



Integrated Landscape Character Objectives

1. Chalk Hills and scarps

Summary description

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

Location

Located in a narrow band running through the central part of the Region, extending from Hertfordshire, through Bedfordshire, to south Cambridgeshire and the extreme west of Suffolk.

Physical environment

The shape of the land

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

Ground type/Soils

Shallow calcareous soils over chalk bedrock, with some heavier soils over deposits of boulder clay.

Natural / water features

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

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character

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

Land use

Predominately arable land use, with permanent pasture and woodland on steeper slopes and horse paddocks around Newmarket.

Tree cover

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

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Historic and built environment

Historical development

This is a landscape almost entirely dominated by late enclosure of former common arable fields and heaths. There is also some older piecemeal enclosure of the common fields.

Enclosure pattern

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

Settlement pattern

Low density settlement, rural in character comprising discrete historic nucleated villages and a scattering of large farms of the late enclosure period. General absence of settlement on steeper scarp slopes. Urban development associated with larger towns impinges on this landscape.

Building descriptions

To be completed at a later date.

Historic features

Historic features such as tracks (e.g. Icknield Way) and some prehistoric hill forts occur in parts of this area.

Perceptual qualities

Visual experience

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

Tranquillity

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

RLCT 1 Chalk Hills and Scarps

Key Priorities

The key integrated objectives are:

- A. Protect the open landscape character**
- B. Manage the distinctive chalk habitats**
- C. Manage and extend opportunities for multifunctional green infrastructure**

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Protect the open landscape character</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. conserve the visually sensitive skylines and rolling slopes from inappropriate land uses, structures and built development 2. conserve and restore existing hilltop woodlands, copses, shelter belts and existing hedges by restocking to emphasise the prominent natural topography 3. recognise and conserve the visual relationship with LCT 4 Lowland Village Chalklands 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, tranquillity, sense of place</p>
<p>B. Manage the distinctive chalk habitats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. enhance and extend areas of chalk grassland including roadside verges, field margins, rights of way and key access sites (e.g. Therfield Heath) and promote reversion from arable to sheep pasture on steeper slopes 2. enhance characteristic features by removal of scrub vegetation to reinstate chalk grassland and rare indicator species (e.g. juniper and pasque flower) 3. maintain openness for rare farm birds (e.g. grey partridge, lapwing, corn bunting and stone curlew) and also for arable weeds and brown hares 4. provide enhanced interpretation of the regionally distinctive chalk geodiversity and associated landscape features 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, access, water quality, geo-diversity,</p>
<p>C. Manage and extend opportunities for multifunctional green infrastructure</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. conserve and interpret historic earthworks and routes which illustrate historic settlement pattern (e.g. Wandlebury, Devils Dyke and Fleam Dyke Brent and Bran Dykes) 2. conserve and enhance the strategic access routes which offer fine panoramic views including the Icknield Way, Roman Road, Devils Dyke and Fleam Dyke 	<p>landscape, access, tranquillity, recreation cultural heritage, sense of place</p>

<p>3. enhance existing public access through networks of definitive and permissive routes that connect with communities with strategic routes for the enjoyment of the landscape, experience of tranquillity and health benefits</p>	
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2. Wooded Chalk Valleys

Summary description

Steep sided, wooded valleys which penetrate the surrounding upland plateau, becoming shallower with only seasonal watercourses in their upper parts. Larger valleys have permanent watercourses, often associated with river meadows.

Location

A widespread landscape type within South Bedfordshire and Northwest Hertfordshire.

Physical environment

The shape of the land

Characterised by steep sided, sometimes narrow valleys, with tributaries that often form deep hollows, or combes, with a distinctive 'open downland' character extending into surrounding plateau areas.

Ground type/Soils

Mixed soils including fine silty/loamy and shallow calcareous soils over chalk.

Natural / water features

Many of the valleys contain only seasonal watercourses, while others are associated with a permanent water channel.

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character

Mostly mixed woodland, some of which is ancient, with localised patches of *calcareous grassland* on steeper slopes and along roadside verges. The survival of primary habitats is relatively high (>7%).

Land use

Mixed landuse comprising arable (often on the upper slopes) with some commercial forestry and pasture along the valley floor.

Tree cover

Interlocking pattern of ancient woods scattered throughout the area, particularly on the steepest slopes, making a significant visual contribution and creating a well wooded, intimate character.

Historic and built environment

Historical development

Fieldsapes are highly varied, including Early Enclosures with a pocket of co-axial fields around Hemel Hempstead, while to the East of Stevenage, most of the fields comprise Late Enclosures from common field.

Enclosure pattern

Varied enclosure pattern defined by mature hedgerows which are often species rich.

Settlement pattern

Settled character with a clustered pattern of historic villages/hamlets. Larger settlements remain contained and well defined although their urban fringes may impinge on the surrounding landscape.

Building descriptions

To be completed at a later date.

Historic features

Sunken lanes.

Perceptual qualities

Visual experience

Views across elevated valley sides onto the adjoining areas of plateau landscape and also down the wooded valleys.

Tranquillity

Valleys often form road and rail transport corridors.

RLCT 2 Wooded Chalk Valleys

Key Priorities

The key integrated objectives are:

- D. Manage and connect valley floor habitats**
- E. Manage arable, pasture and woodland mosaic to valley slopes**
- C. Enhance and extend multifunctional green infrastructure provision**

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Manage and connect chalk valley floor habitats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. retain, manage, reinstate and extend flood meadow and grazing pasture within and along the valley floor to provide connectivity and reduce nutrient leaching from arable to watercourses 2. manage and restore patterns of natural watercourses and associated habitats including secondary streams to valley sides, braided watercourses, cut offs 3. conserve and restore remaining watercress beds etc 4. monitor and promote measures to protect and improve water quality of sensitive chalk streams 5. conserve, monitor and enhance river margin habitats for protected species 6. manage poplar and willow plantations to enhance woodland character and encourage appropriate tree planting and wet woodland along river courses avoiding areas of unimproved valley floor pasture 7. promote access along and interpretation of chalk both dry valley and watercourse habitats 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, tranquillity, sense of place, access, water quality</p>
<p>B. Manage arable, pasture and woodland mosaic to valley slopes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. maintain a balanced pattern of land use within valleys 2. manage and restore areas of distinctive mature chalk woodland including hangers to valley sides of open dry 'Bottoms' and denser woodland areas to narrow contained 'V' shaped valley forms. Promote traditional management methods including coppice, pollard and wood pasture and restocking with indigenous, deciduous plants, notably hornbeam and beech and to encourage 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, cultural heritage, carbon storage, water quality</p>

<p>native ground flora</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. retain and manage sunken minor roads to valley sides with the high hedges and tunnels of vegetation and rich ground flora to verges 4. promote management of and introduction of grass buffer strips following contours and where possible existing or former hedgelines to impede direct cross land flows from arable fields into watercourses. Restore gappy hedges to provide enhanced habitat connectivity to valley sides 5. promote arable reversion to grassland to improve mosaic of habitats and to aid water quality and recharge of aquifer 6. conserve patterns of distinctive co-axial fields to valley slopes and retain and restore related enclosure 7. conserve and restore historic houses and parklands on upper valley sides overlooking valleys 8. retain existing cross and along valley views, including those from gaps in dense roadside hedges and from rights of way 9. promote strong landscape enhancements in the countryside to the edge of proposed urban extension to retain rural character of adjacent valley corridors. Consider recreation of former historic traditional woodland and hedges as pattern for enclosure 	
<p>C. Enhance and extend multifunctional green infrastructure provision</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. manage and enhance the valleys as corridors for green infrastructure proposals and habitat creation including both the wider arterial corridors and the more hidden narrow tranquil valleys 2. promote new definitive and permissive access enhancing networks and providing links to strategic rights of way (e.g. Chiltern Way), settlements and growth areas 3. promote and enhance the use of Grand Union Canal as a recreation corridor 4. promote sustainable transport to access countryside and retain tranquillity of area 5. support improvements to existing areas and promote new areas of accessible natural greenspace as part of major growth proposals (e.g. Hemel Hempstead). Range of habitats to be provide including orchards, allotments, SUDs and commons 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, access, sense of place, tranquillity</p>

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3. Settled Chalk Valleys

Summary description

Settled, chalk valley landscapes, distinguished by their soft, rounded and sometimes steeply sloping topography. There is a good balance of woodland and farmland, with distinctive vernacular style villages and associated parklands.

Location

Located within northwest Essex and northeast Hertfordshire.

Physical environment

The shape of the land

Characterised by narrow and sometimes steep sided chalk valleys, often with dissected/undulating valleys sides, which extend into the surrounding plateau areas.

Ground type/Soils

Calcareous brown soils over chalky till, generally free draining but in places slowly permeable. Shallow calcareous soils over chalk in places.

Natural / water features

Many of the valleys have only seasonal watercourses, while others are associated with a permanent water channel.

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character

Although the base-rich brown soils favour agricultural production, riparian wet pastures remain as a feature along the valley floor, while localised patches of *calcareous grassland* and *ancient woodland* still survive on some of the steeper slopes.

Land use

Predominately arable with some pasture around settlements.

Tree cover

Small blocks of woodland occur in places, while river courses are often tree lined.

Historic and built environment

Historical development

This is a mixed landscape, where the majority of fieldscapes have been created from the enclosure of former common fields. Early enclosures are dominant with more late enclosure to the north and west. Riverine meadows occupy valley floors.

Enclosure pattern

A varied enclosure pattern, with both small scale sinuous enclosures defined by mature ancient hedges and larger scale rectilinear fields, reflecting an ongoing process of enclosure from common fields.

Settlement pattern

A nucleated pattern of estate farms and historic villages along valley bottoms, with clusters of roadside dwellings in the lower parts of some valleys. Larger settlements (e.g. Harlow and Bishop's Stortford) exert an urbanising influence locally.

Building descriptions

To be completed at a later date.

Historic features

Parklands are a recurring feature in this landscape.

Perceptual qualities

Visual experience

Framed views down and across valleys.

Tranquillity

Generally a peaceful, rural landscape.

RLCT 3 Settled Chalk Valleys

Key Priorities

The key integrated objectives are:

- F. Manage and connect valley floor habitats**
- G. Protect the traditional pattern of settlement**
- H. Enhance and extend multifunctional green infrastructure provision**

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Manage and connect the valley floor habitats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. retain, manage and reinstate flood meadow and grazing pasture within the valleys to contrast with the arable valley slopes which should maintain a sense of openness 2. manage natural watercourses, and associated habitats including secondary streams, rivers, cut offs 3. monitor and promote measures to protect and improve water quality of sensitive chalk streams 4. conserve, monitor and enhance river margin habitats for protected species including otters and water voles 5. manage poplar and willow plantations to enhance woodland character and encourage appropriate tree planting along river courses (e.g. alder), avoiding unimproved valley floor pasture 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, tranquillity, sense of place, water quality</p>
<p>B. Protect the traditional pattern of settlement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. protect, manage and restore distinctive historic parklands, houses and woodlands especially along Cam and Stort (e.g. Audley End). Retain and enhance sense of enclosure and key vistas across valleys 2. protect and conserve the rich traditional pattern of small towns, villages, individual buildings, open spaces and historic earthworks which lie close to the valley floor 3. conserve and maintain the distinctive historic pattern of fords on watercourses 4. promote the interpretation and education of traditional settlement patterns including mills and malting 5. encourage provision of traditional enclosure for grazing, 	<p>sense of place, cultural heritage, landscape, recreation</p>

paddocks and settlements	
<p>D. Enhance and extend multifunctional green infrastructure provision</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. manage and enhance the valleys as corridors for green infrastructure proposals and habitat creation 2. promote new definitive and permissive access where there is existing or future need, enhancing networks and providing links to growth areas and existing settlements 3. create new areas of significant accessible natural greenspace as part of major growth proposals (e.g. Harlow) 4. promote and enhance the River Stort Navigation as a recreational corridor 5. maintain views along valleys, cross valley views and a sense of openness 6. manage woodlands to upper valley slopes and biodiversity and habitat connectivity with valley floor features focusing on tributary streams 7. promote access and interpretation of links with cultural figures and sites (e.g. Henry Moore and Frederick Gibberd) 	<p>landscape, access, tranquillity, recreation cultural heritage, sense of place, biodiversity</p>

4. Lowland Village Chalklands

Summary description

Low lying, but gently rolling arable landscape, dissected by small streams, with a distinctive pattern of nucleated villages and a patchwork of woodlands and shelterbelts.

Location

Located in the central part of the Region, where it is often associated with Rolling Chalk Hills.

Physical environment

The shape of the land

Low lying, gently rolling topography.

Ground type/Soils

Calcareous brown soils over chalk.

Natural / water features

Small streams, often tree lined, create shallow valleys.

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character

Although this is a productive agricultural landscape of moderate relief, favouring arable agriculture, fragments of *lowland calcareous grassland* still survive (> 2% of the LCT is Priority Habitat).

Land use

Predominately arable land use.

Tree cover

Limited woodland cover, except around Newmarket where shelterbelts are a feature.

Historic and built environment

Historical development

This is a landscape dominated by late enclosures, most of which were created from common fields. Some enclosures represent early piecemeal enclosure of common fields. All have experienced significant modification from the mid 20th century.

Enclosure pattern

Medium to large sized fields enclosed by hawthorn hedges. Field structure is a mix of rectilinear & sinuous patterns, reflecting the process of planned surveyor enclosure from common fields.

Settlement pattern

A distinctive pattern of historic nucleated villages with prominent churches. Some villages have grown bigger in the 20th century, while larger towns, such as Cambridge, Newmarket and Royston contribute to an urbanising influence.

Building descriptions

Building materials include flint, clunch and pale brick.

Historic features

Historic stone churches in nucleated villages act as local landmarks.

Perceptual qualities

Visual experience

An open landscape with long distance views.

Tranquillity

A settled landscape yet one where tranquillity can readily be perceived.

RLCT 4 Lowland Chalk Villages

Key Priorities

The key integrated objectives are:

- A. Protect the open arable landscape character**
- B. Manage the distinctive chalk habitats**
- C. Protect the historic settlement pattern**
- D. Manage and connect valley floor features**

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Protect the open arable landscape character</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. conserve the open undulating chalk landscape with its expansive views protecting the landscape from inappropriate land uses, structures and built development which would conflict with openness 2. conserve and restore existing linear shelter belt plantations, copses, and existing gappy clipped hedges by restocking to provide habitat connectivity and to emphasise the natural topography while still retaining the open character overall 3. recognise and conserve the visual foreground relationship to the prominent slopes with LCT 1- Chalk Hills and Scarps 4. promote accessibility through the open landscape along established routes (e.g. Icknield Way) and as gateways to significant green infrastructure sites (e.g. Wicken Fen Vision) 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, tranquillity, sense of place, access,</p>
<p>B. Manage the distinctive chalk habitats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. enhance and extend areas of chalk grassland including roadside verges and field margins 2. maintain openness for rare farm birds (e.g. grey partridge, lapwing, corn bunting and stone curlew) and also for arable weeds and brown hares 3. provide enhanced interpretation of the distinctive chalk geodiversity and associated biodiversity and landscape features (e.g. chalk steam fed meres, fens and chalk pit sites) 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, water quality, geo-diversity,</p>

<p>C. Protect the historic settlement pattern</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. conserve and enhance the traditional nucleated villages many of which are located at springs or close to the interface with the claylands and fen edge 2. conserve the setting of traditional buildings within villages including prominent churches (e.g. Ashwell) 3. promote use of traditional vernacular materials (e.g. gault brick, cob and thatch) and local features in conservation projects and new buildings 4. conserve and enhance the condition of isolated estates, house and farmsteads 5. retain the localised character of the equestrian paddocks around Newmarket as a more contained landscape 	<p>landscape, access, tranquillity, recreation cultural heritage, sense of place</p>
<p>D. Manage and connect valley floor features</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. maintain distinctiveness of river corridors from adjacent arable land 2. enhance waterside meadows and pasture through stock grazing where possible, to maintain diversity of floral interest 3. promote and reinstate small woodlands and copses within river valley corridors 4. conserve and restore historic parks 5. restore riverside willows by pollarding 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, water quality, cultural heritage, sense of place</p>

Wooded Limestone Wolds

Summary description

A landscape with a gently rolling, rounded landform and patchwork of arable fields and blocks of ancient woodland, interspersed with parklands and nucleated villages/towns.

Location

Occurs in the northwest corner of the Region, to the west of Peterborough.

Physical environment

The shape of the land

Gently rolling limestone plateau gradually decreasing in elevation towards the east.

Ground type/Soils

Shallow calcareous soils over limestone.

Natural / water features

Occasional water bodies associated with designed landscapes, small reservoirs, or field ponds.

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character

A small unit in the northwest corner of the Region supporting an unusually high proportion (> 6%) of *ancient woodland*, with remnants of unimproved *calcareous grassland* and *limestone heath*.

Land use

Predominantly arable land use, but with significant areas of commercial forestry. Several active and disused limestone quarries.

Tree cover

An ancient wooded landscape with areas of intact parkland.

Historic and built environment

Historical development

Although primarily a late enclosure landscape created from common fields, there are some significant areas of early enclosure, some of which may be derived from assarting, as it is related to the distribution of ancient woodlands.

Enclosure pattern

Large scale regular field pattern defined by low hedgerows, or dry stone walls. Wide verges are a feature of minor roads.

Settlement pattern

Low density settlement comprising a well defined nucleated pattern of vernacular stone villages with a scatter of outlying farms.

Building descriptions

Buildings constructed of local pale yellow coloured limestone with stone slate roofs.

Historic features

Remnant pre-enclosure field systems, with ridge and furrow near villages and isolated settlements. Large parklands are a recurring feature throughout this landscape.

Perceptual qualities

Visual experience

A semi enclosed landscape as a result of the rolling topography and woodland blocks.

Tranquillity

Generally a quiet rural ambiance.

RLCT 5 Wooded Limestone Wolds

Key Priorities

The key integrated objectives are:

- I. Conserve and reinforce the distinctive pattern of wooded farmland**
- J. Manage and extend the range of limestone habitats and geodiversity features**
- K. Conserve and manage the rich pattern of limestone villages, historic houses and associated parklands**
- L. Promote and extend existing and improved facilities for green infrastructure**

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Conserve and reinforce the distinctive pattern of wooded farmland</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. manage and extend the network of medium to large scale woodlands in the arable landscape providing enhanced linkage of woodland habitats and as a strategy for reducing the visual impact of large buildings, urban edges, road corridors and airfields. Use ancient woodland, hedge and field boundaries as the most appropriate location for woodland restoration and expansion. With new woods also framing important views and emphasising undulations in topography. 2. manage existing broadleaved woodland to maximise biodiversity and amenity diversity for example through coppicing, wood pasture management and protection of designated sites (e.g. Castor Hanglands and Bedford Purlieus) as well as promoting conversion of conifer plantations within existing woodlands to indigenous native broadleaved species 3. manage and restore boundary hedges by coppicing, laying and gapping up with appropriate species to improve the network of linkages within arable landscape between woodlands. Encourage the planting of appropriate hedgerow trees to provide replacement for over mature stock 4. promote the planting of new hedges following either roads, rights of way, historic boundaries and/or routes that visually emphasise the character of the landscape 5. maintain and enhance habitats associated with arable and mixed farming, which support a range of species including song thrush, linnet, bullfinch and yellowhammer 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, tranquillity, sense of place , carbon storage</p>

<p>B. Manage and extend the range of limestone habitats and geodiversity features</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. conserve, manage and promote the interpretation of the former quarry sites (e.g. Barnack Hills and Holes) for their geodiversity and biodiversity value 2. create high quality restoration schemes of stone quarries and sand and gravel works, which promote their biodiversity and geodiversity conservation interests, and include public access to these features where possible 3. conserve, manage and extend species rich grasslands including, pasture to village edges, field margins, dry valley bottoms and road verges, using traditional grazing where possible 4. restore locations on marginal arable land from arable to species rich grassland and/or limestone heath habitats, particularly where adjacent to similar existing habitats 5. promote the retention and repair of the distinctive dry stone walls 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, access, geo-diversity,</p>
<p>C. Conserve and manage the rich pattern of limestone villages, historic houses and associated parklands</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. conserve and restore the historic parklands using traditional management measures including veteran trees, parkland buildings, enclosure and built features 2. conserve the historic setting, structure and open spaces in and around towns and villages, including views to and within retained open spaces within them together with promoting sympathetic improvements to village entrances and fringes, screening local eyesores and framing local landmarks (e.g. churches) 3. promote use of appropriate indigenous building materials (e.g. limestone, and Collyweston roofs) 4. ensure that boundaries to equestrian establishments use traditional walls, metal fences or hedges to provide paddock enclosure 5. conserve the rural character of historic minor lanes and former drove roads with wide verges 	<p>landscape, tranquillity, recreation cultural heritage, sense of place</p>

<p>D. Promote and extend existing and improved facilities for green infrastructure</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. promote the continued and extended use of the area for quiet informal recreation, enhancing accessibility by sustainable transport from adjacent urban areas (e.g. Peterborough and Stamford) 2. promote and improve public access arrangements for walkers, cyclists and horse riders to provide connectivity between existing routes (e.g. Peterborough Green Wheel, Torpel Way and Hereward Way). Ensure the routes provide a range of experiences including vistas, views and enclosure 3. use existing minor roads, historic routes (e.g. King Street and Ermine Street) and former railways as routes for access and links to settlements 4. promote enhanced access to historic parklands with landowner agreement, including major visitor attractions (e.g. Burghley Park) 5. promote improved access, interpretation and facilities at key visitor sites (e.g. Castor Hanglands, Southey Woods and Bedford Purlieus) updating car parks and links to rights of way network 6. promote the interpretation of the historic heritage of the area, including roman features of Ermine Street and Castor and the estates and parklands of the area 7. promote the interpretation of the local landscape for its associations with the peoples poet John Clare and the visitor centre at Helpston 	<p>cultural heritage tranquillity, access,</p>
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6. Limestone Village Farmlands

Summary description

An undulating agricultural landscape with a nucleated pattern of limestone villages, surrounded by a regular pattern of large fields defined by well trimmed hedgerows and stone walls.

Location

Occurs in the north western corner of the region beyond Peterborough and the Upper Ouse valley in Bedfordshire.

Physical environment

The shape of the land

A dissected undulating landform often associated with larger river valleys.

Ground type/Soils

A mixture of shallow calcareous soils over limestone, with some deeper brown earths.

Natural / water features

Small feeder watercourses linking to larger rivers in valley bottoms.

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character

Old Man's Beard in hedgerows and occasional patches of *calcareous grassland* on steeper slopes, but generally limited semi-natural habitat remaining in this settled agricultural landscape.

Land use

Predominance of arable land with areas of improved pasture.

Tree cover

A fairly open landscape with discrete coverts and groups of trees around farmsteads. Patches of ancient woodland become more notable along the fringe of Yardley Chase and Rockingham Forest.

Historic and built environment

Historical development

This landscape includes two different areas. In the northern section fieldscapes are dominated by late enclosures, while in the south early enclosures are more prevalent. In both areas enclosure seems to have been from common fields.

Enclosure pattern

Fields are frequently large in size and defined by well trimmed hedgerows, with limestone walls in some areas.

Settlement pattern

Many nucleated historic limestone villages with distinctive square church towers, often on higher land overlooking river valleys. Settlement outside villages is uncommon and characterised by occasional farms.

Building descriptions

Pale yellow, vernacular limestone dwellings, farms & isolated field barns.

Historic features

Historic, pale coloured stone villages and churches with landmark spires.

Perceptual qualities

Visual experience

Long distance views, from higher ground, over surrounding plateau summits. Views from within the valleys, although open, are often framed by landform.

Tranquillity

This is a peaceful, rural landscape, although there are occasional disruptive elements, such as major road corridors.

RLCT 6 Limestone Village Farmlands

Key Priorities

The key integrated objectives are:

- M. Manage and enhance the structure and condition of the open arable landscape**
- N. Protect the distinctive limestone towns, villages, historic houses and areas of parkland**
- O. Enhance the provision for multifunctional green infrastructure**

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Manage and enhance the structure and condition of the open arable landscape</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. manage and restore the condition of landscape features within the largely arable landscape to enhance connectivity between river valley floodplain and wooded plateau. Maintain strength and distinctiveness from the adjacent LCTs to the floodplains and plateau 2. screen views to large or unsightly structures and development 3. manage, restore and extend the pattern of small woods and copses to field corners and around farmsteads to also emphasise the undulating character of the valley slopes 4. promote the retention, restoration and planting of hedges and new hedgerow trees within the open landscape to provide additional structure and ensure patterns follow historic field boundaries and rights of way where possible 5. promote and extend areas of uncropped grassland to field margins as a means of providing enhanced biodiversity and reducing nutrient rich run off 6. control runoff from arable fields and provide attenuation to secondary streams to reduce localised flooding and impacts on major rivers 7. protect, improve and frame the panoramic views across and along major valleys, including the meandering courses of the rivers Great Ouse and Nene 8. manage local pressures for fragmentation of agriculture (e.g. to poly-tunnels near Oundle) 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, flood alleviation, water quality, tranquillity, access</p>
<p>B. Protect the distinctive limestone towns, villages, historic houses and areas of parkland</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. protect the setting and structure of the towns and nucleated 	<p>landscape, cultural heritage,</p>

<p>villages including views to the villages and their retained open spaces. To include local and wider setting of landmark buildings (e.g. parish churches) which have an influence over a wide area within the valleys (e.g. Olney)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. promote use of indigenous building materials for restoration projects and/ or equally acceptable alternatives within new built development to maintain and enhance the character of the existing villages. To include use of local limestone, thatch and slate tile and red brick details 3. conserve and enhance the pattern of smaller fields and pasture, including some ridge and furrow to the edge of villages. Promote the use of traditional hedging and metal estate fencing for paddocks and meadows 4. conserve, enhance and promote the restoration of the historic parklands and the visual and functional relationship with the adjacent arable landscapes 	<p>biodiversity, access, senses of place</p>
<p>C. Enhance the provision for multifunctional green infrastructure</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. promote the continued and extended use of the area for quiet recreation and in particular in providing enhanced access from larger settlements and areas of planned growth 2. improve rights of way connections from urban and rural settlements to the rights of way network promoting new links where absent 3. protect the tranquillity of area 4. promote and improve the interpretation of long distance footpaths (e.g. Ouse Valley Way and Nene valley way) 5. enhance the cultural landscape associations within the valleys (e.g. William Cowper and John Bunyan) 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, access, tranquillity, recreation cultural heritage, senses of place</p>

7. Wooded Sandstone Hills

Summary description

Elevated wooded ridges (sometimes steeply sloping) with notable areas of mixed woodland and also areas of arable farmland. Underlying geology gives rise to distinctive vegetation and a textured appearance.

Location

Located in central Bedfordshire.

Physical environment

The shape of the land

Prominent, often narrow, elevated Greensand ridges some with relatively steep sides.

Ground type/Soils

Mixed soils including sandy loams, with heavier soils in places over boulder clay.

Natural / water features

Small streams drain ridges feeding into adjacent river courses. Occasional ponds and water bodies associated with designed landscape, golf courses or former quarries.

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character

Mixed deciduous woodland with occasional patches of *heath* and *acidic grassland*. There is a high level of protected sites (>1%).

Land use

Commercial forestry, with areas of intensive arable production on gentler slopes.

Tree cover

Heavily wooded landscape with large blocks of ancient woodland.

Historic and built environment

Historical development

This landscape occurs mainly in central Bedfordshire, where fieldscapes are a minor element in an otherwise wooded setting.

Enclosure pattern

Semi-regular fields with many sinuous boundaries are the main type associated with enclosure from common fields. Elsewhere, sub-rectangular forms are more common, reflecting late enclosure of common heaths.

Settlement pattern

Settlement comprises a mix of nucleated villages, hamlets and individual farms. Many villages and historic market towns (e.g. Ampthill) have seen extensive growth since WWII and are now fairly large.

Building descriptions

There is a varied vernacular building character, comprising red brick, white render and tiled roofs. Black tarred timber barns and distinctive ironstone churches are also a characteristic feature.

Historic features

Historic houses and associated parkland. Relic commons are also a feature of this landscape.

Perceptual qualities

Visual experience

Wooded horizons and a strong sense of enclosure. Vegetation reflects acidic nature of soil creating a textured landscape. Elevation affords some long distance views where woodland is less prevalent.

Tranquillity

A tranquil and rural landscape despite settled character.

RLCT 7 Wooded Sandstone Hills

Key Priorities

To key integrated objectives are:

- P. Manage the distinctive mosaic structure of agriculture and woodland**
- Q. Conserve and restore the rich legacy of historic parklands, estate villages, small towns and earthworks**
- R. Manage and plan for existing and future recreational uses**
- S. Conserve and manage the geodiversity assets of the lower greensand**

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Manage the distinctive mosaic structure of agriculture and woodland</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ensure steeper scarp slopes are retained predominantly for pasture and woodland to maintain traditional patterns and protect from soil erosion 2. promote woodland grant schemes with a reduction in the proportion of commercial conifers in favour of indigenous broadleaves. Manage broadleaved areas with emphasis on sustainable practices (e.g. coppicing of sweet chestnut and hazel) 3. promote limited use of the landscape for root crops and free range pigs where soil erosion is a problem on lighter soils 4. reinstate, restore and create areas of heath habitat including through clearance of coniferous woodland and scrub on poorer soils developing acidic plant and animal communities 5. promote Environmental Stewardship to deliver maintenance, restoration and recreation of semi-natural habitats such as acid grassland as well as arable options for farmland birds and farmland wildlife 6. reinstate and restore hedgerow features and where possible reflect historic pre enclosure boundaries expanding outwards from areas of more intact condition 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, sense of place, carbon storage</p>
<p>B. Conserve and restore the rich legacy of historic parklands, estate villages, small towns and earthworks</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. conserve the form, structure and setting of historic houses, lodges, estate villages, parklands 	<p>cultural heritage, landscape, biodiversity, access, sense of place,</p>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. maintain historic features associated with parklands including traditional walls, railings, fencing, hedging, woodland, shelter belts and livestock (e.g. rare deer breeds at Woburn) 3. promote through enhanced interpretation for education and recreation the importance of the historic estate landscapes along the greensand ridge 4. promote the reinstatement of areas of former parkland from arable and restore areas in decline 5. promote use of local and traditional building materials in restored features and new buildings, including stock bricks, clay tile and selective use of greensand in churches and boundary walls 6. conserve and interpret historic earthwork features (e.g. hill forts and areas of ridge and furrow) 	<p>tranquillity, recreation, geodiversity,</p>
<p>C. Manage and plan for existing and future recreational uses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. enhance existing rights of way and strategic facilities (e.g. Greensand Ridge Walk) and provide new connections to strategic routes from adjacent settlements and growth areas 2. manage and enhance viewpoints from scarp slopes over the clay vale to the north with appropriate planting within and beyond the LCT 3. review the management and adequacy of existing parking areas providing access to the countryside and promote and enhance sustainable access provision 4. manage formal sports facilities (e.g. golf courses) to respect and emphasise local landscape character 5. promote awareness and mitigation of the potential impacts of larger recreational facilities (e.g. Woburn Safari Park, Shuttleworth and proposed Center Parcs) that may increase pressures on the local landscape 6. promote liaison and understanding with major landowners to balance the pressures of public access with private ownership interests 7. promote the LCT as a source for the creation of strategic green infrastructure facilities to meet any deficits 8. safeguard remaining tranquil areas from further intrusive developments and activities 	<p>landscape, cultural heritage, biodiversity, access, sense of place, tranquillity, recreation</p>

<p>D. Conserve and manage the geodiversity assets of the lower greensand</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. conserve key geological features including quarry exposures of greensand and gault (e.g. Double Arches Pit and Nine Acres Pit) 2. promote interpretation of and access to geological features and assets of the area highlighting links to other interests including, local building materials distinctive habitats and flora and fauna 3. develop restoration plans for existing and former extraction and quarry sites that demonstrate geological, landscape and biodiversity benefits, including those where nationally scarce minerals such as Fullers Earth have been extracted 4. promote smaller scale distinctive features (e.g. acidic mires) that are a feature of the local geology 	<p>geodiversity, landscape, cultural heritage, biodiversity, access, sense of place,</p>

8. Forested Estate Sandlands

Summary description

This is a relatively simple landscape comprising extensive areas of conifer plantations, arable land and some remnant heaths, reflecting the underlying sandy soils. Scots Pine shelterbelts and 'pine lines' are defining characteristics.

Location

Located mainly in the Brecks of Norfolk and Suffolk, in the Sandlings of south-east Suffolk and to the north of Norwich, as well as some small areas around Holt and Kings Lynn.

Physical environment

The shape of the land

A gently rolling and, in places, undulating topography.

Ground type/Soils

Sandy brown impoverished soils, derived mostly from glacial sands and gravels, but sometimes found over chalk.

Natural / water features

The Brecks are noted for their fluctuating meres and clusters of relict pingos (pond features of periglacial origin which can be wet or dry), but otherwise this is a landscape that is freely drained with few notable water features.

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character

Although land use is now dominated by arable farmland and forestry plantations planted on formerly extensive areas of *dry grassland* and *heath*, there is still a relatively good survival of semi-natural habitat in this LCT (> 3%).

Land use

Predominantly arable land, often with very visible artificial irrigation and substantial areas of commercial forestry.

Tree cover

A strongly wooded landscape with substantial blocks of coniferous plantation (mainly Forestry Commission plantings of Scots and Corsican pines), shelterbelt plantings and 'pine lines', the latter often originating as hedges containing contorted trees.

Historic and built environment

Historical development

A landscape dominated late enclosure of former common arable fields and open heathlands (both common and private). Many 18th/19th century parks, often ringed by shelterbelts, were also created primarily for game shooting.

Enclosure pattern

A medium to large scale field pattern. Field systems are mostly rectilinear with some earlier sinuous elements, reflecting a process of planned 'surveyor' enclosure from common fields and heaths.

Settlement pattern

Population is sparse and largely concentrated in nucleated villages that are surrounded by notable scattering of estate farmsteads. No major conurbations or urban fringe influences.

Building descriptions

Mainly 18th and 19th century brick structures with tiled or slate roofs. In the Brecks there is also an important component of flint-walled buildings.

Historic features

There are considerable numbers of prehistoric burial mounds throughout this landscape, formerly set in extensive areas of heathland and now reflected by present day place names.

Perceptual qualities

Visual experience

This landscape has a 'blocky' structure, resulting from the mix of conifer plantations and open land, which creates a strong visual contrast between confinement in the forested areas and open space in the wide expanses of arable farmland.

Tranquillity

Strong sense of relative isolation resulting from the strongly nucleated settlement pattern, the extensive areas of arable and conifer plantation and the areas of open heath.

RLCT 8 Forested Estate Sandlands

Key Priorities

The key integrated objectives are:

- A. Protect and enhance the woodland resource and develop a balance between tree planting initiatives and the reversion of woodland to heathland**
- B. Protect the valuable heathland resource through sustainable management**
- C. Manage and protect the agricultural landscape and soil resource while adapting to pressures from natural processes and climate change**
- D. Plan for improved public access and enjoyment whilst safeguarding vulnerable habitats**
- E. Protect local identity, (e.g. estate character and use of vernacular) and preserve tranquillity**

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Protect and enhance the woodland resource and develop a balance between tree planting initiatives and the reversion of woodland to heathland</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identify areas for tree planting where this would not compromise future heathland creation or restoration initiatives and is hence undesirable 2. conserve semi-natural woodland areas where they form skyline features particularly adjacent to main river valleys such as the Nar and Stiffkey 3. retain and manage the striking Scots pine shelterbelts that define a number of the field margins 4. promote selective removal of some less appropriate shelterbelt species and replace with species that are consistent with the traditional character of the lanes 5. enhance wildlife corridors through increasing the connectivity of small woodland blocks and identify areas where introduction of short-rotation coppice could help link and extend existing woodland sites 6. maintain areas of ancient semi-natural woodland (primary and secondary). Promote the planting of additional woodland to link and address the fragmentation of key existing sites and restore lost woodland assisting the increased carbon storage potential of woodland areas 7. ensure veteran trees are protected and appropriately managed and ensure a new generation is re-planted to replace those lost 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, cultural heritage sense of place renewable energy carbon storage</p>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. enhance conifer plantations (particularly along the Cromer Ridge and around Buxton-Cawston-Marsham) through the introduction of native broadleaved species upon clear felling to achieve improvements in outline, structure and species mix, where this does not compromise potential for heathland reversion 9. promote the gradual restocking of poplar plantations with native wet woodland species to improve biodiversity value on floodplains or allow these areas to return to wet pasture 	
<p>B. Protect the valuable heathland resource through sustainable management</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identify opportunities for the re-creation of areas of lowland heath from arable land or coniferous woodland. Particular consideration should be given to extending and linking existing sites such as those on the Cromer Ridge 2. restore existing heathland and semi-natural grassland sites through the introduction of appropriate grazing regimes and reinstatement of sustainable site management 3. promote the creation of heathland and semi-natural grassland on former minerals sites and secure the sustainable management of such sites 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, cultural heritage sense of place carbon storage</p>
<p>C. Manage and protect the agricultural landscape and soil resource while adapting to pressures from natural processes and climate change</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. promote the sustainable production of crops on the fragile soils. Target high risk areas and more damaging root crops 2. promote grassland margins to fields and encourage the over-wintering of stubble in order to protect against soil erosion and support populations of farmland birds associated with arable farming 3. plan for climate change by promoting diversification of cropping especially towards agricultural regimes which help to conserve water 4. use Stewardship initiatives to protect watercourses and prevent water quality deterioration caused by rapid runoff 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, cultural heritage sense of place carbon storage flood alleviation</p>

<p>D. Plan for improved public access and enjoyment whilst safeguarding vulnerable habitats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. create and enhance opportunities for permissive and definitive public access by creating additional linkages between existing public footpaths and settlements and the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path National Trail and implement the Greater Norwich GI Strategy 2. manage public access so as to avoid adverse impacts upon agricultural management, landscape, habitats and wildlife 	<p>landscape, access, recreation biodiversity</p>
<p>E. Protect local identity, (e.g. estate character and use of vernacular) and preserve the sense of tranquillity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. promote local design guidance for new development 2. promote the adoption of vernacular building materials, (e.g. carstone and flint) in developments 3. promote the improvement and upgrading of existing holiday development in keeping with local vernacular 4. development within villages should conserve and enhance their nucleated character and street patterns and retain important views, (e.g. to local landmarks such as church towers) 5. support and promote characteristic individual hedgerow management and other features which define character of large estates 6. plan for future pressures from urban-related development, major roads and general industrial development 	<p>landscape, biodiversity cultural heritage, geodiversity tranquillity sense of place</p>

9. Wooded Plateau Farmlands

Summary description

For the most part this is a settled, early enclosed landscape with frequent ancient woods, associated with a rolling, in places undulating glacial plateau, dissected by numerous shallow valleys.

Location

Located mainly in the Chilterns, east Hertfordshire and much of north Essex and southwest Suffolk. There is a second smaller area in east Suffolk, while a third and separate area lies to the north and west of Bedford.

Physical environment

The shape of the land

A rolling landscape on a dissected glacial plateau, in places deeply dissected, especially in the south west.

Ground type/Soils

Heavy brown soils over glacial boulder clay/till.

Natural / water features

This upland area is drained by numerous small watercourses which dissect the plateau, creating a series of shallow valleys. Field ponds are a feature in places.

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character

Frequent small to medium-sized *ancient woods*, with some notably larger woods in places, connected by a network of ancient hedgerows. A relatively high survival of primary habitats (> 7%), although relatively little is specifically protected (< 1%).

Land use

Most of the land is in arable production.

Tree cover

A wooded landscape with many ancient woods, copses and occasional smaller plantations.

Historic and built environment

Historical development

For the most part an early enclosed landscape, with late enclosures only occurring to a limited extent, in certain places. Around Bedford, however, there are extensive areas of common fields which were subject to parliamentary enclosure.

Enclosure pattern

An irregular pattern of medium to large sized fields. There has been much modification as a result of reorganisation/ boundary removal in the 20th century.

Settlement pattern

A settled character comprising a mixture of scattered farmsteads, hamlets and occasional larger villages, the latter often linear in form where they have grown along roads. Late 20th century development impinges in the southern part of the area.

Building descriptions

The core part of this landscape, between Hertfordshire and Suffolk, has a strong vernacular tradition of timber framed buildings with tiled roofs. Some 19th/20th century brick buildings also occur in linear hamlets and around enclosed greens.

Historic features

Sinuous pattern of roads and lanes with small to medium-sized greens that are often triangular, or linear. These greens are often described as tyes in Suffolk and Essex.

Perceptual qualities

Visual experience

The network of winding, hedged lanes and paths coupled with the rolling countryside give a feeling of intimacy. In places field amalgamation has resulted in longer views over rolling, lightly wooded countryside.

Tranquillity

Despite its settled character this landscape is deeply rural and tranquil often affording a sense of remoteness and continuity. This is lost in some locations close to larger settlements and roads, or where there are pylons.

RLCT 9 Wooded Plateau Farmlands

Key priorities

The key integrated objectives are:

- A. Manage, enhance and restore ancient wooded landscape, hedgerows and hedgerow trees**
- B. Conserve the tranquillity that exists over a wide area in the farmlands, protect views into and out of Dedham Vale AONB and resist further suburbanisation of the farmlands in Essex**
- C. Maintain traditional dispersed settlement patterns and seek solutions for vernacular buildings falling into disrepair**

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Manage, enhance and restore ancient wooded landscape, hedgerows and hedgerow trees</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. bring areas of ancient woodland back into active management particularly using techniques such as coppicing and ensure continued management of willow carr and free standing willows through traditional pollarding and coppice management 2. conserve and enhance ancient woods as distinct historic landscape features within their original form and boundaries 3. promote other woodland planting and where historically appropriate, link up small remnants of ancient woodland 4. restore known lost woods or portions of woods, and create and manage new small to medium-sized woods, particularly on the plateau and plateau edges 5. promote the use of wood fuel as a renewable energy as well as the carbon storage benefits of new woodland 6. maintain trees that provide features in the agricultural landscape such as hedgerow trees and pollards, small copses and ancient semi-natural woods 7. encourage appropriate tree planting using local native species to help maintain the traditional wooded appearance and character of the clay plateau 8. restore important characteristic field boundary patterns such as pre-enclosure and parish boundaries, and manage and replant hedgerows 	<p>landscape cultural heritage biodiversity sense of place tranquillity carbon storage renewable energy</p>

<p>9. ensure new hedgerow planting on the clay plateau does not block important amenity views or excessively enclose the landscape</p> <p>10. retain characteristic surviving medieval enclosure, and sunken hollow lanes which are a landscape feature, lined with hedgerows, (although the impact of Dutch Elm disease is apparent)</p>	
<p>B. Conserve the tranquillity that exists over a wide area in the farmlands, protect views into and out of Dedham Vale AONB and resist further suburbanisation of the farmlands in Essex</p> <p>1. retain pasture land, encourage appropriate tree planting along river courses within the valleys, and continue restoration of larger ponds to conserve the character of the farmed landscape</p> <p>2. ensure modern enclosure, often for horse paddocks around settlements, does not change the character of the farmed landscape</p> <p>3. plan for and manage land sold in smaller plots for non agricultural use (e.g. extended gardens, keeping caravans, keeping of horses) to ensure minimal negative effects on landscape character</p> <p>4. ensure redundant agricultural buildings subject to applications for change of use (e.g. residential, office space, visitor accommodation) are monitored to ensure that conversions or change of use developments reflect the local building style, resist suburbanization and do not contribute to incremental new development in the open countryside and associated growth in demand for gardens</p> <p>5. ensure applications for replacement dwellings, communication infrastructure, and utility infrastructure have minimal negative landscape and visual impacts on the character of the area</p> <p>6. use the opportunity of major developments in areas of growth or in identified areas of demand or need (as identified in the Haven Gateway Green Infrastructure Strategy) to create new green infrastructure including green links that restore or enhance key views in or out of the AONB</p>	<p>landscape</p> <p>cultural heritage</p> <p>biodiversity</p> <p>sense of place</p> <p>tranquillity</p> <p>public access</p> <p>and enjoyment</p> <p>recreation</p>

<p>C. Maintain traditional dispersed settlement patterns and seek solutions for vernacular buildings falling into disrepair</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. maintain the dispersed settlement pattern - scattered farmsteads and small settlements around 'tyes' (commons) or strip greens and isolated hamlets with a road pattern that is winding (away from major routes), often with wide verges and strong hedgerows 2. maintain and restore the traditional buildings (and their curtilages/setting) including timber-framed and colour-washed houses with steeply pitched roofs, (sometimes faced with Georgian red brick, pegtiles or wheat straw thatch), the impressive churches and a rich heritage of barns 3. maintain and enhance the concentration of historic moated sites, and the well preserved medieval towns and villages with elaborate timber-frame houses (e.g. Lavenham, Finchingfield, Cavendish and Thaxted) 	<p>landscape cultural heritage biodiversity sense of place tranquillity</p>
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10. Wooded Village Farmlands

Summary description

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

Location

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

Physical environment

The shape of the land

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

Ground type/Soils

Heavy brown soils over boulder clay/till.

Natural / water features

Minor streams drain this landscape creating shallow depressions, or valleys amongst the arable landuse. Occasional field ponds.

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character

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

Land use

Arable land use.

Tree cover

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

Historic and built environment

Historical development

The majority of fieldscapes in this landscape are derived from the late enclosure of common fields. There are also areas of earlier enclosure, some of which may have been derived from assarting (the act of clearing forested lands for use in agriculture or other purposes).

Enclosure pattern

A mixture of medium to large scale, sub-regular and sinuous fields (often with tall hedgerows) alongside areas of planned geometric fields, reflecting the late enclosure of former common arable and waste.

Settlement pattern

Low density small nuclear villages, often arranged around a central village green, with occasional outlying farms often set in fields away from roads. Minimal 20th expansion of settlement.

Building descriptions

Building materials include timber framed and rendered cottages, often with thatched roofs.

Historic features

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

Perceptual qualities

Visual experience

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

Tranquillity

Peaceful and rural character.

RLCT 10 Wooded Village Farmlands

Key priorities

The key integrated objectives:

- A. Manage, enhance and restore woodlands and hedgerows to conserve the characteristic treed landscape**
- B. Manage changes in the traditional agricultural landscape such as block cropping (e.g. of Rape) or the increase in ‘horsiculture’**
- C. Plan for the creation of new landscapes associated with planned expansion around the existing urban centres, new settlements and growth areas**

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Conserve, manage and enhance woodlands and hedgerows to enhance the characteristic treed landscape</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. promote the restoration of ancient woodland and other woodland planting and where historically appropriate, link up small remnants of ancient woodland 2. bring areas of ancient woodland back into active management particularly using techniques such as coppicing and ensure continued management of willow carr and free standing willows through traditional pollarding and coppice management 3. encourage appropriate tree planting using local native species to help maintain the traditional wooded appearance and character of the clay plateau 4. restore important characteristic field boundary patterns such as pre-enclosure and parish boundaries 5. conserve, manage and replant hedgerows and their trees (including ancient pollarded oaks), using locally appropriate traditional methods, including the encouragement of trees (oak, ash, hornbeam and maple) from existing hedgerow stocks. Ensure new hedgerow planting does not block important amenity views or excessively enclose the landscape. Encourage indigenous mixed species hedgerow 	<p>landscape biodiversity cultural heritage carbon storage</p>

<p>planting including: hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel and maple, dogwood, spindle, hornbeam, willow, small- leaved lime (derived from woodland), barberry together with climbers including: bramble, wild rose, clematis, wild hops, black and white bryony</p>	
<p>B. Manage changes in the traditional agricultural landscape such as block cropping (e.g. of Rape) or the increase in ‘horsey culture’</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. promote wider and continued uptake of agri-environment schemes to broaden the landscape, access and biodiversity value of the claylands including the use of winter stubble for farmland bird populations 2. reinstate species rich grassland where feasible and locally in character 3. restore and enhance ponds which provide valuable habitat for protected species 4. enhance ditches through clearance and planting and improve their opportunities for storm water retention 5. manage areas of new paddocks and promote enclosures with hedges rather than wire fences 6. promote extended uptake of biomass cropping through short rotation coppicing and miscanthus 7. promote extended and enhanced access within agricultural landscapes 8. safeguard protected areas and high quality habitats 9. create new access where there is identified demand or need in order to link people with places, enhance existing networks and providing links to growth areas 10. promote access agreements close to where people live and areas of proposed new residential development 	<p>public access and enjoyment recreation landscape biodiversity cultural heritage</p>
<p>C. Plan for the creation of new landscapes associated with planned expansion around the existing urban centres, new settlements and growth areas</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. create new green infrastructure as part of major developments in areas of growth (e.g. Harlow and Bury St Edmunds) 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, cultural heritage geo-diversity, sense of place recreation,</p>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. identify locations where landscape enhancements and woodland planting can mitigate visually intrusive development in the countryside (e.g. industrial/commercial buildings on former airfield sites) 3. support and create a new landscape within the Marston Vale through a mosaic of woodland, water, agriculture and development 4. create and enhance infrastructure corridors through the area focusing on opportunities for sustainable access, recreation and regeneration including: road corridors, waterways (e.g. Bedford Milton Keynes waterway link), guided bus routes and SUD systems, combining appropriate well designed landscaping together with habitat creation 5. create new and enhanced landscapes in visually prominent urban fringes softening the interface with the rural landscape 6. restore former clay pits and landfill sites to realise a mix of development opportunities, recreation, and the management of features of notable bio-diversity and geo-diversity value (e.g. Stoneworts, Dragonflies and Great Crested Newt populations at Orton Pit , Peterborough) 7. create new green infrastructure facilities for existing and new populations, with sustainable access for local people (e.g. country parks reflecting the underlying landscape character and biodiversity resource) 8. enhance and extend the network of rights of way in the area with a focus on strategic routes including access for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians 	<p>flood alleviation carbon storage</p>
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11. Plateau Estate Farmlands

Summary description

A medium to large scale, ordered, arable landscape, for the most part associated with an open, rolling plateau on sandy soils, characterised by estate farms and discrete small villages/hamlets.

Location

Located mainly in Norfolk and northeast Essex, with smaller areas in Suffolk and Bedfordshire.

Physical environment

The shape of the land

Elevated land, with a gently rolling topography, associated with low glacial plateaux.

Ground type/Soils

Light loams and sandy brown, occasionally impoverished, soils derived from sandy drift and in limited areas mixed with bands of chalk.

Natural / water features

Frequent small streams drain this landscape, but these are not visually obvious.

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character

The relatively flat topography and workable sandy soils have resulted in the development of an arable landscape with only fragments (<1%) of *lowland heath* now remaining. Small patches of *ancient woodland* also survive in places.

Land use

Predominately arable cultivation.

Tree cover

Discrete tree belts, coverts and occasional larger plantations, often associated with areas of 18th and 19th century parkland.

Historic and built environment

Historical development

Mainly late enclosure of common fields and rough grazing land, particularly in northwest Norfolk, (Agricultural Revolution of the 18th century). Around Colchester & Ipswich, however, this landscape is characterised by earlier enclosures.

Enclosure pattern

Rectilinear fields with occasional earlier sinuous elements, giving rise to a regular, large-scale field pattern with well-trimmed hedgerows.

Settlement pattern

Low density of settlement comprising primarily discrete small villages/hamlets and estate farms. Towns are absent and there has been little 20th century development.

Building descriptions

Many buildings of brick construction with clay tiled roofs.

Historic features

There are many small parklands in this landscape, often with associated large country houses.

Perceptual qualities

Visual experience

Estate farms and parkland give rise to a visually well ordered landscape.

Tranquillity

This is a tranquil rural landscape, which in places, can feel rather empty and remote.

RLCT 11 Plateau Estate Farmlands

Key Priorities

The key integrated objectives are:

- A. Manage and protect the agricultural landscape and soil resource while adapting to pressures from natural processes and climate change**
- B. Protect local identity (e.g. historic parkland, local estate character and use of vernacular)**

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Manage and protect the agricultural landscape and soil resource while adapting to pressures from natural processes and climate change</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. promote the sustainable production of crops on the fragile soils. Target high risk areas and more damaging root crops 2. protect against soil erosion, water quality deterioration (caused by rapid runoff) whilst conserving and supporting farmland bird species associated with arable farming through the use Stewardship initiatives (e.g. the creation of buffer strips, uncut grass field margins, appropriate maintenance of adjacent grassland areas and over-wintering of stubble) 3. plan for climate change by promoting diversification of cropping especially towards agricultural regimes which help to conserve water 4. promote mixed farming to help retain remaining pockets of pasture with its associated hedgerows and boundary oaks 5. conserve, reinstate and manage hedgerows and hedgerow trees to strengthen the hedgerow network, the landscape pattern and increase visual diversity. Focus restoration on areas where fields have been amalgamated and hedgerow lengths/sections lost and where increased visual diversity in the landscape is desirable 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, cultural heritage sense of place carbon storage flood alleviation</p>

<p>B. Protect local identity (e.g. historic parkland, local estate character and use of vernacular)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. promote local design guidance for new development 2. promote the adoption of locally appropriate vernacular building materials, (e.g. carstone and flint) in developments in north west Norfolk 3. development within villages should conserve and enhance their nucleated character and street patterns and retain important views (e.g. to local landmarks such as church towers) 4. support and promote locally characteristic hedgerow management and other features which define the character of large estates 5. manage and control the conversion of historic farmsteads to uses other than agriculture (e.g. through appropriate development and design guidance adopted as SPD) 6. protect and manage historic field and boundary patterns such as the species-rich hedgerows from pre-C18th enclosures in the Herts Plateau and co-axial field systems 7. encouraging the management of historic parkland landscapes through promoting uptake of sensitive HLS schemes and/or use of tree planting grants 	<p>landscape, biodiversity cultural heritage, geodiversity sense of place</p>
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12. Valley Settled Farmlands

Summary description

Settled, often busy landscapes which occur along the sides of the sinuous valley corridors that cut through the East Anglian clay plateau.

Location

Occurs within a broad diagonal sweep extending from Chelmsford (Essex) in the south to Fakenham (Norfolk) in the north.

Physical environment

The shape of the land

Gently sloping valleys cut through glacial till, often with deposits of sand and gravel in the valley bottoms.

Ground type/Soils

Heavy brown soils, in places slowly permeable, but better draining on more sloping land.

Natural / water features

The upper reaches of most of the river valleys draining the clay plateau occur within this landscape.

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character

Although it has a long farming history, this is a landscape with substantial and *ancient hedges* surrounding its predominantly arable fields, along with *wet meadows* in valley bottoms and patches of *ancient woodland* on upper valley slopes.

Land use

Mainly arable land, with peri-urban areas that have a more mixed landuse, including some recreational/equestrian use.

Tree cover

Hedgerow trees have a strong visual impact in this landscape, associated with the localised influence of landscaped parks (e.g. Helmingham). Woodland is mainly limited to the upper parts of the valley sides.

Historic and built environment

Historical development

Field shapes are generally organic in character, with substantial and long-established hedges. There are some patches of co-axial fields in the Waveney valley area. Narrow, riverine meadows are a feature on the upper valley floors.

Enclosure pattern

Small to medium scale landscape, sometimes with a complex enclosure pattern. Field pattern is commonly sinuous and sub-regular.

Settlement pattern

Clustered pattern of farmsteads and hamlets, with some larger market towns. Many of these settlements have experienced significant late 20th century growth. Main roads usually run along valley bottoms, while sunken lanes occur on valley sides.

Building descriptions

Vernacular houses are typically timber-framed (usually plastered and painted) and often interspersed with red-brick houses. Timber-clad and tarred barns, with tiled (plain or pan tiles), or thatched roofs are also a feature in this landscape.

Historic features

Many towns and villages with distinctive medieval cores and late medieval churches. There are also many moated farmsteads of mediaeval date within this landscape.

Perceptual qualities

Visual experience

The nature of this landscape, with its strong hedgerow networks and linear valleys, gives rise to a varied visual experience characterised by a mixture of longer distance views and more intimate, semi-enclosed scenes.

Tranquillity

Away from the busy valley settlements, this is often a tranquil and rural landscape.

RLCT 12 Valley Settled Farmland

Key Priorities

The key integrated objectives are:

- A. Reinstate functional floodplains**
- B. Manage and protect the agricultural landscape, soil resource and water quality while adapting to pressures from natural processes and climate change**
- C. Protect and enhance green infrastructure and key wildlife corridors**
- D. Protect local identity, amenity and aesthetic value from inappropriate development, horsiculture etc**

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Reinstate functional floodplains</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. implement a policy of renaturalisation of watercourses by restoring minor watercourses to their natural profiles and flood regimes through de-culverting and restoration of sinuosity and the creation of new temporary wetlands. Reinstate connection between watercourse and floodplain, with consequent benefit in terms of flood storage and retention 2. identify opportunities for geodiversity, biodiversity and landscape enhancement which might result from holding water back within the valley system, (e.g. creation of temporary wetlands) to help increase storage capacity of both water and carbon, increase flood regulation and peat formation and help rapid aquifer recharge 3. plan the reconnection of upper-catchment valley pastures with the watercourse and reinstate wet grassland, fen and carr 	<p>geo-diversity biodiversity landscape cultural heritage flood alleviation sense of place carbon storage</p>
<p>B. Manage and protect the agricultural landscape, soil resource and water quality while adapting to pressures from natural processes and climate change</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. conserve, reinstate and manage hedgerows and hedgerow trees to strengthen the hedgerow network, the landscape pattern and increase visual diversity. Focus restoration on areas where fields have been amalgamated, hedgerow lengths/sections lost and where increased visual diversity in the landscape is desirable 2. promote farming practices that support bird populations and increase biodiversity of the area generally through the creation of field margins and over-wintering stubble combined with spring grown crops 3. maintain traditional unimproved valley meadowland where 	<p>landscape biodiversity cultural heritage sense of place carbon storage water quality geodiversity</p>

<p>economically feasible and through the support of agri-environment schemes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. raise the understanding of the importance of retaining historic field patterns amongst Stewardship advisors and land managers 5. encourage the maintenance and creation of field edge / field corner habitats such as grass margins, uncropped strips, hedges and ditches, trees and ponds 6. promote and encourage the continuation of pollard management of old ash and oak trees in hedgerows to ensure their longevity 7. restore historic landscapes by replanting hedgerows on significant previously-hedged field boundaries and manage existing/restored hedgerows appropriately (e.g. by coppicing rather than laying as more in keeping with local tradition) or through more localised practices and use of species 8. discourage inappropriate practices such as using wildlife-rich meadows for horse paddocks 9. maintain and monitor water quality in streams and aquifers and use Stewardship initiatives to buffer watercourses to help reduce water quality deterioration from high nutrient levels and low flows. 10. continue to protect the headwaters of the chalk rivers from point source and diffuse pollution and protect from over-abstraction 	
<p>C. Protect and enhance green infrastructure and key wildlife corridors</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. seek to create improved pedestrian access to the countryside 2. create and enhance green infrastructure and opportunities for public access in line with county or other GI strategies by creating linkages between existing public footpaths and settlements and the trails and paths which dissect the area and identify locations for new recreational sites such as County Parks 3. manage public access so as to avoid adverse impacts upon agricultural management, landscape, habitats and wildlife 4. identify and promote new paths where a real need exists (e.g. re-connecting a village or hamlet into the rights of way network) 	<p>biodiversity landscape cultural heritage recreation access</p>

<p>D. Protect local identity, amenity and aesthetic value from inappropriate development, horticulture etc</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. conserve and protect historic parklands and their houses/mansions (e.g. Thornham Magna, Helmingham and Heveningham) 2. retain and enhance historic greens and common grazing lands many of which have a valued flora (e.g. Chippenhall, Mellis and Hales). Conserve the distinctiveness of linear riverside commons on peaty soils and those on interfluvial clayland greens with settled margins. Limit the vehicular access points to such greens and conserve their distinctive settlement margins 3. encourage the retention and enhancement of moated houses (dating from the mid-12th - 16th centuries with steeply pitched pantile or pegtile roofs) and the biodiversity they support, old timber-framed barns (late medieval period - mid 19th century) and other traditional agricultural buildings (e.g. early brick barns) which have a high visual impact in the generally dispersed settlement pattern of this largely flat landscape 4. conserve and enhance historic landscape features and wildlife habitats within the planned open spaces associated with new development 5. promote local design guidance and the adoption of vernacular building materials for new development 	<p>sense of place cultural heritage landscape</p>
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13. Lowland Village Farmlands

Summary description

This is a well settled, low lying landscape which is often crossed by major river corridors. The high density of settlement, intensive agriculture and major transport infrastructure mean that this is often a busy, rural landscape.

Location

Located predominately in west Norfolk, south Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire.

Physical environment

The shape of the land

A generally low lying, gently rolling topography, although some areas adjacent to lower lying levels can appear elevated.

Ground type/Soils

A mixture of soil types including both productive sandy and clayey brown soils.

Natural / water features

This landscape is drained by small streams and ditches which are visually indistinct. Occasionally there are gravel extraction lakes (e.g. Hemingfords and Buckden) along the River Great Ouse and within the Ivel valley in Bedfordshire.

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character

A productive, intensively farmed agricultural landscape, with patches of *wet woodland*, *reedbed* and *wet grassland* along river valleys and in damp, low-lying hollows. Almost 10% of these sites are afforded some degree of designated protection.

Land use

Arable land use predominates with some areas of pasture and orchards. Occasional mineral extraction, lake creation and brickworks.

Tree cover

Groups of trees, often around farmsteads and occasional small plantations.

Historic and built environment

Historical development

A landscape dominated by the late enclosure of common fields. Large pockets of earlier enclosure also exist, also created from common fields. All fieldscapes have experienced significant modification during the 20th century.

Enclosure pattern

Medium/large scale, regular field pattern, defined by well trimmed hedgerows. Field systems include a mix of rectilinear & sinuous patterns, reflecting the process of planned surveyor enclosure from common fields.

Settlement pattern

A dense, largely nucleated, rural settlement pattern composed of small towns (e.g. Biggleswade), villages and outlying farmsteads. Larger towns (e.g. Bedford) often exert an urbanising influence on this landscape.

Building descriptions

Main building materials include Gault clay, brick, clay tile, render and thatch.

Historic features

Medieval moated sites and fine stone churches are a characteristic feature.

Perceptual qualities

Visual experience

Sparse woodland cover giving rise to open character and extensive views.

Tranquillity

Away from major transport routes this landscape has a greater sense of tranquillity although intensive farming activity and a high density settlement pattern mean that many areas retain a busy feel.

RLCT 13 Lowland Village Farmlands

Key priorities

The key integrated objectives are:

- A. Maintain strong, open drainage pattern
- B. Manage and enhance the agricultural landscapes and address loss of biodiversity from agricultural intensification and the impact of 'horseyculture'
- C. Plan for issues and opportunities resulting from mineral extraction and urban growth, including biodiversity gain and public access

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Maintain a strong, open drainage pattern</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. promote wider and continued uptake of ELS (Entry level Stewardship) and HLS (Higher level Stewardship) schemes to restore and reinstate flood meadows from arable 2. restore and reinstate riparian features and vegetation including willow pollards, wet woodland and specimen native black poplar 3. enhance the value of existing restored mineral sites and development areas for biodiversity, access and recreation 4. enhance the opportunities on larger water bodies (e.g. Grafham Water) for active recreation, balancing with the needs of biodiversity and maintaining water quality 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, access, sense of place, tranquillity, recreation, flood alleviation,</p>
<p>B. Manage and enhance the agricultural landscape and address loss of biodiversity from agricultural intensification and the impact of 'horseyculture'</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. promote wider and continued uptake of ES and HLS schemes to broaden the landscape, access and biodiversity value of the claylands including use of winter stubble for bird populations 2. restore gappy hedges and reinstate lost hedgerows adding new features using indigenous species mixes and increased number of hedgerow trees of appropriate locally native species 3. reinstate species rich grassland where feasible and locally in character 4. restore and enhance ponds which provide valuable habitat for protected species (e.g. Great Crested Newts) 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, access sense of place tranquillity, carbon storage</p>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. enhance ditches through clearance and planting where appropriate and provide improved opportunities for storm water retention 6. manage areas of new paddocks and promote appropriate enclosures with hedges rather than wire fences 7. manage existing woodlands using traditional methods (e.g. coppicing), extend existing woodlands, create new woodlands and create linkages with ancient woodland sites and smaller woodland blocks in the valleys but without creating too much visual enclosure in the landscape 8. promote extended and enhanced access within agricultural landscapes 	
<p>C. Plan for issues and opportunities resulting from mineral extraction and urban growth, including biodiversity and public access</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. support and create a new landscape within the Marston Vale through a mosaic of woodland, water, agriculture and development 2. create and enhance infrastructure corridors through the area focusing on opportunities for sustainable access, recreation and regeneration including: road corridors, waterways (e.g. Bedford Milton Keynes waterway link), guided bus routes and SUD systems, combining appropriate well designed landscaping together with habitat creation 3. create new and enhanced landscapes in visually prominent urban fringes softening the interface with the rural landscape 4. restoration of former clay pits and landfill sites to realise a mix of development opportunities including recreation, promoting the management of bio- and geo-diversity value (e.g. Stoneworts, Dragonflies and Great Crested Newt populations at Orton Pit , Peterborough) 5. creation of new green infrastructure facilities for existing and new populations with sustainable access to local people (e.g. country parks) 6. enhance and extend the network of rights of way in the area with focus on strategic routes In accordance to requirements of local GI strategies 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, cultural heritage, geo-diversity, sense of place, recreation, flood alleviation, carbon storage</p>

14. Lowland Settled Farmlands

Summary description

This is a settled agricultural landscape, often with a recurring estate character, associated with fertile rolling lowlands, often around the coastal fringe.

Location

Occurs in northeast Norfolk, along the southern coastal fringe of Essex and in the central parts of Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.

Physical environment

The shape of the land

Low-lying, gently rolling topography associated with deposits of glacial sand and gravel, often associated with river valleys and adjoining areas of gently rolling ground.

Ground type/Soils

Sandy brown and loamy, free draining soils.

Natural / water features

Well drained by a network of small streams and rivers.

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character

A landscape of productive, free draining soils with little surviving semi-natural habitat. Some patches of *ancient woodland* survive in areas with wetter gleyed soils.

Land use

Predominately arable land use, with occasional damp meadows on lower ground in river valleys. Some mineral extraction (e.g. for brick making in Marston vale) and recreational land uses (e.g. golf courses).

Tree cover

Widespread groups of trees and small plantations, with occasional ancient woodlands.

Historic and built environment

Historical development

A landscape with a mixed historical evolution, including both late enclosures from common field and heath in Norfolk and early co-axial field types in Essex & Hertfordshire.

Enclosure pattern

Field forms are generally medium sized and sinuous, but rectilinear patterns are also common in places, reflecting more planned surveyor enclosures.

Settlement pattern

Rural settlement is dense and clustered with a mixture of riverside towns, small nucleated villages/hamlets and many individual farms. There are limited urban fringe influences in this landscape.

Building descriptions

To be completed at a later date.

Historic features

Extensive network of hedged and occasionally sunken lanes. There are also numerous small parklands. Brickwork kilns and chimneys are also a distinctive feature in Beds.

Perceptual qualities

Visual experience

A generally more enclosed landscape, with a complex mosaic of wooded and tree lined vistas, in places giving rise to an intimate character.

Tranquillity

Much of this landscape has a deeply rural character with a high degree of tranquillity. However, in areas of mineral extraction, tranquillity is often significantly reduced.

RLCT 14 Lowland Settled Farmland

Key priorities

The key integrated objectives are:

- A. Manage ongoing loss of hedgerows and trees (and associated features) in the landscape**
- B. Plan for the creation of new landscapes associated with expansion around the rural settlements and urban growth areas of towns**
- C. Identify and plan for opportunities for green infrastructure (biodiversity, access, other recreation) following mineral extraction**

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Manage ongoing loss of hedgerows and trees (and associated features) in the landscape</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. maintain and conserve areas of woodland in the inland farming area particularly where they occur on the fringes of the Broads 2. reinstate active management of existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees 3. restore old hedgerow lines where gappy and/or lost completely and replant with locally appropriate species 4. conserve and widen the earth banks where these form a characteristic feature of the landscape, and prevent close cultivation to encourage wild flora 5. conserve and maintain existing orchards and fruit varieties 6. reinstate orchards as prominent landscape features in the North East Norfolk and Flegg NCA, to retain landscape interest and distinctive landscape patterning 7. promote connectivity and bat foraging opportunities in the northeast of the North East Norfolk and Flegg NCA, particularly where they are likely to lead to habitat enhancement for the Barbastelle bat 8. retain characteristic rectilinear landscape patterns of the field boundaries of South Essex 9. identify and create new local markets for biomass products (e.g. short-rotation coppice), particularly where their use can help to redress the loss of woodland to arable intensification 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, cultural heritage sense of place carbon storage renewable energy</p>

<p>B. Plan for the creation of new landscapes associated with expansion around the rural settlements and urban growth areas of towns</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. conserve and enhance historic landscape features and wildlife habitats within the planned open spaces associated with new development 2. promote local design guidance and the use of vernacular building materials for new development particularly where associated with the coastal villages including the improvement and upgrading of existing holiday developments in keeping with local vernacular 	<p>landscape, biodiversity cultural heritage, geodiversity sense of place recreation</p>
<p>C. Identify and plan for opportunities for green infrastructure (biodiversity, access, other recreation) following mineral extraction</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. create and enhance opportunities for public access by creating linkages between existing public footpaths and settlements and the Weavers Way Long Distance Paths 2. manage public access so as to avoid adverse impacts upon agricultural management, landscape, habitats and wildlife 	<p>recreation landscape, access, biodiversity</p>

15. Wooded Hills and Ridges

Summary description

This is a varied and textured landscape characterised by undulating hills and steep ridges, which are cloaked in woodland, with clearings of arable farmland and pasture.

Location

Located in the south of the Region in Essex and Hertfordshire.

Physical environment

The shape of the land

Undulating land, often steeply sloping, with distinctive ridges and narrow plateau summits.

Ground type/Soils

Heavy clay soils overlying London clay.

Natural / water features

Minor streams drain the hills and feed into adjacent river valleys/low lying landscapes.

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character

A combination of heavy, gleyed soils supports a high cover of ancient deciduous woodland. Survival of *Ancient Woodland* is relatively high, much of which is found in large blocks and protected by designated sites (>1%).

Land use

Mixed farming (pasture and arable) between extensive areas of woodland. Some peri-urban land uses including horse grazing, golf courses and country parks.

Tree cover

Frequent, often large ancient woodlands, in places associated with parkland.

Historic and built environment

Historical development

Historically this landscape has comprised a mixture of wooded areas and fields, many of which are likely to have been created by assarting. Fieldsapes tend to be dominated by early enclosures, with significant areas of co-axial fields.

Enclosure pattern

Field pattern is generally irregular and sinuous. Areas that have been extensively modified through field reorganisation tend to have a more regular pattern.

Settlement pattern

Settlement is densely dispersed, with many linear clusters along roadsides. The influence of towns (both new developments and vastly expanded historic settlements) are also a feature within this landscape.

Building descriptions

To be completed at a later date.

Historic features

Small to medium sized parklands and relic commons. Historic churches in settlements act as local landmarks.

Perceptual qualities

Visual experience

Enclosed character due to woodland cover and mature hedgerows. Where there are breaks in the woodland cover the elevated nature of these hills and ridges affords long distance views.

Tranquillity

The hilltops and lanes are relatively tranquil, however near to settlements and road infrastructure tranquillity reduces considerably.

RLCT 15 Wooded Hills and Ridges

Key Priorities

The key integrated objectives are:

- A. Restore, manage and enhance the characteristic tree and woodland cover in the landscape**
- B. Plan for and manage impact of existing settlement and proposed growth including recreation needs (e.g. in London and Thames Gateway)**
- C. Protect, manage and plan for and promote character and diversity in the countryside**

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Restore, manage and enhance the characteristic tree and woodland cover in the landscape</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. bring existing ancient and semi-ancient woodlands into management, including smaller copses and belts associated with old parkland, using traditional techniques such as coppicing 2. increase woodland cover and proportion of native species in plantations, small scale woodland plots and old 'plot-lands' 3. promote woodland creation using local native species (e.g. by arable reversion), linking up of small remnants of ancient woodland or continued support of the Community Forest programme 4. continue traditional management of bank-side trees such as pollarded willows, and management of in-field and hedgerow trees 5. restore orchards and encourage new plantings particularly in the Essex Wooded Hills and Ridges 6. promote sustainable new uses and viable markets for private woodland to bring them back into management and enhance their environmental value 	<p>landscape, cultural heritage biodiversity carbon storage recreation tranquillity</p>
<p>B. Plan for and manage impact of existing settlement and proposed growth including recreation needs (e.g. in London and Thames Gateway)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. produce an overall strategy to plan for future pressure and manage change in the London Green Belt and adjoining landscapes 	<p>landscape biodiversity access and recreation</p>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. monitor growth of urban and peri-urban development around larger towns such as Tiptree, Basildon, Brentwood, Borehamwood and Hatfield 3. prevent the erosion of character through greenfield site development (e.g. between Benfleet and Billericay), and discourage neglect or fragmentation of greenfield sites on the urban fringe due to the 'hope value' of the land for future development 4. manage the potential negative impact of proposed development on views from the hills and ridges 5. plan for increased recreation in the countryside through the creation of new green infrastructure as part of major developments in areas of growth such as Thames Gateway and the M11 corridor, to raise the profile of the region and offer new visitor destinations and address any existing shortfalls in accessible natural greenspace 6. maintain strong green infrastructure partnerships at a sub-regional level to champion enhancement and management of greenspace networks for landscape, biodiversity and community cohesion 7. create new permissive access where there is identified demand or need in order to link people with places, enhance existing networks, and provide links to new growth areas (e.g. through the promotion of access agreements under Environmental Stewardship) 8. seek opportunities in areas of growth to conserve and restore key historic environment characteristics and features, including buildings, through appropriate development, design guidance and the planning control system 9. celebrate and promote the rich cultural and archaeological heritage through events, activities, education and the arts 10. ensure access to the historic environment is managed as part of an integrated green infrastructure programme 	<p>sense of place</p> <p>cultural diversity</p>
<p>C. Protect, manage, plan for and promote character and diversity in the countryside</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. manage the trend towards 'gardening' in the countryside through design guidance or promotion of best practice 2. encourage the management of historic parkland landscapes through promoting uptake of grants, and the management of visible and below ground archaeological 	<p>cultural heritage</p> <p>sense of place</p> <p>landscape</p> <p>biodiversity</p> <p>geodiversity</p>

<p>and historic features that are assessed as a priority in the region</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. maintain or restore historic buildings, their curtilage or settings, particularly medieval moats, late medieval timber-framed houses and other historic agricultural buildings 4. encourage the over-wintering of stubble in order to support populations of farmland birds and manage set-aside land to reduce a muddled appearance leading to loss of landscape character; bringing neglected land back into agricultural use to encourage a diverse farmland patchwork, and maintaining traditional grasslands (such as species-rich, damp, unimproved neutral grasslands) and floodplain grassland 5. protect, plan and manage historic farmsteads conversions to uses other than agriculture (e.g. through appropriate development and design guidance) 6. protect and manage remaining historic fields and boundary patterns such as the species-rich hedgerows from pre-C18th enclosures in the Herts Plateau and river valleys, and the co-axial field systems (e.g. east of Broxbourne, and in the vicinity of Waltham Abbey) 7. protect, manage and restore areas of unimproved acid grasslands, heath and other semi-natural habitats to add texture to the landscape and richness to biodiversity 8. protect and manage key geological and geomorphological features of national interest, that help to shape the landscape 9. manage and enhance the quality and character of rivers and streams, and man-made water bodies 	<p>flood alleviation</p>
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16. Wooded Plateau Claylands

Summary description

An ancient wooded landscape of arable farms, associated with heavy clay soils on gently rolling plateau, which are lightly dissected by minor river valleys.

Location

Occurs in Norfolk, from Attleborough northwards to Fakenham and eastwards as far as Loddon; in Suffolk on the clay plateau edge in an arc from Stowmarket to Diss and from Lowestoft south to Hadleigh; and in two smaller areas in northeast Essex.

Physical environment

The shape of the land

A gently rolling landform associated mainly with glacial till plateau, but also occurring on London clay in Essex. This landscape is often dissected by small river valleys around the edge of the plateau, creating more complex slopes.

Ground type/Soils

Heavy clay soils derived from glacial till, or London clay.

Natural / water features

Areas of poor drainage/waterlogged soils where ponds are a common feature.

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character

A scattering of small to medium-sized *ancient woodlands*, connected by an irregular network of similarly *ancient hedgerows*. A relatively high proportion of this landscape is primary habitat (> 4%), but little is specifically protected (less than 1%).

Land use

Arable land use.

Tree cover

Relic patches of ancient semi-natural woodland and scattered hedgerow trees (oak, ash and field maple).

Historic and built environment

Historical development

This is a landscape dominated by enclosures of medieval and earlier origin, including some areas with co-axial patterns. Late enclosures are a minor element. Fieldsapes have seen significant modification in the 20th century.

Enclosure pattern

Varied field pattern including a mixture of irregular and sinuous boundaries, the latter often defined by bushy hedgerows. 20th century boundary removal and reorganisation has led to some regularisation of field shapes.

Settlement pattern

Rural settlement is fairly dense, comprising a clustered pattern of villages, hamlets and large outlying farms, connected by a network of winding, often hedged lanes and paths. Little to no 20th century development.

Building descriptions

Strong vernacular tradition of timber-framed buildings, tiled roofs and some thatch. Also some 19th and 20th century brick buildings, especially in the linear hamlets and on the enclosed greens.

Historic features

Villages often associated with medieval greens, in places called tyes. Parklands are prominent in some parts such as East Suffolk (e.g. Helmingham). There are also a large number of medieval moats throughout this landscape.

Perceptual qualities

Visual experience

Despite being a reasonably well-wooded landscape the rolling plateau landform allows frequent longer views. The comprehensive network of winding lanes and tall hedges, however, often provide a more intimate feeling.

Tranquillity

The rural nature of much of this landscape and high incidence of ancient woodland, mean that it has a high degree of tranquillity, despite a relatively dense rural settlement.

RLCT 16 Wooded Plateau Claylands

Key priorities

The key integrated objectives are:

- A. Conserve, restore and enhance the characteristic ancient small woodlands and sinuous enclosure pattern**
- B. Plan for changes to traditional parklands through pressure from development, management and recreation**
- C. Conserve, restore or enhance distinctive moated buildings and churches in the landscape**
- D. Plan for pressure from infill development in dispersed settlement patterns through (e.g. Village Design Statements, Design Guidance etc)**

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Conserve, restore and enhance the characteristic ancient small woodlands and sinuous enclosure patterns</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. bring existing ancient and semi-ancient woodlands into management using traditional techniques such as coppicing 2. promote woodland creation by replanting known lost woods or portions of woods, the creation and management of new small and medium-sized woods particularly on the plateau/plateau edges. Also enhance ancient woods as distinct historic landscape features within their original shapes and boundaries 3. protect and manage remaining historic field and boundary patterns such as the species-rich hedgerows from pre-C18th enclosures and in-field and hedgerow trees. Restore historic landscapes by replanting hedgerows on significant previously-hedged field boundaries and managing existing/restored hedgerows appropriately (e.g. by coppicing) 4. continue pollarding of ash and oak in hedgerows and willow (in the river valleys) to ensure longevity of the trees 5. promote sustainable new uses and viable markets for private woodland to bring them back into management and enhance their environmental value (e.g. promote management for wood fuel, carbon storage benefits, informal recreation opportunities and new permissive 	<p>landscape</p> <p>cultural heritage</p> <p>biodiversity</p> <p>sense of place</p> <p>tranquillity</p> <p>carbon storage</p> <p>renewable energy</p>

access)	
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<p>B. Plan for changes to traditional parklands through pressure from development, management and recreation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. promote the conservation and management of historic parklands and their houses/mansions (e.g. Thornham Magna, Helmingham and Heveningham) through promoting the uptake of grants 2. seek opportunities in areas of growth to restore key historic environment characteristics and features through the planning control system 3. manage and control historic farmstead conversion to uses other than agriculture (e.g. through appropriate development and design guidance adopted as SPD) 4. promote and encourage positive management of visible and below ground archaeological and historic features that are assessed as a priority 5. celebrate and promote the rich cultural and archaeological heritage through events, activities, education and the arts 6. ensure access to the historic environment is managed as part of an integrated green infrastructure programme 	<p>landscape cultural heritage biodiversity sense of place tranquility recreation</p>
<p>C. Conserve, restore or enhance distinctive moated buildings or churches in the landscape</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. encourage the retention and enhancement of moated houses (dating from the mid-12th - 16th centuries with steeply pitched pantile or pegtile roofs) and the biodiversity they support, old timber-framed barns (late medieval period - mid 19th century) and other traditional agricultural buildings (e.g. early brick barns) which have a high visual impact in the generally dispersed settlement pattern of this largely flat landscape 2. conserve the distinctive Saxo-Norman, and later medieval churches, such as Wymondham, North Lopham, Framlingham, Eye and Laxfield, that form features in the landscape 	<p>cultural heritage biodiversity sense of place</p>

<p>D. Plan for pressure from infill development in dispersed settlement patterns through (e.g. Village Design Statements, Design Guidance etc)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. maintain the distinctive character, settlement form and vernacular of towns and villages (generally small, dispersed, 12th or 13th century origin, within an intricate network of minor roads) and improve their setting and settlement fringes (e.g. Long Stratton) 2. retain and restore historic green lanes and former drove ways (giving priority to fragmented sections and bridleways) 3. retain and enhance historic greens and common grazing lands many of which have a valued flora (e.g. Chippenhall, Mellis and Hales). Conserve the distinctiveness of linear riverside commons on interfluvial clayland greens with settled margins. Limit the vehicular access points to such greens and conserve their distinctive settlement margins 	<p>landscape biodiversity access and recreation sense of place</p>
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17. Settled Plateau Claylands

Summary description

An expansive, elevated, gently rolling plateau landscape, with an ancient enclosure and settlement pattern.

Location

Located in north Suffolk in an area stretching north-eastwards from Stowmarket to Halesworth, and in south Norfolk between Diss and Attleborough.

Physical environment

The shape of the land

Gently rolling glacial plateau, dissected by small streams.

Ground type/Soils

Heavy clay soils derived from boulder clay.

Natural / water features

The edges of the plateau are dissected by streams and their tributaries, providing some topographic variation.

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character

A relatively uniform landscape characterised by arable farmland on heavy clay soils, with only occasional fragments of *ancient woodland*. Less than 0.5% of this LCT is semi-natural habitat and there are few designated sites.

Land use

Arable land use.

Tree cover

Scattered hedgerow trees (oak and ash) and groups of trees around farmsteads, with occasional copses, often associated with ponds.

Historic and built environment

Historical development

Historically, a landscape with areas of co-axial fields intermixed with other forms of early enclosure. Extensive changes to this pattern occurred from the mid 20th century onwards, resulting in the creation of large open areas through substantial boundary loss.

Enclosure pattern

An ancient organic field pattern with many sinuous boundaries, strongly co-axial in the north east (South Elmhams and Ilketshalls) with many substantial mixed hedges, dominated in places with suckering elm.

Settlement pattern

Clustered pattern of hamlet-sized settlements, some centred on churches, others on greens (or former greens). Farmsteads are scattered throughout this landscape and many are moated. Few towns and little 20th century development.

Building descriptions

Strong local vernacular tradition of timber-framed buildings, tiled roofs and some thatch. Also some 19th and 20th century brick buildings, especially in the linear hamlets and enclosed greens.

Historic features

Historically characterised by large greens, many of which were enclosed late, leaving a residue of rectilinear fields and straight roads. There are also a large number of medieval moats throughout this landscape.

Perceptual qualities

Visual experience

Open views of arable land with small clusters of trees and houses on the horizon, although in places, changes in slope sometimes allow views to be confined by hedges and trees.

Tranquillity

A settled and working arable landscape, yet one which is deeply rural. Tranquillity is often found in small valleys and away from main roads.

RLCT 17 Settled Plateau Claylands

Key priorities

The key integrated objectives are:

- A. Conserve, restore and enhance distinctive and often large medieval greens, meadows and other distinctive landscape features as part of planned management of the overall historic and built environment**
- B. Conserve, restore or enhance distinctive moated buildings or churches in the landscape.**
- C. Manage and control large-scale development in the landscape such as agricultural buildings and wind turbines and development on wartime airfields (e.g. through design and planning guidance)**

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Conserve, restore and enhance distinctive village greens, other traditional grasslands and distinctive landscape features as part of planned management of the overall historic and built environment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. retain and enhance historic greens and common grazing land much of which has a valued flora (e.g. those at Chippenhall, and Mellis). Limit the vehicular access points to such greens and conserve their distinctive settlement margins 2. discourage inappropriate practices such as using wildlife-rich meadows for horse paddocks 3. maintain ditches and isolated ponds which are a characteristic feature of the clay plateau for their landscape and biodiversity value 4. retain and restore historic green lanes and former drove ways (giving priority to fragmented sections and bridleways) 5. maintain the distinctive character, form and vernacular of settlements (generally small, dispersed, of 12th or 13th century origin, within an intricate network of minor roads) 6. protect and conserve historic parklands and their houses/mansions 	<p>landscape cultural heritage biodiversity sense of place tranquillity recreation</p>
<p>B. Conserve, restore or enhance distinctive moated buildings or churches in the landscape</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. encourage the retention and enhancement of moated houses (dating from the mid-12th - 16th centuries with 	<p>landscape cultural heritage</p>

<p>steeply pitched pantile or pegtile roofs) and the biodiversity they support, old timber-framed barns (late medieval period - mid 19th century) and other traditional agricultural buildings (e.g. early brick barns) which have a high visual impact in the generally dispersed settlement pattern of this largely flat landscape</p> <p>2. protect and conserve the distinctive round-towered Saxo-Norman, and later medieval churches, such as Wymondham, North Lopham, Framlingham, Eye and Laxfield, that form features in the landscape</p>	<p>biodiversity sense of place tranquillity recreation</p>
<p>C. Manage and control large-scale development in the landscape such as agricultural buildings and wind turbines and development on wartime airfields (e.g. through design and planning guidance)</p> <p>1. ensure quality and consistency in environmental assessments for large-scale development in the landscape and consider the cumulative effects of such developments</p> <p>2. protect, conserve and enhance fragments of ancient woodland, small copses and trees forming features in the landscape</p> <p>3. promote the historic significance of world war two airfields and their structures and where lost to development ensure that these are properly recorded</p> <p>4. ensure large scale developments do not cause adverse intrusion in the landscape through appropriate location and design ensuring adequate mitigation for negative visual impacts</p>	<p>landscape cultural heritage biodiversity sense of place tranquillity carbon storage access recreation</p>

18. Lowland Settled Claylands

Summary description

Low lying, rolling coastal farmland forming a hinterland between the Coastal Levels and the Wooded Hills further inland.

Location

Located mainly in the southern parts of Essex.

Physical environment

The shape of the land

Low-lying, gently rolling topography, associated with London clay.

Ground type/Soils

Heavy, often wet clay soils.

Natural / water features

Land is drained by a criss-cross pattern of drainage ditches.

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character

The predominantly low lying nature and clay character of the substrate indicate the potential presence of *wetland* habitats, a few fragments of which survive. These are relatively well protected, with a high proportion of designated sites.

Land use

Arable land use. Some areas of peri-urban landscape.

Tree cover

Sparse woodland cover, but some copses and shelter belts.

Historic and built environment

Historical development

An early enclosed landscape dominated by co-axial fieldscapes. Late enclosure is rare and usually associated with enclosure of commons.

Enclosure pattern

An irregular/ sinuous field pattern, in places defined by a mixture of field sizes. Field boundaries mostly comprise well trimmed low hedges, or ditches.

Settlement pattern

A densely dispersed settlement pattern comprising scattered farmsteads, hamlets and clusters of dwellings, with occasional towns. There is a strong urban influence, with many new housing developments and some vastly expanded historic settlements.

Building descriptions

To be completed at a later date.

Historic features

Right angled bends in lanes reflecting an ancient field pattern and churches in historic settlements which act as local landmarks.

Perceptual qualities

Visual experience

An open farmed landscape, with long distance views over adjoining coastal levels and marshes.

Tranquillity

Urban development and road infrastructure undermine the tranquillity of the area as a whole.

RLCT 18 Lowland Settled Claylands

Key priorities

The key integrated objectives are:

- A. Plan and manage the impacts of existing and proposed urban and infrastructure development in this flat, open landscape, particularly within areas of growth (e.g. Thames Gateway)**
- B. Conserve and restore remaining co-axial boundary patterns through agri-environmental schemes and planning for their protection in areas of change**

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Plan and manage the impacts of existing and proposed urban and infrastructure development in this flat, open landscape, particularly within areas of growth (e.g. Thames Gateway)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. produce an overall strategy to manage change in the London Green Belt and adjoining landscapes through establishing a new vision for agricultural landscapes especially in areas of growth such as Thames Gateway, Haven Gateway and M11 corridor 2. plan for future pressure from urban-related development, major roads and general industrial development (e.g. future expansion of Stansted, urban sprawl in Essex heathlands) 3. monitor growth of urban and peri-urban development around larger towns such as Colchester, Tiptree, Wickford, Grays, Hatfield, St Albans and Rickmansworth 4. prevent erosion of landscape character through ‘greenfield’ site development and discourage neglect of ‘greenfield’ sites on the urban fringe due to the ‘hope value’ of the land for future development 5. seek opportunities in areas of growth to restore key historic environment characteristics and features through the planning control system 6. create new green infrastructure as part of major developments in areas of growth to raise the profile of the region, offer new visitor destinations and address any existing shortfalls in accessible natural greenspace 7. continue support of the planting and management of young trees as part of the Community Forest programme 	<p>landscape</p> <p>biodiversity</p> <p>access and recreation</p> <p>sense of place</p> <p>cultural heritage</p> <p>carbon storage</p> <p>recreation</p> <p>access</p>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. create new permissive access where there is identified demand or need (e.g. through the promotion of access agreements under Environmental Stewardship), in order to enhance existing networks and provide links to new growth areas 9. ensure access to the historic environment is managed as part of an integrated green infrastructure programme through the celebration and promotion of the rich cultural and archaeological heritage through events, activities, education and the arts 10. maintain strong green infrastructure partnerships at a sub-regional level to champion enhancement and management of greenspace networks for landscape, biodiversity and community cohesion 	
<p>B. Conserve and restore remaining co-axial boundary patterns through agri-environmental schemes and planning for their protection in areas of change</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. protect and manage the remaining historic field and boundary patterns of the early, maybe Roman, planned enclosures in the London Clay Lowlands, through agri-environmental schemes and planning for their protection in areas of change 2. restore land extracted for minerals or utilized for landfill – including riverside landscapes - back to agriculture, recreation or for biodiversity gains as appropriate, especially in the London Clay Lowlands 3. bring neglected land back into agricultural use and encourage a diverse farmland patchwork 4. maintain traditional grasslands such as species-rich, damp, unimproved neutral grasslands on the London Clay 5. protect, manage and plan historic farmstead conversions (particularly medieval moated and late medieval timber-framed houses) to uses other than agriculture (e.g. through appropriate development and design guidance) 6. manage the remnant lowland heathland in the Essex Heaths 7. co-ordinate a programme of river valley restoration (e.g. the Lea Valley where the 2012 Olympic will take place) preventing deterioration of water quality caused by high nutrient levels as well as addressing flood protection 	<p>landscape biodiversity cultural heritage sense of place water quality flood alleviation</p>

19. Valley Meadowlands

Summary description

Flat, low lying valley floors traditionally supporting a pastoral land use, associated with notable watercourses/rivers. Generally unsettled, with occasional areas of carr woodland and gravel extraction lakes, or ancient meres.

Location

Occurs throughout the region along major river valleys.

Physical environment

The shape of the land

Flat, low lying landform associated with deposits of river alluvium.

Ground type/Soils

Heavy, seasonally waterlogged soils.

Natural / water features

Open water areas associated with gravel workings or ancient meres. Notable rivers/tributaries and drainage ditches.

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character

Wet meadowland, lowland fen and other associated wetland vegetation reflect the wet valley nature of this landscape. Habitat survival is variable, reflected in the low cover (< 2%) of protected sites.

Land use

A pastoral landscape with significant areas of arable and some gravel extraction.

Tree cover

Scattering of trees and areas of increasing scrub, sometimes dense, including willow and poplar trees, along the course of rivers.

Historic and built environment

Historical development

Historically this has been a grazed landscape, enclosed into a mosaic of riverine meadows. In places, large areas of valley floor have been removed by sand/gravel extraction and these now function as reservoirs.

Enclosure pattern

A landscape where the shape of fields is heavily constrained by topography, with boundaries running parallel, or perpendicular to the alignment of the river.

Settlement pattern

Generally unsettled although occasional mill buildings often provide local built features. Urban settlements in surrounding areas often impinge on this type.

Building descriptions

To be completed at a later date.

Historic features

Notable medieval and Tudor moated sites.

Perceptual qualities

Visual experience

An enclosed, low-lying landscape comprising grassland meadows grazed by cattle in a wider arable setting. Valley floor woodland can confine views.

Tranquillity

The presence of water, limited settlement and often extensive areas of grazed water meadows create a tranquil, rural landscape, which is in places disturbed by mineral workings.

RLCT 19 Valley Meadowlands

Key Priorities

The key integrated objectives are:

- A. Reinstate functional floodplains**
- B. Support the traditional grazing livestock industry and low-intensity management of the valley meadows**
- C. Maintain and monitor water quality**
- D. Protect and enhance green infrastructure and key wildlife corridors**
- E. Protect local identity, amenity and aesthetic value**
- F. Safeguard valuable wetland habitats**

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Reinstate functional floodplains</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. implement a policy of renaturalisation of watercourses by restoring minor watercourses to their natural profiles and flood regimes through de-culverting, restoration of sinuosity and the creation of temporary wetlands and reinstate the connection between watercourses and the floodplain 2. extend the grazing marsh and fen systems of the lower river valleys upstream to enhance the landscape and biodiversity value of the valleys and increase connectivity 3. identify opportunities for geodiversity, biodiversity and landscape enhancement which might result from holding water back within the valley system (e.g. through the creation of temporary wetlands) 4. reconnect upper catchment valley pastures with the watercourse and reinstate upper-catchment wet grassland, fen and carr 5. promote wider and continued uptake of ELS and HLS schemes to promote the reversion of floodplain arable land back to wet grassland with traditional water meadows and ponds for landscape and biodiversity gains 6. restore and reinstate riparian features and vegetation including willow pollards, wet woodland and specimen native black poplar and ensure appropriate management of riparian, in-field and hedgerow trees 	<p>geodiversity</p> <p>biodiversity</p> <p>landscape</p> <p>cultural heritage</p> <p>flood alleviation</p> <p>sense of place</p> <p>carbon storage</p>

<p>C. Support the traditional grazing livestock industry and low-intensity management of the valley meadows</p> <p>1. maintain the small-scale pastoral character of traditional unimproved valley grassland through appropriate grazing management and through the support of agri-environment schemes</p>	<p>sense of place</p> <p>biodiversity</p> <p>landscape</p>
<p>C. Maintain and monitor water quality</p> <p>1. maintain and monitor water quality in streams and aquifers and use agri-environment initiatives to buffer watercourses against water quality deterioration caused by high nutrient levels and lowered flows</p> <p>2. protect the headwaters of the chalk rivers from point source, diffuse pollution and over-abstraction.</p>	<p>water quality</p> <p>geodiversity</p> <p>biodiversity</p>
<p>D. Protect and enhance green infrastructure and key wildlife corridors</p> <p>1. seek opportunities to enhance green infrastructure created by the river valleys (e.g. create hedgerow and woodland connections on the valley sides)</p> <p>2. create and enhance key strategic green infrastructure and opportunities for public access by creating linkages between existing public footpaths and settlements and the trails and paths which run through or bisect this LCT</p> <p>3. manage and improve sustainable public access so as to avoid adverse impacts upon agricultural management, landscape, habitats and wildlife</p> <p>4. promote water-born access through canoe trails and other sustainable means where appropriate</p>	<p>biodiversity</p> <p>landscape</p> <p>cultural heritage</p> <p>recreation</p> <p>access</p>
<p>E. Protect local identity, amenity and aesthetic value</p> <p>1. protect historic buildings, bridges, mills and other structures within the floodplain from inappropriate redevelopment or loss through neglect</p>	<p>sense of place</p> <p>cultural heritage</p>

20. Broadland Marshes

Summary description

A level, low lying wetland landscape supporting a pastoral land use, associated with notable watercourses, extensive areas of grazing marsh and frequent patches of Carr woodland and reedbed.

Location

Occurs in east Norfolk.

Physical environment

The shape of the land

Level, low lying landform associated with deposits of marine alluvium.

Ground type/Soils

Heavy, seasonally waterlogged soils.

Natural / water features

A network of drains and ditches (known as dykes) feeding into a series of embanked Broadland rivers.

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character

A landscape with extensive wetland habitats comprising large areas of grazing marsh, with smaller patches of peat fen and carr woodland around the margins. Habitat survival is considerable, with many protected sites.

Land use

A pastoral landscape.

Tree cover

This is an open landscape with limited tree cover. Trees are mostly restricted to patches of carr woodland around the edges of the area, while lines of pollarded willow are a notable feature along the few roads that cross the Broads.

Historic and built environment

Historical development

Historically this former estuarine landscape, which has now been settled for at least 1000 years, was reclaimed by embankment and drainage from an area of salt industry and sheep grazing into a renowned cattle grazing district.

Enclosure pattern

The enclosure pattern is formed by water filled dykes, which have a mixture of very early sinuous channels derived from natural creeks and planned rectilinear forms, mainly associated with parliamentary enclosures of late 18th/early 19C.

Settlement pattern

Traditionally unsettled aside from isolated marsh farm sites and drainage mill complexes along the main watercourses. Farmsteads are dotted around the edge of the marshes and timber chalets line the river to the north of the area.

Building descriptions

To be completed at a later date.

Historic features

The largest concentration of windmills in the country.

Perceptual qualities

Visual experience

An open, low-lying landscape comprising grazing marshes and water filled dykes.

Tranquillity

Although the waterways can be busy with pleasure boats, within the vast open expanse of the marshes, the richness of wildlife and limited settlement mean that much of the area has a stark, remote, wilderness quality.

RLCT 20 Broadland Marshes

Key Priorities

The key integrated objectives are:

- A. Develop strategies to manage and adapt to coastal change and sea level rise**
- B. Maintain and monitor water quality and safeguard availability**
- C. Support the traditional grazing livestock industry and sustainable management of the grazed marshland**
- D. Protect and enhance green infrastructure and key wildlife corridors and plan for improved but ecologically sustainable public access and enjoyment**
- E. Safeguard valuable wetland habitats and associated species**
- F. Reinstate functional floodplains (where appropriate to do so)**
- G. Protect local identity, amenity and aesthetic value of key features (e.g. windpumps, staithe and boatsheds) and preserve tranquillity**

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Develop strategies to manage and adapt to coastal change and sea level rise</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. promote and deliver short-term climate change adaptation measures (e.g. the Connecting Wetlands Project) using the ecosystems services approach 2. identify and develop strategies to mitigate some of the impacts of salt-water incursion (e.g. through the creation of washlands and new wetlands to moderate flooding of existing wildlife sites) 3. restore and extend the grazing marsh systems, and continue to plan for future adaptation to rising sea levels and flood management through managed realignment as part of ongoing flood defence work undertaken by BESL and wetland habitat creation, which will in turn increase carbon sequestration 4. continue implementation of measures designed to restore and enhance high water quality in the dykes and rivers 5. continue to support the Broads Authority in promoting ecotourism and policing waterways, as mechanisms to reduce environmental damage to the waterways caused by tourism pressure 6. promote partnership working between key stakeholders (Environment Agency, Natural England, Broads Authority, National Trust, RSPB, Norfolk Wildlife Trust and Butterfly Conservation, landowners, user groups and local people), to ensure close cooperation and mutual understanding of issues 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, cultural heritage, geodiversity carbon storage water quality flood alleviation</p>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. identify opportunities for the adaptation of the usages which are made of the wetland resource (both land and water) as conditions change in the future 8. promote initiatives which facilitate rewetting the drained floodplain, to maintain peat resource and promote carbon sequestration and create new fenland habitat at the upstream extent of the system 9. monitor and plan for future potential catastrophic events such as storms or pests and diseases that may occur as a result of, or be exacerbated by, climate change 10. adapt dredging depths throughout the rivers to moderate saline intrusion and create fish refuges 11. promote public access and amenity opportunity on rising ground so as to be resilient to rising water levels (e.g. create new routes to replace river bank routes that may be lost as a result of managed realignment and the development of a more natural floodplain) 	
<p>B. Maintain and monitor water quality and safeguard availability</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identify mechanisms for water cycling to prevent over-utilisation of the aquifer and fluvial resource 2. maintain river flows and continue to work towards good water quality 3. maintain and monitor water quality in rivers, streams and aquifers and use Stewardship initiatives to buffer watercourses and ditches against water quality deterioration caused by high nutrient levels and lowered flows 4. promote partnership working between key stakeholders (Environment Agency, Natural England, Broads Authority, National Trust, RSPB, Norfolk Wildlife Trust, landowners and user groups), to ensure close cooperation and mutual understanding of issues 5. continue implementation of measures designed to restore and enhance high water quality in the marsh dykes, rivers and Broads 	<p>water quality geo-diversity biodiversity</p>
<p>C. Support the traditional grazing livestock industry and sustainable management of the grazed marshland</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. maintain the landscape character mosaic of the Broads, and its distinctiveness from the surrounding area, through appropriate agricultural and management practices (e.g. lower intensity grazing and maintenance of high winter water table in grazed marshland) 2. encourage grazing management 3. reduce agricultural intensity on grazing marshes 4. conserve and maintain traditional marsh dykes as stock barriers 	<p>sense of place biodiversity landscape carbon storage cultural heritage</p>

<p>5. promote agri-environment schemes on priority sites to deliver biodiversity gains</p>	
<p>D. Protect and enhance green infrastructure and key wildlife corridors</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. conserve and enhance the corridors of deciduous woodland around the floodplain margin 2. conserve lines of characteristic pollard willows along roadsides through re-pollarding and replanting 3. seek opportunities to enhance green infrastructure created by the river systems (e.g. linking footpath sections on the flood banks and creating new connections on the valley sides) 4. extend and facilitate sustainable public access to the floodplain and river systems and seek new opportunity for access enhancement through the Broads Flood Alleviation Project 5. create and enhance opportunities for public access by creating linkages between existing public footpaths, settlements and Weavers Way and Wherrymans Way Long Distance Paths and the Bure Valley Path 6. manage existing and proposed new public access so as to avoid adverse impacts upon landscape, habitats and wildlife through disturbance, erosion and littering (e.g. avoid developing new access into quiet refuge zones for overwintering birds) 7. provide for additional water borne access where appropriate (e.g. creating canoe trails) 	<p>biodiversity landscape cultural heritage recreation access carbon storage</p>
<p>E. Safeguard valuable wetland habitats and associated species</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. conserve spring fed ditch systems that are very vulnerable to water abstraction 2. safeguard ditch systems from damage due to neglect, changing water quality or over-intensive management and encourage sensitive management 3. maintain water tables appropriate to the vegetation type and associated species (wildfowl and waders etc) and so as to preserve the palaeoarchaeological resource and preserve the carbon storage function of the peat 4. reinstate and extend wet grassland for breeding waders (e.g. lapwing, redshank, snipe) and wintering wildfowl 	<p>landscape biodiversity sense of place and tranquillity carbon storage cultural heritage</p>
<p>F. Reinstate functional floodplains (where appropriate to do so)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. restore connectivity between river channels, their floodplains and wetland habitats where not at risk from saline incursion and where this will not compromise water quality in the ditch systems 	<p>landscape biodiversity geodiversity sense of place</p>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. identify opportunity for a more naturally functioning river and floodplain thereby enhancing the important wildlife corridor function (e.g. through better dispersal of species) 3. promote initiatives which facilitate rewetting the floodplain, to maintain peat resource and promote carbon sequestration 	<p>tranquillity carbon storage cultural heritage</p>
<p>G. Protect local identity, amenity and aesthetic value of key features (e.g. windpumps, staites and boatsheds) and preserve tranquillity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ensure new development fully complies with current guidance upon development within the floodplain 2. promote local design guidance for new development within and around the floodplain 3. promote use of traditional materials such as sedge and reed thatch 4. protect boatyards and other waterfront industry from redevelopment which is likely to result in loss of distinctive character 	<p>landscape sense of place, cultural heritage</p>

21. Wooded Peat Fen

A wooded and usually drained wetland

landscape. May form low lying small shallow basins, or be linear in form along valleys, or be part of a wider fenland landscape.

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Occurs mainly in Norfolk, Cambridgeshire with a few small areas on the Suffolk coast.

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Areas of wooded fen set

within open fenland or, on the Suffolk coast small areas of wooded fen bounded by higher land on the inland side.

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Peaty, often waterlogged soils.

Where systematic water control has not been carried out poor drainage results in areas of standing water and small water channels.

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A strong ecological character, typified by a mixed pattern of traditional *riparian fen*, *reed/sedge beds*, and *Carr (alder/willow) woodland*. Survival of primary habitat is good at almost 2%.

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Open arable fenland with blocks of woodland, or fenland containing discreet blocks of wooded fenland or wooded coastal valley pasture and wetland.

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Dense scattering of trees, scrub and areas of alder/willow Carr, or blocks of poplar plantations

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Except on the

coast the landscape has a coherent pattern formed by the dyke network used to drain the land for grazing and cultivation.

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Planned pattern of arable land divided by drainage ditches, with meadow open water and reedbed in the coastal parts of this landscape.

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The fenland part of this landscape is settled with scattered farmsteads. The coastal and valley parts of this landscape are generally unsettled due to flooding. Clusters of settlement are adjacent, on the higher ground.

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To be completed at a later date.

The lack of settlement can

create a sense of isolation. Much of this landscape is inaccessible with limited outward views.

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Deeply tranquil as a result of inward looking wooded character, unsettled character and areas of limited access.

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RLCT 21 Wooded Peat Fen

Key Priorities

The key integrated objectives are:

- A. Maintain and monitor water quality and safeguard availability to reduce the rate of terrestrialisation**
- B. Develop strategies to manage climate change, sea level rise and problems created by saline incursion in coastal LCT areas**
- C. Safeguard valuable wetland habitats and ensure appropriate low-intensity management of the fen resource/micromanagement of fen vegetation**

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Maintain and monitor water quality and safeguard availability to reduce the rate of terrestrialisation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identify mechanisms for water cycling to prevent over utilisation of the aquifer and fluvial resource 2. maintain river flows and continue to work towards good water quality 3. maintain and monitor water quality in streams and aquifers and use Stewardship initiatives to buffer watercourses against water quality deterioration caused by high nutrient levels and lowered flows 4. promote partnership working between key stakeholders (Environment Agency, Natural England, National Trust, RSPB, Norfolk Wildlife Trust, landowners and user groups), to ensure close cooperation and mutual understanding of issues 	<p>water quality geo-diversity biodiversity</p>
<p>B. Develop strategies to manage climate change, sea level rise and problems created by saline incursion in coastal LCT areas</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. promote and deliver short-term climate change adaptation measures (e.g. Connecting Wetlands project), using the ecosystems services approach 2. identify and develop strategies to mitigate some of the impacts 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, cultural heritage, geodiversity, carbon storage water quality, flood</p>

<p>of salt-water incursion, for example through the creation of washlands and new wetlands to moderate flooding of existing wildlife sites</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. restore and extend the fen systems, and continue to plan for future adaptation to rising sea levels and flood management (e.g. through managed realignment as part of ongoing flood defence work undertaken by BESL, and wetland habitat creation, which will in turn increase carbon sequestration) 4. continue implementation of measures designed to restore and enhance high water quality in the dykes, rivers and Broads 5. continue restoration of marginal reed swamp through bank setback and removal of piling to allow reinstatement of natural marginal vegetation 6. promote partnership working between key stakeholders (Environment Agency, Natural England, National Trust, RSPB, Norfolk Wildlife Trust and Butterfly Conservation, landowners and user groups), to ensure close cooperation and mutual understanding of issues 7. identify opportunity for adaptation of the usages which are made of the wetland resource (both land and water) as conditions change in the future 8. promote initiatives which facilitate rewetting the drained floodplain, to maintain peat resource and promote carbon sequestration and create new fenland habitat at the upstream extent of the system 9. monitor and plan for future potential catastrophic events such as storms or pests and diseases that may occur as a result of, or be exacerbated by, climate change 	<p>alleviation</p>
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<p>C. Safeguard valuable wetland habitats and ensure appropriate low-intensity management of the fen resource/micromanagement of fen vegetation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. conserve spring fed habitats that are very vulnerable to water abstraction 2. ensure fen meadow and mire is protected from damage resulting from (e.g. over-grazing, water abstraction and lack of management) 3. safeguard ditch systems from damage due to neglect, changing water quality or over-intensive management 4. conserve and enhance fen carr in the valley bottoms through non intervention management 5. continue work to restore the broads to optimal condition (e.g. through Lake Restoration and Sediment Management Strategies, working with key stakeholders as appropriate) 6. maintain open fen vegetation through successional clearance of scrub and management of encroaching carr 7. implement the Fen Management Strategy through the work of the Fen Audit appraisal 8. maintain the network of fen ditches and minor watercourses and increase their connectivity with the river system 9. continue to bring derelict reed and sedge beds into regular management and promote the use of fen litter for biomass and new commercial uses for hay and litter, reed and faggots 10. Maintain water tables appropriate to the vegetation type and so as to preserve the palaeoarchaeological resource and preserve the carbon storage function of the peat 	<p>landscape biodiversity sense of place and tranquillity carbon storage, cultural heritage, carbon storage renewable energy</p>
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22. Planned Peat Fen

Summary description

A flat, low lying and sparsely populated landscape characterised by dark peaty soils, a grid like pattern of large arable fields bounded by drainage ditches and wide views of distant, often dramatic skies.

Location

This is the southern component of the extensive former Fenland of eastern England – stretching from south Lincolnshire, through Cambridgeshire, to south west Norfolk, and north-west Suffolk.

Physical environment

The shape of the land

An expansive, low-lying (often below sea level), landscape with a distinctively flat landform.

Ground type/Soils

Area characterised by mainly dark peaty soils, but also some areas of silt soils.

Natural / water features

The Hundred Foot Washes are a key water feature when flooded in winter, as are the altered courses of major rivers (e.g. Old Bedford River and the Nene). There are also occasional gravel extraction lakes (e.g. at Needingworth).

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character

A uniform and low-lying landscape, characterised by drained fenland, but supporting a mosaic of wetland habitats including *fens*, *reedbed*, *wet woodland* and patches of *grazing marsh*.

Land use

An intensively farmed arable landscape.

Tree cover

Almost no tree cover - restricted to infrequent patches of secondary woodland/scrub and discrete conifer belts around farmsteads.

Historic and built environment

Historical development

A landscape created by drainage from the medieval period onwards to create farmland. Most comprises recent (18/19th century) fen enclosures, but significant areas of early (16th-18th century) enclosure also exist in the south and around Thorney.

Enclosure pattern

Planned geometric landscape with large fields defined by straight ditches. There is little apparent structural difference between the early and recent episodes of field creation.

Settlement pattern

Settlement is sparse and limited mainly to isolated brick-built farmsteads on former fen islands. Most are post-medieval in origin reflecting the late reclamation of the area for agriculture. Thorney is the only historic nucleated settlement.

Building descriptions

To be completed at a later date.

Historic features

The area is dissected by long straight roads with 90 degree bends, often located on dykes above the arable fen fields, or following ditches. Occasional pump houses are a feature.

Perceptual qualities

Visual experience

The flat horizontal nature of the landscape can give vertical features (e.g. church towers and more recently wind farms) unusual prominence.

Tranquillity

A quiet, remote landscape where the sky plays a particularly dominant role in creating mood and interest.

RLCT 22 Planned Peat Fen

Key Priorities

The key integrated objectives are:

- A. Manage the agricultural landscape character and soil resource as a major provider of food, while adapting to pressures from natural processes and climate change**
- B. Protect the drainage systems, including rivers, washes, dykes, embankments, ditches, and manage to enhance water quality, wildlife and recreation value**
- C. Plan for the creation of extended green infrastructure opportunities to bring biodiversity, cultural heritage, geo-diversity and access enhancements**

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Manage the agricultural landscape character and soil resource as a major provider of food, while adapting to pressures from natural processes and climate change</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. promote the sustainable production of high value crops on the fragile largely peaty high grade agricultural soils using best practice to minimise oxidation and soil erosion. Target high risk areas and more damaging root crops and promote broadleaved shelter belts around prominent agricultural buildings 2. promote grassland margins to fields to benefit wildlife (e.g. farmland birds) 3. conserve and monitor buried geo-diversity and archaeological remains that are under threat through erosion of peat, increased cultivation and drying out from dewatering for irrigation 4. promote the creation and recreation of wet fen/swamp landscapes and habitats through co-ordinated and sensitive management of drainage pattern 	<p>landscape, geodiversity, biodiversity flood alleviation carbon storage cultural heritage sense of place</p>
<p>B. Protect the drainage systems, including rivers, washes, dykes, embankments, ditches, and manage to enhance water quality, wildlife and recreation value</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. maintain the functioning of draining systems to safeguard prime agricultural land and existing settlement. Continually maintain and enhance existing structures and watercourses while also retaining and enhancing biodiversity value for protected and rare species 	<p>landscape, cultural heritage, biodiversity access, tranquillity water quality</p>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. promote the extension of the seasonal winter flood storage provision in addition to the existing Ouse and Nene washes including after use of mineral sites. Manage assets for biodiversity value 3. consider selected conversion from arable to grassland reinstating species rich grassland and tussocky /rough swards to the embankments of drains dykes and canalised rivers 4. enhance semi natural woodland and willow pollards while retaining the majority of the Fens with its distinctive open skies character. 	<p>flood alleviation carbon storage recreation</p>
<p>C. Plan for the creation of extended green infrastructure opportunities to bring biodiversity, cultural heritage, geo-diversity and access enhancements</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. promote increased sustainable access to the fens for walking, cycling and riding focusing on, historic dykes, quiet lanes and drove roads while also identifying new rights of way and strategic open space to redress gaps and shortfalls (e.g. Wicken Fen Vision) 2. promote greater use of the navigable waterways for recreation while minimising any potential conflicts with biodiversity and water quality 3. promote the wider understanding of the unique development of the Fen landscape from prehistoric times to present day, including successive drainage patterns and how the landscape has always adapted to change 	<p>landscape, geodiversity biodiversity access tranquillity water quality flood alleviation carbon storage recreation cultural heritage</p>

23. Planned Silt Fen

Summary description

An engineered, large-scale open landscape which is distinctively flat and uncomplicated in its patterns. Arable land use occurs in large, regular fields and vertical structures appear prominent.

Location

Occurs in the central seaward part of the Fens, in northern Cambridgeshire, west Norfolk and south Lincolnshire.

Physical environment

The shape of the land

Open, low-lying landscape with a distinctive flat landform.

Ground type/Soils

Drift deposits of silty and estuarine clay giving rise to heavy clay soils, where groundwater is controlled by ditches and pumps.

Natural / water features

Area is drained by ditches, often imperceptible unless at close range.

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character

Although characterised by grazing marsh on marine levels, the low-lying nature and relative fertility of this landscape is reflected in a minimal survival of semi-natural habitat.

Land use

Intensively farmed arable landscape.

Tree cover

To be completed at a later date.

Historic and built environment

Historical development

This landscape was created by drainage of coastal marshland for farmland from the post-medieval period onwards. Most of the area is occupied by recent (18/19th C) enclosures, although earlier (16/18th C) enclosures occur around the eastern fringes.

Enclosure pattern

Large sized geometric arable fields defined by drainage ditches and dykes. There is little apparent structural difference between early and recent episodes of field creation.

Settlement pattern

Settlement and built structures are largely absent except for occasional isolated farmsteads, reflecting the late reclamation of this area for agricultural use.

Building descriptions

To be completed at a later date.

Historic features

Farmsteads which often occur at the intersection of reclamation periods and sea defence walls.

Perceptual qualities

Visual experience

Long distance views, open skies and uninterrupted horizons.

Tranquillity

Open skies and long distance views create a strong sense of remoteness.

RLCT 23 Planned Silt Fen

Key Priorities

The key integrated objectives are:

- A. Achieve a balance between highly productive agriculture and sustainable management of the dwindling soil resource**
- B. Manage the artificial and natural drainage systems for functional water management, biodiversity and recreation**
- C. Enhance multifunctional green infrastructure opportunities for biodiversity, access and interpretation of the cultural history of fens**
- D. Manage grazing marsh and adaptation to the effects of climate change**

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Achieve a balance between highly productive agriculture and sustainable management of the soil resource</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. promote the sustainable production of high value crops on the high grade silty and clay agricultural soils using best practice to minimise soil erosion. Consider transfer of more damaging cropping away from the more fragile peat fens 2. promote grassland margins to arable fields to reduce erosion and to benefit wildlife (e.g. farmland birds) 3. promote the creation and recreation of wet fen/swamp focusing on eroded soil areas as priority for wetting 4. identify and promote alternative means of productivity including renewable energy in appropriate locations. 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, flood alleviation, carbon storage</p>
<p>B. Manage the artificial and natural drainage systems for functional water management, biodiversity and recreation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. manage the drainage systems and structures to safeguard prime agricultural land and existing settlement from flooding 2. monitor water quality and promote good practice to reduce chemical and biological pollution 3. promote the extension of the seasonal winter flood storage including restored wet mineral sites. Manage assets for biodiversity value including rare and protected species 4. promote enhancement, reinstatement and creation of species rich grasslands and rough swards on watercourse embankments, drains, dykes and canalised watercourses. Manage by grazing where feasible 	<p>landscape, cultural heritage, biodiversity, access, water quality, flood alleviation, carbon storage,</p>

<p>C. Enhance multifunctional green infrastructure opportunities for biodiversity, access and interpretation of the cultural history of fens</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. develop strategic green infrastructure networks and spaces for multiple benefits including promoting increased sustainable access for walking, cycling and riding focusing on, quiet lanes and drove roads while also identifying new networks, rights of way and strategic open space to redress gaps and shortfalls 2. promote greater use of the navigable waterways including lodes, dykes and drains for recreation while minimising any potential impacts on biodiversity and water quality 3. manage the network of waterways for biodiversity enhancement 4. promote the wider understanding of the unique development of the Fens from prehistoric times to present day, including successive drainage patterns and how man and the environment has adapted to change 5. manage willow pollards, shelter belts and avenues to former drove roads 6. promote screening of unsightly industrial scale structures by shelter belts while retaining the open character to the majority of the Fens 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, access, tranquillity water quality recreation cultural heritage sense of place</p>
<p>D. Manage grazing marsh and adaptation to the effects of climate change</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. manage and extend grazing to marine levels near the Wash 2. consider adaptation to coastal change and the extent of grazing marsh 	

24. Settled Marsh

Summary description

A distinctively flat and intensively farmed open arable landscape, with a densely settled character of towns and villages expressing periods of past wealth in stone buildings and churches. Tree cover is restricted to small shelterbelts and orchards.

Location

Occurs in the central seaward part of the Fens, in northern Cambridgeshire, west Norfolk and south Lincolnshire.

Physical environment

The shape of the land

Open, low lying landscape with a distinctly flat landform providing wide horizons.

Ground type/Soils

Calcareous silty soils, where groundwater is controlled by ditches and pumps.

Natural / water features

Land is drained by a regular pattern of ditches which are not visually dominant unless one is close by. River courses are canalised to form significant, straight water channels flanked by banks.

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character

Although characterised by grazing marsh on marine levels, the low-lying nature and relative fertility of this landscape is reflected in a minimal survival of semi-natural habitat.

Land use

Intensively farmed arable landscape.

Tree cover

Fruit orchards and shelterbelts (conifers, poplar and willow) are repeating themes.

Historic and built environment

Historical development

This landscape created through fenland drainage from the medieval period onwards. The majority of fields are early (16th-18th C), while more recent enclosures (18/19th C) are only present along the northern and western fringes of the area.

Enclosure pattern

Strongly rectilinear field pattern defined by drainage channels and dykes. Field pattern is often slightly sinuous, reflecting early drainage and use as common fields prior to enclosure.

Settlement pattern

Settled character with a clustered pattern of towns and villages focussed on roads through the area. Farms form a minor element and tend to cluster at road junctions. Larger towns such as Kings Lynn exert some urbanising influence.

Building descriptions

To be completed at a later date.

Historic features

Church towers are strong vertical features.

Perceptual qualities

Visual experience

Long distance panoramic views.

Tranquillity

A busy settled landscape with limited tranquillity.

RLCT 24 Settled Marsh

Key Priorities

The integrated objectives are:

1. **Manage the highly productive agricultural resource**
2. **Conserve and enhance the distinctive organic pattern of landscape and settlement**
3. **Manage the natural and artificial drainage systems for water management and biodiversity**
4. **Enhance multifunctional green infrastructure opportunities for biodiversity, access and interpretation of the natural and cultural history of fens**

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Manage the highly productive agricultural resource</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. promote the sustainable production of high value agricultural crops on the high grade silty and clay soils. Consider transfer of more damaging cropping from more eroding and fragile peat fens 2. manage existing orchards and reinstate and restore old orchards with a range of fruit varieties for productivity and to reinforce cultural and biodiversity value 3. enhance and promote expansion of shelter belts around orchards considering the introduction of biomass crops as part of the more enclosed orchard landscape pattern 4. plan for the visual impact of large horticultural and commercial buildings in the landscape through careful siting and introduction of deciduous shelterbelts as alternative and replacement of conifers 	<p>landscape, biodiversity flood alleviation carbon storage cultural heritage</p>
<p>B. Conserve and enhance the distinctive organic pattern of agricultural landscape and settlement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. promote the conservation of the distinctive medieval landscape with its smaller fields and organic pattern of winding lanes and areas of remnant ridge and furrow 2. conserve historic settlements and landmark buildings especially medieval churches, merchants houses and traditional farmsteads 3. promote the reversion of arable land back to coastal grazing marsh and salt marsh as part of adaptation to effects of climate change and as habitat for over-wintering birds 	<p>landscape sense of place, cultural heritage, biodiversity</p>

<p>4. manage existing broadleaved shelter belts and small woodlands where locally prominent (e.g. around farmsteads). Extend woodlands where in keeping with traditional patterns while retaining the majority of the area with its open character</p>	
<p>C. Manage the natural and artificial drainage systems for water management and biodiversity</p> <p>1. manage the drainage systems and structures to safeguard prime agricultural land and existing settlement from flooding</p> <p>2. monitor water quality and promote good practice to reduce chemical and biological pollution</p> <p>3. maintain and enhance both meandering and straight cut ditches to ensure effective drainage and water storage while also retaining and enhancing the biodiversity value for associated protected and rare species</p> <p>4. manage, enhance, reinstate and create species rich grasslands and rough swards on watercourse embankments, drains, dykes and canalised watercourses. Manage by grazing where feasible</p>	<p>landscape, cultural heritage, biodiversity, water quality, flood alleviation,</p>
<p>T. Enhance multifunctional green infrastructure opportunities for biodiversity, access and interpretation of the natural and cultural history of fens</p> <p>1. promote increased sustainable access to the fens for walking, cycling and riding focusing on, historic dykes, quiet lanes and sea walls while also identifying opportunities for new rights of way to redress strategic gaps in the network</p> <p>2. promote a greater understanding of the geodiversity and biodiversity evolution of the natural fen landscape and drainage pattern (e.g. buried creeks) as it has adapted in response to climate change and fluctuating sea levels over time</p> <p>3. promote the wider interpretation and education of the unique archaeological history of the Fens from prehistoric times to present day and how man and the environment has adapted to change</p> <p>4. create new green infrastructure facilities for existing and new populations with sustainable access for local people (e.g. near Kings Lynn and Wisbech)</p>	<p>landscape, biodiversity, access, recreation cultural heritage, sense of place</p>

25. Coastal Levels

Summary description

An open, low-lying former marshland landscape, with a strong horizontal emphasis and characterised by wide skies and large fields bounded by a grid like pattern of drains and ditches.

Location

Occur along east and north coast.

Physical environment

The shape of the land

Low-lying, drained former coastal marshes adjacent to the coast.

Ground type/Soils

Calcareous clayey soils, where groundwater is controlled by ditches and pumps.

Natural / water features

Drained by series of ditches and dykes.

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character

A relatively uniform landscape characterised by extensive patches of *coastal grazing marsh*. The ecological importance of this landscape for breeding waders is reflected in the relatively high level of protection.

Land use

Land used for cattle grazing and some arable cultivation.

Tree cover

An open landscape with little or no tree cover.

Historic and built environment

Historical development

This is a landscape created by the drainage of coastal marshlands and tidal creeks from the medieval period onwards.

Enclosure pattern

Complex, sinuous historic dyke networks with sea walls. Recent enclosures are generally more rectilinear, while early enclosures are particularly obvious in the Broads and around the Blackwater estuary.

Settlement pattern

A largely unsettled landscape with domestic buildings only on the fringes.

Building descriptions

To be completed at a later date.

Historic features

Sea banks and drainage dykes.

Perceptual qualities

Visual experience

Open character with few field boundaries.

Tranquillity

Strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity – often the landscape has a sense of being windswept and desolate.

RLCT 25 Coastal Levels

Key Priorities

The key integrated objectives are:

- A. Build resilience and adaptation to coastal change and identify acceptable limits of change**
- B. Support the traditional grazing livestock industry and sustainable management of the grazed marshland**
- C. Recognising the constraints created by coastal change, safeguard valuable coastal wetland habitats and associated species**
- D. Preserve the sense of tranquillity and open, isolated character**

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Build resilience and adaptation to coastal change and identify acceptable limits of change</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. safeguard coastal freshwater marshes in situ where they are sustainable and provide for replacement habitat where existing habitat is likely to be lost, maintaining a balance between fresh and brackish systems 2. promote partnership working between key stakeholders (Environment Agency, Natural England, National Trust, RSPB, landowners, communities and user groups), to ensure close cooperation and mutual understanding of issues 3. identify opportunity for adaptation of the usages which are made of the wetland resource (both land and water) as conditions change in the future 4. Monitor and plan for future potential catastrophic events such as storms that may occur as a result of, or be exacerbated by, climate change 5. promote public access, development and amenity opportunity on rising ground so as to be resilient to coastal change 6. promote the reversion of arable land back to coastal wetland (reedbed, grazing marsh and saltmarsh) 	<p>landscape, biodiversity cultural heritage geodiversity, carbon storage water quality flood alleviation</p>

<p>B. Support the traditional grazing livestock industry and sustainable management of the grazed marshland</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. encourage grazing management 2. reduce agricultural intensity on grazing marshes 3. promote agri-environment schemes on priority sites to deliver biodiversity gains 4. conserve and maintain traditional marsh dykes as stock barriers and reinstate and promote sympathetic rotational management of existing ditches in floodplain arable, grazing marsh and arable reversion areas to increase the diversity of vegetation contained in the ditches 5. maintain and restore wet grassland for wintering/ breeding waders and wintering wildfowl 6. maintain traditional pastoral landscapes 	<p>sense of place biodiversity landscape cultural heritage carbon storage</p>
<p>C. Recognise the constraints created by coastal change, safeguard valuable coastal wetland habitats and associated species</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. safeguard ditch systems from damage due to neglect, changing water quality or over-intensive management and encourage sensitive management 2. maintain water tables appropriate to the vegetation type and associated species (wildfowl and waders etc) and so as to preserve the palaeoarchaeological resource and preserve the carbon storage function of the peat 3. reinstate and extend wet grassland for breeding waders (e.g. lapwing, redshank, snipe) and wintering wildfowl 	<p>landscape biodiversity sense of place and tranquillity carbon storage cultural heritage,</p>
<p>D. Preserve the sense of tranquillity and open, isolated character</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ensure new development fully complies with current guidance on development within the floodplain 2. promote local design guidance for new development 3. manage and control development on adjacent slope to inland side, which can have a significant effect on the character of this landscape 	<p>landscape sense of place cultural heritage,</p>

26. Saltmarsh and Intertidal Flats

Summary description

A dynamic coastal landscape comprising extensive natural habitats of saltmarsh and intertidal mudflats. A natural landscape where human influence occurs in the form of, the extraordinary range of often prehistoric remains preserved within in it, and today in the form of recreation, fishing activity, or sea defences.

Location

Occurs along the Wash and north Norfolk and Essex coast as well as along other east coast tidal creeks.

Physical environment

The shape of the land

Flat, low lying landscape interspersed by tidal creeks and inlets with a natural and organic form.

Ground type/Soils

Dynamic landscape formed by natural processes of deposition and ecological succession.

Natural / water features

Extensive areas of salt marsh and brackish lagoons - transition between land and sea - interspersed with tidal creeks.

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character

This is a largely semi-natural landscape type, dominated by intertidal mudflats, large areas of which remain extant.

Land use

Amenity uses.

Tree cover

Unwooded.

Historic and built environment

Historical development

Marsh and inter-tidal areas historically utilised as a local resource (e.g. grazing, fowling and salting) and not formally enclosed, or farmed. These areas preserve a remarkable range of heritage assets together with extensive areas of settled prehistoric land surfaces particularly in the Essex Estuaries.

Enclosure pattern

Unenclosed.

Settlement pattern

Except for extensive areas of settled prehistoric land surface Settlement is notably absent.

Building descriptions

Whilst few actual buildings survive, those that are present are often highly visible and quite distinctive; in addition there are a wide range of, often very large, timber structures.

Historic features

In addition to sea defences and occasional shipwrecks there are a wide range of historic features including prehistoric land surfaces, redhills and immense timber fishtraps, making the historic environment of this area one of the most complex and distinctive in the East of England.

Perceptual qualities

Visual experience

Expansive landscape with distant open views.

Tranquillity

Natural landscape and a strong sense of remoteness, tranquillity and relative wildness.

RLCT 26 Saltmarsh and Intertidal Flats

Key Priorities

The key integrated objectives are:

1. **Build resilience and adaptation to coastal change and identify acceptable limits of change**
2. **Safeguard the complex and distinctive historic environment, valuable coastal habitats and associated species, while recognising the constraints created by coastal change**
3. **Preserve the sense of tranquillity and open, isolated character**
4. **Support sustainable traditional harvesting of saltmarsh produce where this does not lead to adverse ecological impacts**

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Build resilience and adaptation to coastal change and identify acceptable limits of change</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. safeguard intertidal habitats, heritage assets and estuary systems in situ where they are sustainable and provide for replacement habitat where existing habitat is likely to be lost, maintaining a balance between fresh, brackish and saltwater systems 2. promote partnership working between key stakeholders (Environment Agency, Natural England, English Heritage Local Authorities, National Trust, RSPB, , landowners, communities and user groups), to ensure close cooperation and mutual understanding of issues 3. identify opportunity for adaptation of the usages which are made of the wetland resource (both land and water) as conditions change in the future 4. monitor and plan for future potential catastrophic events such as storms that may occur as a result of, or be exacerbated by, climate change 5. promote public access, development and amenity opportunity on rising ground so as to be resilient to coastal change 6. promote the reversion of arable land back to coastal wetland (reedbed, grazing marsh and inter tidal habitat) where appropriate 7. identify opportunities and mechanisms for, and promote working with coastal processes to provide a coast protection function (e.g. saltmarsh creation in front of sea walls and natural evolution of coastal vegetated shingle and sand dunes) to enhance important habitats and the quality of the 	<p>landscape biodiversity cultural heritage geodiversity carbon storage flood alleviation</p>

<p>coastal landscape.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. encourage arable reversion to inter tidal habitats, marshland and fen, particularly where this creates opportunity for managed realignment, new wildlife habitat and water storage 9. create areas of managed retreat, which may be suitable in the drained or unenclosed marshes, to extend the amount of inter tidal habitat on the coastal edge 10. continue restoration of marginal inter tidal habitats through bank setback and removal of piling to allow reinstatement of natural marginal vegetation 	
<p>B. Safeguard the complex and distinctive historic environment, valuable coastal habitats and associated species, while recognising the constraints created by coastal change</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. safeguard coastal systems from damage due to high recreational pressure through provision of increased interpretation and educational access to increase people's understanding of their environment 2. reinstate and extend inert tidal habitats and estuarine systems 	<p>landscape recreation biodiversity public access and enjoyment carbon storage</p>
<p>C. Preserve the sense of tranquillity and open, isolated character</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ensure new development fully complies with current guidance upon development within the floodplain 2. protect and manage sensitive sites, such as estuaries, from pressure from tourism whilst increasing opportunities for people to explore and enjoy their benefits 	<p>landscape sense of place cultural heritage recreation biodiversity public access and enjoyment</p>
<p>D. Support sustainable traditional harvesting of saltmarsh produce where this does not lead to adverse ecological impacts</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. support and promote sustainable harvesting of coastal produce including 'samphire', shrimp, cockles and flounders through close cooperative working with local communities, fishermen etc 	<p>sense of place biodiversity landscape cultural heritage</p>

27. Coastal Dunes

Summary description

Narrow stretches of open, rolling sand dunes and shingle ridges, adjoining wide, expansive and windswept beaches, in places backed by fringes of pine woods.

Location

Occur in discrete linear patches along the north and east coast.

Physical environment

The shape of the land

Gently rolling, in places undulating landform of sand, or shingle ridges formed by wave/wind action.

Ground type/Soils

Raw sandy soils and shingle

Natural / water features

Subject to flooding at high tide. Contains water channels draining beaches as tide retreats.

Vegetation and land use

Ecological character

This is a largely semi-natural landscape, dominated by *dune vegetation*, large areas of which remain extant, along with significant shingle features such as Orford Ness.

Land use

Rough/wild land, but localised recreational landuse in some parts.

Tree cover

Generally un-wooded, but pine plantations are a feature in places (eg. Holkham).

Historic and built environment

Historical development

A semi-natural landscape that lacks formal enclosure. Some dune grassland was historically utilised for rough grazing, but much of the area has been subject to continuous coastal movements in the historical period.

Enclosure pattern

Unenclosed

Settlement pattern

Although largely unsettled, this landscape includes former military sites, a nuclear power station and the expansion of adjoining coastal settlements. Fishermen's huts, drying racks and boats on the beach are locally distinctive in some places.

Building descriptions

To be completed at a later date.

Historic features

Historic military structures, especially Orford Ness and Landguard Fort and sea defences.

Perceptual qualities

Visual experience

A natural, visually simple, open landscape, often windswept and exposed to the elements.

Tranquillity

An empty, uncluttered landscape but can be busy with visitors in summer and national holidays.

RLCT 27 Coastal Dunes

Key Priorities

The key integrated objectives are:

- A. Plan for changes in sea levels and subsequent realignment of flood defences to conserve and enhance biodiversity, landscape character and cultural heritage**
- B. Protect the vulnerable coastal dune systems from damage caused by recreational pressure and plan for increased recreation in the area due to growth of key settlements**

Objectives	Integrated interests and services
<p>A. Plan for changes in sea levels and subsequent realignment of flood defences to conserve and enhance biodiversity, landscape character and cultural heritage</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. contribute to the planning and management of the Shoreline Management Process to ensure issues relating to landscape character are understood and addressed 2. contribute to the planning and management of the relevant AONB Management plans to ensure issues relating to landscape character are understood and addressed 	<p>landscape, biodiversity, cultural heritage sense of place carbon storage flood alleviation</p>
<p>B. Protect the vulnerable coastal dune systems from damage caused by recreational pressure and plan for increased recreation in the area due to growth of key settlements</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. protect the coastal dune system from damage resulting from recreational pressure whilst increasing opportunities for people to explore and enjoy their benefits 2. provision of increased interpretation and educational access to increase people's understanding of their environment 3. protect the coastal dune system from damage resulting from recreational pressure by, for example the development of a strategy for public access management 	<p>recreation landscape biodiversity public access and enjoyment</p>