



East Hagbourne

NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN -
2018 to 2033

Submission Version 17 September 2018

Appendix 10: East Hagbourne Green Buffer Assessment

see space differently



→ **EAST HAGBOURNE**

GREEN BUFFER ASSESSMENT

on behalf of East Hagbourne Village Parish Council

JULY 2018

Revision 004

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This assessment of the Green Buffers has been commissioned by East Hagbourne Parish Council to inform the preparation of the East Hagbourne Neighbourhood Plan.

The Brief for the assessment is to define and justify clearly defensible green buffer boundaries around East Hagbourne, identified as forming part of the setting of the village, in the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan.

The Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan was adopted by the two district councils, South Oxfordshire and Vale of the White Horse, in October 2017. Among the principles of the delivery plan is the priority to protect and enhance green space including the setting and rural character of the villages around Didcot.

As part of the effort to evaluate the green buffer, the study will appraise the landscape of the village setting, identifying key characteristics and sensitivities, both in terms of character and visibility. In addition the report will seek to set out the landscape capacity of the local character areas.

This assessment outlines the methodology used for the study to establish the extent of the green buffers around East Hagbourne village. It describes the scope of work necessary to define the exact location of the buffer; the relationship of the land to the village, and its nature conservation, wildlife and heritage assets.

This Landscape Character Assessment is based on current good practice and recognised methodology. It identifies landscape zones which define the study area's character and form the setting of the village, and determine its sensitivity to, and capacity for, development.

Natural England describes landscape character as the landscape features which make an area unique. It is defined "as a distinct and recognisable pattern of elements, or characteristics, in the landscape that make one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse" (Ref 01).

The assessment divides the landscape into areas of common landscape character, listing the key landscape characteristics and landscape and visual sensitivities of each area. This analysis will highlight areas which are sensitive to development, and therefore of low landscape capacity, where future development could be inappropriate. Landscape sensitivity and value may not be completely uniform across an entire character area and therefore the capacity across a character area may vary slightly.

This report initially expounds on the methodology used for the assessment. It then sets out the context of the village before defining and describing the Landscape Character Areas and analysing their sensitivity and capacity. The document is also illustrated with plans to aid understanding.

The approach to this study followed best practice promoted by Natural England, as set out in the Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (2002) (Ref 02) and reaffirmed by Natural England's 2014 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment'.

This guidance recognises that landscape character is not purely a scenic experience and rarely the product of one influence but instead a combination and interaction to varying degrees of physiography, history and land management.

Hence factors as diverse as geology, ecology and culture impact on how a landscape is experienced and valued and should be regarded within the assessment process.

Stage 1: Desk Study

The desk study determines the scope, purpose and level of detail of the study to ensure it is tailored to satisfy the desired outcomes of the assessment.

The national framework provided by the National Character of England Map (Joint Character Areas) and the National Landscape Typology (Landscape Character Types) sets out the overall context for the study. A review of the existing landscape character assessments, and policy documents, including designations will be undertaken, and noted in the references.

The desk study will also review the physical and human influences that have shaped the landscape of the county. Physical influences (natural factors) include geology, landform, climate, hydrology, soils, land cover, flora and fauna.

The data will be analysed and set out in working plans, tables, figures and text, and used to review the existing landscape character assessments and provisionally subdivide the District character areas into draft landscape character areas appropriate to the parish scale. This is done prior to the initial field testing.

Stage 2: Field Study

Field work is an essential part of the landscape character process to capture aesthetic, perceptual and experiential qualities of landscape. For this report, the field survey will be used to test and verify the draft landscape character area subdivisions and define more accurate boundaries.

The survey will be rigorous and methodical, using written observations, map annotations and photographs. Survey checklists will be used to ensure that landscape features and characteristics are recorded in a consistent and objective way. Photographs will also be used to record general landscape character, key characteristics and specific attributes.

The field survey assesses and records each area in terms of the extent and combination of its key characteristics and features as well as the perceptual characteristics of each area.

It notes a description of landscape character, a list of landscape elements and characteristics, such as form, landmarks and building style and assessed the aesthetic and perceptual factors, such as pattern, scale, unity, remoteness and tranquillity of the landscape.

The field assessment also attempts to record the current condition and management of the landscape.

Green Buffers

The Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan was adopted by Vale of White Horse District Council and South Oxfordshire District Council in October 2017. The precepts set out in the Delivery Plan include prioritising green spaces, protecting the rural character of the villages surrounding Didcot and ensuring that new developments enhance the natural environment.

The Delivery Plan established the principle of Green Gaps (or Buffers), reasoned the case for them, and gave an initial 'broad brush' indication of where they might lie while providing the basis for formalising the extents.

Green Buffers are intended to prevent coalescence between East Hagbourne, its neighbouring villages and Didcot town, protecting the identity, character and diversity of the area. The villages have their own history and character which are separate and deemed worthy of protection.

There is also a need to protect the best and most versatile farmland for food production. Preserving vegetation especially woodland around the periphery of the town can help absorb surface water run-off, attenuate flood flows and prevent flooding.

To establish sufficiently the extent of each green buffer, the objective of the study is to define a clearly defensible boundary to the landscape setting of the village using the following outline methodology:

1. Desk top analysis of OS maps to establish the parcels of land which relate to the village envelope on all sides;
2. Evaluation of the heritage assets, with a mapping of Conservation Areas, listed buildings and historic landscape features;
3. Review of existing archaeological records and note any local designations or monuments;
4. Mapping of Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) and protected trees and woodland;
5. Mapping of biodiversity assets, designated local nature reserves or other wildlife protection areas;
6. Evaluation of landscape character assessment information;
7. Visual assessment to analyse the visual relationship between parcels of land and check for intervening vegetation which may separate landscape compartments from the village. Where landscape compartments are contiguous and have a strong visual connection to the village in question the whole parcel of land should be included in the green buffer.
8. Remnants of historic landscape structure are particularly vulnerable to loss and careful identification of these elements should be made by an experienced practitioner in the field and through mapped study.

Landscape Sensitivity and Value

The methodology to assess the capacity of the parish scale landscape character areas to accommodate development, while respecting its character, is based on the guidance in Topic Paper 6 – ‘Techniques and criteria for judging capacity and sensitivity’ (Ref 03). This paper forms part of the Countryside Agency and Scottish Heritage ‘Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland’.

The methodology developed for this study adopts the following premise that:-

$$\text{Landscape Sensitivity} \times \text{Landscape Value} = \text{Landscape Capacity}$$

The characteristics of each character area are analysed against the criteria identified in the national guidance in Topic Paper 6, along with specific factors pertinent to the rural landscape around East Hagbourne village. Local factors could include identification of any designations, unwanted coalescence or gap policies, and consideration of the historic landscape characterisation of the area. This information is then fed into the landscape sensitivity and landscape value assessments.

To assess the sensitivity of a landscape to development some assumptions must be made about the nature of the potential built form of any new development to guide judgements. For the purpose of this study it is assumed that development would consist primarily of residential buildings of 2 storey height. That there would be open space provision and a landscape framework with tree planting of appropriate scale, coverage and design to ensure that the development is integrated into the landscape. In addition, it is also assumed, any new development must also form a logical extension to the village in keeping with the existing settlement pattern.

Sensitivity and value ratings range from Major, Substantial, Moderate, Slight and Negligible. Areas judged to have Major or Substantial sensitivity or value indicates that development would have significant detrimental effect on the character of the landscape. Development in these character areas should only be on a very small scale and proposals would need to demonstrate no adverse impacts on the setting to settlement or the wider landscape.

Landscape Sensitivity Table

No	Landscape Character Area	Quality & condition					Visual contribution to character of the setting					Consistency to existing surrounding setting					Significance to existing surrounding setting					Overall Landscape Sensitivity Analysis
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	

Landscape Value Table

No	Landscape Character Area	Landscape designation					Other land designation factors (eg Public Access, PRow, Heritage, Flood, Nature Conservation, Amenity)					Visual contribution to character of the setting					Cultural & historic settings					Aesthetic values (View, Wilderness)					Overall Landscape Sensitivity Analysis
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	5	10	15	20	25	
1																											

Landscape Capacity

Landscape capacity is defined as the extent to which the landscape is able to accommodate change without significant effects on landscape character, expressing the intrinsic sensitivity and value of the landscape. Therefore by combining the ratings for landscape value and landscape sensitivity we derive an overall assessment describing landscape capacity. A landscape of high sensitivity or value therefore has a low landscape capacity, see table below.

Landscape capacity ratings are Very High, High, Medium, Low and Negligible. A rating of Medium, concerning a village, identifies a landscape character area with the capacity for limited development, in relation to the existing number of dwellings in the settlement (having regard for the setting and form of the existing settlement and the character and sensitivity of adjacent local landscape character areas). A capacity rating of Low identifies a landscape character area with a very limited capacity for development, again in relation to the existing size of the settlement, where the setting and form of the existing settlement would be maintained. Negligible capacity would not accommodate new development and re-use of existing buildings would need to be compatible with the character of the surrounding landscape and land use.

The landscape value, sensitivity and capacity assessments of each parish scale character area are compiled in the tables below. Landscape sensitivity and value may not be homogeneous across the entire character area and therefore the capacity across a character area may fluctuate marginally. A final assessment of each character area is then undertaken to assess the landscape capacity in relation to the overall settlement pattern and morphology of the village to ascertain whether development would form a logical extension to the village, consistent with the existing settlement pattern.

It should be noted that no absolute conclusion should be drawn from the ratings. The influence of individual criteria in a given character area and the context of the wider Landscape Character should also be given due consideration. There may be individual cases, even when the ratings are Negligible, where it is possible that development may be incompatible unless it can be effectively mitigated. In other words, each proposal will still need to be considered on its own merits. To aid these considerations a commentary of the key points has been provided for each landscape character area.

Landscape Capacity Matrix

		Landscape Value				
		Major	Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible
Landscape Sensitivity	Major	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible / Low	Low	Low / Medium
	Substantial	Negligible	Negligible / Low	Low	Low / Medium	Medium
	Moderate	Negligible / Low	Low	Low / Medium	Medium	High / Medium
	Slight	Low	Low / Medium	Medium / High	High	High / Very High
	Negligible	Low / Medium	Medium	High / Medium	High / Very High	Very High

National Context

The practice of landscape characterisation and assessment has been promoted at a national scale in England by the work of Natural England (although the work was started when it was still called the Countryside Agency). England is divided into 159 National Character Areas (NCAs) based on the characteristics of their natural and man-made landscape. The study area includes two NCAs:-

NCA 108 - Upper Thames Clay Vales

NCA 116 - Berkshire and Marlborough Downs

Upper Thames Clay Vales

This national character area (NCA) is a broad belt of open, gently undulating lowland farmland on predominantly Jurassic and Cretaceous clays. The unifying feature of this NCA is the River Thames with its floodplains and tributaries.

The Vale slopes down from the Berkshire and Marlborough Downs forming a clay plain, occasionally broken by minor hills of Greensand or Portland Limestone, and dissected by alluvial flats and low river gravel terraces around the Thames and its tributaries. The area supports mainly arable farming with some pasture, producing a field pattern of large, regular fields with few hedgerows or trees.

For more details see [NCA Profile 108 Upper Thames Clay Vales](#)

Berkshire and Marlborough Downs

Almost the entire NCA falls within the North Wessex Downs AONB in recognition of the scenic qualities and national significance of features across this landscape.

The Berkshire and Marlborough Downs comprise a mass of uplifted chalk which reaches as high as 295m AOD and falls gently south-east into the London basin.

The chalk hills are prominent and stretch north east to meet the Chilterns at Goring Gap. The lower escarpment and plain grades into low hills.

The higher escarpment is almost bare of woodland, exposing a slope convoluted by combes. Steep slopes support the majority of the chalk grassland

which can be vibrant with diverse flowering plants and butterflies. Traditional downland makes up the majority of the open access land.

Across the sparsely settled uplands, huge arable fields offer vast skies and high levels of tranquillity. Post and wire fencing and grass strips bound fields, with views interrupted occasionally by small woodlands and historic routeways bordered by scrub. Gallops, racecourses and stables are particularly concentrated around the Lambourn Valley. Dew ponds, driveway verges and fallow plots create a mosaic of farmland habitat. Brown hare, harvest mouse, farmland birds including stone curlew and arable plants such as *Legousia hybrida* (Venus' looking glass) thrive where there has been a history of consistent cultivation.

The Open Downland forms the backbone of the North Wessex Downs as an elevated plateau of the hard Middle and Upper Chalks. The landscape is of open, smoothly rounded downland dissected by dry valleys and long sinuous steep scarps, and is devoid of surface water. Tree cover is limited to distinctive beech clumps crowning summits and occasional linear shelterbelts.

This is a remote, tranquil landscape of panoramic views where the sky forms a key part of the landscape, including the effect of cloud shadows on the ground and the wind creating swells through the crops. The dominant landform is of vast sweeping arable fields with small remnant patches of chalk grassland on steeper slopes. Settlement is extremely sparse and limited to scattered farmsteads and racing stables.

For more details see [NCA 116 Berkshire and Marlborough Downs](#)

Local Context

North Wessex Downs AONB

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the village is also close to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which, while outside the area of study, is still important due its visual prominence within its setting (see Fig. 01). It is the North Wessex Downs AONB.

This is an important consideration when assessing the landscape character of the area, along with the landscape sensitivity and subsequent capacity of the Landscape Character Areas.

The North Wessex Downs AONB (Ref 04) integrated landscape character assessment identifies two character areas which are visible from the village and its surrounds. These are: Character Area 1D: Blewbury Downs, which lies south of the village, and Character Area 5D: Moreton Plain, which includes some of the lower lying land to the southeast, north of the A417 London Road. Key characteristics of each character area are listed below.

Character Area 1D: Blewbury Downs

- Underlain by the Middle and Upper Chalk with overlying drift deposits of Clay-with-Flint;
- Landform of elevated rolling downland with round or flat-topped hills, intersected by dry valleys;
- Northern edge comprised of a steep, deeply convoluted scarp form, allowing long views out to the north;
- A large scale, open landscape dominated by arable farmland with sparse woodland cover on the tops. Little enclosure apart from the occasional post and wire fence;
- Absence of settlement on the scarp with large villages set at the base of the slope;
- Heritage features include isolated Bronze Age round barrows in highly visible locations on the scarp edge;
- Assembly of gallops for the race horse industry clustered along the northern slopes.

Character Area 5D: Moreton Plain

- Underlain by layers of High Chalk, Middle Chalk, Lower Chalk, and Upper Greensand forming a

transitional landscape between the high downs and the Thames Floodplain;

- A large, open, expansive landscape with views of the strong ridges and skylines of the downs and downland outliers. The remaining chimneys of Didcot power station are also visible from many places.
- Characterised by large fields of intensive arable farmland dominate the area, with a weak or absent hedgerow structure and a sparse covering of trees;
- Open, expansive landscape with 'pockets' of remoteness;
- The villages of North and South Moreton are located on pockets of higher ground and have a loosely nucleated form. Larger springline settlements of Blewbury and Aston Upthorpe / Aston Tirrold are located at the base of the scarp;
- There are many handsome vernacular buildings, with materials including red brick, thatch and weatherboard.

Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)

OWLS is the landscape character assessment for Oxfordshire (Ref 05). The following landscape character types are found within the study area: Alluvial Lowlands, Lowland Village Farmlands. The landscape types are sub-divided into local character areas, the key characteristics of each type and subsequent local character area are listed below:

Alluvial Lowlands – key characteristics

- Broad alluvial plains;
- Mixed farming pattern with regular fields with both arable cropping and pasture;
- Densely scattered hedgerow trees of ash and willow;
- Dense willow corridors bordering a large number of ditches;
- Sparsely settled.

Lowland Village Farmlands - key characteristics

- A varied, gently rolling and almost flat topography;
- Medium to large-sized arable and hedged fields;

- Thinly scattered hedgerow trees, which are mostly ash;
- Ash, willow and poplars fringing ditches and streams;
- Prominent village settlements scattered throughout the area.

South Oxfordshire - Landscape Character Assessment for the Local Plan 2033

The current landscape character assessment for South Oxfordshire (Ref 06) describes two landscape character types that cover the study area: Open Rolling Downs and Semi-Enclosed Rolling Downs. The key characteristics are listed below:

Open Rolling Downs

- Smoothly rounded hills and downland flanks;
- Dominance of intensive arable cultivation with weak or absent hedgerow structure and large scale field pattern;
- Distinctively 'grey' and flinty soils;
- Large-scale, open and denuded landscape;
- Rural character with few detracting influences;
- Open landscape results in high intervisibility and extensive views.

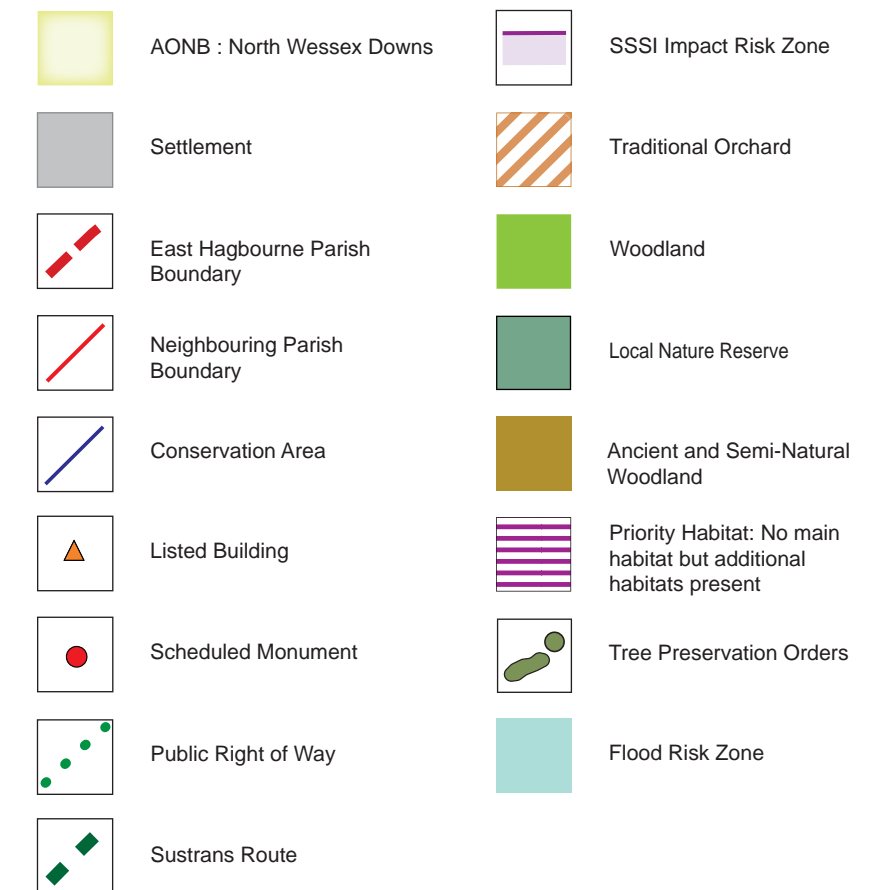
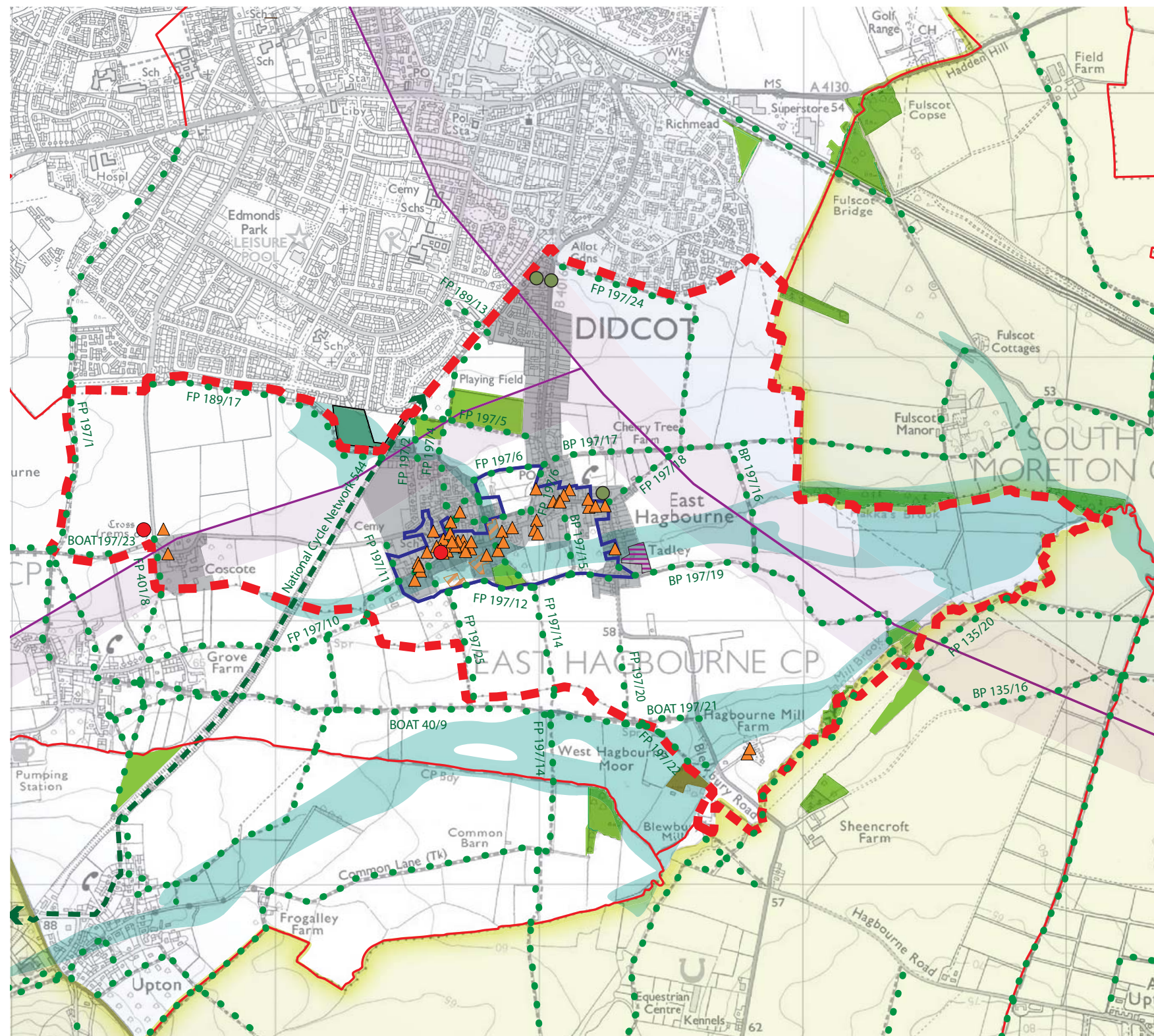
Semi-Enclosed Rolling Downs

- Smoothly rounded hills and downland flanks;
- Intimate dry valleys which dissect the chalk downs, typically with mixed woodland clothing the steep valley sides;
- Dominance of arable cultivation but with a comparatively strong landscape structure of hedges, trees and woods, providing visual enclosure and diversity;
- Distinctive clumps of woodland on prominent hilltops, such as Wittenham Clumps;
- Distinctively 'grey' and flinty soils;
- Rural character with few detracting influences;
- Extensive views from hilltops and downs across the vale to the north but intervisibility restricted by woods and hedgerows.

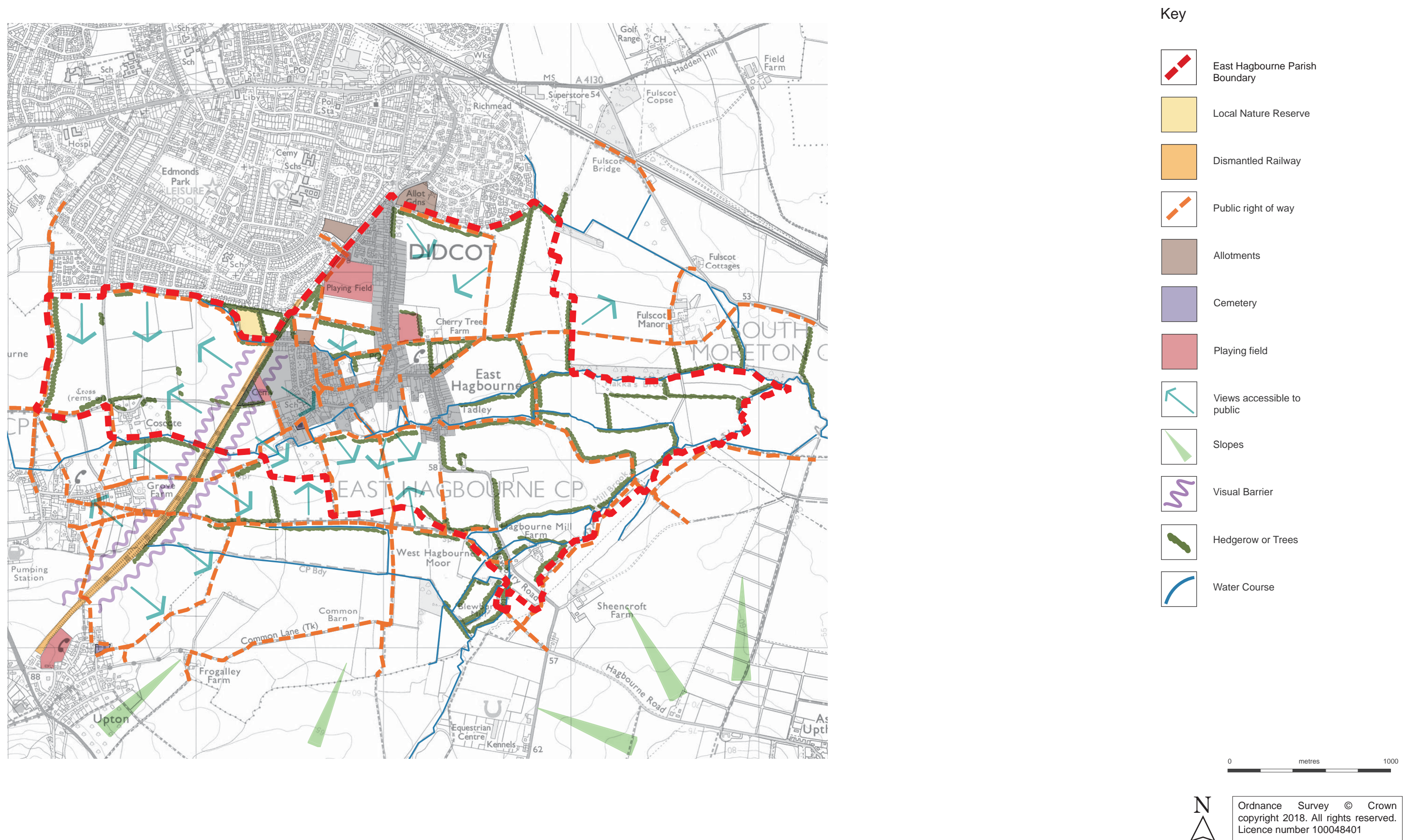
Flat Floodplain Pasture

- Flat, low-lying farmland (usually below 50m AOD), typically dominated by permanent pasture with a 'wet', riparian character;

- Prone to flooding with distinctive network of drainage ditches;
- Comparatively strong landscape structure with willow and alder conspicuous along watercourses and roadsides;
- Intimate, semi-enclosed and pastoral character;
- Generally low intervisibility, although views along the river valley may be possible in some more sparsely vegetated areas;
- M40, A40 and other main roads cause localised intrusion in Thames valley but otherwise, comparative inaccessibility creates a tranquil, remote character.



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East Hagbourne village and the local landscape context

The study area is located in the South Oxfordshire District of Oxfordshire. The main settlement area of East Hagbourne village is approximately 18 kilometres south of Oxford and 25 kilometres northwest of Reading.

The perimeter of East Hagbourne parish lies immediately to the south of the town of Didcot, extends to the small hamlet of Coscote to the west, and to Hagbourne Mill on the road south towards Blewbury. The boundary of the parish has been progressively modified as Didcot has grown, with the population of East Hagbourne being recorded as 1158 (Census 2011, using the 2015 database reflecting the new boundary post-2015). Although Didcot lies close by to the north the village is generally surrounded by open farmland.

East Hagbourne lies on the north/south B4016 (New Road/Blewbury Road) which runs between Didcot and the village of Blewbury to the south. Main Road runs west from Lower Cross, through the village core and towards Coscote.

The study area is made up of flat or smoothly rolling, lowland farmland. It has views east to the Chilterns AONB, and to the south and west to Blewburton Hill, the Ridgeway and the North Wessex Downs AONB, which encompass the parish to the southeast.

An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is a national designation with policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework that protects the landscape within the AONB for its landscape and scenic beauty. The proximity and visual prominence of the settlement within the AONB's setting means that any development within the parish would need to demonstrate that it is in the public interest and would not harm the character or appearance of the AONB.

The earliest evidence of habitation of East Hagbourne dates back to the Iron Age. Archaeological and aerial survey evidence indicate that the area between Didcot and the Downs was farmed and settled during the Iron Age and Roman periods. The village was one of the more significant

settlements of the area during Saxon times. East Hagbourne is listed in the Domesday survey of 1086 with the land noted for its agricultural use, and the recording of two mills.

Between the middle of the 19th and 20th centuries the area was known for the production of fruit; apples, pears and cherries, as well as watercress and hops. Few orchards remain today but wild cherries as well as hops can still be found in hedgerows and field boundaries.

There are wide range of hedgerow species and field boundaries including willows, poplars, alders and oak. The open landscape around East Hagbourne has historically provided habitats for a diversity of farmland birds, including skylarks, fieldfares and redwings.

There is a wide public access network with many Public Rights of Way (PRoW) traversing the parish, linking the village centre to the wider surrounding countryside. These routes are highly valued by local residents and significantly contribute to the character of the area. The easy walking distance from Didcot also ensures that the majority of these routes are well used, connecting the built environment to the open spaces of the parish and beyond.

Sustrans long distance route National Cycle Network 544 passes through the study area along the now dismantled railway embankment, which once served trains between Didcot and Newbury. This former railway embankment offers immediate elevated and panoramic views towards the village and outwards to the AONB and the surrounding countryside.

The village, especially the historic core, is nucleated in form, with some linear expansion from the 20th century. The current shape has developed over time influenced by various factors, especially the ebb and flow of the larger farmsteads. As they prosper and expand, or dwindle and are demolished, or incorporated in to larger holdings, the pattern of the village changes. While the dwellings have become denser over time the pattern between

of roads and tracks, Public Rights of Way and tree cover has taken on greater weight. The study area retains its open agricultural patterned landscape, with distinctive historic houses and farmsteads.

Due to 20th century housing demands, sizable areas of housing development were built north of The Croft and on the Blewbury and New Roads. Despite this pressure there has been relatively little recent development within the historic core of the East Hagbourne village. This, along with its connection to its discernible natural surroundings and agricultural land use, has enabled the village to uphold its distinct village character.

At the centre of East Hagbourne village, located along the line of Main Road, is the Conservation Area. First designated in 1970 and extended in 1993, the conservation area contains a large collection of 15th, 16th and mid to late 17th century houses, including well-maintained yeoman's houses, farmsteads with original barns attached, half-timbered and thatched properties and cottages.

A Conservation Area is a planning designation which denotes an area of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. It is not only buildings which constitute a Conservation Area other features may also contribute, in this case mature trees, walls, waterways, spaces and building not originally intended as dwellings like the distinctive barns, greatly add to the appearance of the village.

The study area contains a proportionately high number of heritage assets with a total of 47 listed buildings and structures. There are two scheduled monuments in the form of East Hagbourne Village Cross and the stump remains of Coscote Cross. The majority of the listed structures are contained within the Conservation Area, but outside the village lie the 17th century farmstead at Coscote to the west, and Hagbourne Mill Farm to the south east of the parish.

A wide variety of materials are employed across the range of historic buildings, including timber-

framing with rendered or brick infill often in a herringbone pattern, tile hanging, local limestone, red brick, vitrified brick, thatch, clay tile, slate, colour-washed render and weather-boarding. Brick chimney-stacks also contribute to the village vernacular. The quality and range of architectural styles is an outstanding feature of East Hagbourne, creating a wide variety of textures and colours, thus contributing to a strong sense of character to the village.

In 1659 a great fire destroyed many of the houses of East Hagbourne, but the quantity and variety of the many well-preserved, historically important buildings remaining today contributes to the areas local distinctiveness and as such is considered to be of district-wide importance.

St Andrew's Parish Church is Grade 1 listed, serving the villages of East and West Hagbourne. The oldest remaining parts of St Andrew's church are sections of wall found at the nave and chancel, which were built at the beginning of the twelfth century. The present tower, with its distinctive bell turret and original bell dates back to the mid-fifteenth century.

The location of the church and related buildings sited amongst the visible remains of the medieval agricultural landscape, known as ridge and furrow, is considered to be of high significance, revealing evidence about the ways that the land around the village was farmed and settlements managed from the late Saxon period. The historic church and associated manor, as well as the areas around the medieval crosses, are indicators to the story of the origins of both East Hagbourne and Coscote.

The main watercourse of the parish is Hacca's or Hakka's Brook which lays claim to a long history of flooding to the area, most notably the houses and roads along Tadley and Main Road. The stream is recorded in a 9th century charter as "Hacceburna" which later became Hagburne/Hagbourne.

The nature of the region's hydrology was utilised in past times to capitalise on the local industries of watercress cultivation and paper mills, which resulted in the invention of blotting paper in the

late 18th century. In 2000, a section of stream and an area of land at Mowbray fields was dedicated as a Local Nature Reserve to protect and harness these waters, with the aim of enhancing the ecological interest of the area.

Analysis of Scale Landscape Character Areas

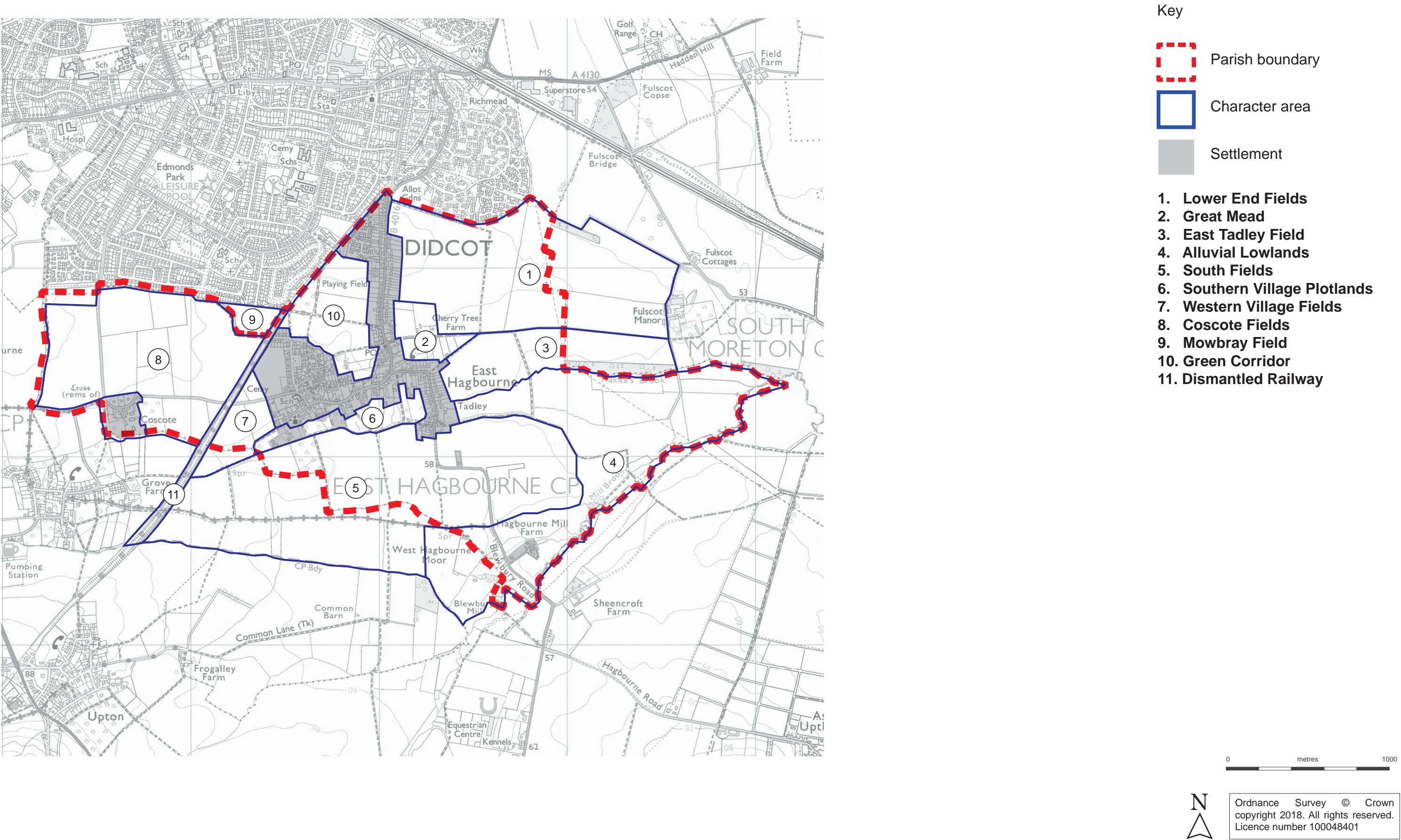
Using the criteria identified in Natural England's 2014 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment' the characteristics of each parish scale part of the landscape setting has been assessed. In addition planning or landscape designations (such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) have been identified and historical landscape features which aid in definition of character have been noted.

Our assessment has resulted in the definition of 11 separate landscape character areas (see Fig. 03) which, in no order of significance, comprise:

- 1. Lower End Fields**
- 2. Great Mead**
- 3. East Tadley Field**
- 4. Alluvial Fields**
- 5. South Fields**
- 6. Southern Village Plotlands**
- 7. Western Village Fields**
- 8. Coscote Fields**
- 9. Mowbray Field**
- 10. Green Corridor**
- 11. Dismantled Railway**

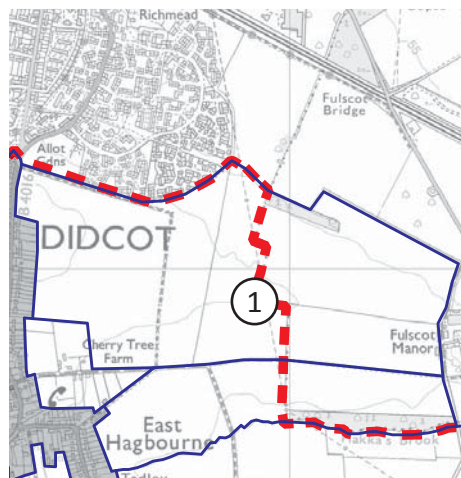
For each character area there will be a description of landscape character and the key issues which are likely to affect that particular zone.

It should be noted that the setting of the village and consequently some of the landscape character areas include land in neighbouring parishes.



Character Area	Designations and policy	Landscape analysis	Conservation and management	Capacity summary
01 Lower End Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Right of Way (footpaths and bridleways) traverse area SSSI Impact zone Partially within the North Wessex Downs AONB Priority Habitat Inventory - Deciduous Woodland A fragment of a medieval open field system Character area extends into South Moreton Parish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located adjacent to the village in the north-eastern corner of the study area; A large, open area of flat and gently undulating arable farmland, ; Underlain by Upper Greensand Formation bedrock, with clayey loam to sandy loam soil; The area is bounded to the north by the town of Didcot, and it forms part of the gap to the village to Fulscot in the east; Low ridge running east west through the centre of the area; Well served by public rights of way, along its southern boundary, running north across the centre (formerly to Marsh Common) and along part of its northern boundary, also boarded with residential development, mature trees and an area of allotments; High voltage electricity cables traverse the eastern area; There are no roads within the area, only farm tracks and footpaths; Despite the urban boundaries it largely remains tranquil in character; Boundaries are mostly tree lines with no internal hedgerows or fences; Views of the urban edge to the north are effectively screened by a thick belt of trees as the landscape falls in level slightly north of the character area; Drainage ditches are the only hydrology present; The open aspect offers wide open views to the east and south, with views of the village core partially obscured by modern development on its eastern edge; This is an large, open, tranquil and highly rural farmed landscape, that provides part of the characteristic setting of the village and, importantly, that separates East Hagbourne from Didcot. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain tranquil character of landscape; Vulnerable to development, structures which would disrupt the rural nature; Built development on low ridge would be especially visually intrusive; Gap in residential properties on east side of New Road essential in maintaining gap between town and village; Conserve existing views; Maintain and enhance existing lines of trees to boundaries, planting appropriate species; Trees along east side of New Road especially critical to gap between town and village. 	Sensitivity = Major Value = Substantial Capacity = Negligible

Parish character area

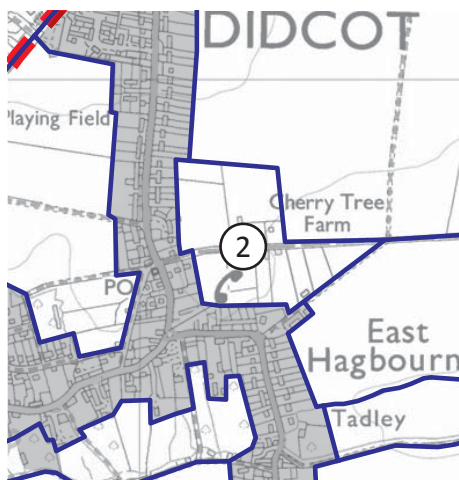


Photographs showing key characteristics



Character Area	Designations and policy	Landscape analysis	Conservation and management	Capacity summary
02 Great Mead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Right of Way (footpaths and bridleways) traverse area Borders Conservation Area Playing fields SSSI Impact zone TPO tree Ridge and furrow evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located adjacent to the village on the eastern side; A flat landscape of small land parcels; Underlain by Upper Greensand Formation bedrock, with clayey loam to sandy loam soil; Formerly paddocks, orchards and open fields, now in mixed use for agriculture, paddocks, a post-1945 farmstead and a recreation ground containing a football pitch, pavilion and small children's playground; Blewbury Road houses to the south, with mature hedges to the north-eastern and eastern boundaries; Some ridge and furrow survives from the former open fields to the north and east; Well served by public rights of way leading north, east and south; Boundaries are either hedgerow (generally species rich) or post and wire fences; Tree cover exists along the hedgerows, some of the roads, tracks and watercourses, and to the rear gardens of the properties in the village. Along with the numerous hedgerows this vegetation helps define the character of the area; Views within and across the area are restricted by the vegetation and the buildings of the village; This area of village margin is the first echelon of countryside hierarchy outside the built area, strongly related to the village yet still rural; This is a smaller scale landscape with often enclosed plots of land, with the uses influenced by proximity to the settlement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain green area of high community value; Vulnerable to development, structures which would disrupt the rural nature; Opportunity to enhance hedgerows and hedgerow management; Conserve existing views; Retain and enhance existing mature hedges to maintain tranquillity; Pressure of village expansion. Possible negative impacts on landscape character of this and adjacent areas, and on village character, form and vernacular. 	Sensitivity = Substantial Value = Moderate Capacity = Low

Parish character area

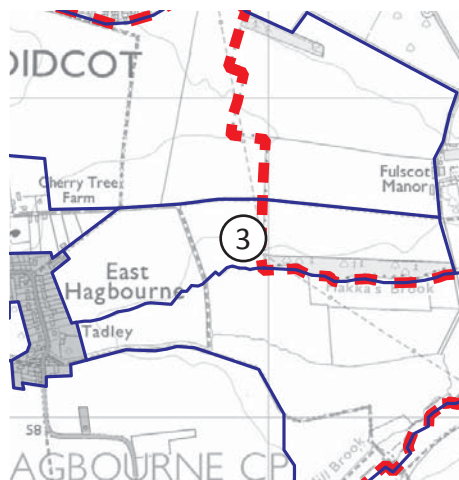


Photographs showing key characteristics



Character Area	Designations and policy	Landscape analysis	Conservation and management	Capacity summary
03 East Tadley Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Right of Way (footpaths and bridleways) traverse area Flood Risk Zone SSSI Impact zone UK Biodiversity Action Plan - Hedgerows Streams Character area extends into South Moreton Parish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located to the east of village; An area of flat, open arable fields to the east of Blewbury Road and associated residences, the southern edge is bordered by the northern branch of Hakka's Brook; Underlain by Upper Greensand Formation bedrock, with clayey loam to sandy loam soil; Fields in agricultural use, arable crops; Well served by public rights of way, a bridleway along northern edge and another running north south across it; Internal boundaries are limited and generally comprise tree lines; Reasonable tree cover to watercourses, field boundaries and a plantation; High voltage electricity cables cross the eastern area; Open views towards the AONB and the village, where the back gardens on Blewbury Road provide a soft transition from the arable land; Hakka's Brook runs along its southern boundary; This is a expansive, highly rural area, with long channelled views and the characteristic treed boundaries. This are forms part of the gap between East Hagbourne and South Moreton. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain open and tranquil character of landscape; Maintain the stream channels to avoid flooding in adjacent settlements; Conserve existing views; Vulnerable to development, structures would disrupt the open quality; Maintain the Public Rights of Way; Maintain and enhance existing lines of trees to boundaries, planting appropriate species; 	Sensitivity = Major Value = Substantial Capacity = Negligible

Parish character area

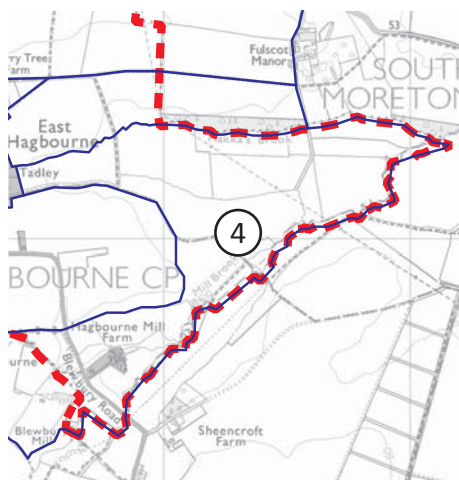


Photographs showing key characteristics



Character Area	Designations and policy	Landscape analysis	Conservation and management	Capacity summary
04 Alluvial Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Rights of Way (footpaths, bridleways & byways) traverse this area; Adjacent to the North Wessex Downs AONB; Flood Risk Zone; Listed Buildings; SSSI Impact zone; B4016 traverses its southern section; UK Biodiversity Action Plan - Hedgerows Streams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located to the east and southeast of the village; Medium sized fields generally arable in the form of cereal crops, under pasture in the lower lying areas adjacent to Mill Brook; Relatively flat thorough although flow of water east illustrates a slight fall in that direction; The bedrock is the Upper Greensand Formation, with superficial alluvium clay, silt sand and gravel deposits. Topped by clayey loam to sandy loam soil; Hakka's Brook to the north and Mill Brook to the south and east form natural boundaries and create large areas under risk of flooding; Listed Buildings of Hagbourne Paper Mill; Tree cover is notable, given the level terrain, with tracks, watercourses and ditches home to corridors of trees, notably ash and willow; Good access to boundaries and across this area with well vegetated footpaths, which along with the treed watercourses provide valuable wildlife habitat; There are hedgerows to many of the boundaries, often grown-out, and also along the more saturated ground of the many small streams or brooks and drainage ditches that traverse the area which contribute to its character; High Voltage power supply lines cross this landscape; An intensely rural area of small watercourses and floodplain landscapes, very remote and tranquil. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain remote, tranquil character of landscape; Maintain the stream channels and vegetation for flood management; Vulnerable to development, structures would disrupt the peaceful rural quality; Maintain the Public Rights of Way; Conserve existing treed areas as riparian habitat. 	Sensitivity = Major Value = Substantial Capacity = Negligible

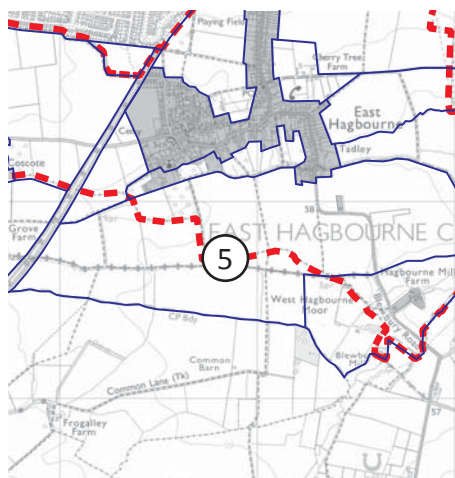
Parish character area



Photographs showing key characteristics

Character Area	Designations and policy	Landscape analysis	Conservation and management	Capacity summary
05 South Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Rights of Way (footpaths, bridleways & byways); Blewbury Road (B4016) traverses its western section; East Hagbourne Conservation area borders the area; SSSI Impact zone; Flood Risk Zone; UK Biodiversity Action Plan - Hedgerows Streams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located south of the village; Large often regularly shaped fields used for both pasture and arable; The land rises very gently from the village to a central low ridge before sloping down towards the south; Underlain by Upper Greensand Formation bedrock with superficial deposits of alluvium clay, silt sand and gravel, with clayey loam to sandy loam soils, with more clay to the west and more sand to the east; Large open fields in agricultural use, which retain no internal hedgerow boundaries, so creating an open landscape. There is a reed boundary along the path leading south from the church, separating an area of pasture at the western end of the parcel; Extensive views to the east, south and west, to the Chilterns and the North Wessex Downs AONBs; Areas prone to flooding from high ground water, Hakka's Brook and Mill Brook; Important part of the approach to the medieval village from the south, affording a strong sense of a village-edge open landscape; Excellent access through Pubic Rights of Way with Fieldside footpath along its northern edge and three north-south footpaths, linking to Moor Lane byway which runs along the southern edge. B4016 traverses its western section; A profoundly rural area, used for agriculture. Internally open but bordered by trees which give a sense of enclosure and heighten the peace and tranquillity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain tranquil, character of landscape; Vulnerable to development, structures would disrupt the peaceful rural quality; Conserve existing views; Increasingly intensive agricultural use has led to loss of biodiversity including birds, hedges and field-side margins; Opportunity to enhance hedgerows and hedgerow management. Opportunity for fields to store water to contribute to flooding mitigation 	Sensitivity = Major Value = Substantial Capacity = Negligible

Parish character area

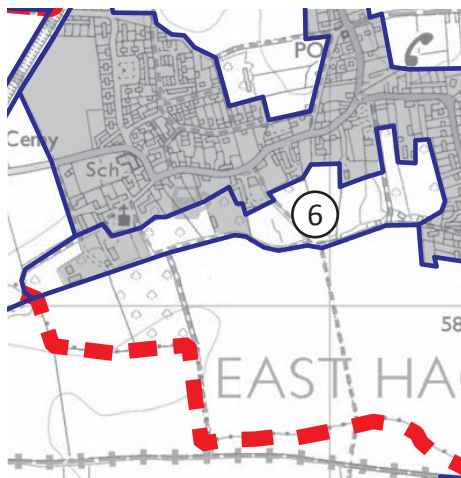


Photographs showing key characteristics



Character Area	Designations and policy	Landscape analysis	Conservation and management	Capacity summary
06 Southern Village Plotlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Rights of Way; Listed buildings; Conservation Area covers majority of area; SSSI Impact zone; Priority Habitat Inventory - Deciduous Woodland and Orchards; Flood Risk Zone; UK Biodiversity Action Plan - Hedgerows Streams Traditional Orchards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located to the southern edge of the historic village core; Gently rolling land to the south of East Hagbourne and comprising former medieval plots of orchards and paddocks extending from the houses and farmsteads; Underlain by Upper Greensand Formation bedrock, with superficial deposits of alluvium clay, silt sand and gravel. With deep clay to sandy loam soil; Mostly now incorporated into large private gardens with some areas left to 're-wild' with light management and an area of paddock at the eastern end; The area is traversed by Parsonage Lane which follows along side Hakka's Brook This area under risk from flooding; The area is visible from the scenic Fieldside footpath to the south, which is bordered by mature trees and shrubs; Tree cover is good both along the brook and in private gardens ; Good Public Rights of Way access; Open views of the North Wessex Downs AONB to the south and of the village's historic assets including St Andrew's church contributing to the strong sense of character of the village; The form of this area relates strongly to the plot structure of the village; This area retains a species-rich boundary the village and the open fields to the south; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain tranquil character of landscape; Vulnerable to development, structures would disrupt the rural village edge-land quality; Conserve existing views; Conserve vegetation including lines of important trees along south boundary (Fieldside) and along Parsonage Lane. Pressure for expansion to village. Potential for negative impacts on landscape character. 	Sensitivity = Substantial Value = Major Capacity = Negligible

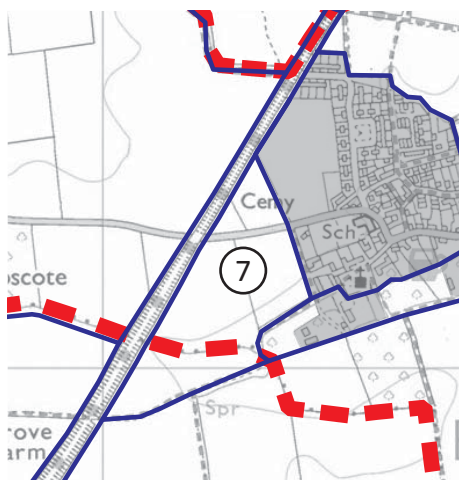
Parish character area



Photographs showing key characteristics

Character Area	Designations and policy	Landscape analysis	Conservation and management	Capacity summary
07 Western Village Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Rights of Way (footpaths); Cemetery; East Hagbourne Conservation area borders the area; Main Road Traverses the area; SSSI Impact zone; Flood Risk Zone; UK Biodiversity Action Plan - Hedgerows Streams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjacent to the village, on the western side; A flat landscape of small fields and multi-use areas including the school playing field and cemeteries; Fields are generally under pasture; Bedrock of Upper Greensand Formation, overlain with deep sandy loam soil, with some clay around Shovel Spring and more loam to the north; There is a Public Right of Way across the area, a footpath, formerly the medieval route to West Hagbourne and another along the western edge of the village; Tree cover is limited, the cemeteries, some alongside the watercourse and sparsely alongside tracks and the field boundaries; Views out of the area are limited, the dismantled railway acts as a visual and physical barrier to this area, but does allow excellent views of the historic village from the elevated position; Main Road traverses the area, passing under the dismantled railway and linking the village with the hamlet of Coscote to the west; The cemetery contains two types of wildflower meadows. One older surviving on unimproved grassland, the other planted in 1998 and managed by the Parish Council; Seasonal wetland and species-rich boundaries to the south around Shovel Spring; Ridge and furrow signs are particularly strong in the Manor Farm fields; This is a smaller scale and enclosed rural landscape, with the uses influenced by proximity to the settlement. An important part of the rural village setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain tranquil character of landscape; Vulnerable to development, structures would disrupt scenic views of the village and rural context; Pressure of village expansion. Negative impacts on landscape character of this and adjacent areas, and on village character, form and vernacular; No footway along Main Road from the Village Hall to the cemetery and embankment, limits utility. 	Sensitivity = Major Value = Substantial Capacity = Negligible

Parish character area

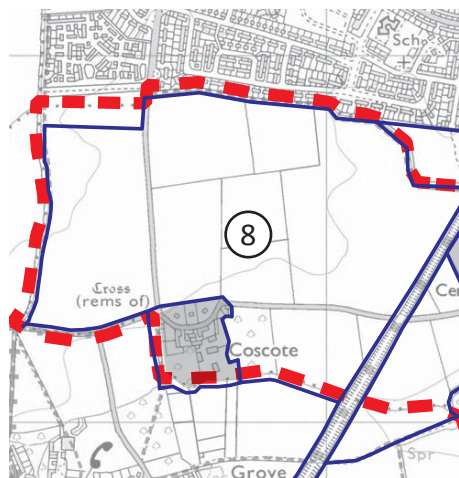


Photographs showing key characteristics



Character Area	Designations and policy	Landscape analysis	Conservation and management	Capacity summary
08 Coscote Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Rights of Way; Scheduled Monument, remains of a stone cross; SSSI Impact zone; Flood Risk Zone; UK Biodiversity Action Plan - Hedgerows Streams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located to the west and northwest of East Hagbourne village; Flat area of mixed arable and pastoral farmland with a vineyard in the southwest; Underlain by Upper Greensand Formation bedrock, with deep sandy loam to loam soil; The area is bounded to the east by the dismantled railway embankment, to the south by a brook with a species rich hedgerow and Coscote hamlet, to the west by a drainage ditch and hedgerow and to the north, in part by the wooded edge of Mowbray Fields, but mainly by the urban edge of Didcot. This comprises 20th and 21st century closely spaced dwellings with small gardens and few trees. All quite visible across the area; The internal boundaries are generally post and wire fences which contribute to the sense of an expansive, open landscape; There are two roads which cut through the area, Main Road runs east-west and Park Road north-south; There is public access to the northern, eastern and western boundaries; Where the roads meet lies the remains of a stone cross recorded as a Scheduled Monument; Many of the fields show distinct evidence of ridge and furrow markings. Some parcels ploughed north-south and some east-west; Long panoramic views are available across and into the area, contained by the embankment of the dismantled railway to the east and the rising ground of the Downs to the south. Public access to these views along the area boundaries is considerable; An open and expansive rural, agricultural landscape with panoramic views. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain open character of landscape; Maintain tranquil character of landscape; Vulnerable to development, structures would disrupt the open quality; Conserve existing views; Road liable to flooding. 	Sensitivity = Major Value = Substantial Capacity = Negligible

Parish character area

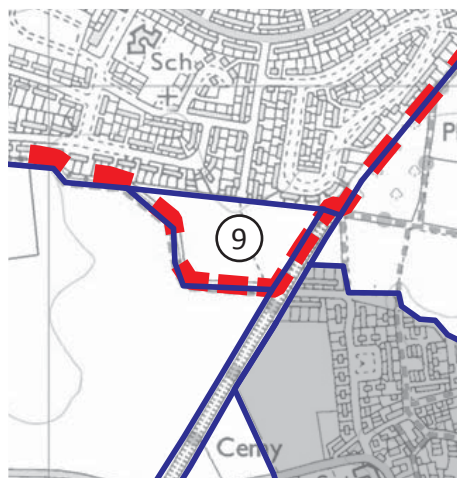


Photographs showing key characteristics



Character Area	Designations and policy	Landscape analysis	Conservation and management	Capacity summary
9 Mowbray Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Nature Reserve; SSSI Impact zone; Flood Risk Zone; Didcot Civil Parish UK Biodiversity Action Plan - Hedgerows Streams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located to the northwest of the village; Nature reserve consisting of two areas, one open with parkland trees and a wildflower meadow, and the other a flood spill area with greater vegetation and tree cover, especially of water tolerant species; Flat land in the flood plain of Hacca's Brook and tributaries, underlain by Upper Greensand Formation bedrock, deep sandy loam to loam soil; Whole area is traversed by paths; Bounded to the north by the rear garden fences of the edge of Didcot, a Hacca's Brook tributary to the south and west, and the dismantled railway line to the east; There is no settlement within the character area, but the dwellings on the southern boundary of Didcot are visible; The nature reserve is now managed by the Earth Trust on behalf of South Oxfordshire District Council. Common spotted and southern marsh orchids (and hybrids) have colonised the low lying areas. A 2012 survey identified 320 species of invertebrate including 11 Nationally Scarce and 1 Red Data Book II Vulnerable Species, making this small area a highly valuable nature resource; Views are constrained across the majority of the site, although there are extensive views south at the access points; Reasonably tranquil, these areas of parkland and lowlying habitat are extremely well used for recreation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain tranquil character of landscape; Continue to manage existing wildlife trees, planting new trees in characteristic species; Vulnerable to development, structures would disrupt the habitat and recreational uses; Improve management of fill pond, it has silted up and become overgrown; 	Sensitivity = Moderate Value = Substantial Capacity = Low

Parish character area

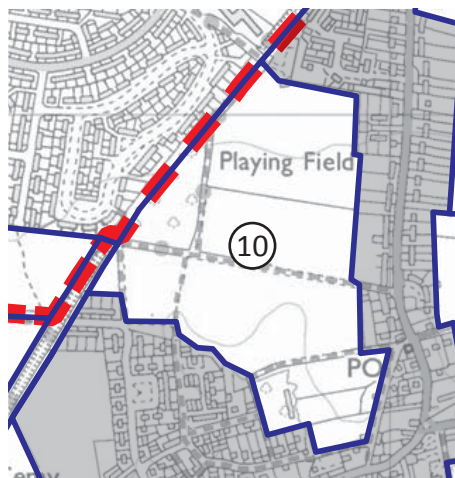


Photographs showing key characteristics



Character Area	Designations and policy	Landscape analysis	Conservation and management	Capacity summary
10 Green Corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Rights of Way; Within East Hagbourne Conservation area Sustrans National Cycle Network route 544; Playing fields; Allotments and managed communal space; Community Woodland; SSSI Impact zone; Flood Risk Zone; UK Biodiversity Action Plan - Hedgerows Streams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located to the north of East Hagbourne village; Flat lands, the flood plain of Hakka's Brook and its tributaries; Underlain by Upper Greensand Formation bedrock, with deep sandy loam to loam soil; Currently a patchwork of open grass, woodland, paddocks, arable land, scrub, playing fields, allotments and relic orchards. Formerly an agricultural mix of orchards, paddocks and arable fields; Two publicly accessible green spaces, Millennium Wood and Butt's Piece; Whole area is traversed by footpaths which link to the neighbouring Sustrans cycle route and Didcot; There is no settlement within the character area but is bounded by the rear garden fences of the edge of Didcot to the north and East Hagbourne settlement along New Road to the east; Hakka's Brook tributary runs along the southern boundary and the dismantled railway line to the west; The southern section of the area falls within the village Conservation Area. Views both from and to the village are limited and of varied quality, constrained by the built up areas around it; The green corridor provides a soft transition between the village and Didcot town, and plays an important role in setting the village in its wider rural landscape; Reasonably tranquil, these areas of parkland and low lying habitat are extremely well used for recreation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain tranquil character of landscape; Vulnerable to development, structures would disrupt the habitat and recreational uses; Maintain and enhance the vegetation and diversification of wildlife gained from woodland planting; Strong local support for continued use of playing fields. 	Sensitivity = Moderate Value = Substantial Capacity = Low

Parish character area

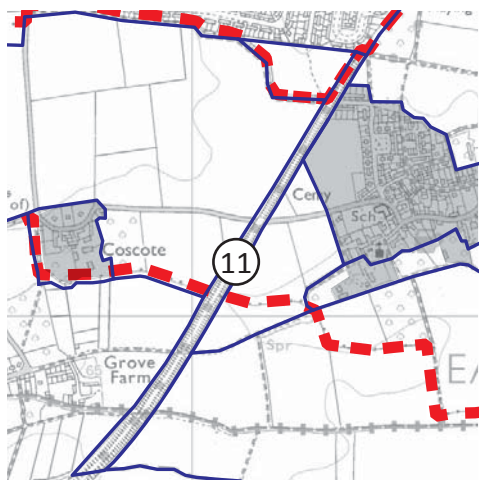


Photographs showing key characteristics



Character Area	Designations and policy	Landscape analysis	Conservation and management	Capacity summary
11 Dismantled Railway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustrans National Cycle Network route 544 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Runs north south west of the village, through the eastern section of the parish; Formerly the Didcot, Southampton and Newbury railway which was closed in 1961; Due to its initial use the landscape is raised, flat, narrow and linear, with a central footpath / cycleway and vegetation to either sides; Its raised position across a generally low and flat landscape affords extensive panoramic views across the surrounding landscape; The raised embankment has also caused a degree of severance to the surrounding parishes and landscape parcels which have historically been aligned east-west; A valuable wildlife corridor, it features many species associated with limestone grassland as the material for its construction was quarried from the Downs; Various butterfly species are present in the summer months, scrub containing walnut and apple trees has grown up and lizards are also to be seen basking along its length; This raised former transport route is now a wildlife corridor and footpath and its exposed position allows excellent views. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain tranquil character of landscape; Vulnerable to development, structures would disrupt the ridge line; Conserve and enhance existing wildlife habitat; Conserve existing panoramic views. 	<p>Sensitivity = Substantial</p> <p>Value = Substantial</p> <p>Capacity = Negligible / Low</p>

Parish character area



Photographs showing key characteristics

Table 1 - Landscape sensitivity

No	Landscape Character Area	Quality & condition					Visual contribution to character of the setting					Consistency to existing surrounding setting					Significance to existing surrounding setting					Overall Landscape Sensitivity Analysis 0-4 Negligible 5-8 Slight 9-12 Moderate 13-16 Substantial 17-20 Major
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
1	Lower Ends Fields				X						X				X						X	18 - Major
2	Great Mead			X					X					X						X		15 - Substantial
3	East Tadley Field				X					X						X					X	18 - Major
4	Alluvial Lowlands					X					X				X						X	19 - Major
5	South Fields					X					X					X					X	20 - Major
6	Southern Village Plotlands				X					X				X						X		15 - Substantial
7	Western Village Fields				X						X					X					X	19 - Major
8	Coscote Fields				X						X					X					X	19 - Major
9	Mowbray Fields			X					X				X						X			11 - Moderate
10	Green Corridor			X						X			X						X			12 - Moderate
11	Dismantled Railway			x						x			x								x	14 - Substantial

Table 2 - Landscape value

No	Landscape Character Area	Landscape Designation					Other land designation factors (eg Public Access PROW, Heritage, Flood, Nature Conservation, Amenity)					Visual Contribution to Character of the setting					Cultural & Historic settings					Aesthetic and perceptual values (Views, beauty, wilderness)					Overall Landscape Sensitivity Analysis 0-5 Negligible 6-10 Slight 11-15 Moderate 16-20 Substantial 21-25 Major
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
1	Lower Ends Fields		X							X						X		X								X	17 - Substantial
2	Great Mead		X							X				X				X						X			14 - Moderate
3	East Tadley Field		X							X					X			X							X		16 - Substantial
4	Alluvial Lowlands			X							X				X				X						X		18 - Substantial
5	South Fields		X							X						X		X								X	17 - Substantial
6	Southern Village Plotlands			X							X				X					X					X		19 - Major
7	Western Village Fields		X							X					X				X						X		16 - Substantial
8	Coscote Fields		X							X						X		X								X	17 - Substantial
9	Mowbray Fields				X						X			X					X					X			17 - Substantial
10	Green Corridor				X						X		X						X					X			16 - Substantial
11	Dismantled Railway			X							X			X					X						X		17 - Substantial

Table 3 - Landscape capacity

No.	Landscape Character Area	Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Landscape Capacity
1	Lower Ends Fields	Major	Substantial	Negligible
2	Great Mead	Substantial	Moderate	Low
3	East Tadley Field	Major	Substantial	Negligible
4	Alluvial Lowlands	Major	Substantial	Negligible
5	South Fields	Major	Substantial	Negligible
6	Southern Village Plotlands	Substantial	Major	Negligible
7	Western Village Fields	Major	Substantial	Negligible
8	Coscote Fields	Major	Substantial	Negligible
9	Mowbray Fields	Moderate	Substantial	Low
10	Green Corridor	Moderate	Substantial	Low
11	Dismantled Railway	Substantial	Substantial	Negligible / Low

Analysis of Village Setting

LCA 01 - Lower End Fields

This area contains a fragment of East Hagbourne's medieval open field system and is strongly connected to the village by the footpath from Fulscot Manor. These are open expansive fields with only one line of trees that runs north south across it. The Green Buffer and connection to the village goes beyond this to the contiguous fields to the east. The boundary is eventually formed by lines of vegetation to the north and Fulscot Manor, a track and more vegetation to the east.

LCA 02 - Great Mead

Within the rural setting of East Hagbourne, the village margins are the first ring of land outside the built settlement. They have long been associated with the village. This is the first echelon in the rural hierarchy stepping away from the village, with smaller enclosed fields. The land is now often employed as horse paddocks, although some smallholdings persist. This area is strongly related both physically and culturally to the adjacent settlement of East Hagbourne.

These village edge-lands are plainly an inner and integral part of the setting of the village. The Green Buffer covers the entire area.

LCA 03 - East Tadley Fields

This ancient enclosure is partially within the East Hagbourne parish. Connected to the village by the footpath and Hakka's Brook.

The fields are open and expansive and the Green Buffer continues with the bridleway, past the first line of vegetation and east to the buildings, track and vegetation associated with Fulscot Manor.

LCA 04 - Alluvial Lowlands

This zone of smaller, more enclosed fields is entirely within the parish of East Hagbourne. Historically a mixture of unenclosed rough ground and parts of the village's open field system, it was also home to the paper mill.

It is currently linked to the village by several Public Rights of Way and the two brooks, Hakka's and Mill. The setting of the village extends across the

smaller fields due to their degree of similarity and eventually terminates where the two brooks merge.

LCA 05 - South Fields

This pastoral and arable landscape is an important part of East Hagbourne's setting. The predominantly flat fields and trees boundaries are high characteristic of the open rural setting.

Historically a mixture of unenclosed rough ground and parts of the village's open field system. Partially within the East Hagbourne parish, it is well connected to the village by numerous footpaths.

The Green Buffer washes south across the contiguous fields until the strong line of trees and vegetation along the boundary between Upton and West Hagbourne parishes. Here the connection to East Hagbourne terminates and with it the extent of the setting.

LCA 06 - Southern Village Plotlands

Located tightly adjacent to the settlement and inside the larger rural fields of the area to the south. Predominantly within the Conservation Area this intimate and rural stripe is unique to the village and a highly important part of its setting. The Green Buffer covers the entire area.

LCA 07 - Western Village Fields

This zone forms the land between the western side of the village and the raised embankment of the dismantled railway. Almost entirely within the parish of East Hagbourne, there are a number of land uses here, including amenity, cemetery and farmland under pasture.

Enclosed between the village edge and the embankment, this area is definitely part of the village's close setting. The Green Buffer covers the entire area and beyond.

LCA 08 - Coscote Fields

These fields are entirely within the parish of East Hagbourne and historically part of the unenclosed land associated with Coscote hamlet, which is also within the parish.

This area has long been associated with East Hagbourne. The fields and Coscote hamlet are no longer visible from the village, but are connected by footpaths and Main Road. They feel like the second echelon in a rural hierarchy as field sizes grow, from small to large, as they step away from the settlement.

However the railway embankment causes a degree of severance between this area and East Hagbourne.

These factors mean that while the area has links to West Hagbourne it still retains cultural and historic links to East Hagbourne, and hence is part of the setting of the village.

LCA 09 - Mowbray Fields

This recreational green space lies within Didcot Parish but abuts both East Hagbourne's northwest edge and part of Didcot's southern edge, forming an important gap between the two. Therefore it is part of the Green Buffer to the village.

LCA 10 - Green Corridor

This character area has changed use and shape over the 20th century and now forms an important part in the setting of East Hagbourne, taking its place in the wider rural landscape. It is part of the gap between the village and Didcot town but is also valued for its accessibility, its contribution to recreation and wellbeing, the habitat provided for wildlife, and not least the views it affords especially those into the Conservation Area.

As part of the close setting of the village, the Green Buffer covers the area and is bounded on all sides by the urban settlement edges.

LCA 11 – Dismantled Railway

At around 150 years old this embankment is a relatively new addition to the landscape. This dismantled railway line is now a cycle route and wildlife corridor. The embankment placed within the flat landscape is a visual barrier and has caused a degree of severance, in landscape terms, between West Hagbourne west of the railway and

East Hagbourne and Upton to its east. In recent times the shared resource of the cycle path has added a new dimension to the enduring cultural connections between the villages. Additionally the raised route provides excellent panoramic views across both East and West Hagbourne villages and the surrounding countryside.

This area is well connected to East Hagbourne by Public Rights of Way, runs very close to the western edge of the settlement, which it overlooks, and is partly within the parish of East Hagbourne. While the embankment limits near and middle distance views to the east of the village, it also provides an order of enclosure and is part of the setting of the village.



The village and environs of East Hagbourne have been the subject of this assessment to establish the extent of the village's setting, the criteria which affect its quality and character, and the proposed extent of the green buffer which should be the offset between it and any adjoining settlement.

In establishing the prevailing landscape character of the local area which forms the context to East Hagbourne, the national and local landscape characteristics have been described and an overview of the village's relationship with land types on all sides has been set out. Using established methodologies for categorising landscape the assessment uses best practice means to describe and locate the setting of the village.

The land which forms the setting of the village has been assessed to describe its landscape character, value and sensitivity to change. These factors combined make up the landscape capacity of the area, and its ability to absorb new development. Detailed tables relating to each of the criteria are given within the scope of the report.

The evaluation of the land also includes identification of the location of clear boundaries which are primarily a visible edge to the landscape constituting the green buffer. Where appropriate the buffer has also been drawn to include land which has a tangible historic connection to or is part of the function of the village and its development.

Illustrations of each of the landscape characteristics, and local designations are given. On completion of the assessment and within the consolidated evaluation of the landscape, the extent of the proposed buffer is provided in a mapped form. This plan illustrates the extent of the proposed green buffer to East Hagbourne, which does not necessarily mirror parish boundaries but is evident in landscape features, topography and vegetation, elements which transcend conventional boundaries.

Context

East Hagbourne is a spring-line village, south of Didcot town. Located at the foot of the Berkshire

Downs, the chalk hills providing a dramatic backdrop to the south of the village. The village is surrounded by flat, rural landscapes, largely open where arable crops over lay the well-drained gravel and more enclosed where pasture land predominates over wetter clayey soils. The tranquil rural surrounding landscape and the panoramic views under expansive skies are an essential part of the village's character.

The settlement itself is a small nucleated village historically arranged around a Main Road and contained by Hakka's Brook and a developed landscape structure of lanes, hedgerows, trees, paddocks and fields. The character of the landscape within and around the village is a major contributor to the village's 'sense of place'.

There are numerous historic assets, relative to the size of the village, both within the built form and existing in the attendant landscape. The built heritage is illustrated by the local vernacular and construction materials used, including brick and tile made from local clays, timber and thatch.

Capacity

Landscape capacity is the extent to which a landscape is able to accommodate change without significant effects on landscape character. This is dependent on the intrinsic sensitivity and value of that landscape. A landscape of high sensitivity or value therefore has a low landscape capacity.

As discussed previously a number of assumptions about any potential new development have been made. It has been assumed that development would consist primarily of residential buildings of 2 storey height. Also that any new development must form a logical extension to the village in keeping with the existing settlement pattern. In addition there would be open space provision and a landscape framework to ensure that the development is integrated into the landscape.

The landscape sensitivity of the study area is typically high reflecting its rural nature and adjacency to an AONB. Of the 11 character areas six were found to have Major sensitivity (Areas 1, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8).

Three have Substantial sensitivity (Areas 2, 6 and 11) and two have Moderate sensitivity (Areas 9 and 10). No character areas were found to have Slight or Negligible sensitivity.

The landscape value of the study area is also high. One area (Area 6) was determined as having Major landscape value, nine areas (1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11) as having Substantial landscape value and one area as having Moderate value.

The subsequent landscape capacity ratings were in Table 3. There are no areas with capacity ratings of Medium or higher, this means that there are no character areas with the capacity to accept large scale residential development, without significant harm to local landscape character. From the 11 areas, seven have a Negligible capacity for development (Areas 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8). One has a Negligible / Low capacity (Area 11) and three (Areas 2, 9 and 10) have a Low capacity.

The areas with Negligible landscape capacity are highly rural, generally open with extensive views of east, west and south and in the main do not have long borders with the settlement. There should be no development within these character areas, other than for the necessary requirements of agriculture, as it would be out of character with the rural open nature of the landscape.

The area with Negligible / Low capacity is Area 11 – Dismantled Railway, this raised former transport route would be extremely difficult to build upon and any development would be seen on the skyline for some considerable distance. No development should occur in this area.

Three areas with Low capacity have been identified which may indicate a limited capacity for small amounts of new development. These are:

- Area 2 – Great Mead
- Area 9 – Mowbray Fields
- Area 10 – Green Corridor

Area 2, Great Mead neighbours the eastern edge of the village, has a reasonable degree of enclosure and a character and form strongly influenced by its

uses and reflecting the structure of the adjoining village. The sensitivity, value and resultant capacity are not consistent across the character area. A bridleway runs through the centre of the area, to the south are paddocks more sensitive to development as they are adjacent to the Conservation Area, a number of listed buildings and their curtilage. The playing fields and play ground to the north are highly valued by locals and therefore also sensitive to change.

Area 9, Mowbray Fields although adjacent to both Didcot and East Hagbourne contains a local Nature Reserve, which acts as a flood water retention area and some popular and highly valued parkland, used by residence of both town and village.

Area 10, the Green Corridor, is an enclosed landscape of varied uses, including the Millennium Wood. It has a lower sensitivity value because of its lack of consistency and contiguity with other areas of the village's landscape setting. However it is one of the last remaining gaps between Didcot and the village and any built development here would contribute to unwelcome coalescence between the two, in addition it is extremely well regarded by locals and very well used for amenity purposes.

The study has identified that the majority of the landscape surrounding East Hagbourne has substantial landscape sensitivity and high landscape value, consistent with its rural status. It follows therefore that the landscapes have negligible or negligible-to-low landscape capacity for future development.

The landscape surrounding the village is largely open, rural in character and exhibits many of the key characteristics of the adjacent AONB. Development in many of the landscape character areas would be inconsistent with the exiting settlement pattern of the village and could breach well defined settlement edges.

- Ref 01 -** Natural England (October 2014) *'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment'*
- Ref 02 -** Countryside Agency (now Natural England)/SNH (April 2002), *'Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland'*
- Ref 03 -** Countryside Agency (now Natural England)/SNH (2003), Topic Paper 6 – 'Techniques and criteria for judging capacity and sensitivity'
- Ref 04 -** North Wessex Downs AONB. (2002) 'The Character of the North Wessex Downs AONB - North Wessex Downs AONB' [ONLINE] Available at: <http://northwessexdowns.org.uk/publications-resources/landscape-2.html>
- Ref 05 -** Oxfordshire County Council (2004) 'Oxfordshire Wildlife & Landscape Study' [ONLINE] Available at: <http://owls.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/OWLS/Home/>
- Ref 06 -** South Oxfordshire District Council (November 2017) 'Landscape Character Assessment for the Local Plan 2033'
- Ref 07 -** South Oxfordshire District Council (2000) 'East Hagbourne, Conservation Area, A Character Study'
- REF 08** Joint Nature Conservation Committee (December 2011) UK BAP list of habitats . 2018. UK BAP list of habitats . [ONLINE] Available at: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5706>.
- REF 09** Lake, J., & Warnock, S. (April 2017) East Hagbourne Village Character Assessment and Landscape Study

