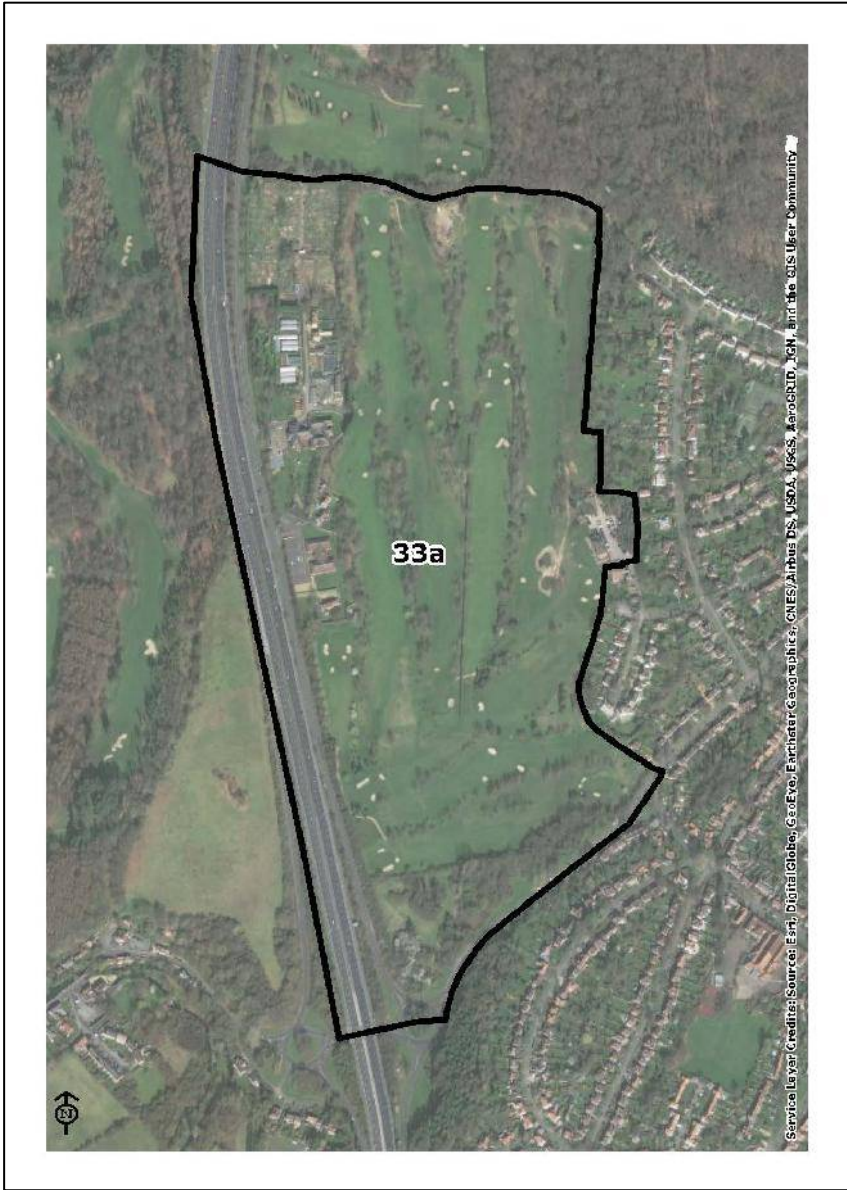
* Rating variations are mapped on the last page of the LCA 33 assessment

Key sensitivities and mitigation potential on the edge of Welwyn Garden City (33a)

To minimise adverse impact on landscape and visual character, development proposals should:

- Seek to retain parkland character.
- Conserve important ecological resources including BAP Priority Habitat and mature tree hedgerows.

**Landscape Character Area 33: Upper Lea Valley
Representative views (33a)**

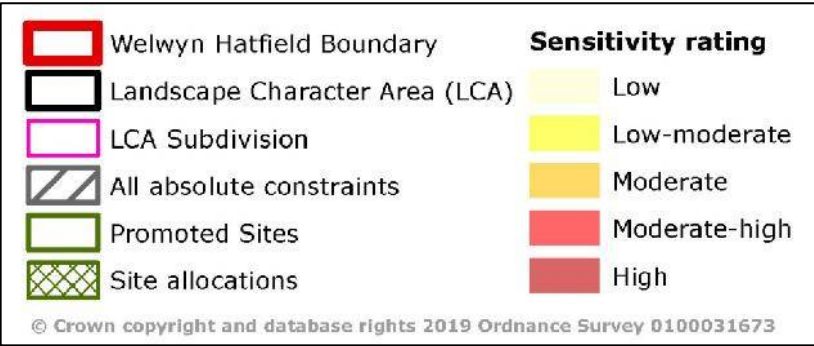
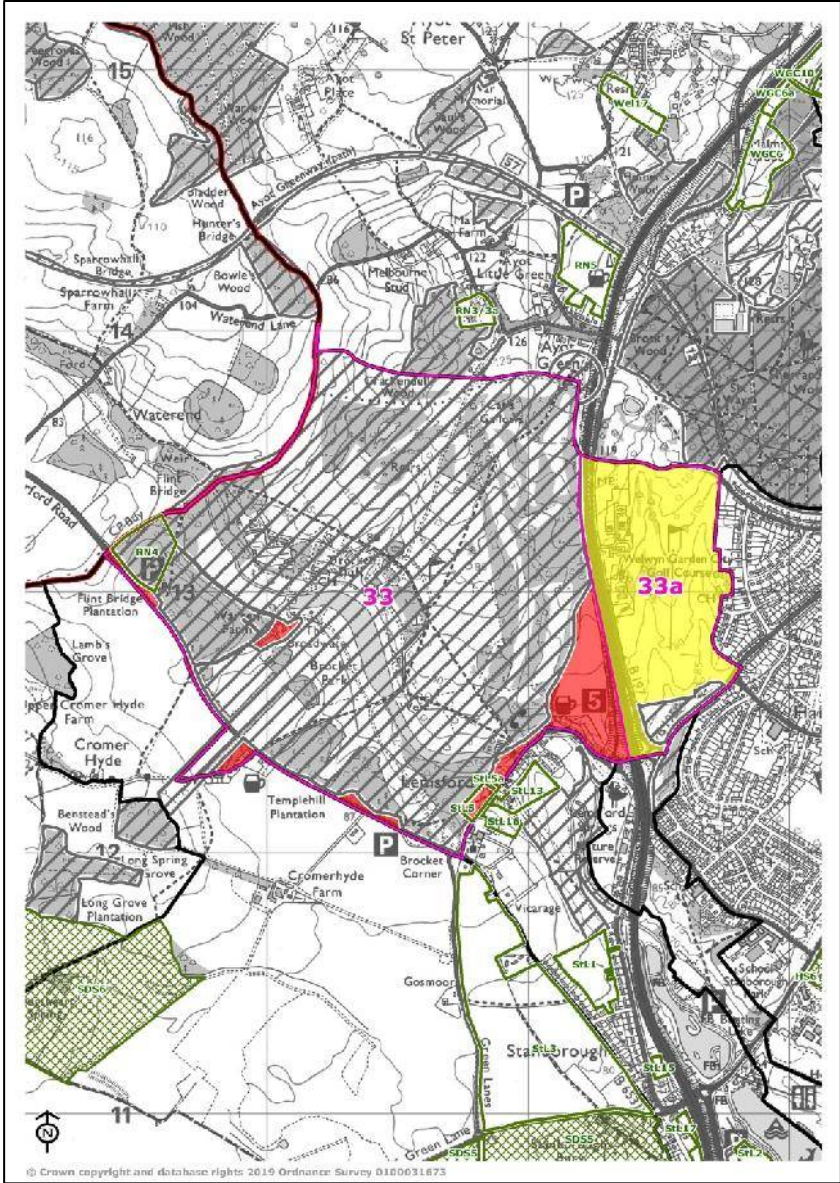


Looking south across the golf course from Brockswood Lane.



Care home alongside the B197 Great North Road.

Landscape Character Area 33: Upper Lea Valley
Sensitivity ratings across assessment area



Landscape Character Area 34: Blackmore End Plateau

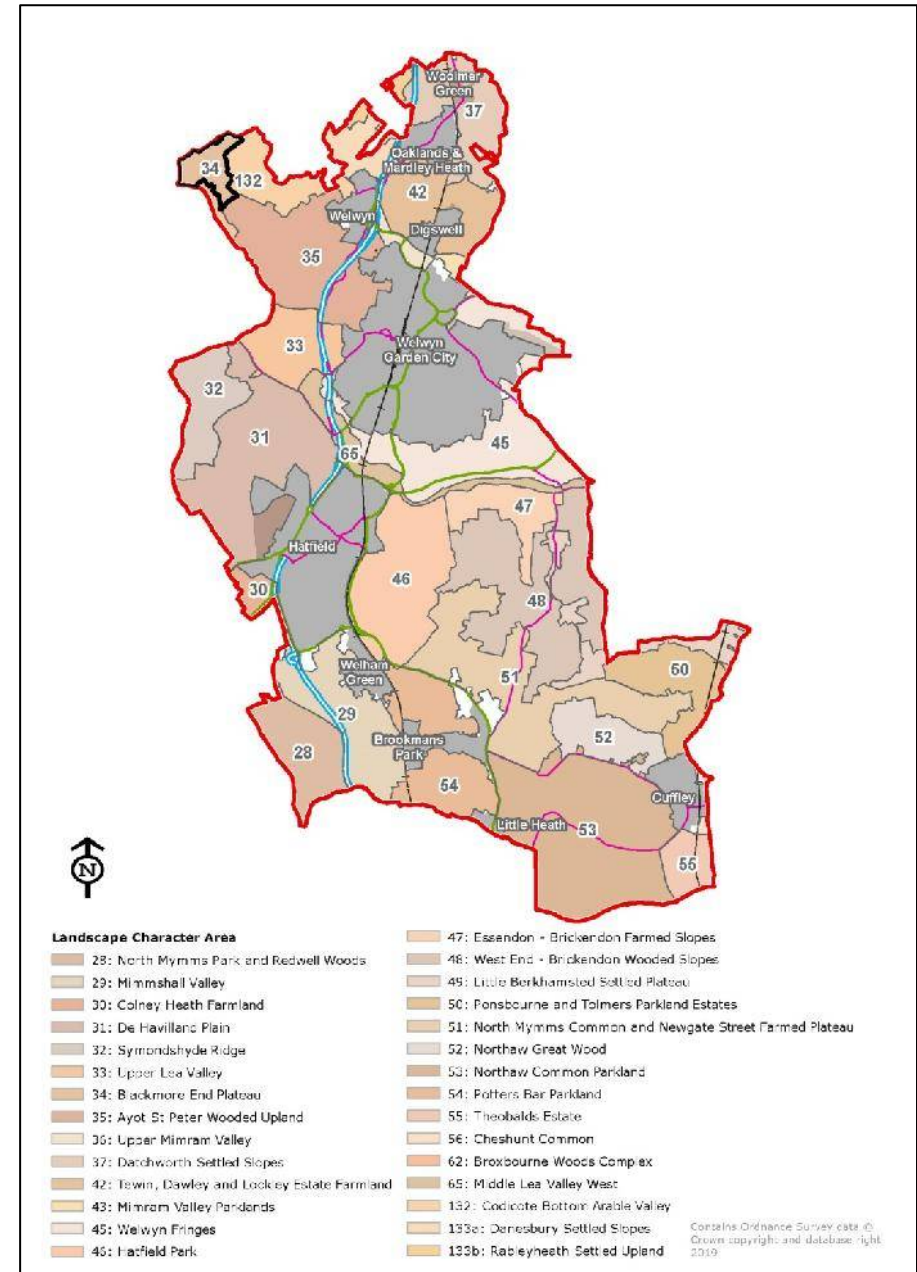
Blackmore End Plateau

Location and Landscape Character Summary

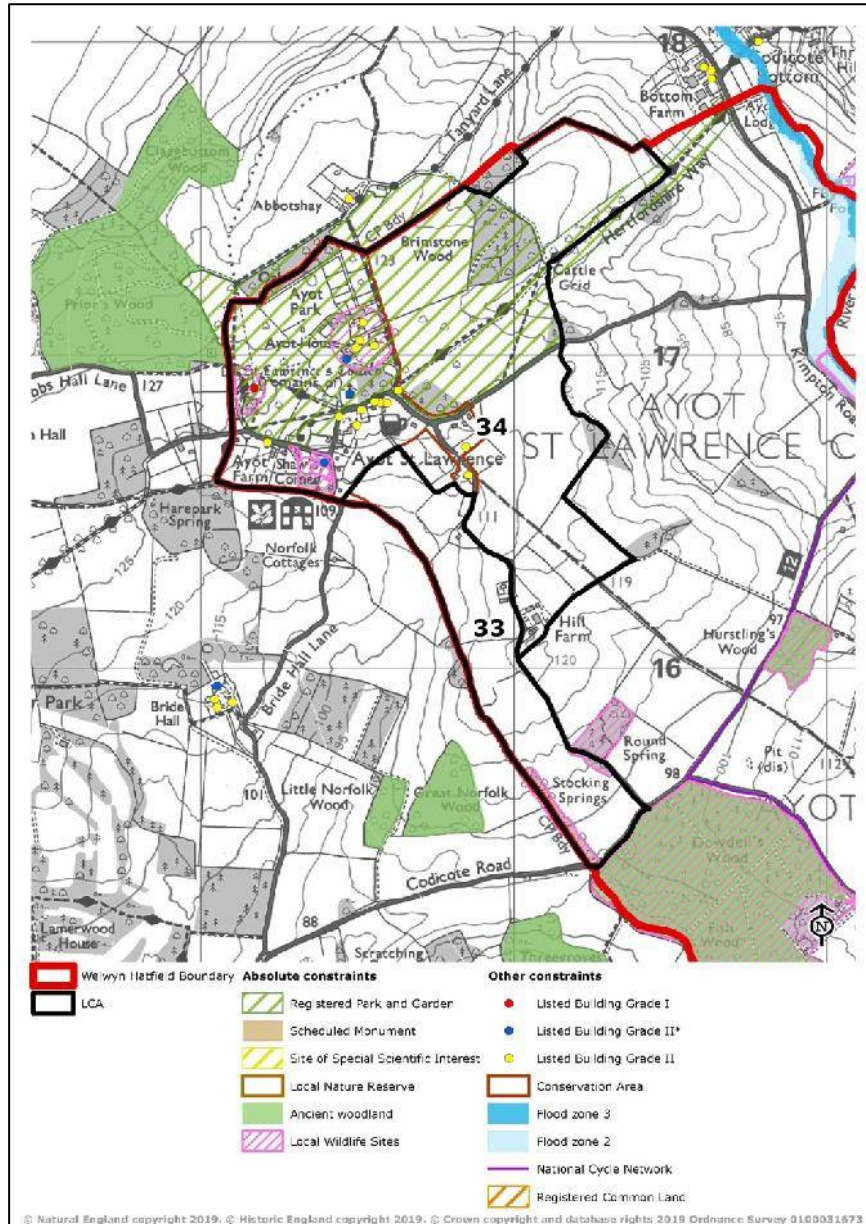
The area is located in the north-west of the borough, and Welwyn lies to the east. The area encompasses all of the Blackmore End Plateau within Welwyn Hatfield, and an isolated sliver of the Upper Lea Valley (LCA 33) between Dowdell's Wood and Ayot St Lawrence. The north and western boundaries are formed by the borough boundary, and the southern and eastern by tracks and field boundaries. The area comprises an elevated plateau landform, much of it occupied by Ayot Park (a Registered Park and Garden) and with some extensive arable fields. The village of Ayot St Lawrence and the adjoining Ayot Park contain a number of notable historic houses.

Assessment Areas

There is no urban development in the vicinity so assessment area has not been subdivided.



Landscape Character Area 34: Blackmore End Plateau



Absolute Constraints and Designations

The following absolute constraints apply to LCA 34:

- Ayot House Registered Park and Garden (Grade II).
- Local Wildlife Sites at Ayot St Lawrence Churchyard, Ayot Barns Area, Shaw's Corner, Round Spring, and Stocking Springs Wood.

Other designations of relevance to landscape that apply to LCA 34 are:

- Listed Buildings including the Grade I listed New St Lawrence Church.
- Ayot St Lawrence Conservation Area.
- Hertfordshire Way recreational route.

Landscape Character Area 34: Blackmore End Plateau

Analysis of Landscape Sensitivity in the Character Area

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Criteria		
<p>Landform</p> <p><i>This considers the shape of the landscape. Smooth, gently undulating or flat landforms are likely to be less sensitive to development than a landscape with distinct landform features, such as hills and valleys, as development may mask distinctive topographical features that contribute to landscape character.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
The area is an elevated plateau area, mostly with very gentle undulation.		
<p>Landscape pattern and time depth</p> <p><i>This considers the field pattern and historic origin of the landscape area. Landscapes with more irregular field patterns, particularly those of historic origin, are likely to more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than landscape with regular scale field patterns because of the risk of losing characteristic landscape patterns.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
	The historic field pattern comprised pre-18 th century organic enclosure has been partially retained, although there has been some field amalgamation in the 20 th and 21 st centuries. Fields are typically large and irregular, interspersed with some small woodland blocks. There are some retained hedgerows.	The Grade II listed Ayot Park Registered Park and Garden covers the area north of Ayot St Lawrence. There are high levels of intervisibility between the assessment area and this Registered Park and Gardens.
<p>'Natural' character</p> <p><i>This considers the 'naturalistic' qualities of the landscape area in terms of the coverage of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features (e.g. trees and hedgerows) which contribute to landscape character and could be vulnerable to loss from development. Areas with frequent natural features (including large areas of designated habitats) result in increased sensitivity to development, while landscape with limited natural features will be less sensitive.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
	The small woodland blocks throughout the area comprise priority habitat deciduous woodland, which are designated as Local Wildlife Sites. Roadside hedgerows and hedgerow boundaries are common.	
<p>Built character</p> <p><i>This considers the built character of the landscape area with particular reference to the presence of heritage assets that contribute to landscape character (i.e. valued features that may be designated as Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, archaeological features or remains or other features). Landscapes with a high density of historic features important to the character of the area are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than areas where such development already exists.</i></p>		

Landscape Character Area 34: Blackmore End Plateau

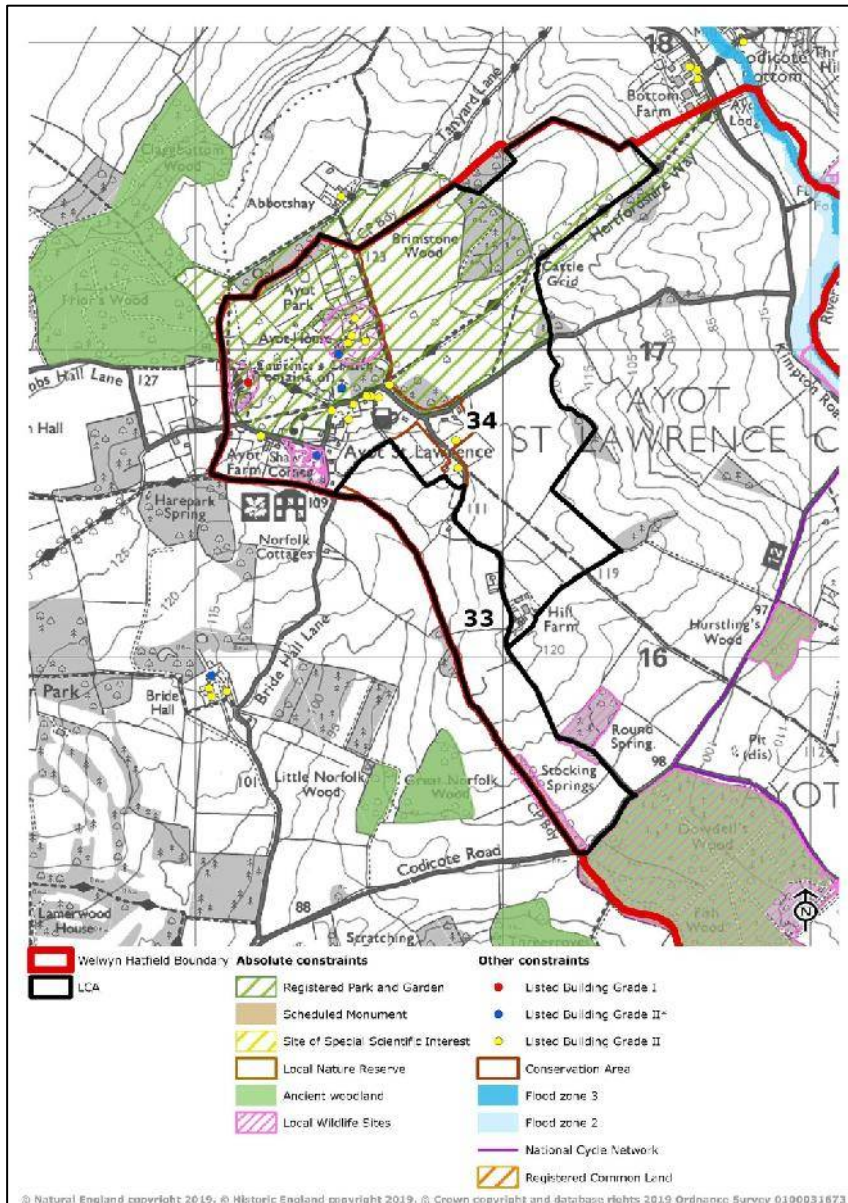
Low	Moderate	High
	There are a few isolated farms in the area, but away from Ayot St Lawrence it is largely unsettled.	Outside of the constrained area, the village of Ayot St Lawrence contains a number of Grade II listed buildings, in a variety of vernacular types including timber frame and red brick. All of the village is protected by a Conservation Area designation.
Recreational value		
<i>This criterion considers the presence of features and facilities which enable enjoyment of the landscape, and the importance of these. This may include public rights of way, bridleways, open access land and outdoor tourist/ visitor attractions with facilities. Recreation activities such as walking, cycling, horse riding or more formal recreation activities where enjoyment of the landscape is important to the experience. Importance of features may be indicated by designation such as long distance footpaths or recreation routes, national cycle routes, proximity to areas of local population (such as local parks) and outdoor tourist attractions often marked on Ordinance Survey maps.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
There is no access to the Upper Lea Valley west of Hill Farm Lane.	There are several footpaths through the area, including the recreational route the Hertfordshire Way. These led between Ayot St Lawrence (including the popular National Trust Shaw's Corner) out to Gustard Wood Common to the west.	
Perceptual aspects		
<i>This considers qualities such as rurality (traditional land uses with few modern, human influences), sense of remoteness or tranquillity. High scenic value, freedom from human activity/ disturbance and 'dark skies' would add to sensitivity in this criterion. This is because development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from a sense of tranquillity and or remoteness.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
		There is a strong sense of rural character within the area, including the cohesive historic village of Ayot St Lawrence. There are very few modern detractors within the area, this lack of visual or audible disturbance contributes to a tranquil and peaceful landscape character.
Settlement setting		
<i>The extent to which the landscape area i) contributes to the identity and distinctiveness of a settlement by way of its character and/ or scenic quality, for example by providing an attractive backdrop or setting, or playing an important part in views from a settlement; and ii) relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement and the character of the adjacent settlement edge, including the role of significant landscape elements in either separating an undeveloped area from a settled area or linking it to it.</i>		

Landscape Character Area 34: Blackmore End Plateau

Low	Moderate	High
The area lacks any relationship with Welwyn due to its plateau character and woodland and hedgerows providing enclosure.		The area provides a rural setting to Ayot St Lawrence, which contributes to its historic character.
<p>Visual prominence</p> <p><i>This considers the visual prominence of the landscape area, reflecting the extent of openness or enclosure in the landscape (due to landform and land cover), and extent to which potential development would be visible. It also considers the skyline character of the area – for instance whether it has features that form a visually distinctive skyline – and any role the landscape area plays in contributing to valued views, such as from promoted viewpoints, routes or recreational areas.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
There is no inter-visibility with promoted viewpoints or recreational routes.	The plateau is locally visible, however the vegetation and elevated landform result in an area which is not distinctive in longer views.	The south and western facing slopes to the west of Hill Farm Lane have localised visual prominence due to their landform and relatively open character, and the eastern fringe of the LCA is prominent in views across the valley of the River Mimram.

Landscape Character Area 34: Blackmore End Plateau

Landscape assessment area (34)



Sensitivity to development (34)

The area is largely set on an elevated plateau, with some enclosure from woodland blocks and strong hedgerows and roadside vegetation, but it has a strong rural character. The cohesive historic village of Ayot St Lawrence would be sensitive to any development, and the openness and rurality of the surrounding countryside is important in preserving its character. These factors result in **moderate-high** sensitivity to residential development in more visually contained areas, with higher sensitivity in the more open areas on the plateau fringes.

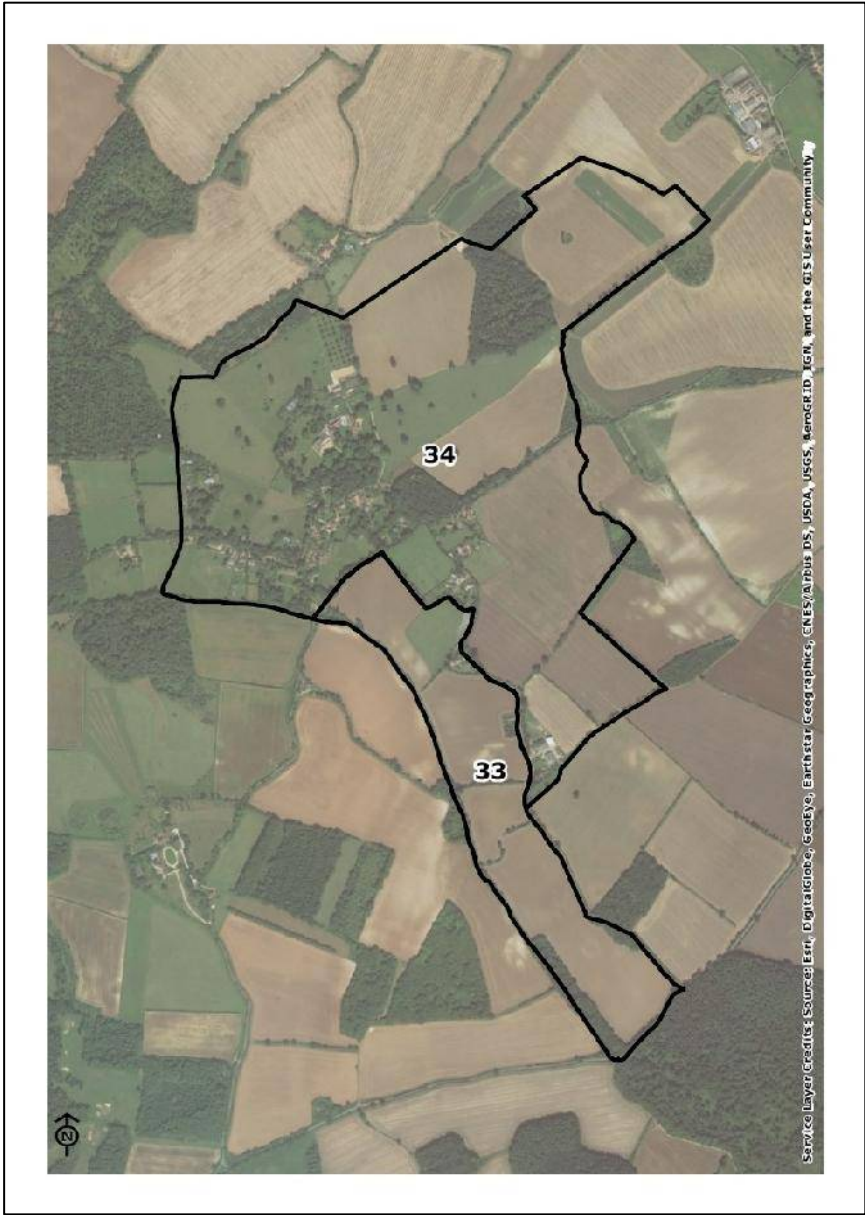
Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
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Key sensitivities and mitigation potential (34)

To minimise adverse impact on landscape and visual character, development proposals should:

- Preserve the character of the historic village of Ayot St Lawrence (a Conservation Area).
- Preserve and enhance the hedgerow boundaries within fields, and hedgerows along rural lanes.
- Minimise impact on the more open areas on the plateau fringes which are subject to wider view.

Landscape Character Area 34: Blackmore End Plateau
Representative views (34)



View to the northwest from Hill Farm Lane, looking across the open sloping arable fields with mature tree hedgerows.



View southeast from the footpath travelling southeast from the north of Hill Farm Lane at Ayot St Lawrence.

Landscape Character Area 35: Ayot St Peter Wooded Upland

Ayot St Peter Wooded Upland

Location and Landscape Character Summary

The area is located to the south of the River Mimram, the south-west of Welwyn and to the north-west of Welwyn Garden City, with both settlements forming the eastern boundary. All other boundaries are defined by rural lanes or field boundaries. The area comprises an elevated plateau landform with the inclusion of valley slopes, and a high proportion of woodland enclosing historic villages, arable fields and parkland. The A1(M) crosses the eastern part of the area.

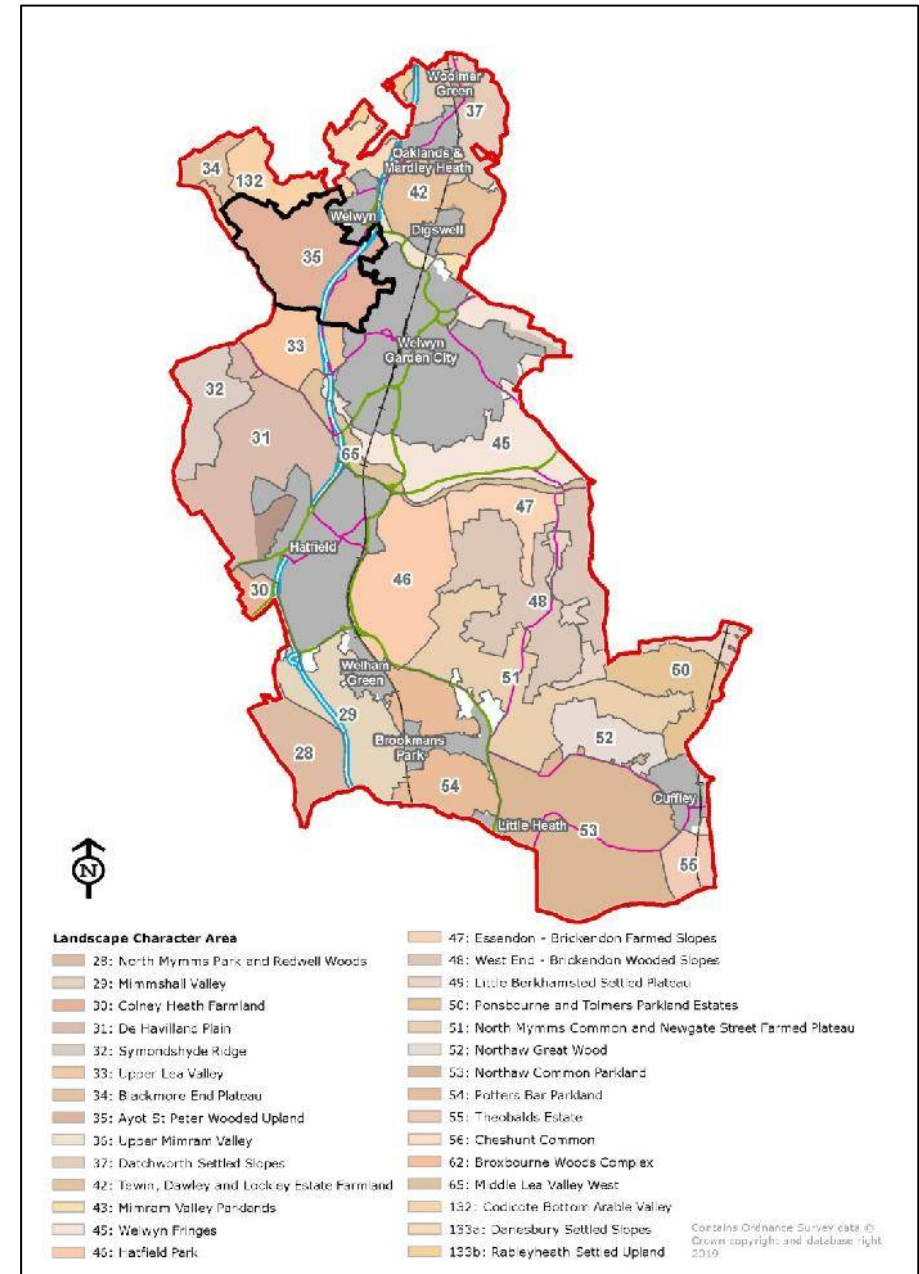
Assessment Areas

The assessment area has been divided into the following sub-areas:

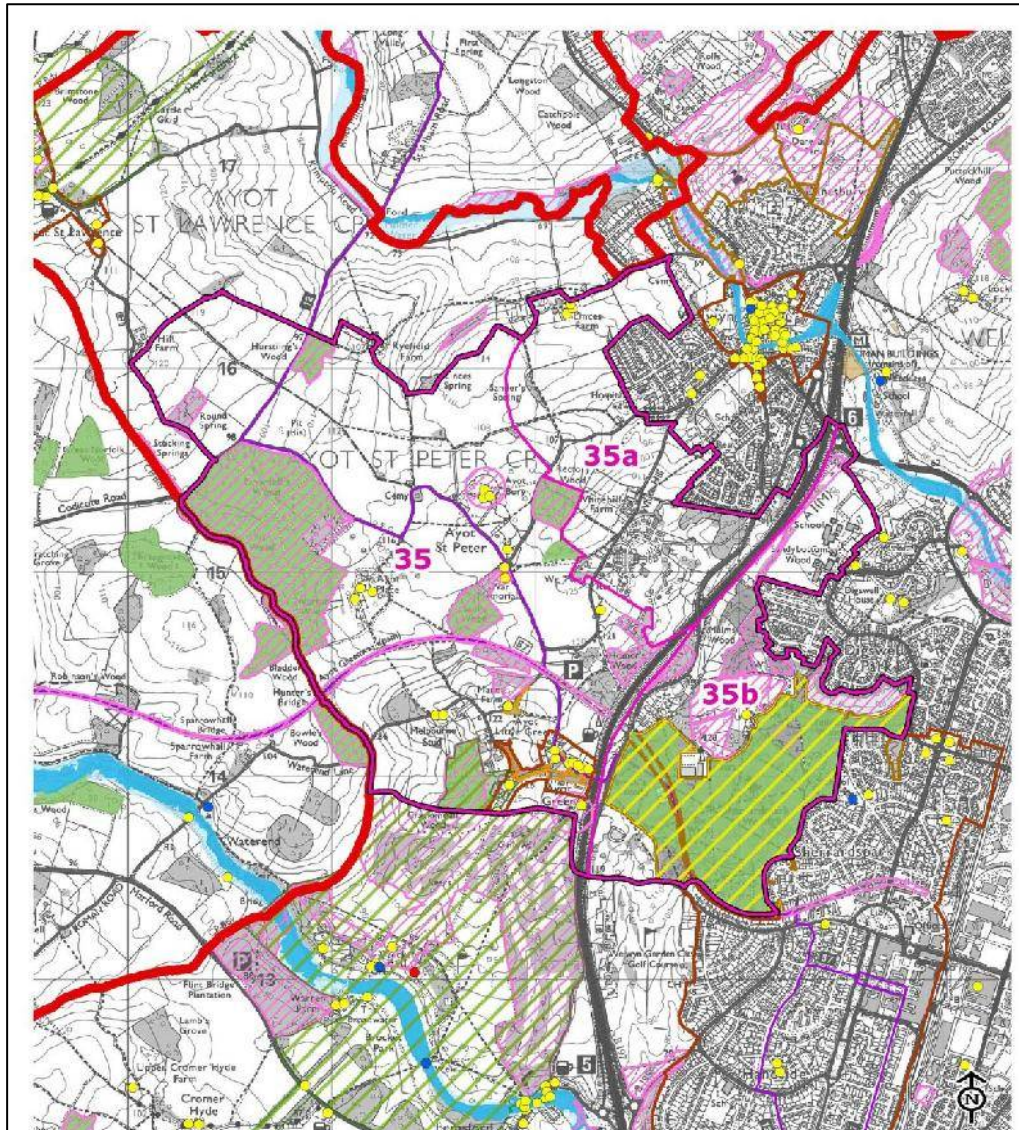
- LCA 35 away from main settlement edges
- Settlement edge of Welwyn (35a)
- Settlement edge of Welwyn Garden City (35b)

The settlement edge of Welwyn has been identified on the basis of topography, where rising slopes and woodland blocks mark the limit of intervisibility between the village and the adjacent LCA.

The settlement edge of Welwyn Garden City has been defined by the A1(M) which, with associated tree cover, forms a physical and visual barrier that splits the LCA.



Landscape Character Area 35: Ayot St Peter Wooded Upland



Absolute Constraints and Designations

The following absolute constraints apply to LCA 35:

- Sherrardspark SSSI and Local Nature Reserve
- Ancient woodland at Sherrardspark Wood, Dowdells / Warren Woods, Rectory Wood, Gregg's Wood, Sauls Wood, Hurstlings Wood, Threegroves Wood, Bowle's Wood and Crackendell Wood (most are also Local Wildlife Sites)
- Local Wildlife Sites at Round Spring, Ayot Bury, the Ayot Greenway, Long Spring, Mitchell's Wood, Homer's Wood, Malm's Wood, Pasture south of Malm's Wood, Sandybottom Wood, Temple Wood Vale Open Space, Digswell Place Meadow, Digswell Place Park and Wagon and Horses Pond (Ayot Green)
- The northern tip of the Brocket Hall Registered Park and Garden (Grade II)

Other designations of relevance to landscape that apply to LCA 35 are:

- Listed building of Grade's II and II*
- Ayot Green Conservation Area
- National Cycle Route's 12 and 57
- Open Access land at Ayot Green



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Landscape Character Area 35: Ayot St Peter Wooded Upland

Analysis of Landscape Sensitivity in the Character Area

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Criteria		
Landform		
<i>This considers the shape of the landscape. Smooth, gently undulating or flat landforms are likely to be less sensitive to development than a landscape with distinct landform features, such as hills and valleys, as development may mask distinctive topographical features that contribute to landscape character.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
An elevated plateau area with very gentle undulation.	The topography is typically steeper around the edges of the area, ascending from the boundaries towards the plateaued center. More pronounced landform in the north, where valley slopes to the River Mimram have been formed. Greater complexity around Ayot Green and Sherrardspark Wood in the south and south-east, forming the upper valley slopes to the River Lea.	
Landscape pattern and time depth		
<i>This considers the field pattern and historic origin of the landscape area. Landscapes with more irregular field patterns, particularly those of historic origin, are likely to more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than landscape with regular scale field patterns because of the risk of losing characteristic landscape patterns.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
	Historic field pattern that comprised informal parkland, pre-18 th century organic enclosure and parliamentary enclosure, has been partially retained, with parklands at Ayot Bury and Ayot Montfitchet, medium sized fields on the plateau and smaller pastoral fields close to and within villages. The area contains a mix of regular and irregular fields, often separated by blocks of woodland / copse with some hedgerow division present.	A small part of the Brocket Hall Registered Park and Garden (Grade II) extends into the southern part of the area.
'Natural' character		
<i>This considers the 'naturalistic' qualities of the landscape area in terms of the coverage of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features (e.g. trees and hedgerows) which contribute to landscape character and could be vulnerable to loss from development. Areas with frequent natural features (including large areas of designated habitats) result in increased sensitivity to development, while landscape with limited natural features will be less sensitive.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
Many arable and pastoral fields lack hedgerow boundaries.	Roadside hedgerows are commonplace, and the Ayot Greenway has well-vegetated hedgerows.	The area contains frequent blocks of priority habitat deciduous woodland, many of which are semi-natural ancient woodland. (Sherrardspark Wood in the south-east and Dowdells / Warren Woods in the west are the most notable).

Landscape Character Area 35: Ayot St Peter Wooded Upland

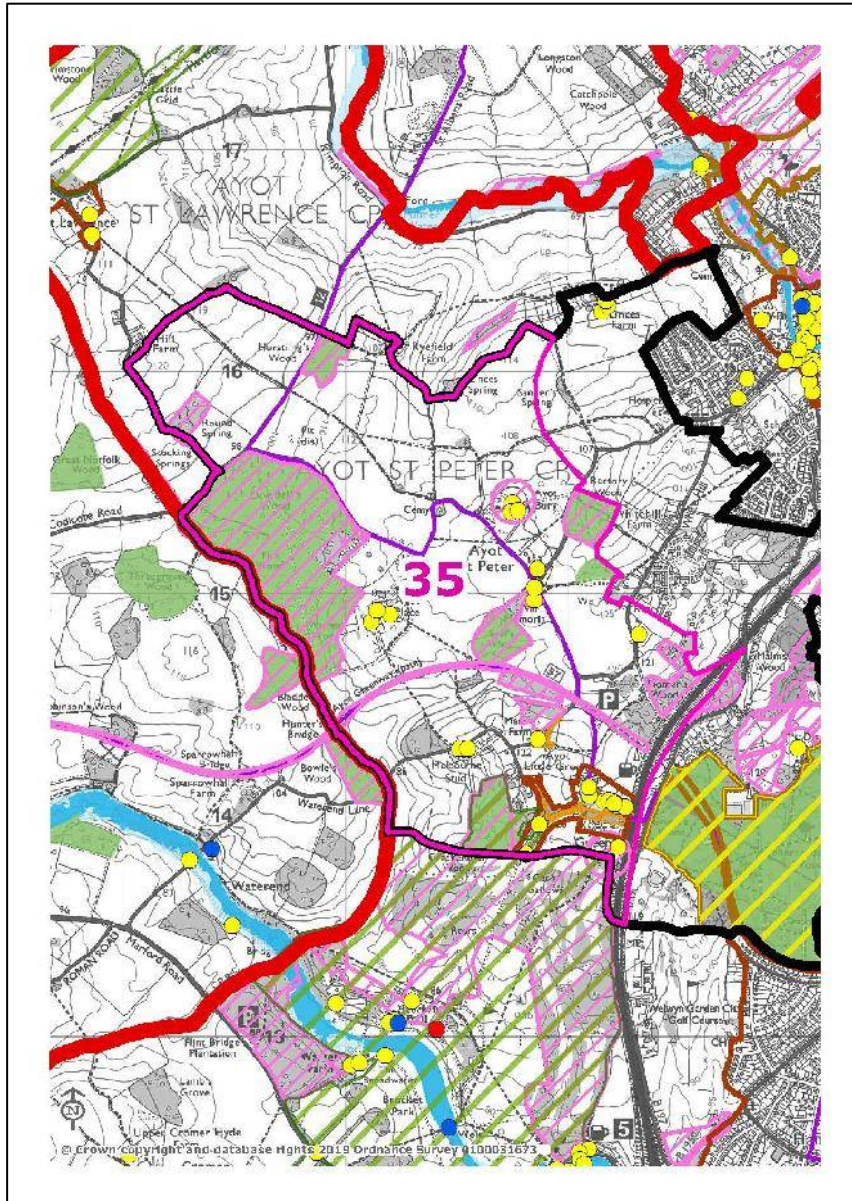
Built character		
<p><i>This considers the built character of the landscape area with particular reference to the presence of heritage assets that contribute to landscape character (i.e. valued features that may be designated as Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, archaeological features or remains or other features). Landscapes with a high density of historic features important to the character of the area are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than areas where such development already exists.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
<p>Modern buildings within the LCA at Knightsfield and Monks Walk schools on the edge of Welwyn Garden City detract from local landscape character.</p> <p>Modern 21st Century housing associated with the Wilshere Park development is detached from the settlement edge of Welwyn but has limited impact on the wider landscape due to screening tree cover. Similarly the sports facilities and associated buildings at Welwyn Tennis Club have a localised impact but are largely contained by vegetation.</p>	<p>The majority of the area is undeveloped with only small clusters of cottages, country houses and farmhouses in traditional vernacular materials.</p>	<p>There are historic houses at Ayot Montfitchet and Ayot Bury, associated with private parklands. Grade II listed buildings are located within the south-eastern part of the area, notably within the villages of Ayot Green, designated as a Conservation Area and set around a traditional village green, as well as within Ayot St Peter which includes Ayot St Peter's church.</p>
Recreational value		
<p><i>This criterion considers the presence of features and facilities which enable enjoyment of the landscape, and the importance of these. This may include public rights of way, bridleways, open access land and outdoor tourist/ visitor attractions with facilities. Recreation activities such as walking, cycling, horse riding or more formal recreation activities where enjoyment of the landscape is important to the experience. Importance of features may be indicated by designation such as long distance footpaths or recreation routes, national cycle routes, proximity to areas of local population (such as local parks) and outdoor tourist attractions often marked on Ordinance Survey maps.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
	<p>Public access is well provisioned in the area. An extensive network of local public rights of way exist, connecting villages to Welwyn and Welwyn Garden City. A national cycle path runs along the disused Ayot Greenway railway line.</p>	<p>The village of Ayot Green contains a notable village green containing veteran oak and chestnut trees and is designated open access land.</p>
Perceptual aspects		
<p><i>This considers qualities such as rurality (traditional land uses with few modern, human influences), sense of remoteness or tranquillity. High scenic value, freedom from human activity/ disturbance and 'dark skies' would add to sensitivity in this criterion. This is because development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from a sense of tranquillity and or remoteness.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
<p>Tranquillity is reduced within the eastern part of the area where it is crossed by the A1(M); the road is cut into the landscape and largely screened by trees but is a source of aural intrusion. The school fields between the A1(M) and Welwyn - the edge of which is blurred by the presence of school buildings beyond the defined settlement edge - have weaker perceptual qualities than most of the LCA</p>	<p>The sloping ground along the edge of Welwyn, offering views beyond the settlement, and localised tree cover within the landscape (including some prominent small blocks on the urban edge), provide a degree of separation which limits urbanising impact.</p> <p>Despite proximity to the A1(M), the small unconstrained areas around Sherrardspark Wood, including the northern end of Welwyn Garden City Golf Course, retain</p>	<p>There is a strong sense of rural character within the undeveloped western part of the area, with woodlands visually enclosing the plateau area.</p>

Landscape Character Area 35: Ayot St Peter Wooded Upland

	rural character due to the influence of the woodland.	
Settlement setting		
<i>The extent to which the landscape area i) contributes to the identity and distinctiveness of a settlement by way of its character and/ or scenic quality, for example by providing an attractive backdrop or setting, or playing an important part in views from a settlement; and ii) relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement and the character of the adjacent settlement edge, including the role of significant landscape elements in either separating an undeveloped area from a settled area or linking it to it.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
<p>Most the the LCA lacks relationship with the urban areas on its northern and eastern fringes, due to its plateau character and, in relation to Welwyn, the extent of tree cover at Sherrardspark Wood and alongside the A1(M).</p> <p>The schools and their grounds on the edge of Welwyn Garden City have no particular landscape interest.</p>	<p>The undulating, rising landform, with some woodlands on high ground (e.g. Rectory Wood and Gregg's Wood) provides an attractive rural setting to the western edge of Welwyn.</p>	
Visual prominence		
<i>This considers the visual prominence of the landscape area, reflecting the extent of openness or enclosure in the landscape (due to landform and land cover), and extent to which potential development would be visible. It also considers the skyline character of the area – for instance whether it has features that form a visually distinctive skyline – and any role the landscape area plays in contributing to valued views, such as from promoted viewpoints, routes or recreational areas.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
<p>Plateau areas are visually enclosed by woodland.</p> <p>There is little or no inter-visibility with promoted viewpoints or recreational routes.</p>	<p>There is sensitivity associated with woodland that is located on the fringes of elevated land, forming elements on the skyline.</p>	

Landscape Character Area 35: Ayot St Peter Wooded Upland

Landscape assessment area (35)



Sensitivity to development (35)

A large proportion of the area comprises a gently undulating plateau enclosed by woodland blocks, which is relatively low in sensitivity in terms of landform and visual prominence the overall rural character. However the intactness of the landscape, the historic settlement (notably Ayot Green and parklands with associated historic houses), ancient woodlands and the recreational opportunities afforded by public rights of way and the Ayot Greenway cycle path, results overall in a **moderate-high** sensitivity to residential development.

Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
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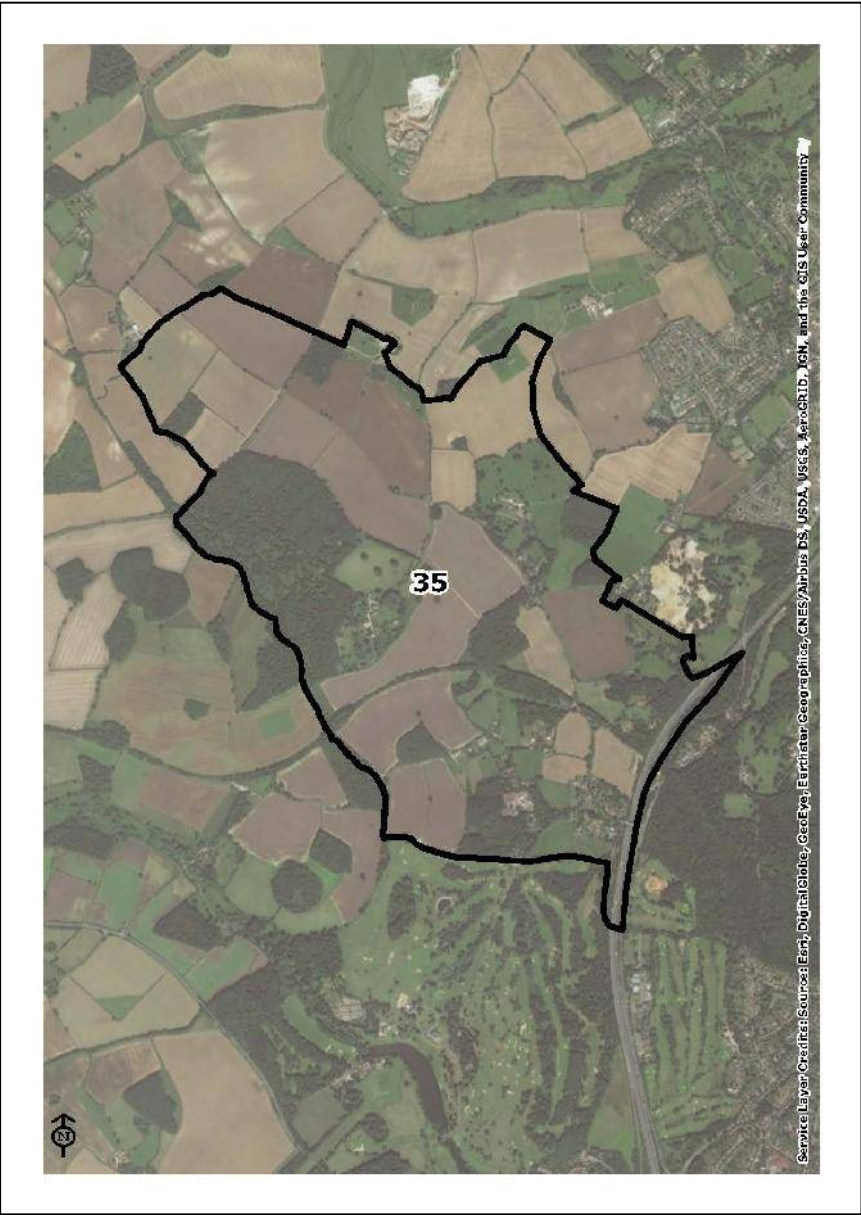
* Rating variations are mapped on the last page of the LCA 35 assessment

Key sensitivities and mitigation potential (35)

To minimise adverse impact on landscape and visual character, development proposals should:

- Maintain the rural nature of the landscape including historic settlement pattern of isolated farms, cottages and country houses of traditional vernacular materials.
- Maintain the prominence of ancient woodlands, including avoiding detracting from their role as skyline landscape features.
- Preserve the character of the historic village of Ayot Green (a Conservation Area), including its associated village green.
- Maintain the relationship between Listed buildings clustered within the villages of Ayot St Peter and Ayot Green and their surrounding rural landscapes.
- Minimise intrusion on the sloping landform on the edges of the area, including valley slopes to the River Mimram in the north.
- Preserve the frequent blocks of deciduous woodland and hedgerows along field boundaries and rural lanes.
- Maintain the extensive network of public rights of way.

Landscape Character Area 35: Ayot St Peter Wooded Upland
Representative views (35)

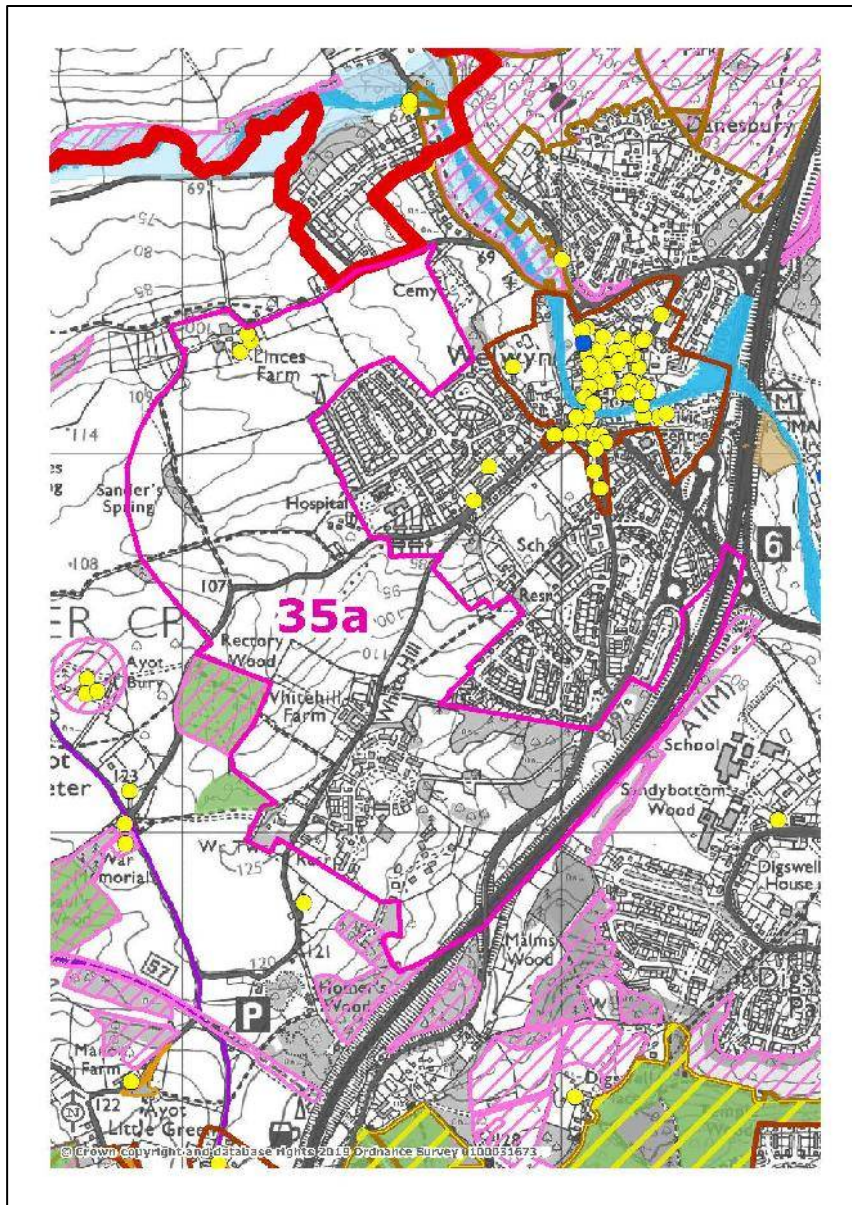


St Peter's Church, Ayot St Peter



Remote farmland to the north of Ayot St Peter

Landscape Character Area 35: Ayot St Peter Wooded Upland
Landscape assessment area (35a)



Sensitivity to development on the edge of Welwyn (35a)

There are some valued features within the area (sloping landform, rural lanes, woodland cover in the south-west, hedgerows and hedgebanks) and a sense of openness that allows for uninterrupted views towards the wooded skyline. However, the disturbance to the rural character (as a result of the busy A1(M) road) and the modern settlement edge at Welwyn reduce the sensitivity to built development, more so to the east of White Hill where there is greater containment from urbanising influences. Sensitivity to residential development is assessed as **moderate** to the west of White Hill and **low-moderate** to the east.

Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
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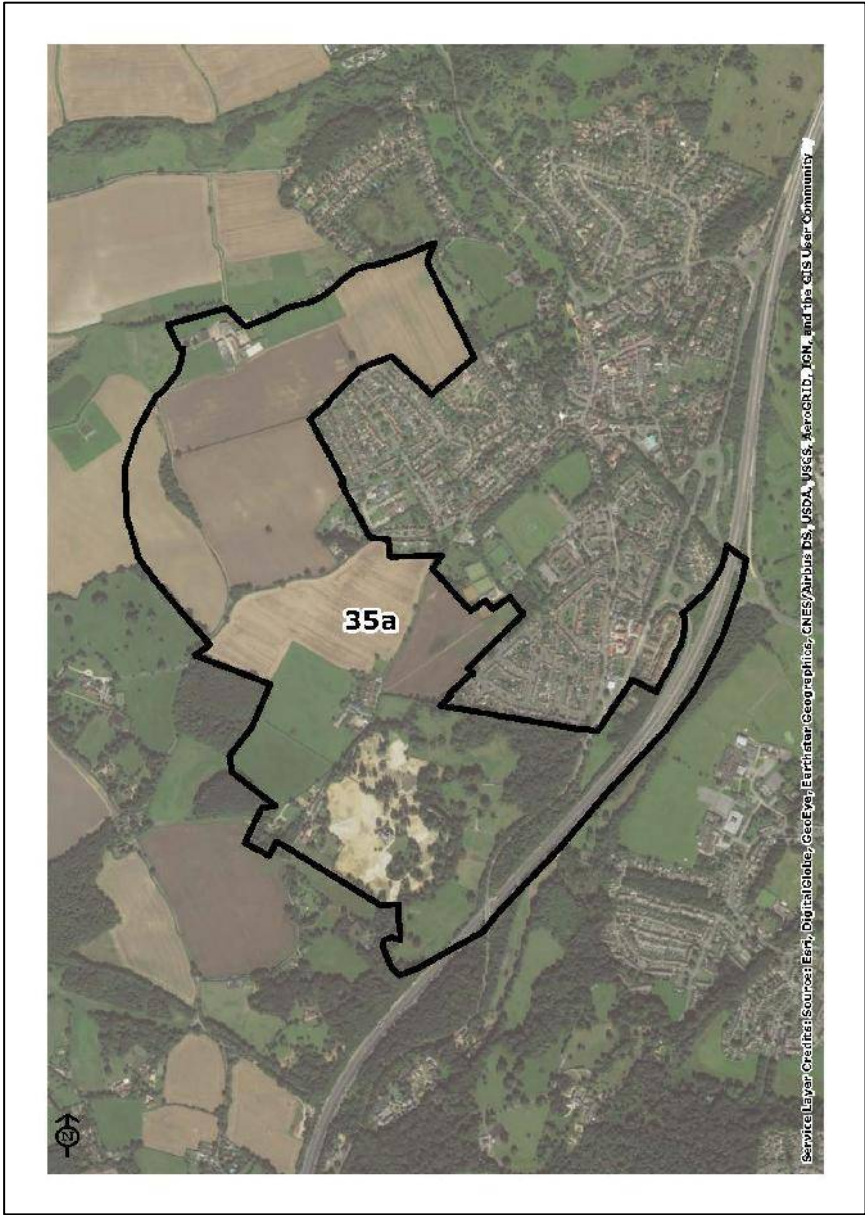
* Rating variations are mapped on the last page of the LCA 35 assessment

Key sensitivities and mitigation potential on the edge of Welwyn (35a)

To minimise adverse impact on landscape and visual character, development proposals should:

- Maintain the openness of the sloping landform up to a wooded skyline which provides a visible rural setting to this edge of Welwyn.
- Preserve the role of Cooks Wood and Horseshoe Plantation as a landscape buffer between the southern edge of Welwyn and the A1(M), and in maintaining the detachment of the Wilshere Park development from the defined urban area of Welwyn.
- Preserve the steep and narrow rural lanes lined with medium high hedgerows and occasional hedgebanks.
- Retain public rights of way along rural lanes and crossing agricultural fields.
- Minimise impact on rural character that would result from encroachment on the buildings of Linces Farm, several of which are Grade II listed.

**Landscape Character Area 35: Ayot St Peter Wooded Upland
Representative views (35a)**

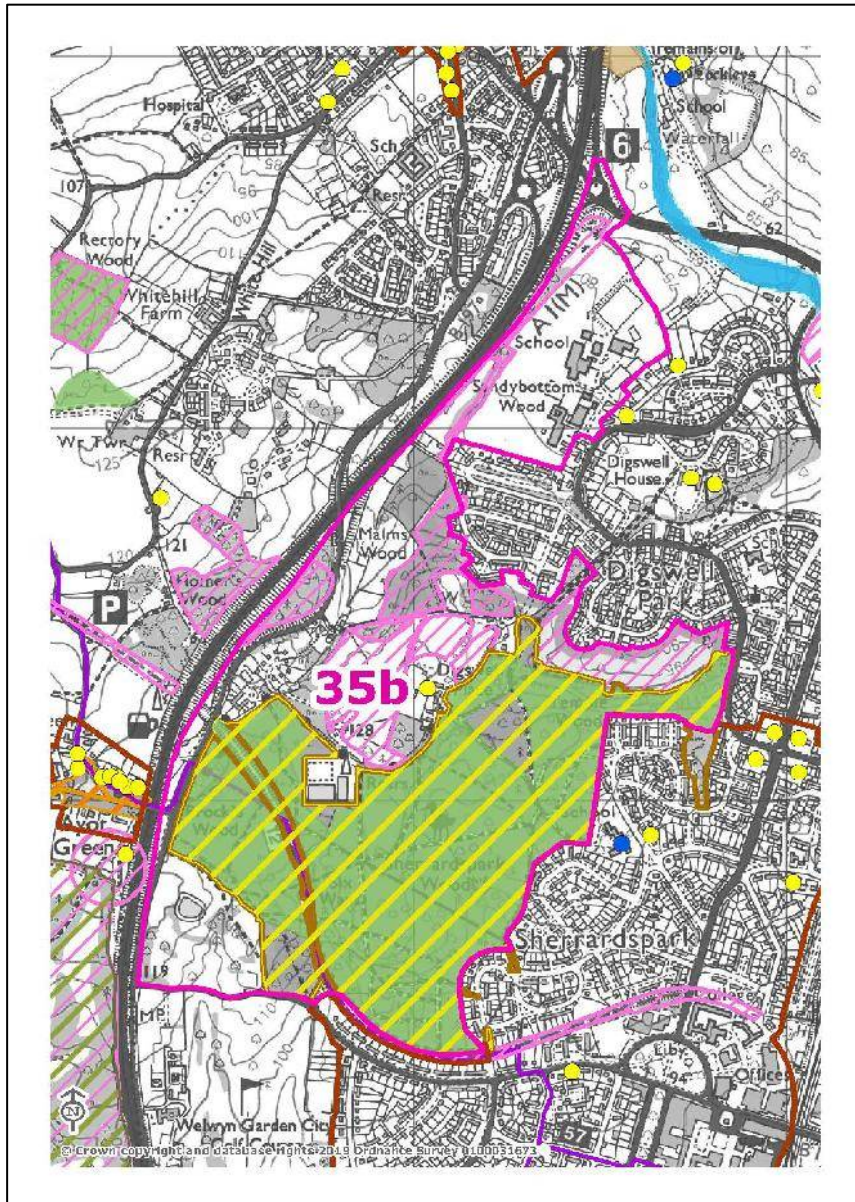


Looking north from White Hill towards the hospital at Welwyn



Looking along valley heading west from the edge of Welwyn

Landscape Character Area 35: Ayot St Peter Wooded Upland
Landscape assessment area (35b)



Sensitivity to development on the edge of Welwyn Garden City (35b)

The extent to which the buildings and playing fields of Monks Walk and Knightsfield schools affect landscape character in this contained area, where vegetation alongside the A1(M) is protected by Local Wildlife Site designation, means that there would be **low** sensitivity to residential development here.

Sherrardspark Wood is a dominant feature but one which has a strong association with the urban edge, with adjacent development on three sides. The level of sensitivity will be **low-moderate** for development on unconstrained areas within and on the fringes of Sherrardspark Wood which would diminish its role as a buffer to the urban edge, although the containing presence of tree cover and of the A1(M) would negate any impact of this on the wider landscape.

Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
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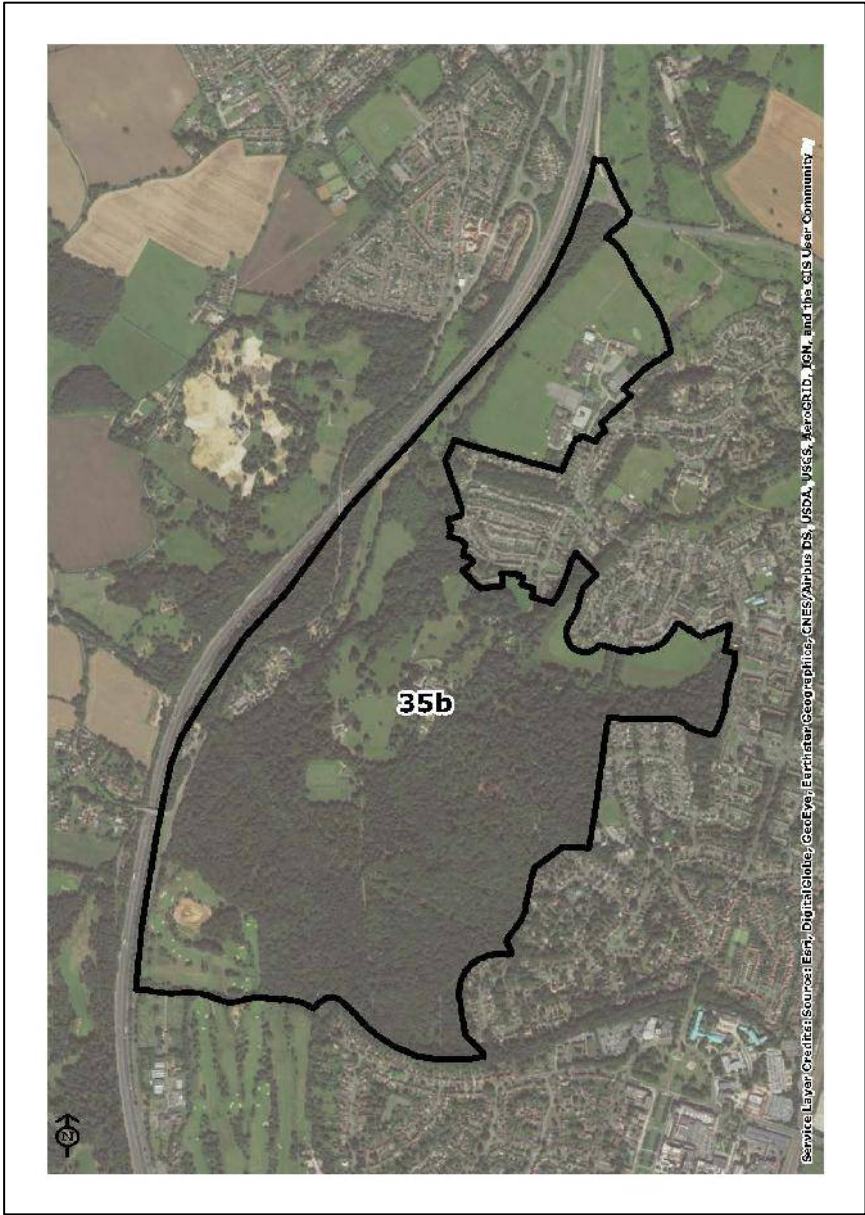
* Rating variations are mapped on the last page of the LCA 35 assessment

Key sensitivities and mitigation potential on the edge of Welwyn Garden City (35b)

To minimise adverse impact on landscape and visual character, development proposals should:

- Retain connectivity of tree cover.
- Maintain the sense that Sherrardspark Wood and adjacent tree cover contain pockets of development, rather than the woodland being contained by development.

**Landscape Character Area 35: Ayot St Peter Wooded Upland
Representative views (35b)**

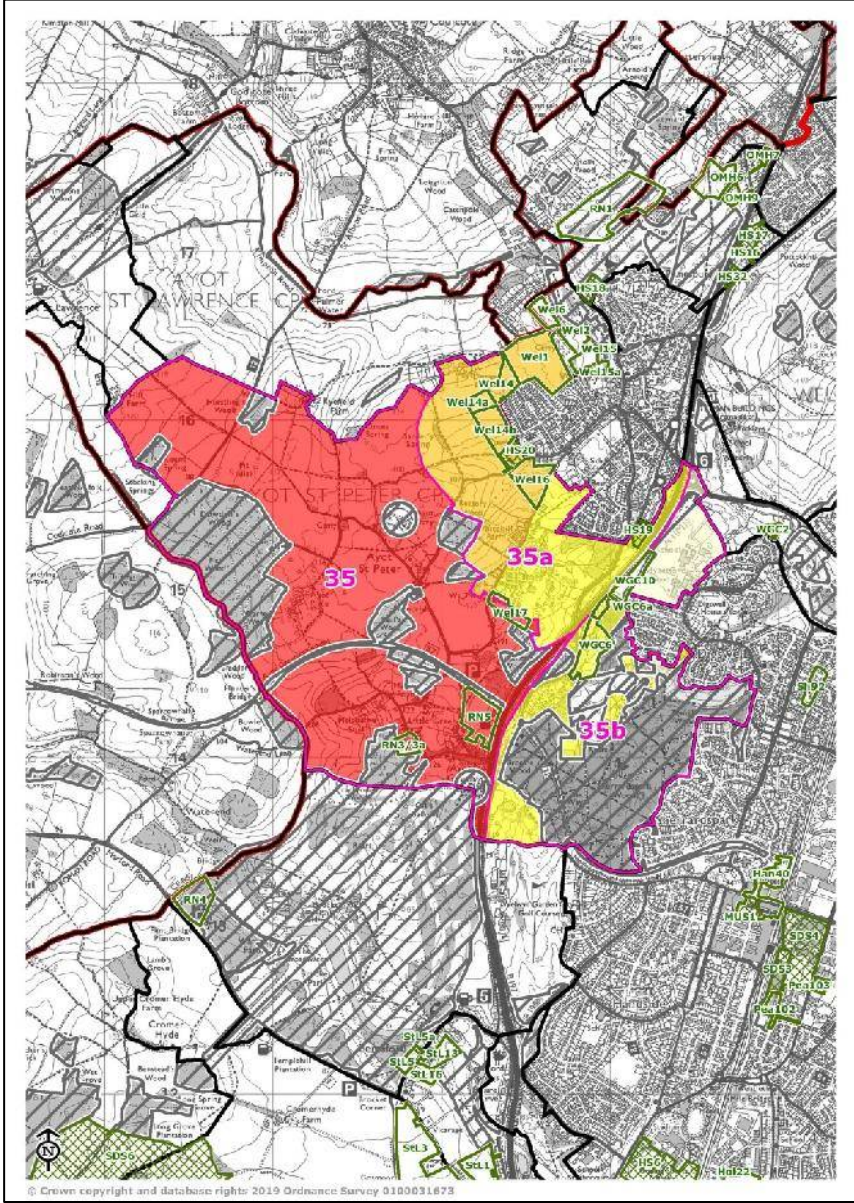


Section of Welwyn Garden City Golf Club to the north of Brockwood Lane, alongside Sherrardspark Wood













Sports pitches at Knightsfield School

Landscape Character Area 35: Ayot St Peter Wooded Upland
Sensitivity ratings across assessment area



Sensitivity ratings key

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|
|  | Welwyn Hatfield Boundary | Sensitivity rating |
|  | Landscape Character Area (LCA) |  Low |
|  | LCA Subdivision |  Low-moderate |
|  | All absolute constraints |  Moderate |
|  | Promoted Sites |  Moderate-high |
|  | Site allocations |  High |

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Landscape Character Area 36: Upper Mimram Valley

Upper Mimram Valley

Location and Landscape Character Summary

The assessment area encompasses the whole of the Upper Mimram Valley LCA and is situated along the north-western settlement edge of Welwyn Garden City. Its eastern half separates the settlement edge from the village of Digswell, and its western half forms part of a gap between the settlement edge and the village of Welwyn. This narrow assessment area comprises a river valley, is largely confined by residential development and influenced by surrounding road and rail networks, crossing the area in part.

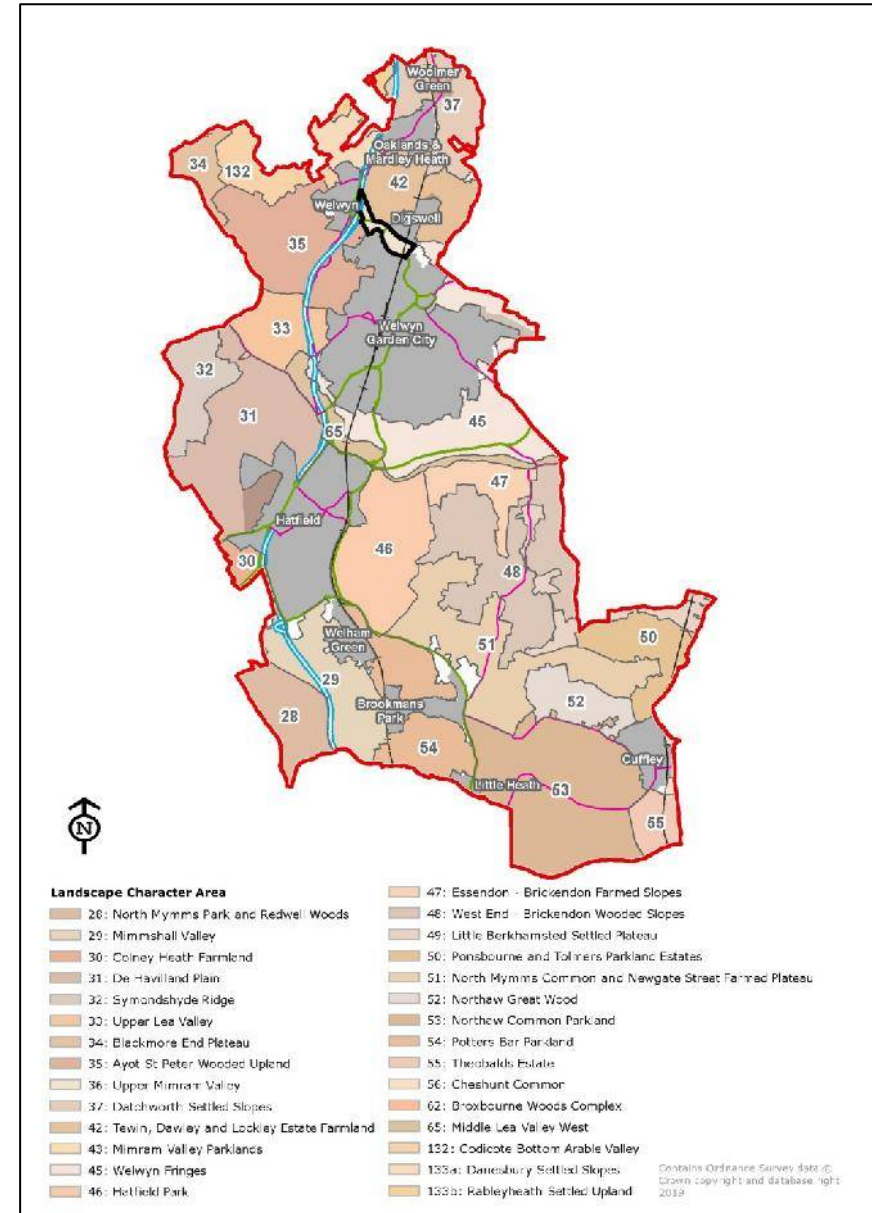
Assessment Areas

The assessment area has been divided into the following sub-areas:

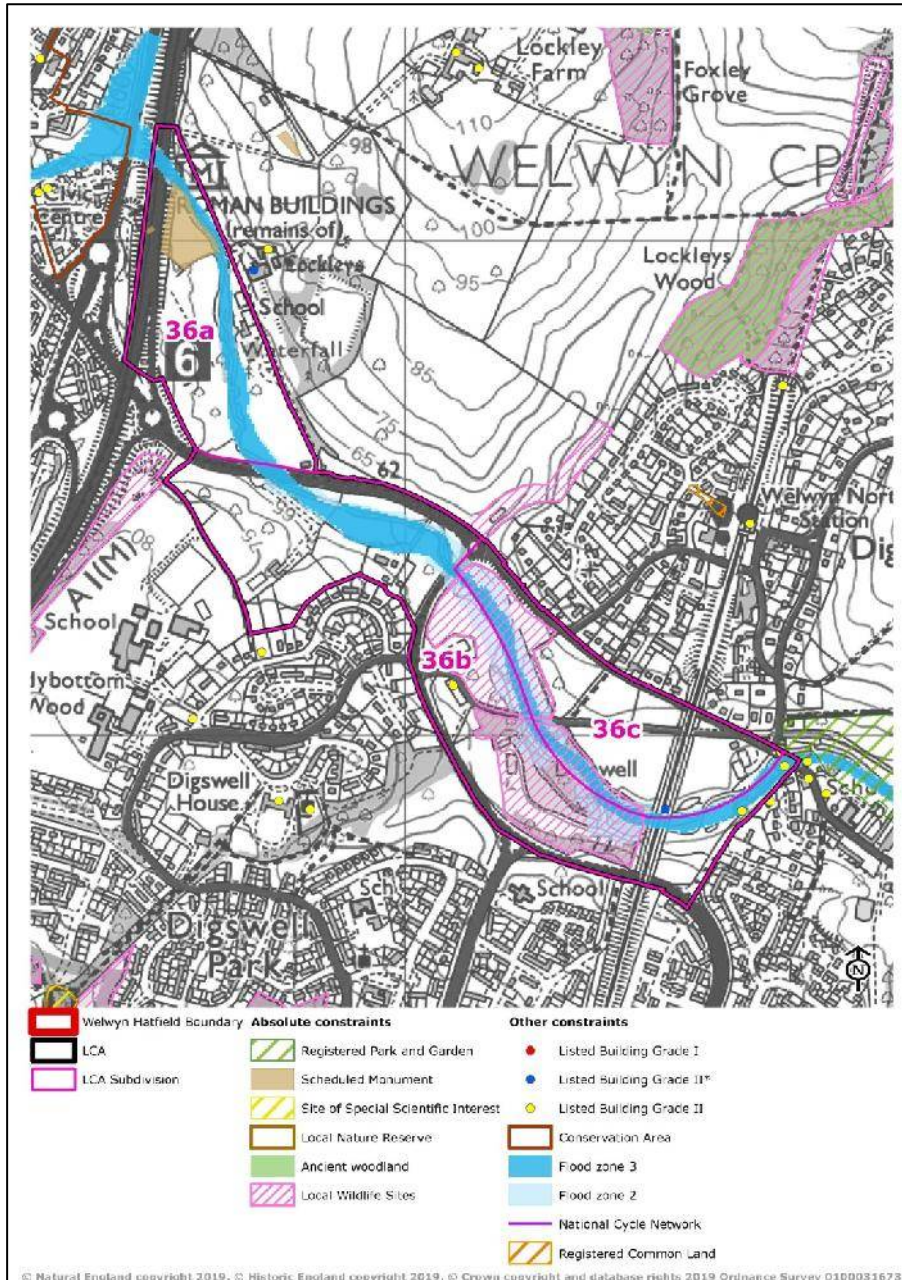
- Settlement edge of Welwyn (36a)
- Settlement edge of Welwyn Garden City (36b)
- Settlement edge of Digswell (36c)

The settlement edges of Welwyn and Welwyn Garden City have been defined by the A1000 which, with associated vegetation along its edge in part, forms a physical and visual barrier that splits the LCA.

The settlement edge of Digswell has been identified by the A1000 to the west and the River Mimram to the south, as its associated vegetation marks the limit of intervisibility between the village and the adjacent LCA.



Landscape Character Area 36: Upper Mimram Valley



Absolute Constraints and Designations

The following absolute constraints apply to LCA 36:

- The Dicket Mead Roman villa Scheduled Monument
- Local Wildlife Sites at Digswell Meadows South and Digswell Lake

Other designations that apply to LCA 36 of relevance to landscape are:

- Flood Zone of the River Mimram
- Listed buildings of Grade II
- Welwyn / Digswell Railway Viaduct (Grade II* listed)

Landscape Character Area 36: Upper Mimram Valley

Analysis of Landscape Sensitivity in the Character Area

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Criteria		
Landform		
<i>This considers the shape of the landscape. Smooth, gently undulating or flat landforms are likely to be less sensitive to development than a landscape with distinct landform features, such as hills and valleys, as development may mask distinctive topographical features that contribute to landscape character.</i>		
Low	Medium	High
	The LCA defines the floor of the Mimram valley, a landform which rises relatively steeply to the north and south, but existing development limits the integrity of the valley in this area as a landscape feature.	
Landscape pattern and time depth		
<i>This considers the field pattern and historic origin of the landscape area. Landscapes with more irregular field patterns, particularly those of historic origin, are likely to more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than landscape with regular scale field patterns because of the risk of losing characteristic landscape patterns.</i>		
Low	Medium	High
Lacking a distinct field pattern given the current and historic use of parkland, pasture and amenity. There are occasional areas of small enclosure for equine use.		A few remnants of the historic parkland associated with Digswell House Park (1810) including woodland, ornamental trees and a lake, and parkland trees associated with Lockleys (Sherrardspark School) parkland.
'Natural' character		
<i>This considers the 'naturalistic' qualities of the landscape area in terms of the coverage of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features (e.g. trees and hedgerows) which contribute to landscape character and could be vulnerable to loss from development. Areas with frequent natural features (including large areas of designated habitats) result in increased sensitivity to development, while landscape with limited natural features will be less sensitive.</i>		
Low	Medium	High
Away from the immediate river corridor this is a predominantly pastoral landscape, with field boundaries typically formed by fencing.		The River Mimram is a valued natural feature. Belts of priority habitat deciduous woodland and floodplain grazing marsh lie along its course and occupy a large proportion of the area. Digswell Lake and the meadows to the west are Local Wildlife Sites.
Built character		
<i>This considers the built character of the landscape area with particular reference to the presence of heritage assets that contribute to landscape character (i.e. valued features that may be designated as Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, archaeological features or remains or other features). Landscapes with a high density of historic features important to the character of the area are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than areas where such development already exists.</i>		

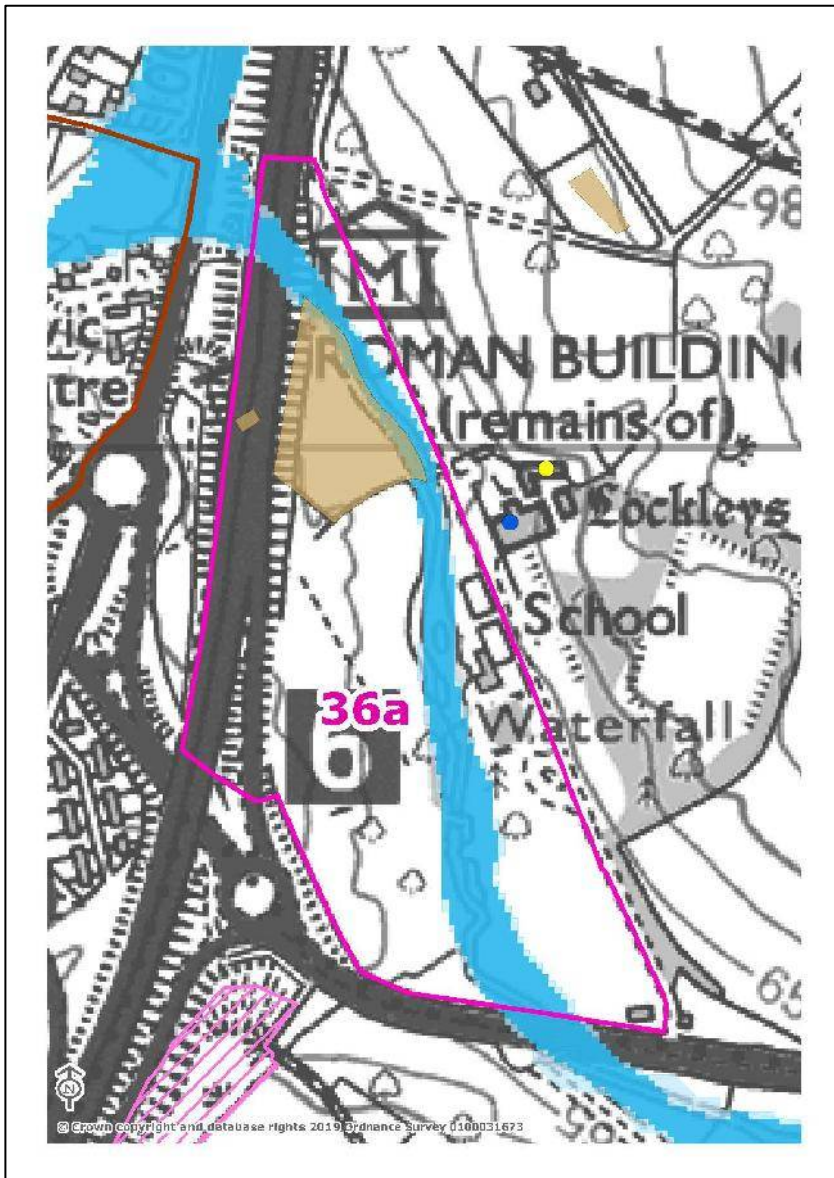
Landscape Character Area 36: Upper Mimram Valley

Low	Medium	High
<p>The busy Hertford Road and Bessemer Road (A1000) run through the center of the assessment area with little screening from the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>Sports pitches / playing fields associated with Sherrardswood School in the north-west, as well as tennis courts and car park in the east, detract from local landscape character although are largely contained by vegetation.</p>	<p>The area is largely undeveloped although contained by surrounding residential development. There are a small number of isolated buildings in the area (some of historic origin) enclosed by vegetation and lacking relationship with the area.</p>	<p>The Grade II* listed Welwyn/ Digsweil Railway Viaduct is a prominent feature on the landscape, and at a height of 25m makes it visible throughout the majority of the area and from higher ground beyond. The undeveloped fields surrounding the base of the viaduct provide an open setting for the structure to some extent and retains the associative qualities in relation to the valley landscape.</p>
<p>Recreational value</p> <p><i>This criterion considers the presence of features and facilities which enable enjoyment of the landscape, and the importance of these. This may include public rights of way, bridleways, open access land and outdoor tourist/ visitor attractions with facilities. Recreation activities such as walking, cycling, horse riding or more formal recreation activities where enjoyment of the landscape is important to the experience. Importance of features may be indicated by designation such as long distance footpaths or recreation routes, national cycle routes, proximity to areas of local population (such as local parks) and outdoor tourist attractions often marked on Ordnance Survey maps.</i></p>		
Low	Medium	High
<p>The area is largely inaccessible, crossed only by a short length of public footpath between Digsweil and Digsweil Park Road.</p>	<p>Digsweil Playing Fields lie to the east of the viaduct, largely enclosed by vegetation. Digsweil Lake and surrounding parkland are owned by a society which members of the public can join to gain recreational access.</p>	
<p>Perceptual aspects</p> <p><i>This considers qualities such as rurality (traditional land uses with few modern, human influences), sense of remoteness or tranquility. High scenic value, freedom from human activity/ disturbance and 'dark skies' would add to sensitivity in this criterion. This is because development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from a sense of tranquility and or remoteness.</i></p>		
Low	Medium	High
<p>Tranquility of former parkland character has been diminished by the proximity to urban areas and the busy road and railway network. This results in aural intrusion, along with intermittent visual detractors from vehicles along roads and trains over the Welwyn / Digsweil Railway Viaduct.</p>	<p>Tree cover provides small pockets of rural retreat from surrounding urban areas.</p>	
<p>Settlement setting</p> <p><i>The extent to which the landscape area i) contributes to the identity and distinctiveness of a settlement by way of its character and/ or scenic quality, for example by providing an attractive backdrop or setting, or playing an important part in views from a settlement; and ii) relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement and the character of the adjacent settlement edge, including the role of significant landscape elements in either separating an undeveloped area from a settled area or linking it to it.</i></p>		

Landscape Character Area 36: Upper Mimram Valley

Low	Medium	High
<p>In the west, the area lacks relationship with the edge of Welwyn as it is contained by the A1(M) and its associated vegetation.</p>		<p>The woodland around Digswell Lake forms a wooded backdrop to adjacent settlement edges, and although there are views over it from higher ground in both Digswell and Welwyn Garden City it plays a positive role in maintaining distinction between urban areas to either side of the valley.</p>
<p>Visual prominence</p> <p><i>This considers the visual prominence of the landscape area, reflecting the extent of openness or enclosure in the landscape (due to landform and land cover), and extent to which potential development would be visible. It also considers the skyline character of the area – for instance whether it has features that form a visually distinctive skyline – and any role the landscape area plays in contributing to valued views, such as from promoted viewpoints, routes or recreational areas.</i></p>		
Low	Medium	High
<p>A large proportion of the area is visually enclosed by woodland. There is little or no inter-visibility with promoted viewpoints or recreational routes.</p>	<p>Some visual prominence of steeper valley slope in the west. Despite being relatively flat, some parts of the area are visually prominent because of the lack of hedgerows (which have frequently been replaced by fencing).</p>	<p>The Welwyn / Digswell Railway Viaduct is visually prominent within the local landscape.</p>

Landscape Character Area 36: Upper Mimram Valley
Landscape assessment area (36a)



Sensitivity to development on the edge of Welwyn (36a)

The area is separated from the settlement edge and comprises a relatively intact landscape with a parkland character (associated with the old Lockleys estate), containing mature parkland trees and deciduous woodland. However the disturbance to the rural character (as a result of the busy A1(M) and A1000 which border the area), the sports pitches / playing fields at Sherrardswood School on the eastern edge which detract from local landscape character, the relatively flat landform and the enclosure provided by vegetation results in a **moderate** sensitivity to residential development on unconstrained areas of land.

Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
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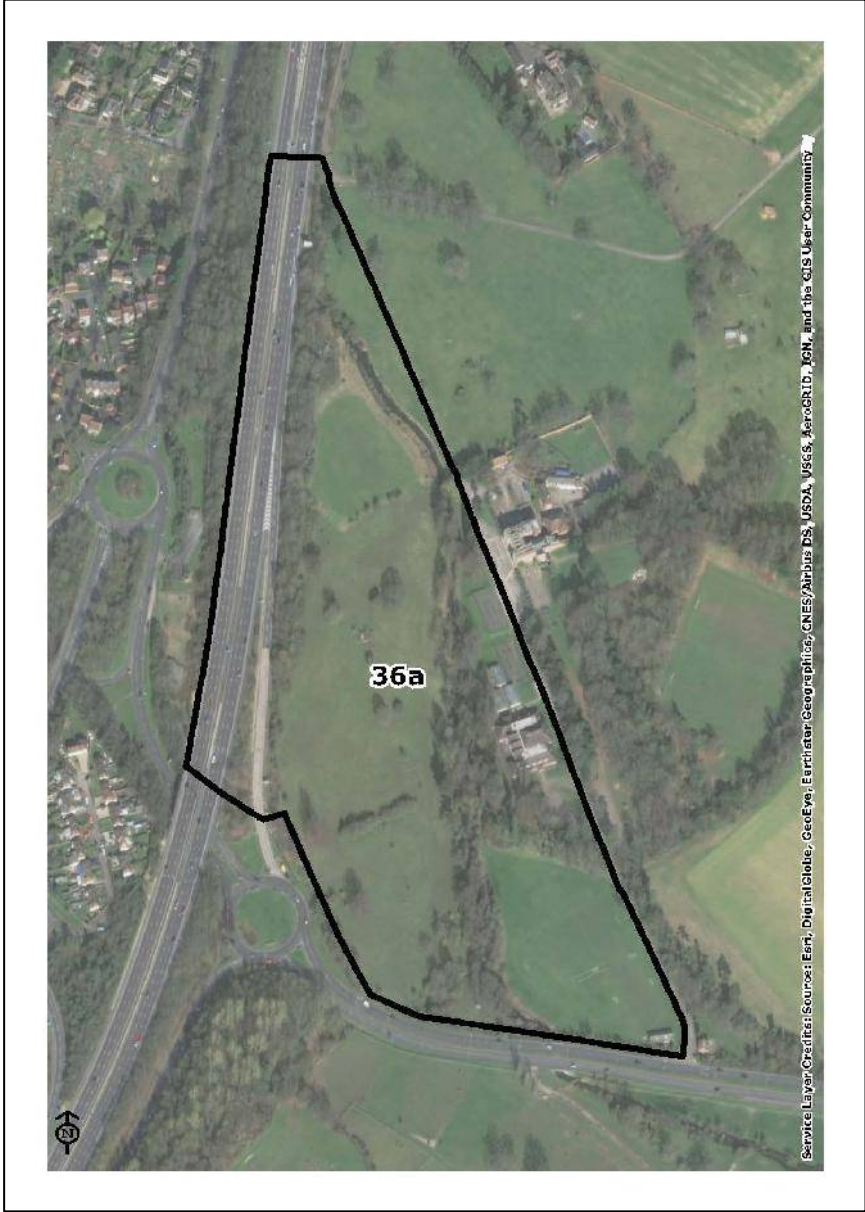
* Rating variations are mapped on the last page of the LCA 36 assessment

Key sensitivities and mitigation potential on the edge of Welwyn (36a)

To minimise adverse impact on landscape and visual character, development proposals should:

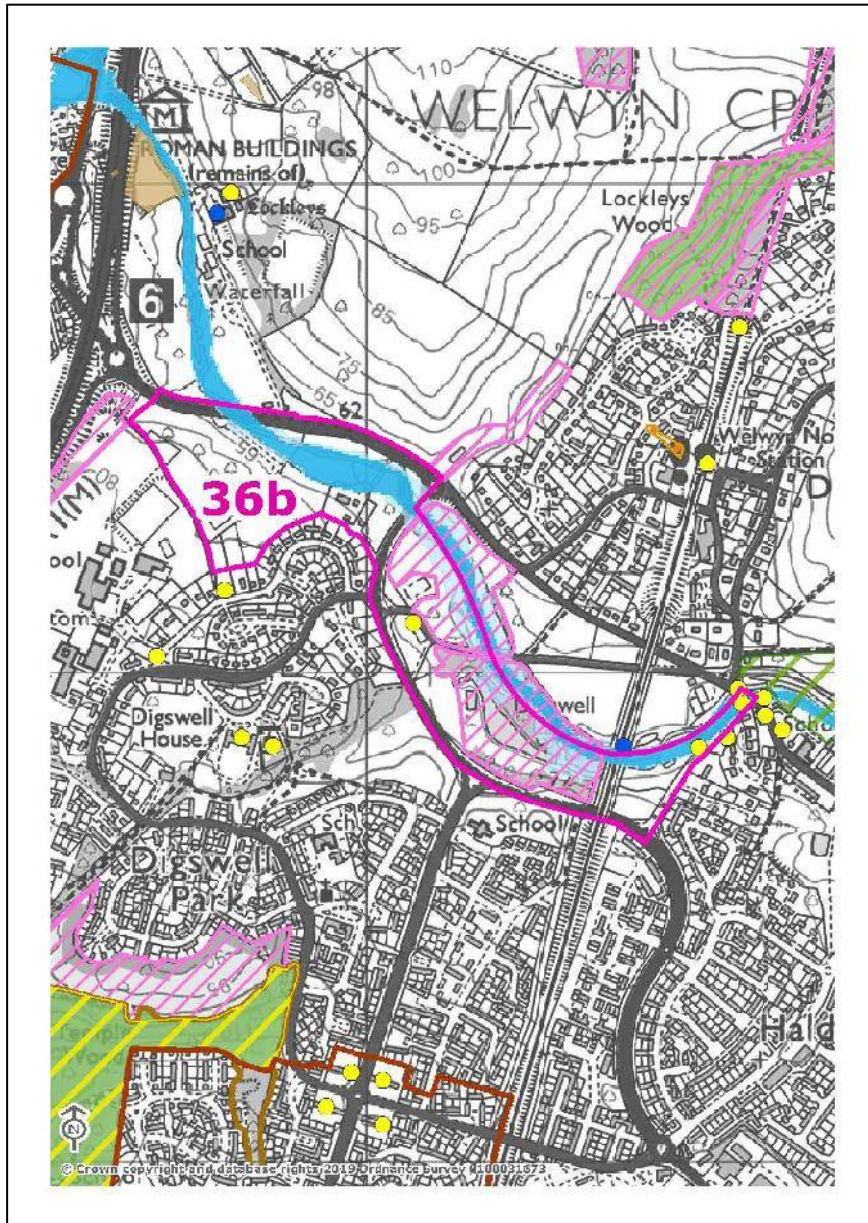
- Minimise impact on parkland character by retaining mature trees, woodland and pockets of open space.

**Landscape Character Area 36: Upper Mimram Valley
Representative views (36a)**



View towards Sherrardswood School set within parkland associated with the old Lockleys estate

Landscape Character Area 36: Upper Mimram Valley
Landscape assessment area (36b)



Sensitivity to development on the edge of Welwyn Garden City (36b)

To the east of Bessemer Road the areas of unconstrained land are very limited. Where this is the case, most of the unconstrained areas are occupied by mature trees extending from the protected local wildlife sites, and have a role in providing a landscape buffer along the edge of Bessemer Road (A1000) and to the urban edge, while contributing towards the parkland character of the area. For these reasons the level of sensitivity will be **moderate-high** for development on these unconstrained areas, although the containing presence of tree cover and of the A1000 would negate any impact of this on the wider landscape.

To the west of Bessemer Road the area comprises a steeper sloping landform resulting in localised visual prominence from the north. There is sensitivity associated with the river and valley landform but landscape character is strongly associated with the urban fringe. Given its predominant equine use with boundaries formed by fencing and the presence of stables, as well as the disturbance from the A1000 and A1(M), sensitivity to residential development is **moderate**.

Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
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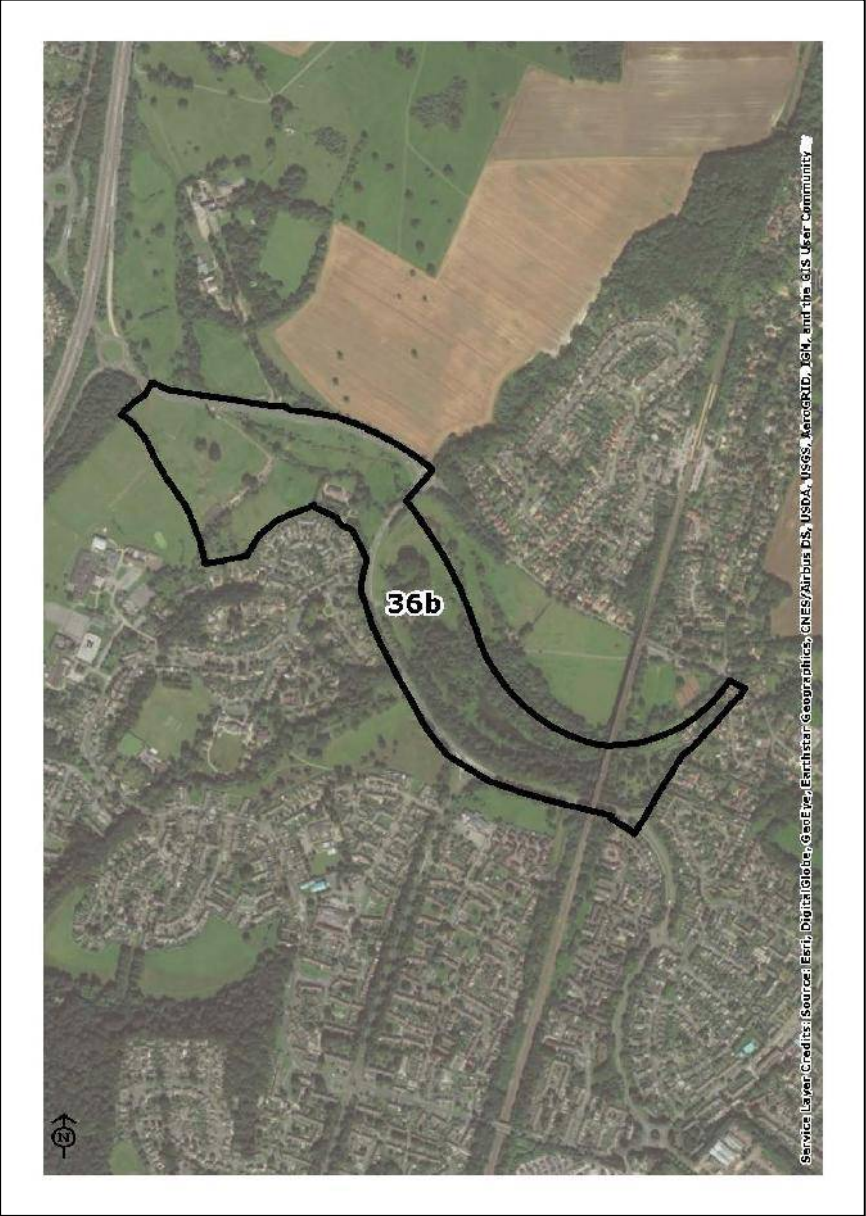
* Rating variations are mapped on the last page of the LCA 36 assessment

Key sensitivities and mitigation potential on the edge of Welwyn Garden City (36b)

To minimise adverse impact on landscape and visual character, development proposals should:

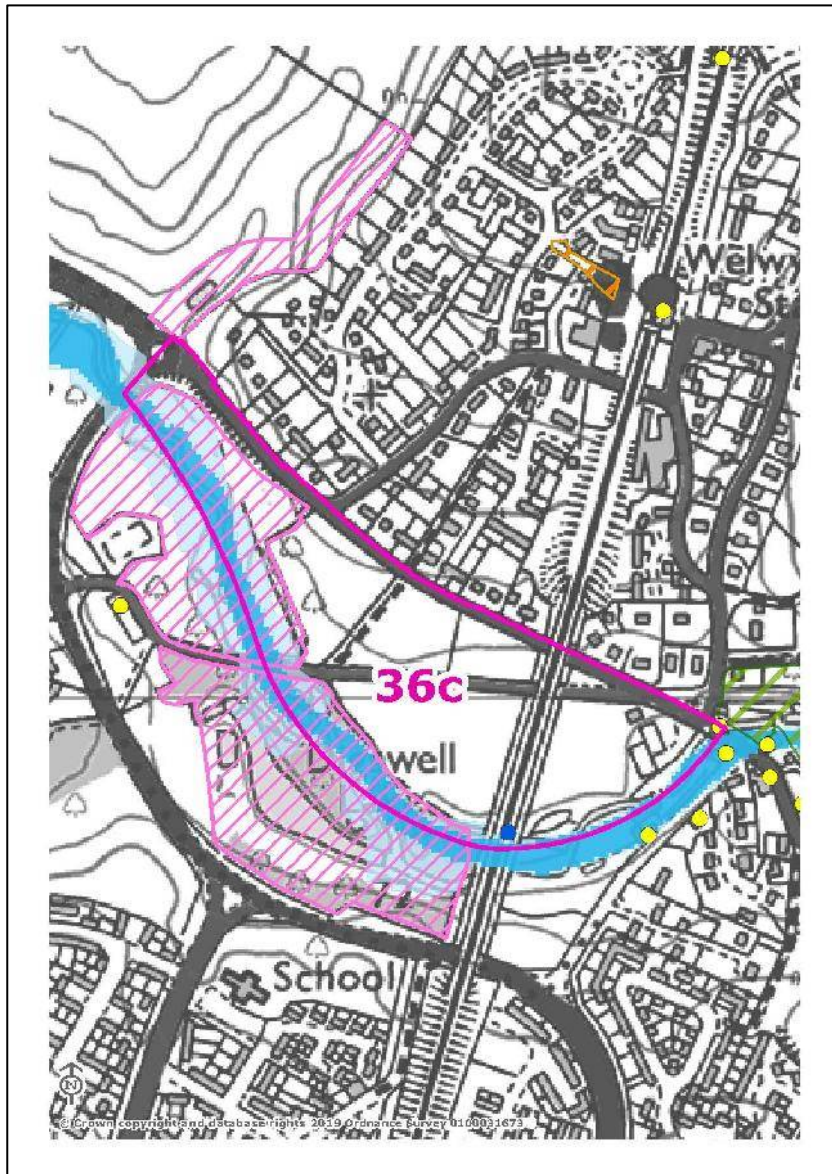
- Minimise intrusion on the steeper valley slopes to the River Mimram in the west.
- Preserve the role of mature vegetation in providing a landscape buffer between Bessemer Road (A1000) and the River Mimram.
- Minimise impact on parkland character for the listed buildings to the east by retaining wooded enclosure which forms a buffer to playing fields / sports pitches.

**Landscape Character Area 36: Upper Mimram Valley
Representative views (36b)**



View of area to the west of Bessener Road comprising sloping landform and equine use

Landscape Character Area 36: Upper Mimram Valley
Landscape assessment area (36c)



Sensitivity to development on the edge of Digswell (36c)

The area provides a relatively open setting to the Welwyn / Digswell Railway Viaduct and a rural setting for the edge of Digswell, although it is less significant in this respect than the riverside woodland to the south. It has accessibility from a public right of way, and playing fields in the east, but the aural intrusion from passing trains along the viaduct, urban edge character associated with the car park and sports facilities, and fencing associated with the equine use of the area all detract from the local landscape character, resulting in a **moderate** sensitivity to residential development.

Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
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* Rating variations are mapped on the last page of the LCA 36 assessment

Key sensitivities and mitigation potential on the edge of Digswell (36c)

To minimise adverse impact on landscape and visual character, development proposals should:

- Preserve the open setting of the listed Welwyn / Digswell Railway Viaduct by minimising encroachment.
- Maintain the openness of the area up to the wooded backdrop which provides a visible rural setting to the edge of Digswell.
- Retain the public right of way providing access to Digswell.
- Preserve the vegetated field boundaries comprising a hedgerow in the west and mature trees in the east around the playing field.

Landscape Character Area 36: Upper Mimram Valley
Representative views (36c)

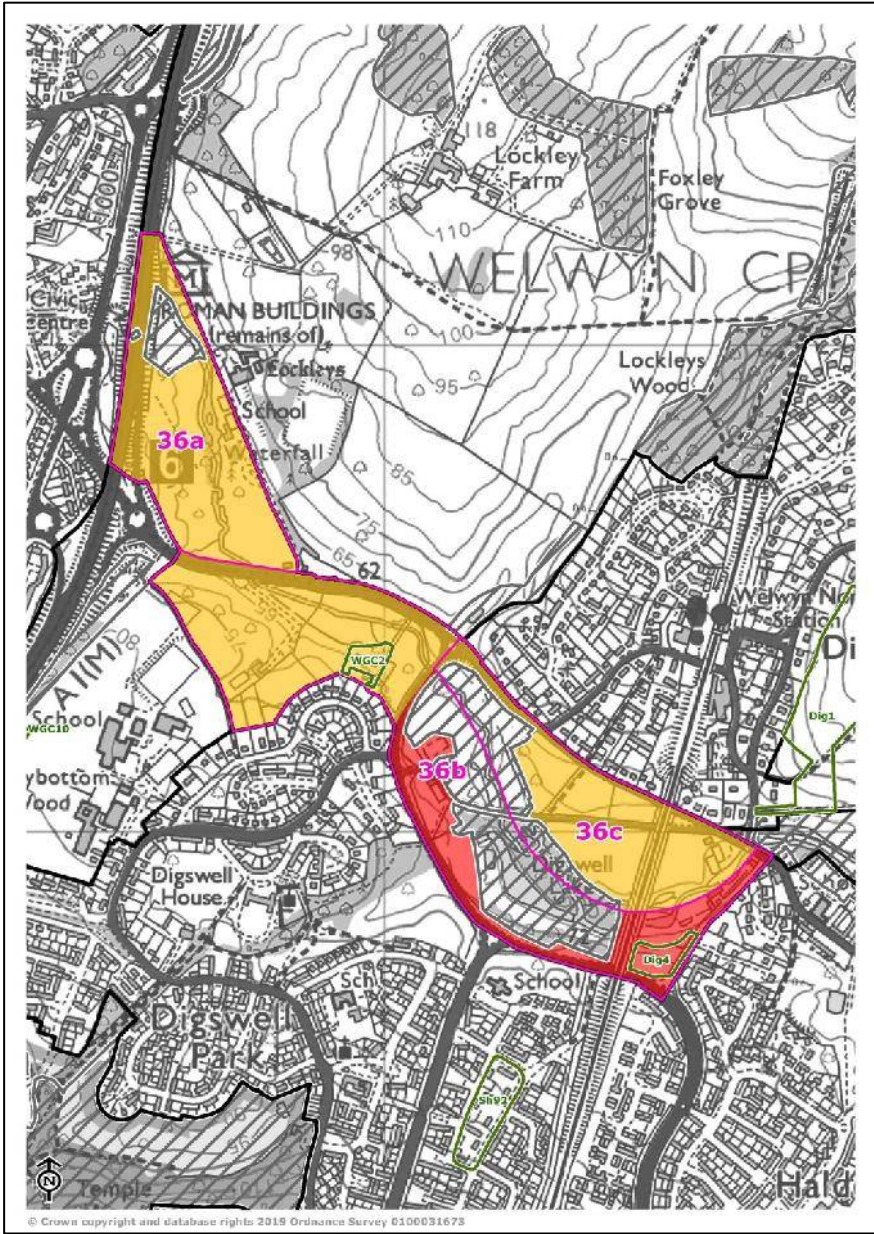


View of Welwyn / Digswell Railway Viaduct














Sports pitches / playing fields in the east enclosed by vegetation

Landscape Character Area 36: Upper Mimram Valley
Sensitivity ratings across assessment area



Sensitivity ratings key

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|
|  | Welwyn Hatfield Boundary | Sensitivity rating |
|  | Landscape Character Area (LCA) |  Low |
|  | LCA Subdivision |  Low-moderate |
|  | All absolute constraints |  Moderate |
|  | Promoted Sites |  Moderate-high |
|  | Site allocations |  High |

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Landscape Character Area 37: Datchworth Settled Slopes

Datchworth Settled Slope

Location and Landscape Character Summary

The assessment area is situated in the north of the Welwyn Hatfield Borough, directly to the northeast of Oaklands and containing the large village of Woolmer Green. The A1(M) passes the western edge of the assessment area, whilst the railway line runs through the centre. The area has a characteristically open and undulating landform with arable land use.

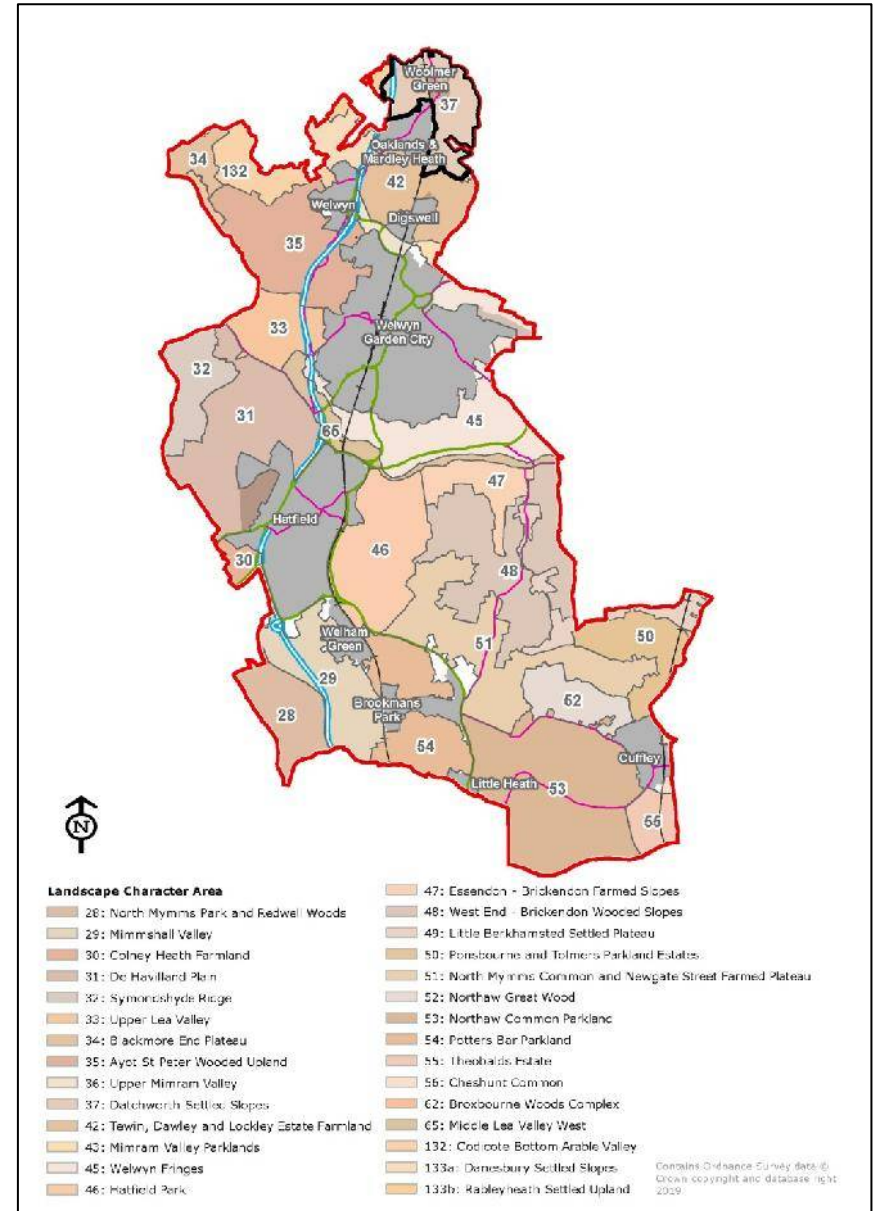
Assessment Areas

The assessment area has been divided into the following sub-areas:

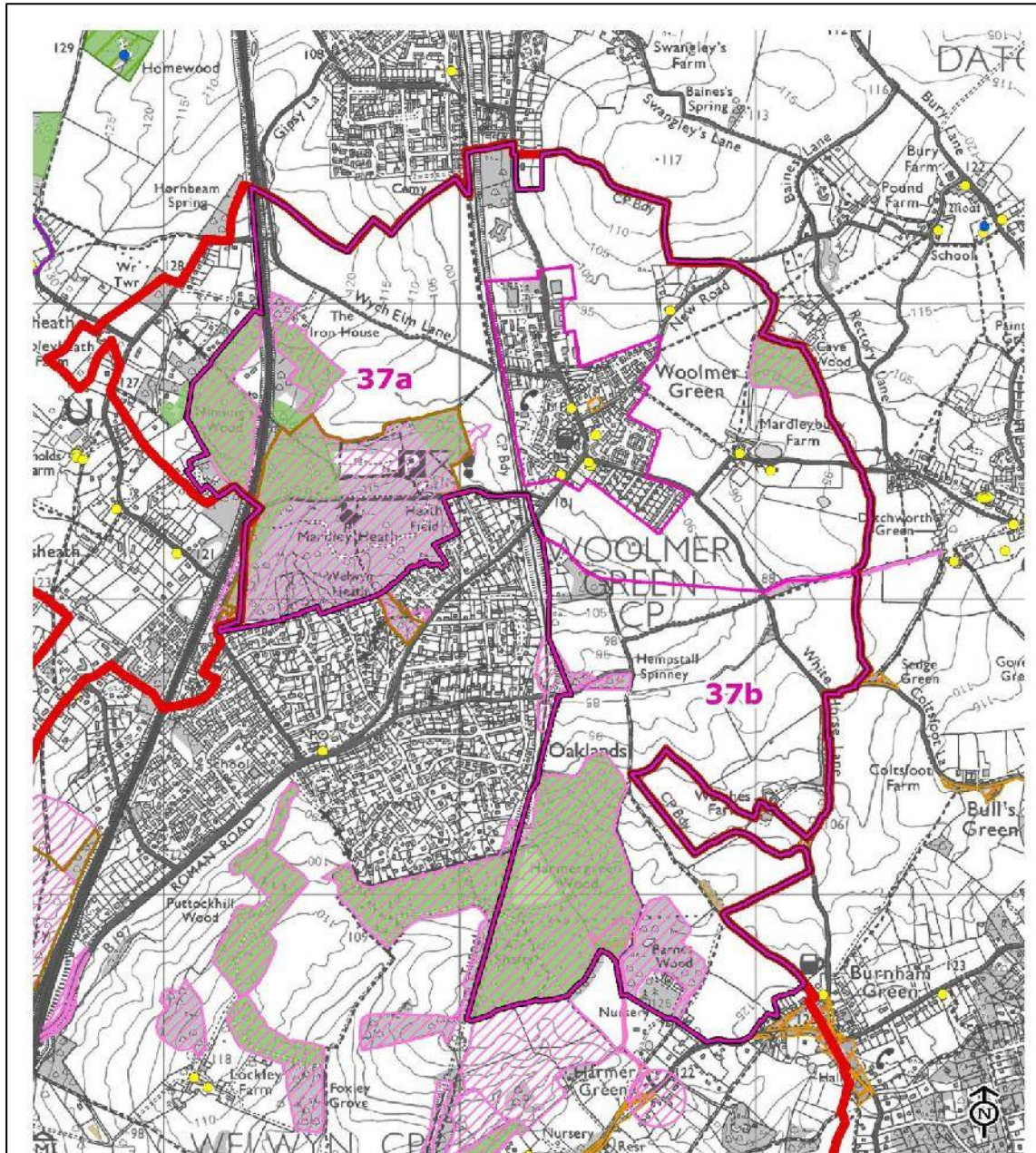
- LCA 37a area around Woolmer Green, northern edge of Oaklands and southern edge of Knebworth
- LCA 37b between eastern edge of Oaklands and Burnham Green.

The settlement edges of Woolmer Green, Knebworth and Oaklands (north) are assessed as one area due to their close proximity and landform relationship, with Woolmer Green located in a valley contained by the rest of 37a.

LCA 37b forms another, broader valley, separated from 37a along a ridgeline extending west-east across Mardley Heath, the northern edge of Oaklands and to the south of Woolmer Green.



Landscape Character Area 37: Datchworth Settled Slopes



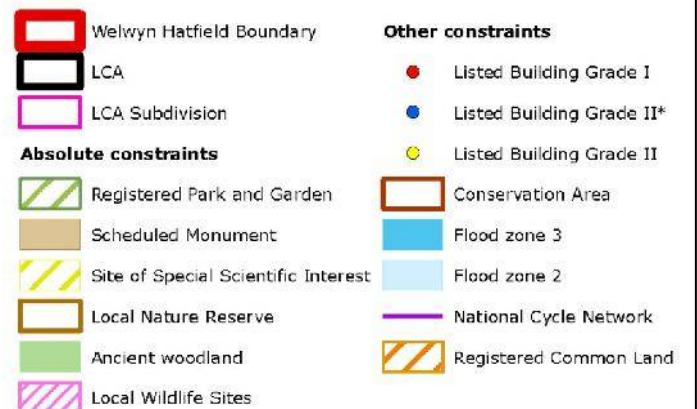
Absolute Constraints and Designations

The following absolute constraints apply to LCA 37:

- Local Wildlife Sites including Mardley Heath, Legs and Stockings Wood, Harmergreen Wood, Cave Wood, Barnes Green, Robbery Bottom Lane Railway Embankment, Hempstall Spinney, Datchworth Green Green Lane North and Barnes Wood.
- The Linear earthwork in Perry's Grove scheduled monument.
- The Local Nature Reserve and ancient woodland at Mardley Heath.
- Ancient woodland at Harmergreen Wood.

Other designations of relevance to landscape that apply to LCA 37 are:

- Grade II Listed buildings.



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Landscape Character Area 37: Datchworth Settled Slopes

Analysis of Landscape Sensitivity in the Character Area

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Criteria		
Landform		
<i>This considers the shape of the landscape. Smooth, gently undulating or flat landforms are likely to be less sensitive to development than a landscape with distinct landform features, such as hills and valleys, as development may mask distinctive topographical features that contribute to landscape character.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
	Gently undulating landform with Woolmer Green located in the low-lying centre of the assessment area. Elevation ranges from 90m AOD to 125m AOD in the south and northwest. There is also a small stream and associated valley running south of Robbery Bottom Lane.	
Landscape pattern and time depth		
<i>This considers the field pattern and historic origin of the landscape area. Landscapes with more irregular field patterns, particularly those of historic origin, are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than landscape with regular scale field patterns because of the risk of losing characteristic landscape patterns.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
Most fields are arable and have been enlarged due to agricultural intensification.		Land adjacent to the Linear earthwork in Perry's Grove Scheduled Monument provides part of the wider setting to this historic feature.
'Natural' character		
<i>This considers the 'naturalistic' qualities of the landscape area in terms of the coverage of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features (e.g. trees and hedgerows) which contribute to landscape character and could be vulnerable to loss from development. Areas with frequent natural features (including large areas of designated habitats) result in increased sensitivity to development, while landscape with limited natural features will be less sensitive.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
There are few remaining hedgerows.	Mardley Heath, Ninnings Wood, Cave Wood, Harmer Green Wood and Barnes Wood are ancient woodlands and Local Wildlife Sites which, although themselves constrained from development, are prominently located and so contribute a degree of natural character to the arable fields in between.	
Built character		
<i>This considers the built character of the landscape area with particular reference to the presence of heritage assets that contribute to landscape character (i.e. valued features that may be designated as Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, archaeological features or remains or other features). Landscapes with a high density of historic features important to the character of the area are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than areas where such development already exists.</i>		

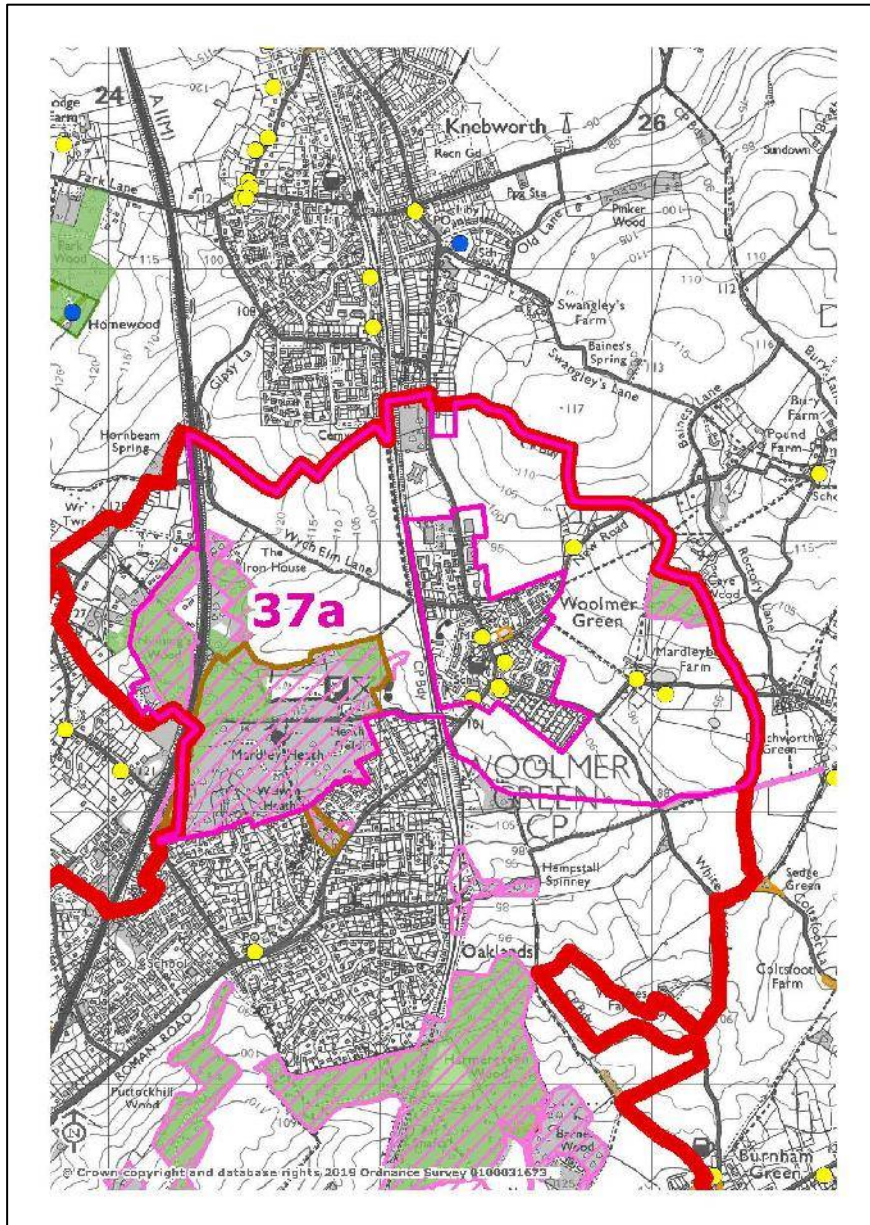
Landscape Character Area 37: Datchworth Settled Slopes

Low	Moderate	High
Woolmer Green is located in the centre of the assessment area. This village has a more urban character than many in Hertfordshire and significantly expanded in the 1850s. Knebworth likewise evolved around its railway station from the late 19 th century, with 20 th century development forming the southern part of the village. The A1(M) runs along part of the western edge of the assessment area, whilst the railway line crosses the centre.	Burnham Green although mostly 20 th century housing, is a small settlement with a more distinct and rural character, centred on a green.	There are two Grade II listed buildings at Mardleybury Farm and one along New Road. The church spire of the Grade II* listed All Saints Church Datchworth is visible on skylines to the northeast.
<p>Recreational value</p> <p><i>This criterion considers the presence of features and facilities which enable enjoyment of the landscape, and the importance of these. This may include public rights of way, bridleways, open access land and outdoor tourist/ visitor attractions with facilities. Recreation activities such as walking, cycling, horse riding or more formal recreation activities where enjoyment of the landscape is important to the experience. Importance of features may be indicated by designation such as long distance footpaths or recreation routes, national cycle routes, proximity to areas of local population (such as local parks) and outdoor tourist attractions often marked on Ordnance Survey maps.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
	There are some public rights of way crossing through the assessment area, including a bridleway.	
<p>Perceptual aspects</p> <p><i>This considers qualities such as rurality (traditional land uses with few modern, human influences), sense of remoteness or tranquility. High scenic value, freedom from human activity/ disturbance and 'dark skies' would add to sensitivity in this criterion. This is because development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from a sense of tranquility and or remoteness.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
The proximity to features such as the A1(M) and frequent trains on the railway line in the west produce a considerable amount of sound pollution, and intervisibility with modern built development in Woolmer Green detracts from the perceptual qualities of the area.	The area feels remote because of its large scale arable land use with an open rolling landform. This perceptual quality is more apparent in the south of the assessment area where there is less intervisibility with Woolmer Green.	
<p>Settlement setting</p> <p><i>The extent to which the landscape area i) contributes to the identity and distinctiveness of a settlement by way of its character and/ or scenic quality, for example by providing an attractive backdrop or setting, or playing an important part in views from a settlement; and ii) relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement and the character of the adjacent settlement edge, including the role of significant landscape elements in either separating an undeveloped area from a settled area or linking it to it.</i></p>		

Landscape Character Area 37: Datchworth Settled Slopes

Low	Moderate	High
<p>Tree cover along the railway line creates strong distinction between Oaklands and the LCA to the east.</p>	<p>The area provides long views north over gently sloping land from the edge of Burnham Green.</p> <p>Although it has no particular landscape qualities, the openness of the land to the west of Woolmer Green is important in retaining distinction from the northern edge of Oaklands, with which there is intervisibility across the railway line.</p>	<p>Land surrounding Woolmer Green provides rural setting to the settlement as it has an open, undulating character with many of the slopes being visually prominent. It also provides an attractive setting to the western end of Datchworth Green.</p>
<p>Visual prominence</p> <p><i>This considers the visual prominence of the landscape area, reflecting the extent of openness or enclosure in the landscape (due to landform and land cover), and extent to which potential development would be visible. It also considers the skyline character of the area – for instance whether it has features that form a visually distinctive skyline – and any role the landscape area plays in contributing to valued views, such as from promoted viewpoints, routes or recreational areas.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
	<p>Woodland areas screen some views and limit intervisibility. Woodland blocks form key skyline features.</p>	<p>Much of the assessment area is visually prominent as the undulating landform increases the visibility of slopes and the lack of hedgerows in many areas increases the length of views.</p>

Landscape Character Area 37: Datchworth Settled Slopes
Landscape assessment area (37a)



Sensitivity to development around Woolmer Green, northern edge of Oaklands and southern edge of Knebworth (37a)

The sensitivity of the assessment area is increased by the visual prominence and provision of setting to Woolmer Green resulting from its sloping, open landform with limited hedgerow boundaries. The proximity of the area to multiple Local Wildlife Sites, BAP Priority Habitat deciduous woodlands and some listed buildings also increase sensitivity. The area plays an important role in providing a setting for Woolmer Green, Oaklands, Knebworth, Datchworth and Burnham Green. Landscape sensitivity is reduced by the presence of the A1(M) and the railway line, both of which produce significant sound pollution, and by the urban character of Woolmer Green, although its valley floor location limits impact on views. Overall this landscape has a **moderate-high** sensitivity rating.

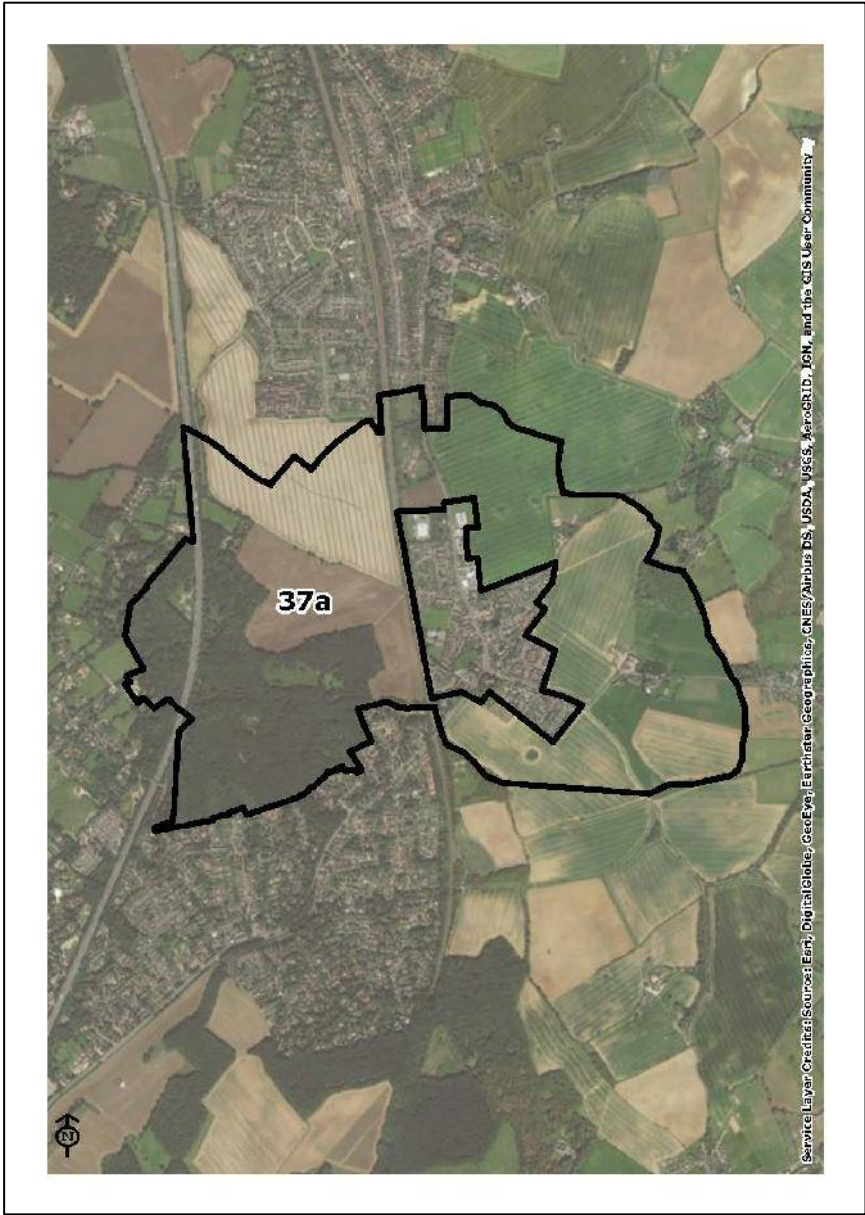
Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
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Key sensitivities and mitigation potential around Woolmer Green, northern edge of Oaklands and southern edge of Knebworth (37a)

To minimise adverse impact on landscape and visual character, development proposals should:

- Avoid development on sloping land which has high intervisibility with existing settlement or would be visually prominent in the wider landscape.
- Ensure development does not degrade the quality of neighbouring LWSs.
- Maintain the rural setting provided to surrounding settlements by the assessment area.
- Maintain the rural setting of historic farmsteads on the slopes above Woolmer Green (Mardleybury and Paynes).
- Protect existing features of ecological interest including remaining hedgerows and areas of priority habitat deciduous woodlands.

Landscape Character Area 37: Datchworth Settled Slopes
Representative views (37a)

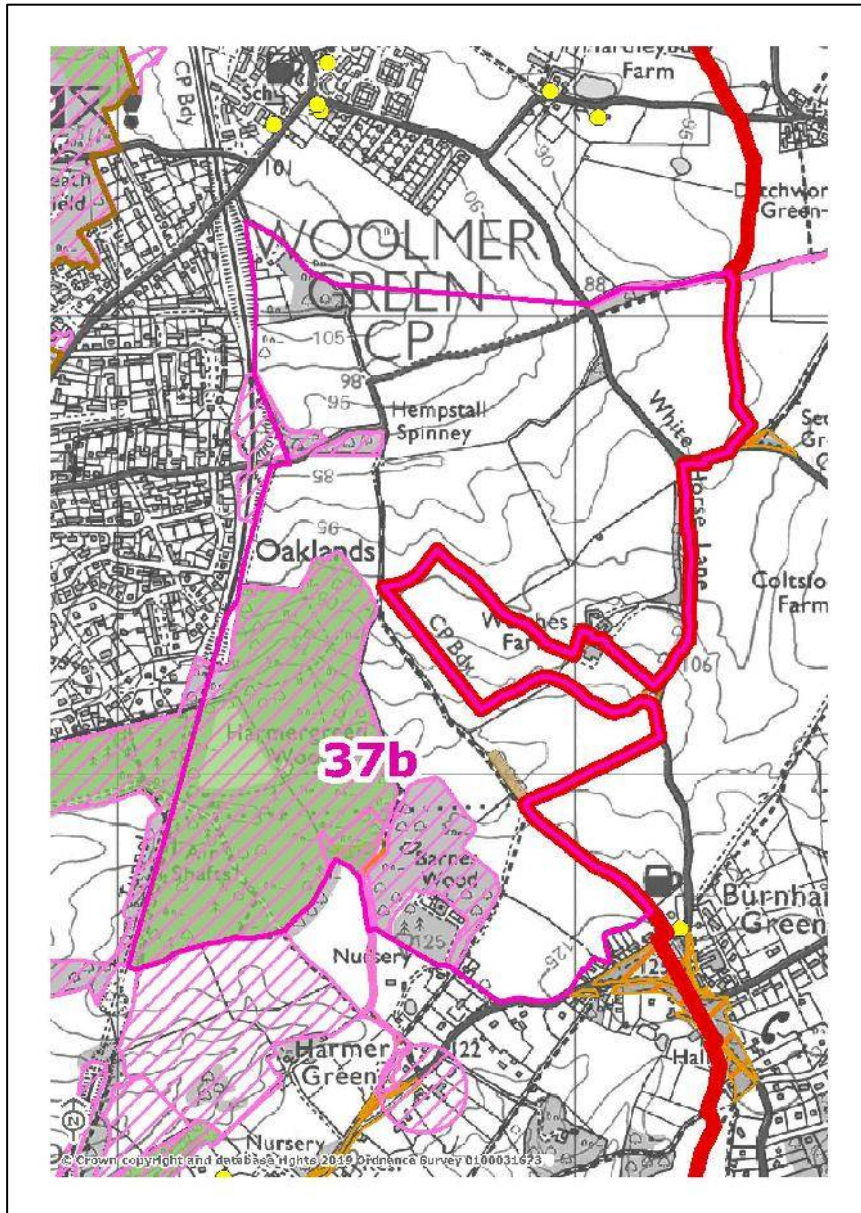


View southwest back towards the settlement edge of Woolmer Green from the footpath near New Road.



View north from Mardleybury Farm towards the existing settlement edge of Woolmer Green.

Landscape Character Area 37: Datchworth Settled Slopes
Landscape assessment area (37b)



Sensitivity to development between the eastern edge of Oaklands and Burnham Green (37b)

This area has a more remote rural character than land closer to Woolmer Green, with tree cover providing strong separation from Oaklands and no major roads in the vicinity, although the presence of the railway line to the west has some impact on tranquillity. The undulating and open landform provides a rural setting to Burnham Green.

The area has an overall **moderate-high** landscape sensitivity to residential development.

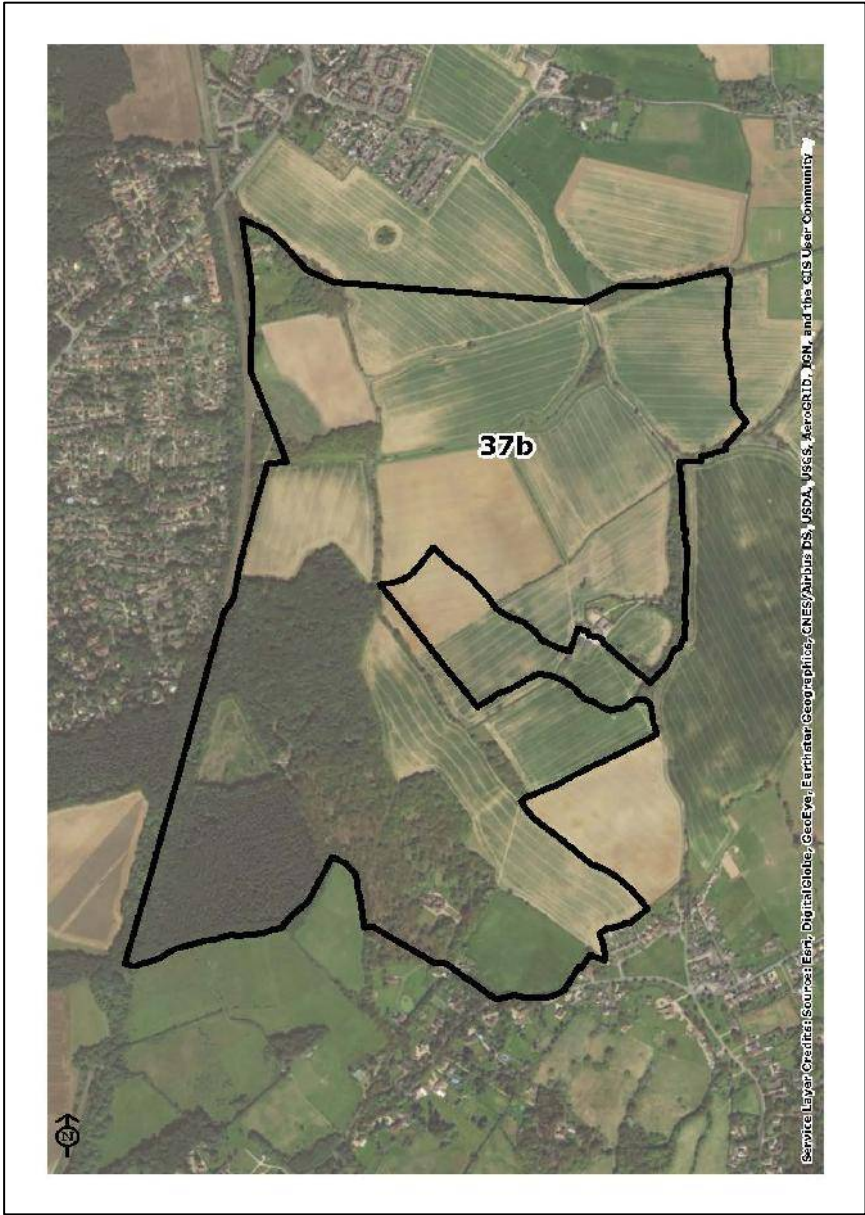
Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-high	High
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Key sensitivities and mitigation potential between the eastern edge of Oaklands and Burnham Green(37b)

To minimise adverse impact on landscape and visual character, development proposals should:

- Preserve the rural agricultural character of the visually prominent slopes.
- Ensure that development does not detract from the provision of habitat within the adjacent Hammergreen Wood (also an ancient woodland), Hempstall Spinney and Barnes Wood Local Wildlife Sites.
- Ensure new development does not imping on the rural setting of Burnham Green.

**Landscape Character Area 37: Datchworth Settled Slopes
Representative views (37b)**

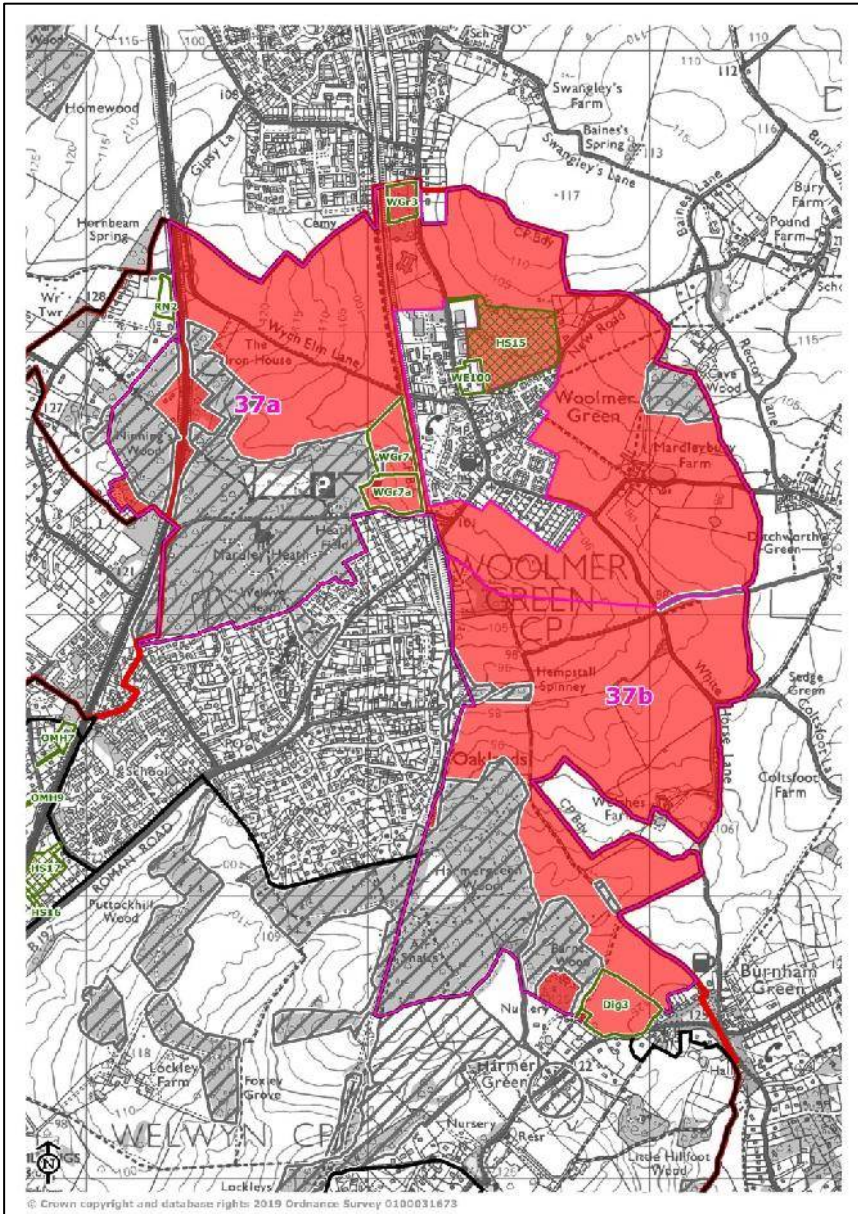


View south from near Hempstall Spinney, showing the undulating and open arable landscape.





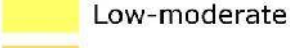

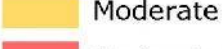

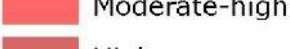




View west from Whitehorse Lane, showing the undulating arable fields.

Landscape Character Area 37: Datchworth Settled Slopes
Sensitivity ratings across assessment area



Sensitivity ratings key

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|---------------|
|  | Welwyn Hatfield Boundary | Sensitivity rating | |
|  | Landscape Character Area (LCA) |  | Low |
|  | LCA Subdivision |  | Low-moderate |
|  | All absolute constraints |  | Moderate |
|  | Promoted Sites |  | Moderate-high |
|  | Site allocations |  | High |

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Landscape Character Area 42: Tewin, Dawley and Lockley Estate Farmland

Tewin, Dawley and Lockley Estate Farmland

Location and Landscape Character Summary

The assessment area encompasses the majority of the Tewin, Dawley and Lockley Estate Farmland LCA and is located to the north of Welwyn Garden City, where it wraps around the northern extents of Digswell village and lies between the settlements of Welwyn (to the west), Oaklands (to the north) and Burnham Green (to the northeast). The area comprises a south-facing, strongly undulating rural slope occupied by a mixture of moderate to large scale arable fields and woodland.

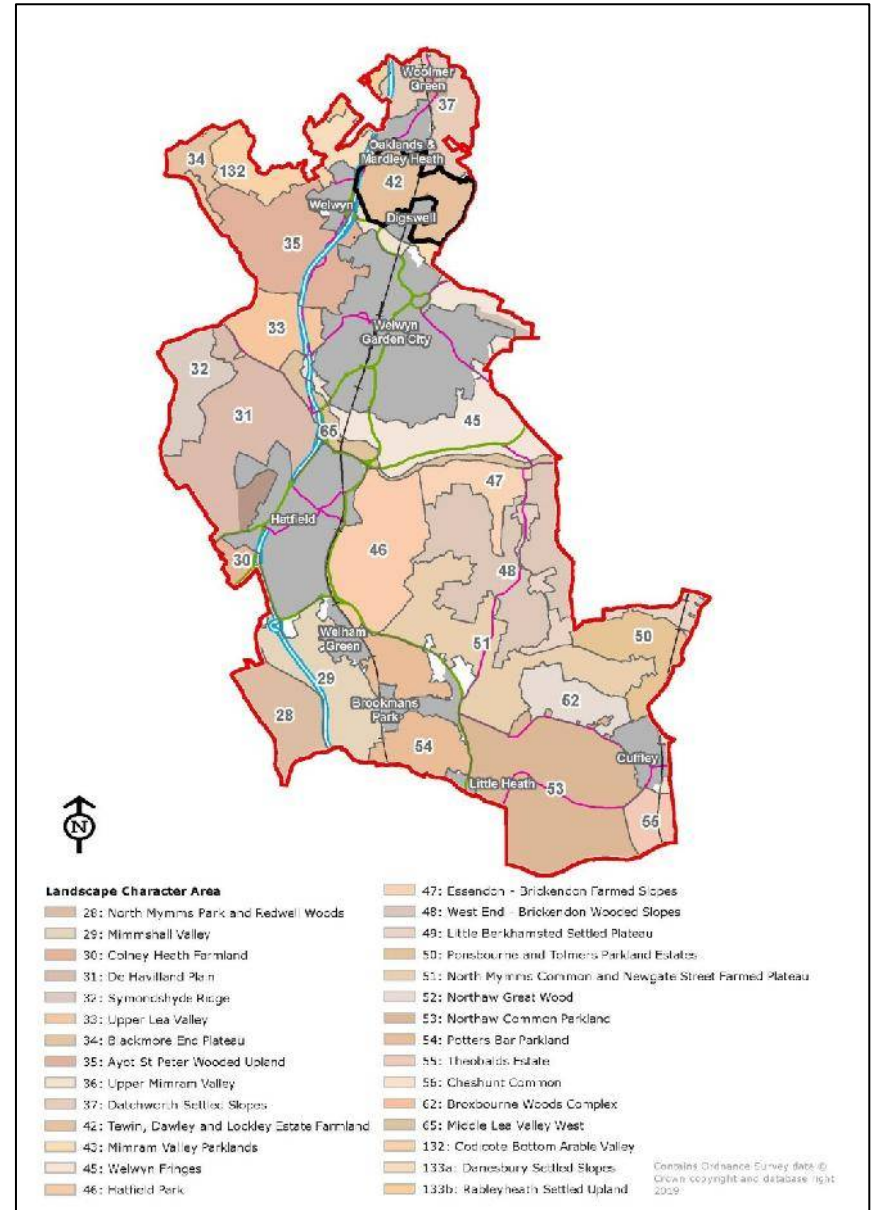
Assessment Areas

The assessment area has been divided into the following sub-areas:

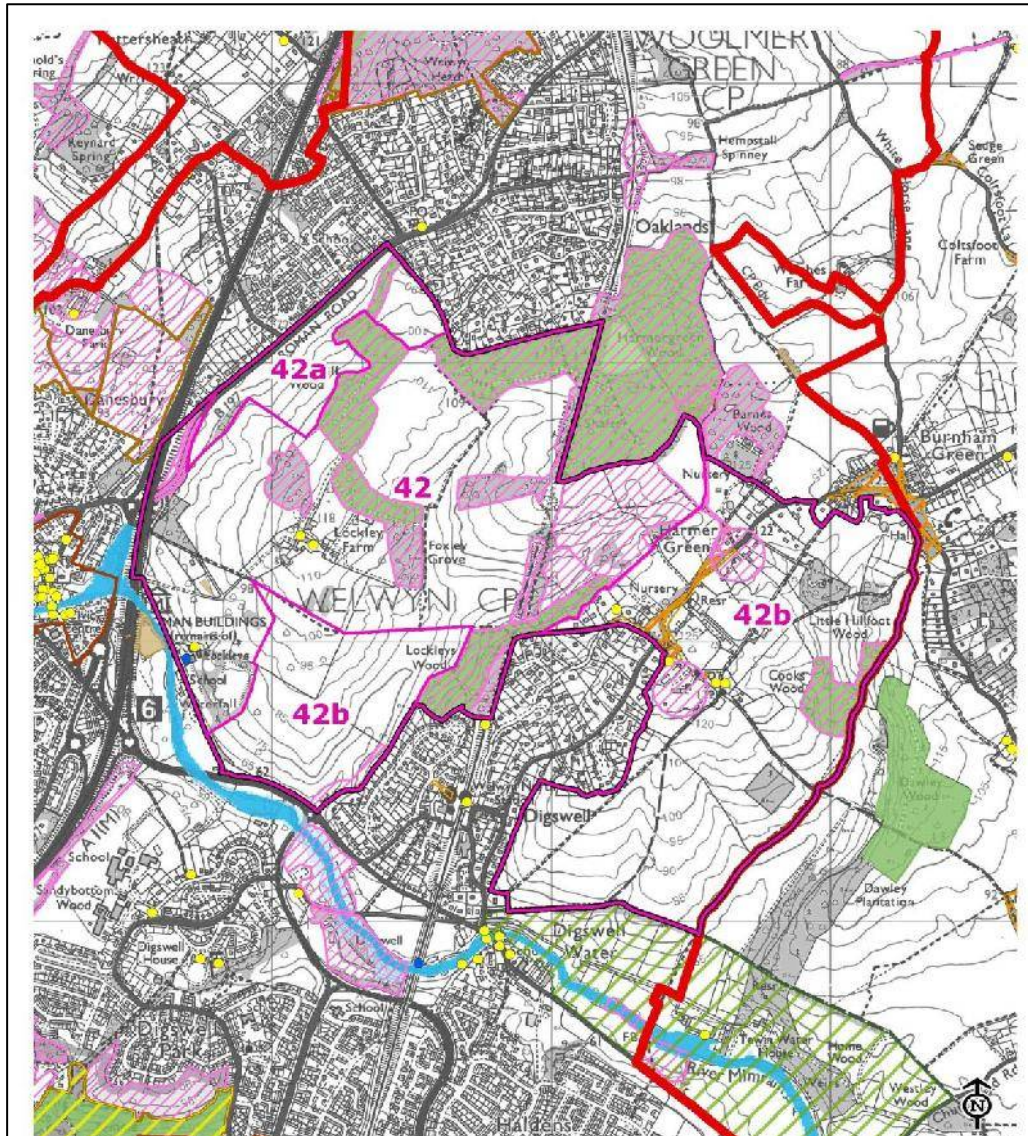
- LCA 42 away from the main settlement edges (42)
- Settlement edge of Oaklands (42a)
- Settlement edge of Digswell (42b)

The settlement edge of Oaklands has been identified on the basis of topography and land cover, where rising slopes and woodland blocks mark the limit of intervisibility between the village and the LCA.

There are two settlement edges to Digswell which are separated by Lockleys Wood. The eastern edge extends up to the eastern boundary of the LCA and encompasses sprawled development of Harmer Green. The western edge is delineated by field boundaries abutting Sherrardswood School and a public right of way.



Landscape Character Area 42: Tewin, Dawley and Lockley Estate Farmland



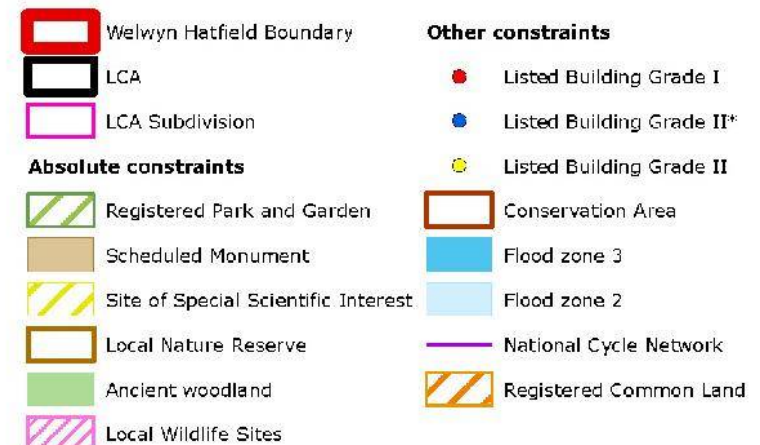
Absolute Constraints and Designations

The following absolute constraints apply to LCA 42:

- Large collection of Local Wildlife Sites at Harmergreen Wood, Lockleys Wood, Puttockhill Wood, Cooks Wood and Foxley Grove and Hazel Grove (which are all designated as ancient woodland).
- Lockleys Roman villa Scheduled Monument.

Other designations that apply to LCA 42 of relevance to landscape are:

- Listed buildings of Grades II and II*
- Open Access land at Harmer Green



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Landscape Character Area 42: Tewin, Dawley and Lockley Estate Farmland

Analysis of Landscape Sensitivity in the Character Area

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Criteria		
Landform		
<i>This considers the shape of the landscape. Smooth, gently undulating or flat landforms are likely to be less sensitive to development than a landscape with distinct landform features, such as hills and valleys, as development may mask distinctive topographical features that contribute to landscape character.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
		Strongly undulating south-facing slope descending to the River Mimram along the southern boundary, with prominent localised hilltops.
Landscape pattern and time depth		
<i>This considers the field pattern and historic origin of the landscape area. Landscapes with more irregular field patterns, particularly those of historic origin, are likely to more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than landscape with regular scale field patterns because of the risk of losing characteristic landscape patterns.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
	Majority of fields are arable and moderate to large in scale, but woodland blocks, many of them Ancient Woodland, increase the landscape sensitivity pattern. Around Burnham Green there are some smaller enclosed fields, although many of which are used for equine pasture.	The Lockleys estate farmland is an area of historic parkland and still retains some of its estate character with limited parkland around the house and remnant parkland oaks in arable fields.
'Natural' character		
<i>This considers the 'naturalistic' qualities of the landscape area in terms of the coverage of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features (e.g. trees and hedgerows) which contribute to landscape character and could be vulnerable to loss from development. Areas with frequent natural features (including large areas of designated habitats) result in increased sensitivity to development, while landscape with limited natural features will be less sensitive.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
	The relatively large arable fields that occupy much of the area have limited natural character, with limited hedgerow connectivity, but for the most part they are located within a well-wooded context which increases their sensitivity.	Woodland is a dominant landscape element in this area, with most woodland blocks designated as Local Wildlife Sites and a number as Ancient Woodland.
Built character		
<i>This considers the built character of the landscape area with particular reference to the presence of heritage assets that contribute to landscape character (i.e. valued features that may be designated as Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, archaeological features or remains or other features). Landscapes with a high density of historic features important to the character of the area are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than areas where such development already exists.</i>		

Landscape Character Area 42: Tewin, Dawley and Lockley Estate Farmland

Low	Moderate	High
	Majority of the area is undeveloped with occasional farmsteads. The Grade II* listed Welwyn railway viaduct is visible in views to the south from elevated hilltops.	Sherrardswood School lies in the east and occupies the old Lockleys House building and is set within parkland. There are other historic buildings (Grade II listed) at Lockley Farm and north-east of Digswell.
<p>Recreational value</p> <p><i>This criterion considers the presence of features and facilities which enable enjoyment of the landscape, and the importance of these. This may include public rights of way, bridleways, open access land and outdoor tourist/ visitor attractions with facilities. Recreation activities such as walking, cycling, horse riding or more formal recreation activities where enjoyment of the landscape is important to the experience. Importance of features may be indicated by designation such as long distance footpaths or recreation routes, national cycle routes, proximity to areas of local population (such as local parks) and outdoor tourist attractions often marked on Ordnance Survey maps.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
	Public access is well provisioned in the area with an extensive network of local public rights of way, particularly in the east providing connections between Digswell, Burnham Green and the village of Tewin. An area at Harmer Green is open access common.	
<p>Perceptual aspects</p> <p><i>This considers qualities such as rurality (traditional land uses with few modern, human influences), sense of remoteness or tranquility. High scenic value, freedom from human activity/ disturbance and 'dark skies' would add to sensitivity in this criterion. This is because development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from a sense of tranquility and or remoteness.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
The A1 (M) abuts the western boundary providing aural intrusion in the west of the area. Tranquility is also reduced intermittently by passing trains, although most of the railway line goes underground through a tunnel in the area.	The area has rural perceptual qualities despite being surrounded by built development, as woodland blocks and the undulating landform help to enclose areas, providing a sense of remoteness.	
<p>Settlement setting</p> <p><i>The extent to which the landscape area i) contributes to the identity and distinctiveness of a settlement by way of its character and/ or scenic quality, for example by providing an attractive backdrop or setting, or playing an important part in views from a settlement; and ii) relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement and the character of the adjacent settlement edge, including the role of significant landscape elements in either separating an undeveloped area from a settled area or linking it to it.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
		The assessment area provides a rural visual setting to surrounding settlements, with the rolling agricultural hills and wooded skyline forming an attractive backdrop for the settlement edges of Oaklands and Digswell. Higher ground also provides a rural backdrop to eastward views over Welwyn.

Landscape Character Area 42: Tewin, Dawley and Lockley Estate Farmland

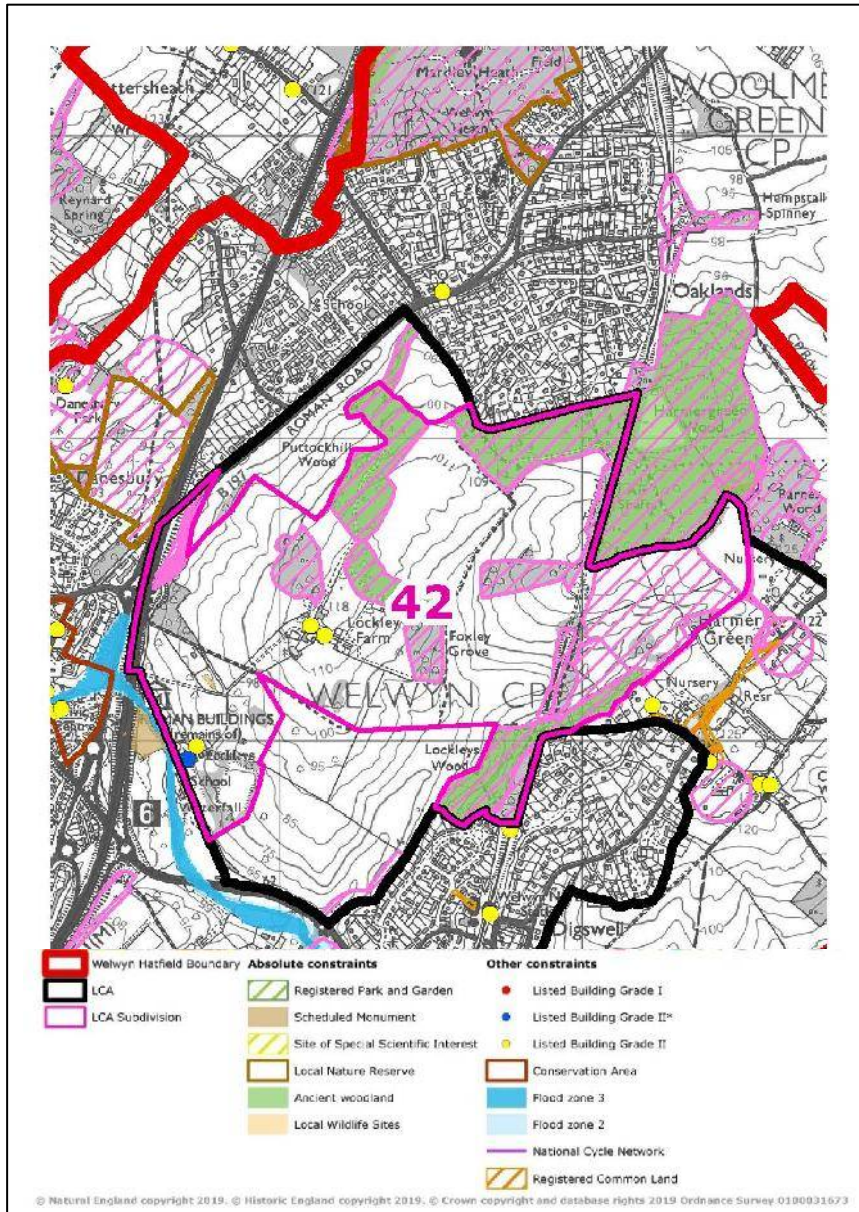
Visual prominence

This considers the visual prominence of the landscape area, reflecting the extent of openness or enclosure in the landscape (due to landform and land cover), and extent to which potential development would be visible. It also considers the skyline character of the area – for instance whether it has features that form a visually distinctive skyline – and any role the landscape area plays in contributing to valued views, such as from promoted viewpoints, routes or recreational areas.

Low	Moderate	High
Woodlands create some localised containment from wider view.		Many parts of the area are elevated and strongly undulating, resulting in localised visual prominence. The rollong hills and woodland blocks form distinctive skylines.

Landscape Character Area 42: Tewin, Dawley and Lockley Estate Farmland

Landscape assessment area away from urban edges (42)



Sensitivity to development away from urban edges (42)

The proximity of road and rail infrastructure has some adverse perceptual impacts, but the area's visually prominent, wooded slopes and strongly undulating landform are sensitive in their own right but also in providing a rural setting to Oaklands, Welwyn, Digswell and Welwyn Garden City. The remnants of parkland character associated with the Lockleys estate and the many public rights of way also add sensitivity, resulting overall in a **high** landscape sensitivity rating to residential development.

Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
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* Rating variations are mapped on the last page of the LCA 42 assessment

Key sensitivities and mitigation potential away from urban edges (42)

To minimise adverse impact on landscape and visual character, development proposals should:

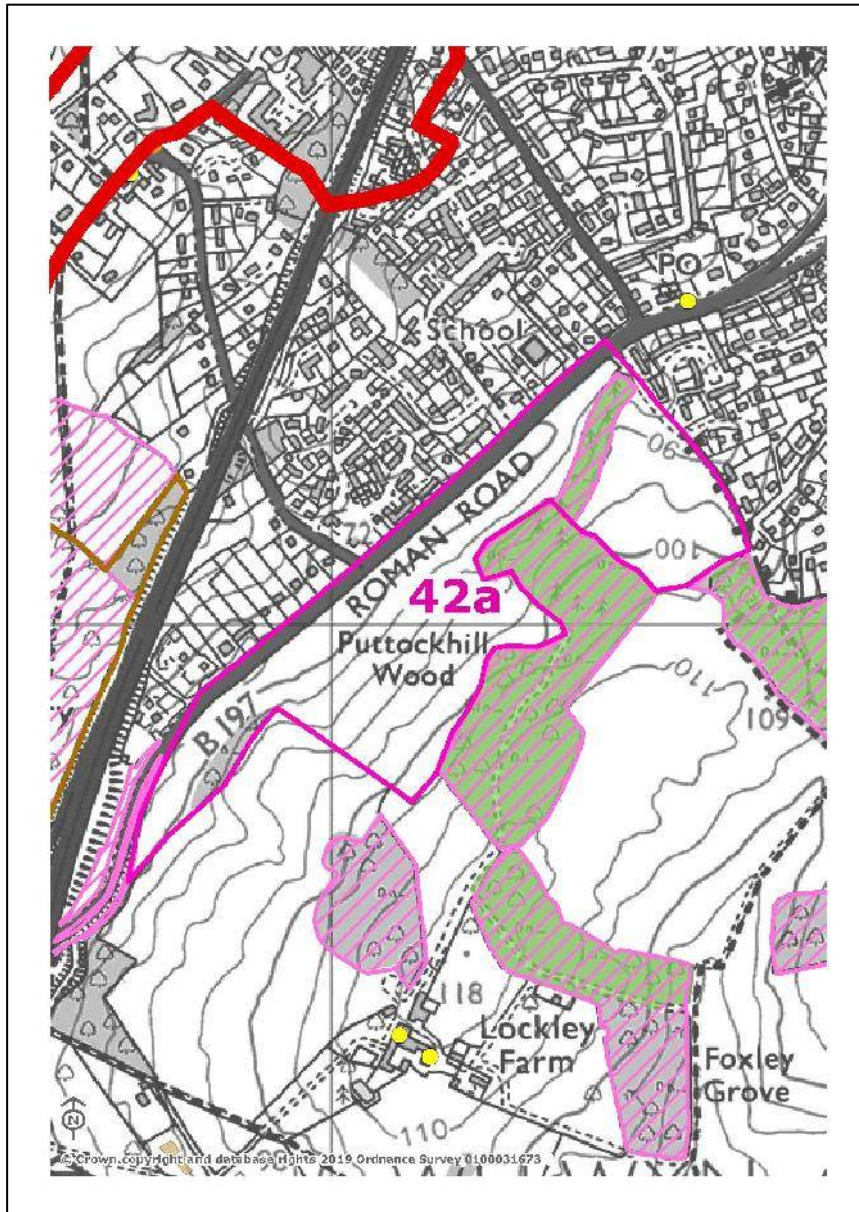
- Maintain the rural nature of the landscape and the parkland character by retaining parkland trees.
- Retain open and uninterrupted views towards woodland blocks on the skyline.
- Maintain the relationship between the listed Sherrardswood School building and the surrounding parkland landscape by minimising encroachment.
- Minimise intrusion on the prominent slopes.
- Maintain the extensive network of public rights of way.

Landscape Character Area 42: Tewin, Dawley and Lockley Estate Farmland
Representative views away from the urban edges (42)



View southwest from the edge of Lockleys Wood, showing the open arable undulating landform with woodland blocks.

Landscape Character Area 42: Tewin, Dawley and Lockley Estate Farmland
Landscape assessment for the edge of Oaklands (42a)



Sensitivity to development on the edge of Oaklands (42a)

There is more urban intrusion close to the Great North Road, and woodlands provide containment from the wider LCA. However this area is nonetheless very distinct from the adjacent settlement edges, with the Great North Road and Turpins Ride both following valleys beyond which the sloping landform of the LCA and its woodlands provide a visually prominent rural setting. Therefore this area has **moderate-high** landscape sensitivity to residential development.

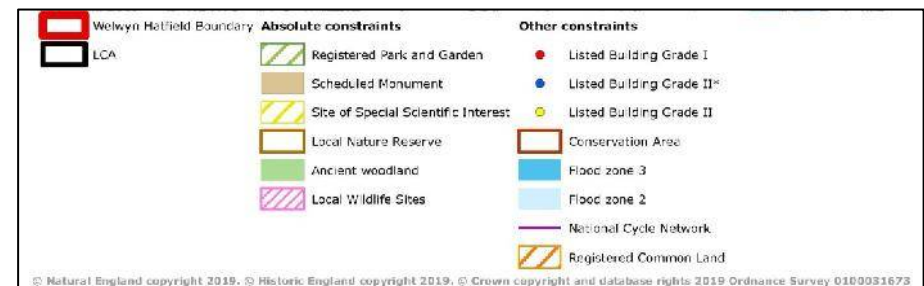
Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-high	High
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* Rating variations are mapped on the last page of the LCA 42

Key sensitivities and mitigation potential on the edge of Oaklands (42a)

To minimise adverse impact on landscape and visual character, development proposals should:

- Minimise intrusion on the sloping landform.
- Retain uninterrupted views towards the wooded skyline.



Landscape Character Area 42: Tewin, Dawley and Lockley Estate Farmland
Representative views of the edge of Oaklands (42a)



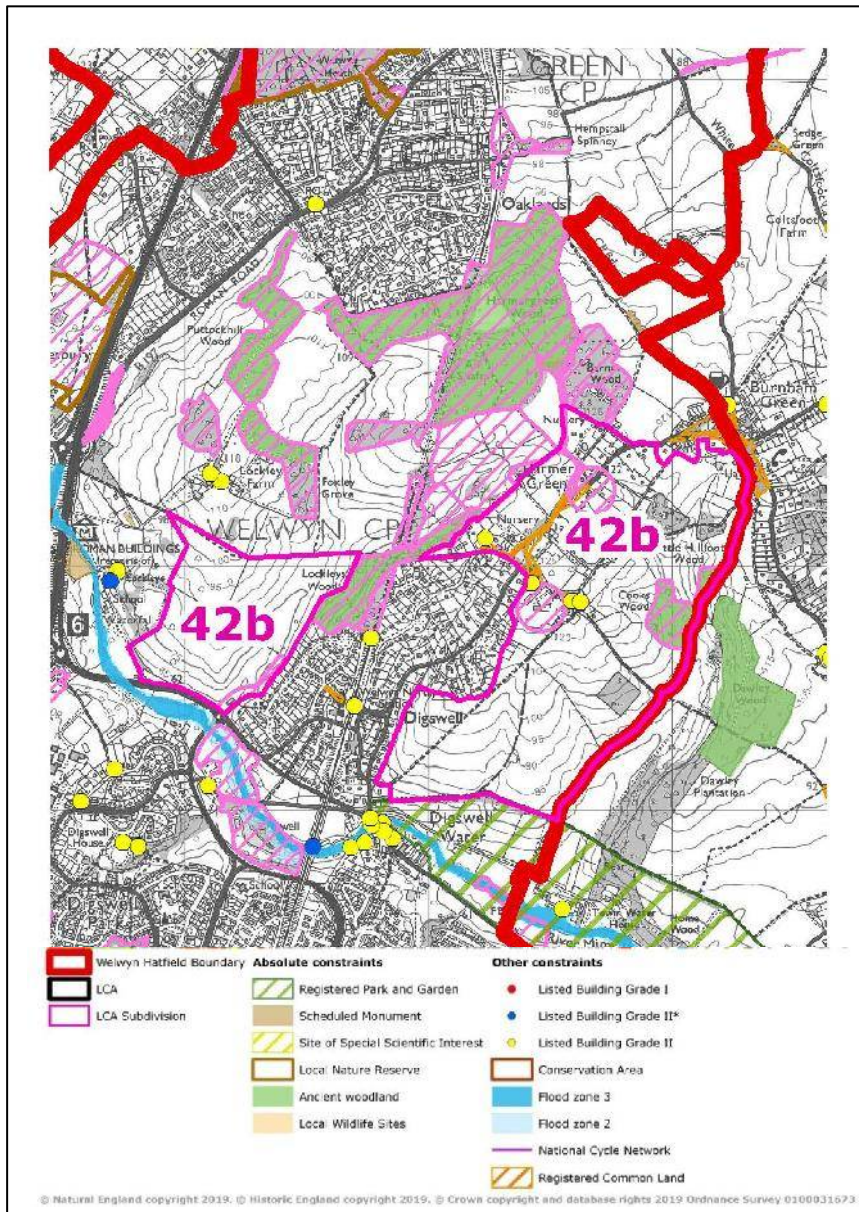
Looking south east from junction of B197 and The Avenue



View from Turpins Ride towards Puttockhill Wood

Landscape Character Area 42: Tewin, Dawley and Lockley Estate Farmland

Landscape assessment for the edge of Digswell (42b)



Sensitivity to development on the edge of Digswell (42b)

The prominent open sloping landform, rural setting with wooded features on the skyline, historic parkland character associated with the Lockley estate and extensive network of public rights of way make the settlement edges to the east and west of Digswell **moderate-high** in sensitivity to residential development. This is reduced slightly, to **moderate**, in close proximity to the settlement in the larger arable field to the east of Digswell, but where the terrain provides strong eastwards views towards open countryside there is a stronger rural character.

Tree cover around Harmer Green maintains consistency with the surrounding landscape, and minimises intrusion from housing, but the landform is flatter and fields are relatively small, enclosed by mature vegetation, resulting in a **moderate** sensitivity to residential development.

Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-high	High
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* Rating variations are mapped on the last page of the LCA 42 assessment

Key sensitivities and mitigation potential on the edge of Digswell (42b)

To minimise adverse impact on landscape and visual character, development proposals should:

- Minimise intrusion on the prominent sloping landform.
- Retain uninterrupted views towards the wooded skyline.
- Maintain historic parkland character and associated features of the Lockleys estate along western settlement edge.
- Retain the small scale field pattern around Harmer Green.
- Maintain the extensive network of public rights of way.

Landscape Character Area 42: Tewin, Dawley and Lockley Estate Farmland
Representative views of the edge of Digswell (42b)

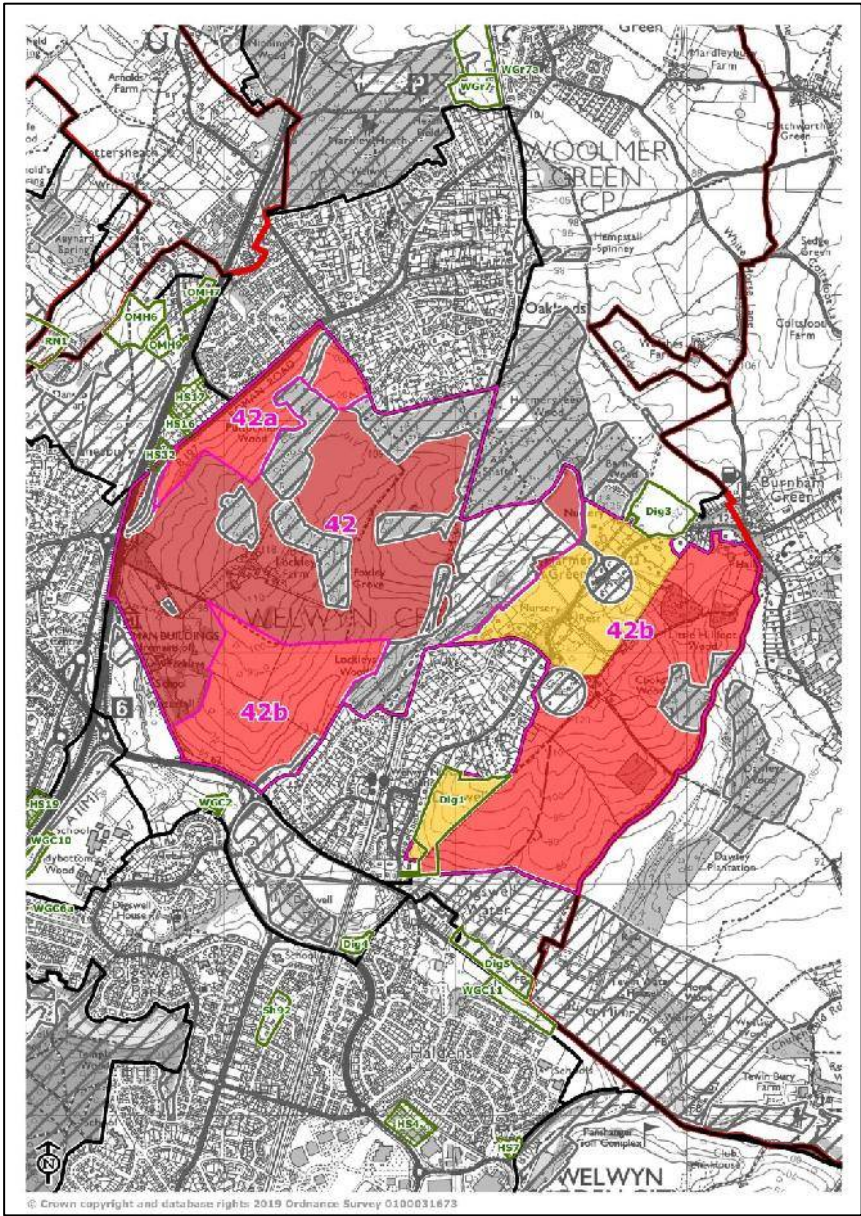


View from the hilltop to the east of Digswell, looking southwest and including views of the Welwyn Railway Viaduct.








View of the elevated western settlement edge of Digswell.

Landscape Character Area 42: Tewin, Dawley and Lockley Estate Farmland
Sensitivity ratings across assessment area



Sensitivity ratings key

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|
|  | Welwyn Hatfield Boundary | Sensitivity rating |
|  | Landscape Character Area (LCA) |  Low |
|  | LCA Subdivision |  Low-moderate |
|  | All absolute constraints |  Moderate |
|  | Promoted Sites |  Moderate-high |
|  | Site allocations |  High |

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Landscape Character Area 45: Welwyn Fringes

Welwyn Fringes

Location and Landscape Character Summary

The assessment area encompasses the majority of the Welwyn Fringe LCA, where it wraps around the southern and eastern edges of Welwyn Garden City from Junction 5 of the A1(M) near Lemsford anticlockwise round to Panshanger. Also included in the assessment area is a small part of the Mimram Valley Parklands LCA (43) that lies within the Borough on the fringes of Haldens and Digsweil Water just to the west of Panshanger.

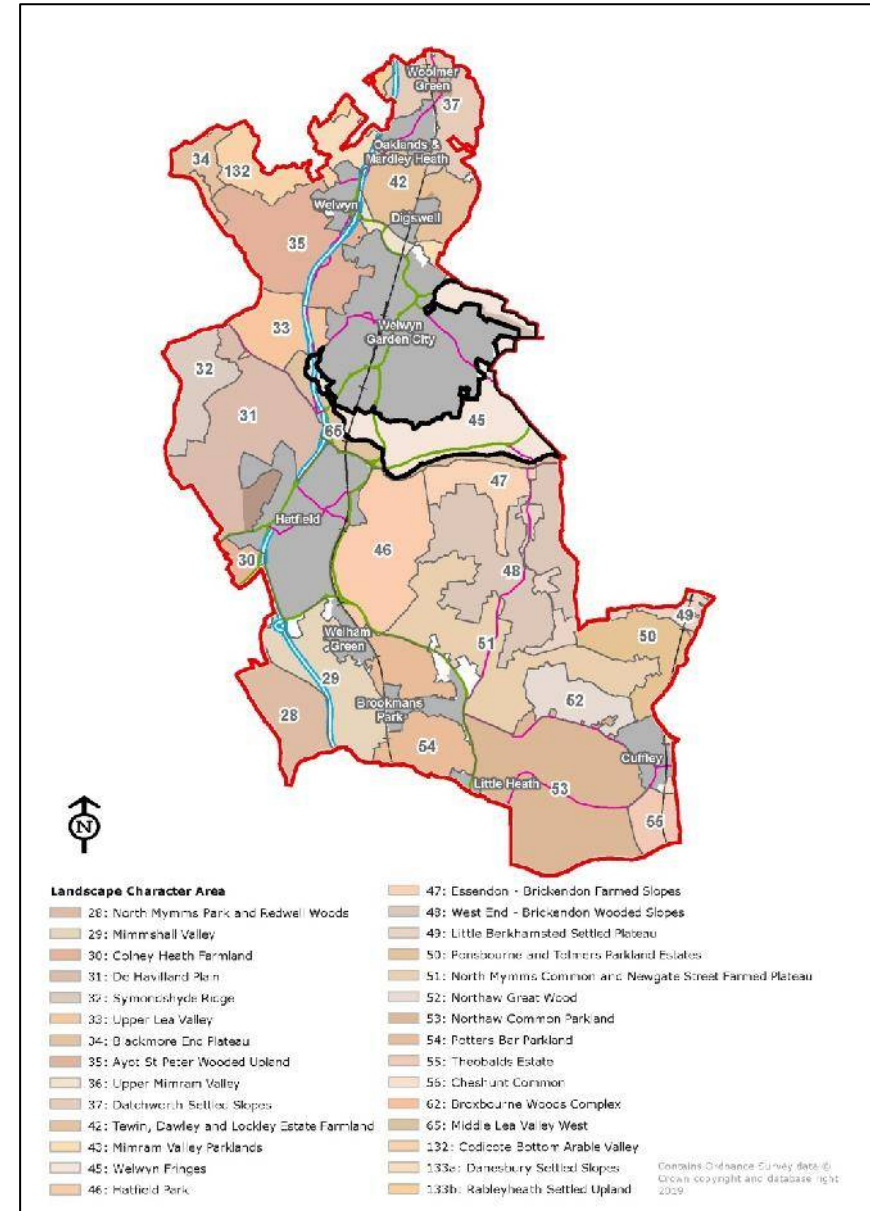
The area, which is separated from the northern edge of Hatfield by the River Lea valley, accommodates a wide range of land uses, with typical urban-fringe land uses occurring between Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield and more rural land use to the east.

Assessment Areas

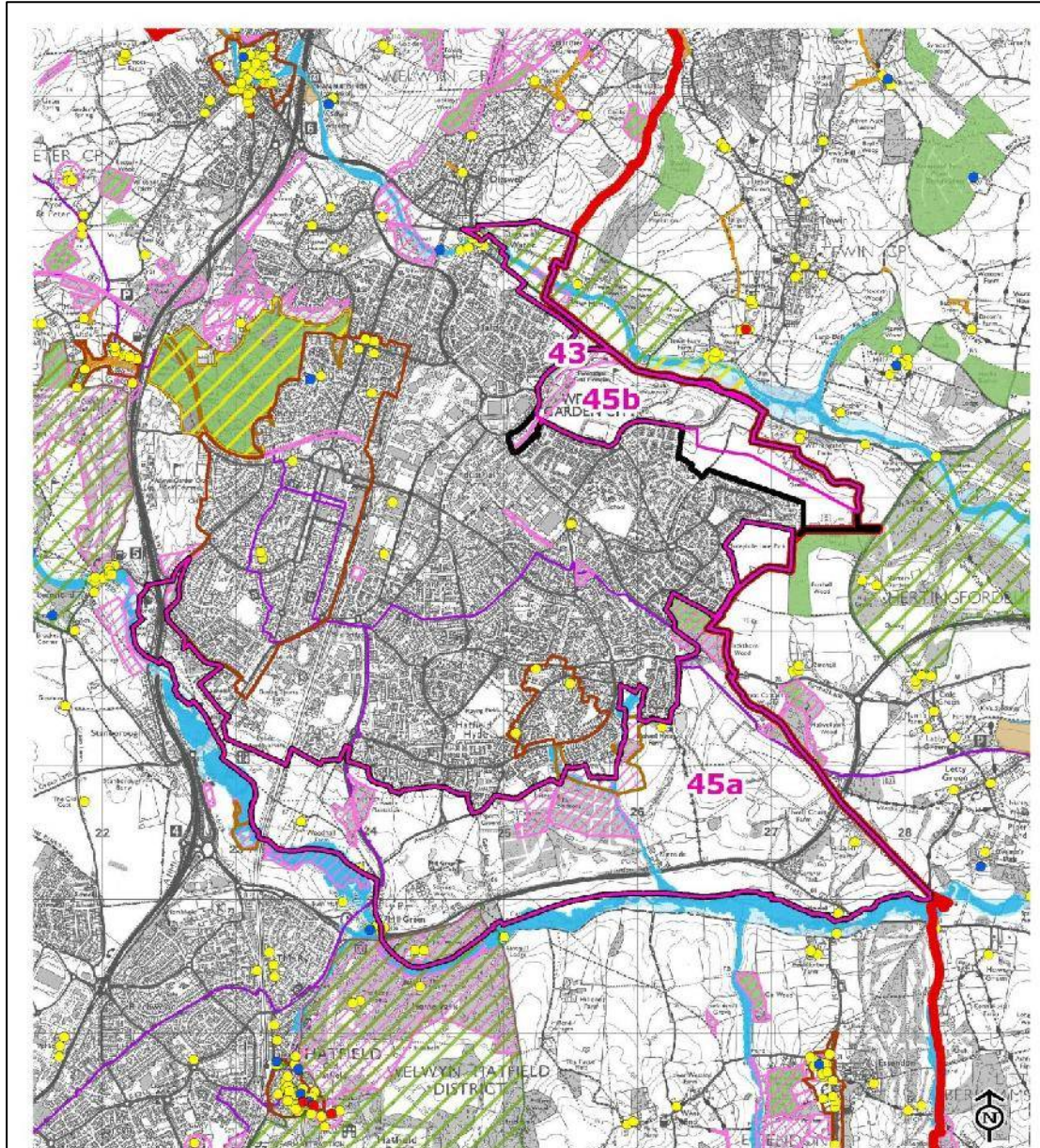
The assessment area has been divided into the following sub-areas:

- The River Lea valleys slopes to the south of Welwyn Garden City (45a);
- The River Mimram slopes to the north east of Welwyn Garden City, including the fragment of the Mimram Valley Parklands LCA, and Moneyhole Lane Park to the east of the town (45b).

It is noted that part of LCA 45 occupied by the former Panshanger Aerodrome has been released from the Green Belt for housing development.



Landscape Character Area 45: Welwyn Fringes



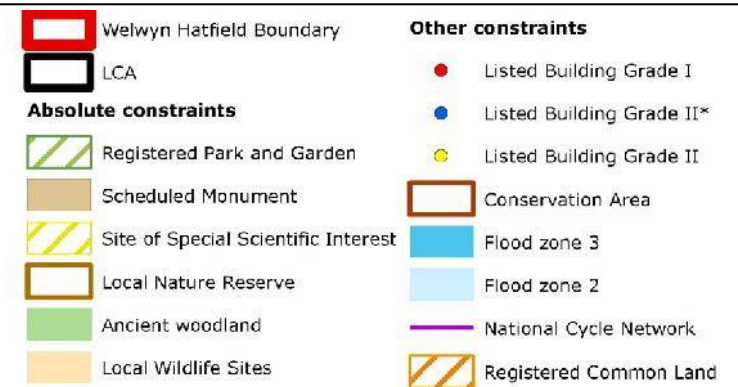
Absolute Constraints and Designations

The following absolute constraints apply to LCA 45:

- Tewin Water Registered Park and Garden (Grade II)
- The northern part of Hatfield House Registered Park and Garden (Grade I)
- Ancient woodland at Rolls Wood
- Local Wildlife Sites at Valley Road Open Space, Creswick Plantation, Rolls & Blackthorn Woods, The Commons, The Commons LNR, Home Park, Hatfield Estate and Greater Captain's & Howellpark Wood
- Local Nature Reserves at The Commons and Stanborough Reedmarsh

Other designations of relevance to landscape that apply to LCA 45 are:

- Stanborough Country Park
- Grade II Listed Buildings
- National Cycle Routes 12 and 61



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Landscape Character Area 45: Welwyn Fringes

Analysis of Landscape Sensitivity in the Character Area

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Criteria		
<p>Landform</p> <p><i>This considers the shape of the landscape. Smooth, gently undulating or flat landforms are likely to be less sensitive to development than a landscape with distinct landform features, such as hills and valleys, as development may mask distinctive topographical features that contribute to landscape character.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
The landform at Moneyhole Lane Park is flat.	Moderately sloping northern side of the River Lea valley to the south of Welwyn Garden City. A hill with gentle slopes near Holwell Hyde Lane is a distinctive feature in relation to the adjacent landscape, despite being artificially formed to infill former gravel workings.	Relatively steeply sloping landform in the north of the LCA (including LCA 43), on the side of the River Mimram valley.
<p>Landscape pattern and time depth</p> <p><i>This considers the field pattern and historic origin of the landscape area. Landscapes with more irregular field patterns, particularly those of historic origin, are likely to more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than landscape with regular scale field patterns because of the risk of losing characteristic landscape patterns.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
Much of historic alluvial floodplain and estate pattern diminished by development including former mineral extraction. Large scale and regular field pattern in the east.	Historically the valley included a number of parklands, and although the spread of Welwyn Garden City and increased traffic have diminished this characteristic the extent of tree cover in the valley and proximity to the more intact parkland at Panshanger contributes to retention of some parkland character.	Tewin Water Park, on the north side of the Mimram valley within LCA 43, is a Registered Park and Garden.
<p>'Natural' character</p> <p><i>This considers the 'naturalistic' qualities of the landscape area in terms of the coverage of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features (e.g. trees and hedgerows) which contribute to landscape character and could be vulnerable to loss from development. Areas with frequent natural features (including large areas of designated habitats) result in increased sensitivity to development, while landscape with limited natural features will be less sensitive.</i></p>		
Low	Moderate	High
Moneyhole Lane Park has an urban fringe character.	Hedgerows and wooded copse along roadsides and field boundaries.	The area contains blocks of BAP Priority Habitat deciduous woodland visible on the skyline. Small area of BAP Priority Habitat semi-improved grassland adjacent to The Commons.
<p>Built character</p> <p><i>This considers the built character of the landscape area with particular reference to the presence of heritage assets that contribute to landscape character (i.e. valued features that may be designated as Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, archaeological features or remains or other features). Landscapes with a high density of historic features important to the character of the area are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than areas where such development</i></p>		

Landscape Character Area 45: Welwyn Fringes

<i>already exists.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
No settlements within the area and very few isolated dwellings and farm buildings.	Limited number of historic buildings set within isolated farmsteads.	
Recreational value		
<i>This criterion considers the presence of features and facilities which enable enjoyment of the landscape, and the importance of these. This may include public rights of way, bridleways, open access land and outdoor tourist/ visitor attractions with facilities. Recreation activities such as walking, cycling, horse riding or more formal recreation activities where enjoyment of the landscape is important to the experience. Importance of features may be indicated by designation such as long distance footpaths or recreation routes, national cycle routes, proximity to areas of local population (such as local parks) and outdoor tourist attractions often marked on Ordnance Survey maps.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
Sports pitches and playing fields adjacent to the settlement edge.	Two golf courses crossed by public rights of way. Two national cycle routes pass through the area.	Part of Stanborough Country Park popular for its fishing and boating lakes to the south with access provided by public rights of way that cross the area.
Perceptual aspects		
<i>This considers qualities such as rurality (traditional land uses with few modern, human influences), sense of remoteness or tranquility. High scenic value, freedom from human activity/ disturbance and 'dark skies' would add to sensitivity in this criterion. This is because development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from a sense of tranquility and or remoteness.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
Overall tranquility and coherence is reduced by a variety of land uses associated with the urban fringe including golf courses, sports pitches / playing fields and sewage works. The A1(M) crosses the western part of the area and the A414 crosses through the southern part; both largely screened by vegetation but are sources of aural intrusion.	A sense of remoteness in the south-east which has a parkland character in places. Large woodland at The Common limits the urbanising impact on the east by providing separation from the settlement edge and the land use activities occurring in the west. There is little perception of development from the B1000, which runs along the Mimram valley.	
Settlement setting		
<i>The extent to which the landscape area i) contributes to the identity and distinctiveness of a settlement by way of its character and/ or scenic quality, for example by providing an attractive backdrop or setting, or playing an important part in views from a settlement; and ii) relates to the form and pattern of the existing adjacent settlement and the character of the adjacent settlement edge, including the role of significant landscape elements in either separating an undeveloped area from a settled area or linking it to it.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
	Most of the LCA lacks visual relationship with the settlement edge due to the mature vegetation that defines the edge of Welwyn Garden City. However the sloping landform still creates distinction between the plateau settlement area and the River Lea valley.	To the north of Welwyn Garden City in this LCA the Mimram valley floor is screened from settlement edge views by landform (e.g. Panshanger Airfield) and/or vegetation, but the relatively steep valley-side slope marks a clear edge to Welwyn Garden City.

Landscape Character Area 45: Welwyn Fringes

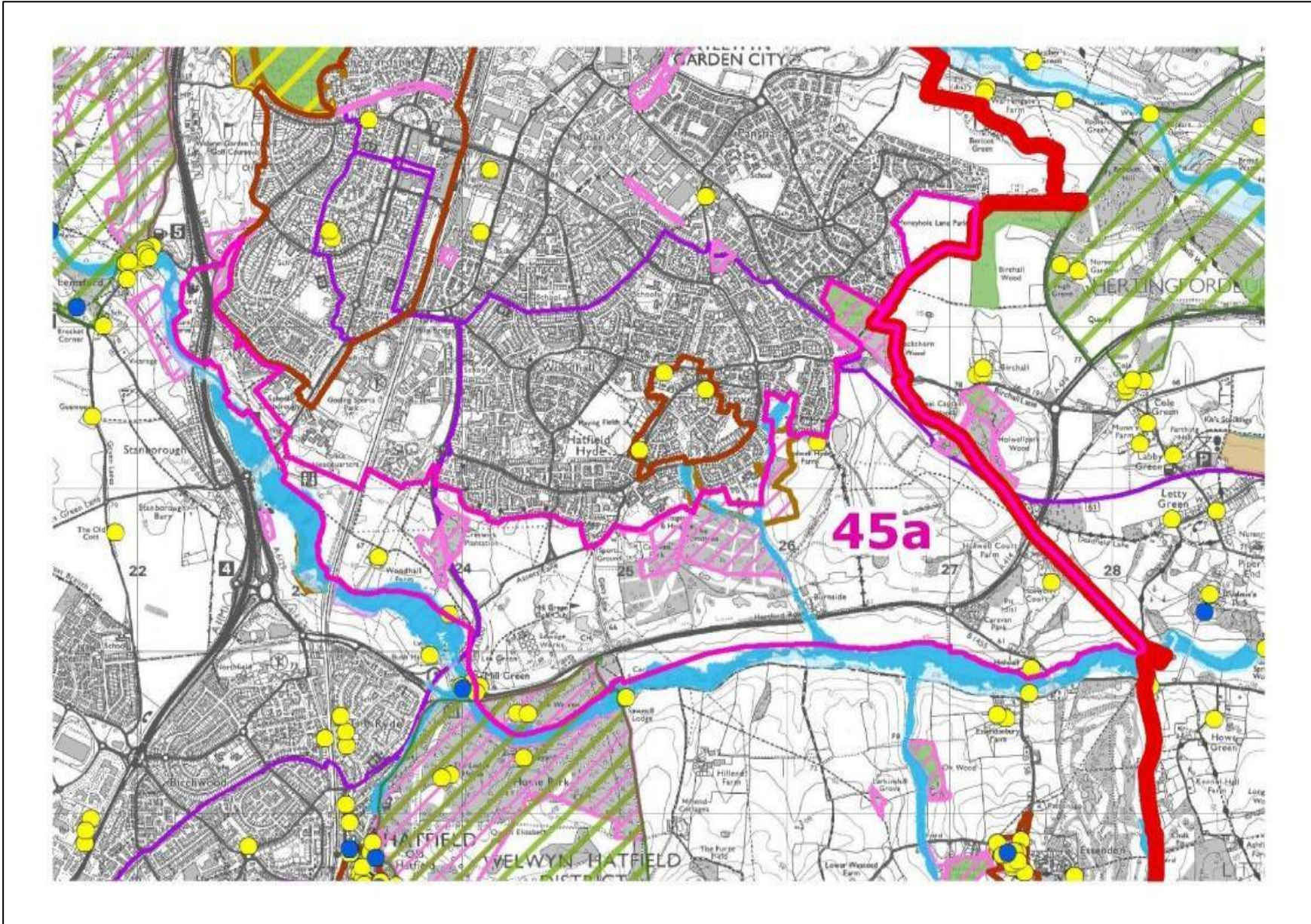
Visual prominence

This considers the visual prominence of the landscape area, reflecting the extent of openness or enclosure in the landscape (due to landform and land cover), and extent to which potential development would be visible. It also considers the skyline character of the area – for instance whether it has features that form a visually distinctive skyline – and any role the landscape area plays in contributing to valued views, such as from promoted viewpoints, routes or recreational areas.

Low	Moderate	High
<p>A visually enclosed landscape screened by vegetation in the form of woodland blocks and field boundaries. Pylons cross the River Lea valley and form visual detractors on the skyline. There is little or no inter-visibility with promoted viewpoints or recreational routes.</p>	<p>The hill landform in the east results in intervisibility with valley slopes to the south of the River Lea.</p> <p>Vegetation typically limits views from the side of the River Mimram valley, but the valley landform allows some intervisibility from higher ground to the north and south.</p>	

Landscape Character Area 45: Welwyn Fringes

Landscape assessment area (45a)



Landscape Character Area 45: Welwyn Fringes

Landscape assessment area (45a)

Sensitivity to development on the River Lea valley slopes (45a)

The majority of the area is occupied by land use activities that can be reasonably anticipated along the urban fringe and crossed or bound by busy roads/railway affecting the tranquillity. This has resulted in a lack of unified landscape character. A strong sense of enclosure from the vegetation in the area will ensure that any future development will be visually screened, but there would nonetheless be some sensitivity associated with expansion downslope towards the valley floor. Overall there is **low-moderate** sensitivity to development in the central part of the area on the slopes above the River Lea, and in the contained paddocks between the B197 and Lemsford Springs.

There is **moderate** sensitivity in Stanborough Park due to its parkland scenery and recreational value. Further east along the Lea valley the area is largely undeveloped. The Commons woodland strengthens natural character and east of this the landform is more varied, with some parkland character in places. The south-eastern corner of the assessment area contains Holwell Court (a grade II listed building) with the surrounding fields forming part of its estate. Blocks of woodland partly enclose the area, which also contains a caravan park. These areas will have **moderate** sensitivity to residential development.

Moneyhole Lane Park is not sensitive in terms of its landform but has recreational value, so sensitivity here is **low-moderate**.

Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
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* Rating variations are mapped on the last page of the LCA 45 assessment

Key sensitivities and mitigation potential on the River Lea valley slopes (45a)

To minimise adverse impact on landscape and visual character, development proposals should:

- Preserve the blocks of deciduous woodland and hedgerows / woodland copses along field boundaries and rural lanes.
- Maintain the small area of BAP Priority Habitat semi-improved grassland adjacent to The Commons.
- Preserve the rural/parkland character and greater sense of remoteness in the east.
- Consider views from the public rights of way and National Cycle Routes running through the area.

Landscape Character Area 45: Welwyn Fringes

Representative views (45a)



Landscape Character Area 45: Welwyn Fringes

Representative views (45a)

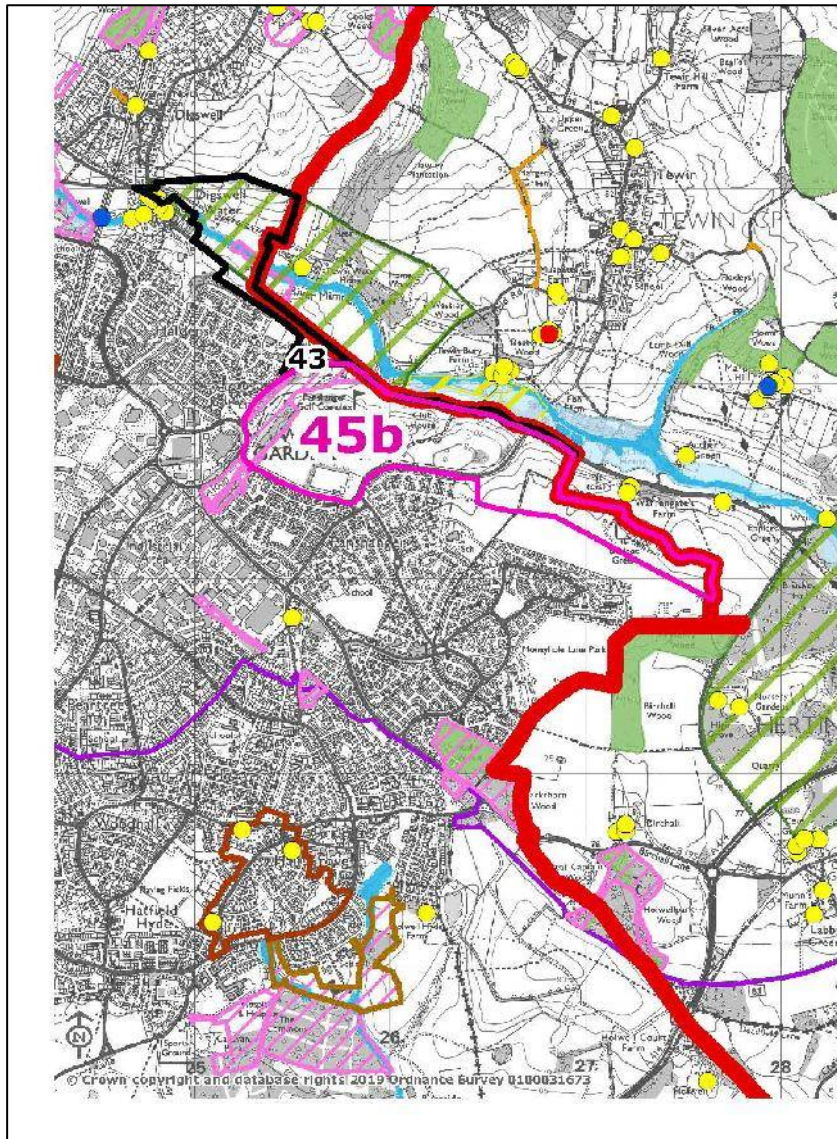


Frequent passing of trains reduces tranquility to the settlement edge in the south west of the area



Parkland character in the undeveloped east where there is intervisibility with the valley to the south

Landscape Character Area 45: Welwyn Fringes
Landscape assessment area (45b)



Sensitivity to development on the River Mimram valley slopes (45b)

Proximity to the urban edge and an absence of rural land use limit landscape sensitivity, however the valley landform and tree cover create a distinctive settlement edge, with the valley providing a parkland setting for this edge of Welwyn Garden City. Sensitivity to residential development is **moderate** on higher ground, closer to the urban fringe, and on the more visually contained slopes at the western end of the area. Sensitivity is **moderate-high** on the steeper slopes which are subject to views across the valley, and within the golf course where the level of tree cover increases sensitivity.

Low	Low-Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High
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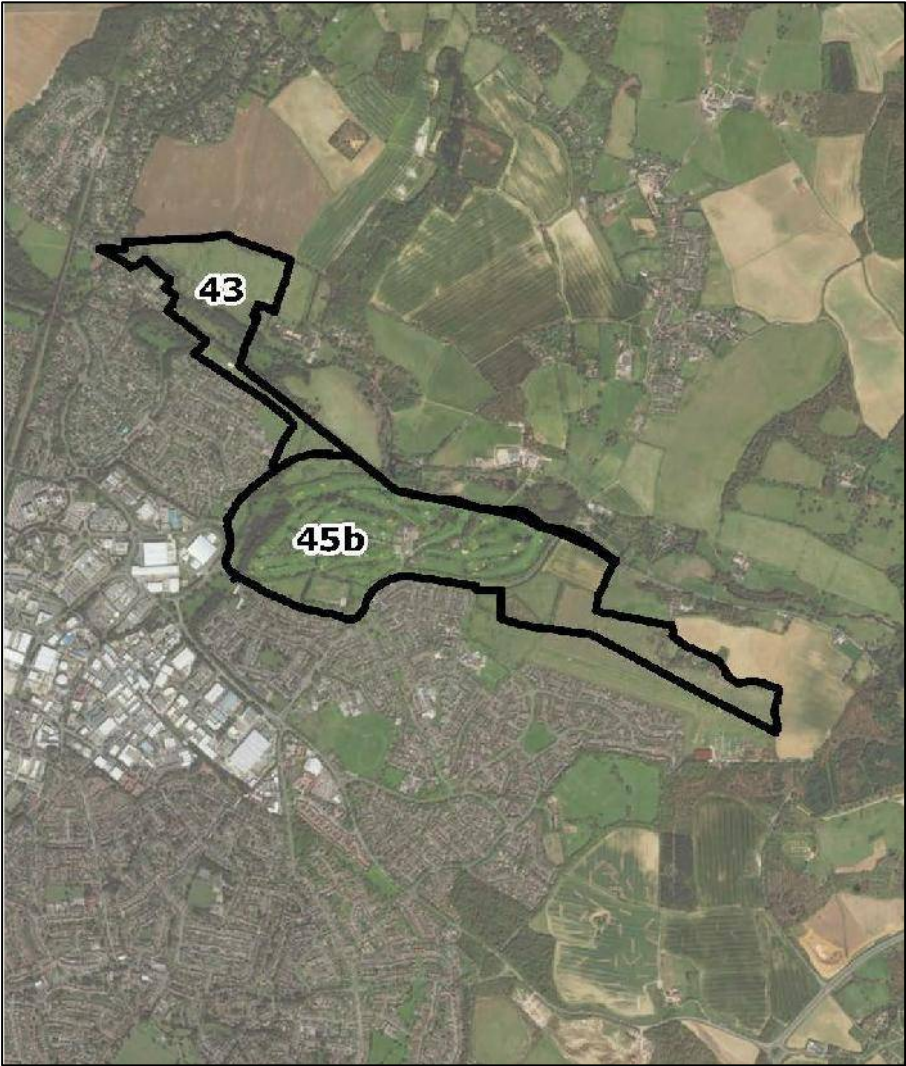
* Rating variations are mapped on the last page of the LCA 45 assessment

Key Sensitivities and Mitigation Potential on the edge of Welwyn Garden City (45)

To minimise adverse impact on landscape and visual character, development proposals should:

- Preserve the blocks of deciduous woodland and tree lines that help to retain a parkland character.
- Avoid any visual perception of development spilling over from higher ground into the valley.
- Retain perception of a rural valley from the valley-floor B1000 road.

Landscape Character Area 45: Welwyn Fringes
Representative views (45b)



Slope of the Mimram valley, look up towards settlement edge woodland block from close to Herts Lane



Looking south across the Mimram valley towards Panshanger

Landscape Character Area 47: Essendon-Brickendon Farmed Slopes

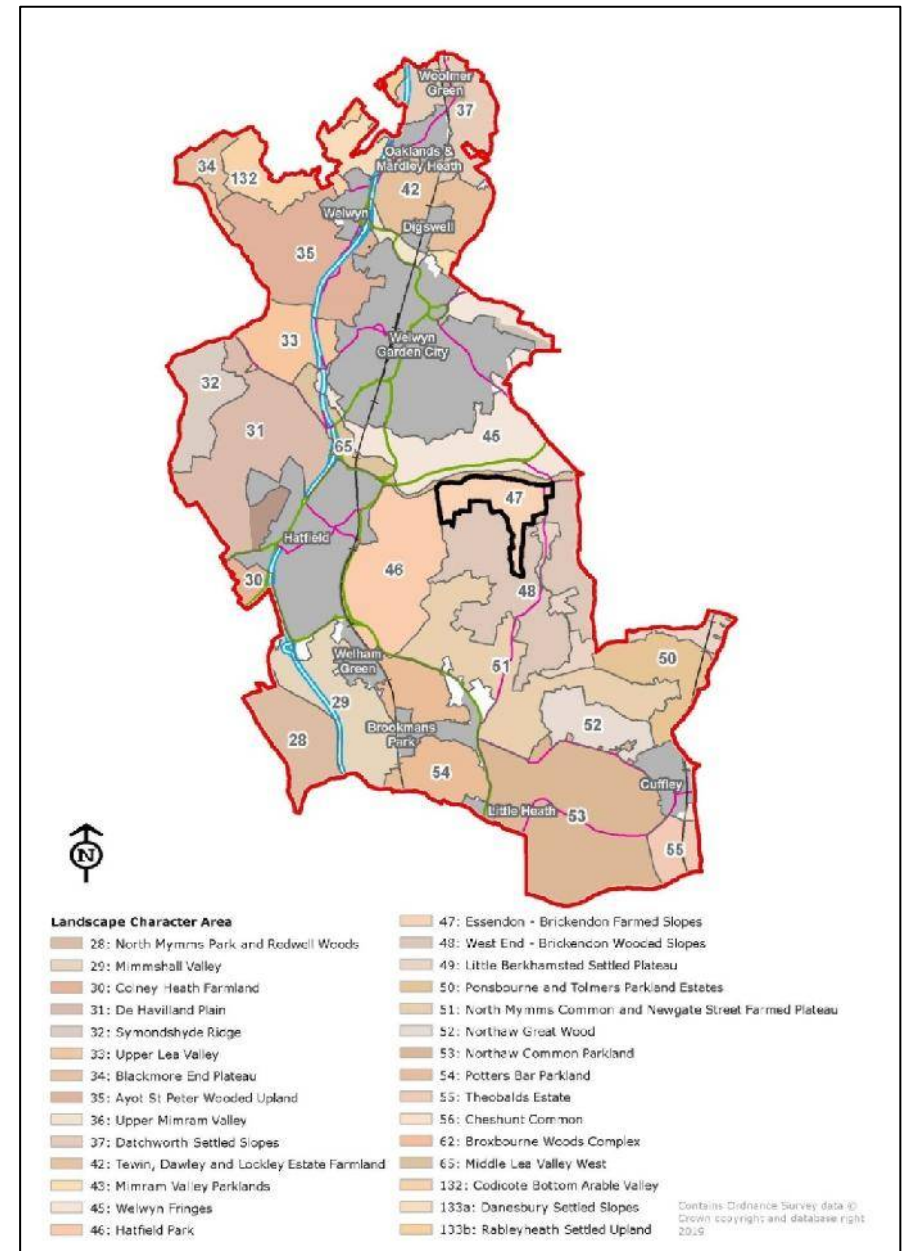
Essendon-Brickendon Farmed Slopes

Location and Landscape Character Summary

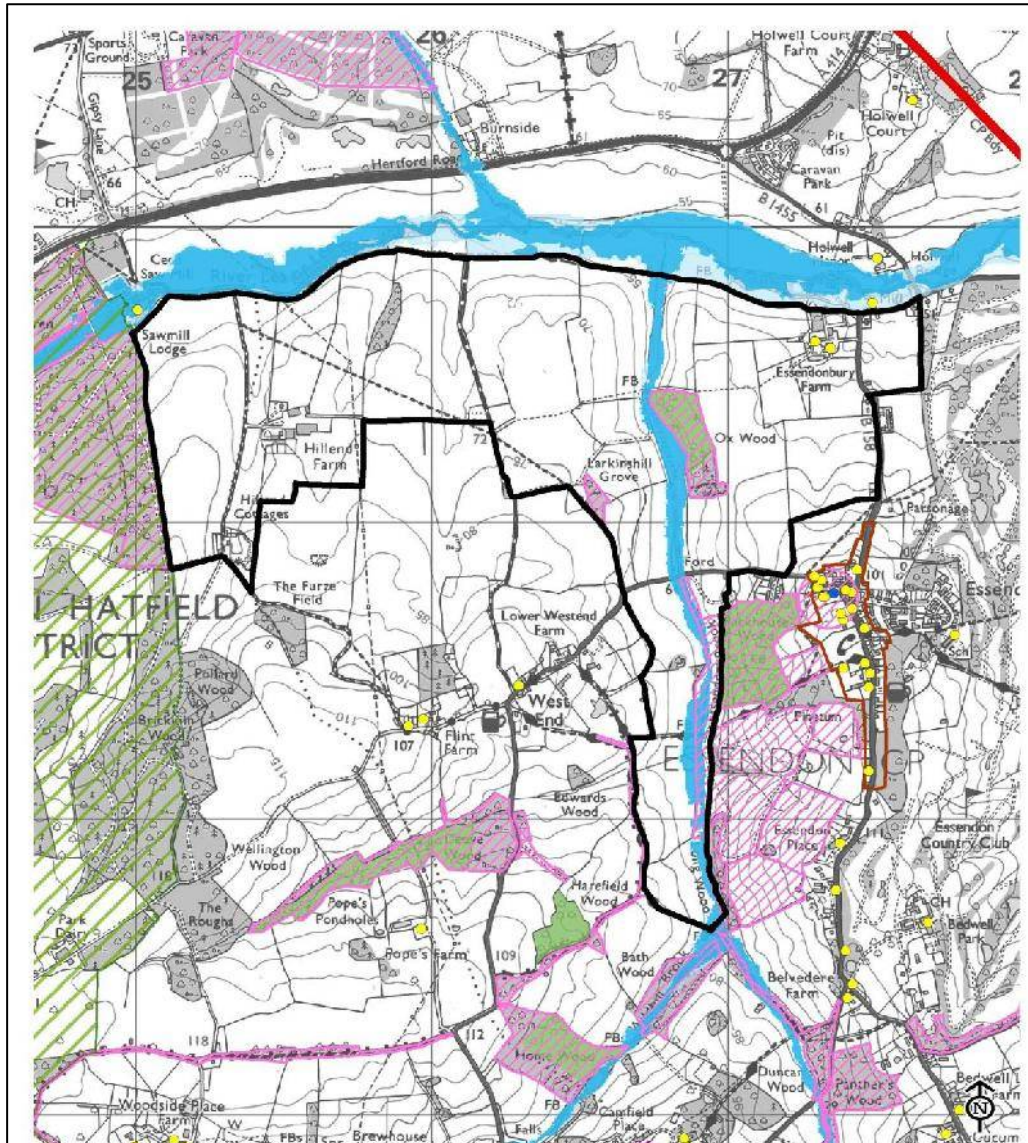
The assessment area encompasses the whole of the Essendon-Brickendon Farmed Slopes LCA and lies directly to the south of the Lea Valley (LCA 65) which runs west-east. Hatfield Park (LCA 46) is located to the west and the West End - Brickendon Wooded Slopes (LCA 48) is located to the south and east. The area is generally linear along the Lea valley but also extends to the south along Essendon Brook which passes between the villages of West End and Essendon. The area comprises gently undulating slopes to south of the River Lea and steeper slopes to the narrow Essendon Brook valley. Land use is mostly arable farming within medium to large scale fields which are separated in places by overgrown hedgerows.

Assessment Areas

The assessment area has not been subdivided.



Landscape Character Area 47: Essendon-Brickendon Farmed Slopes



Absolute Constraints and Designations

The following absolute constraints apply to LCA 47:

- Ancient woodland at Ox Wood.
- Local Wildlife Sites at Ox Wood, Larkinhill Grove, Essendon Brook Pasture and Long Wood (Essendon).

Other designations of relevance to landscape that apply to LCA 47 are:

- Two Grade II Listed Buildings at Essendonbury Farm.
- Hertfordshire Way Long Distance Footpath.



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Landscape Character Area 47: Essendon-Brickendon Farmed Slopes

Analysis of Landscape Sensitivity in the Character Area

Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Criteria		
Landform		
<i>This considers the shape of the landscape. Smooth, gently undulating or flat landforms are likely to be less sensitive to development than a landscape with distinct landform features, such as hills and valleys, as development may mask distinctive topographical features that contribute to landscape character.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
	Gently undulating northward facing slopes to the River Lea.	Narrow valley to the Essendon Brook with steep wooded slopes.
Landscape pattern and time depth		
<i>This considers the field pattern and historic origin of the landscape area. Landscapes with more irregular field patterns, particularly those of historic origin, are likely to more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than landscape with regular scale field patterns because of the risk of losing characteristic landscape patterns.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
Some evidence of disturbance to historic field pattern from past mineral extraction.	Fields are medium to large in scale, following a regular post-1800 pattern and are bound by well-established hedgerows.	
'Natural' character		
<i>This considers the 'naturalistic' qualities of the landscape area in terms of the coverage of semi-natural habitats and valued natural features (e.g. trees and hedgerows) which contribute to landscape character and could be vulnerable to loss from development. Areas with frequent natural features (including large areas of designated habitats) result in increased sensitivity to development, while landscape with limited natural features will be less sensitive.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
	Majority of land cover comprises fields under arable cultivation. Hedgerows are well-established and overgrown in places, containing mature hedgerow trees.	Limited areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland, most notably Ox Wood, which is also ancient woodland.
Built character		
<i>This considers the built character of the landscape area with particular reference to the presence of heritage assets that contribute to landscape character (i.e. valued features that may be designated as Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, archaeological features or remains or other features). Landscapes with a high density of historic features important to the character of the area are likely to be more sensitive to the introduction of modern development than areas where such development already exists.</i>		
Low	Moderate	High
A pylon route runs through the west of the area.	The LCA is primarily unsettled. Built development is limited to isolated farms and scattered small groups of houses. These include Hillend Farm, Essendonbury Farm, Hillend Cottages and Bury Cottages. Manor houses on the hillside to the east of the assessment	At Essendonbury Farm there are two Grade II listed buildings; Essendonbury Farmhouse and Barn on east side of farmyard. Essington is visible on the hilltop to the east of the assessment area with the Grade II* listed Church of St Mary the Virgin and several Grade II