Statements of Environmental Opportunity

SEO 1: Protect, manage and promote the historic and archaeological features, designed landscapes and field patterns – including the parkland, battlefield sites, canals, ridge and furrow and settlement sites, and distinctive high hedgerows with their many trees – to ensure that these key features for sense of place and history are conserved, people's enjoyment and understanding is increased, and recreation opportunities are enhanced.

For example, by:

- Protecting and conserving and, where appropriate, restoring designated historic assets – including Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, registered battlefield sites and Listed Buildings, especially those which are considered 'at risk' – and encouraging sensitive management of the outstanding features, including the nationally important open field systems, ridge and furrow and deserted medieval settlements and shrunken ends of villages, protecting archaeological assets from damaging activities such as ploughing, animal burrowing and tree growth, and developing a co-ordinated approach to their management by conservation organisations and farming and landowning interests.
- Protecting, conserving, restoring and enhancing the extensive non-designated historic parklands, their settings, their veteran and ancient trees, and rare fauna and flora, including lichens, invertebrates and bats, to protect their heritage, landscape and biodiversity interest, encouraging the development of comprehensive management plans which respect the historic integrity of parkland design and features, as well as taking into account the needs of their biodiversity, archaeology and modern farming practice.
- Encouraging the surveying, protection, conservation, appropriate management and interpretation of non-designated historic sites, including those on the Historic Environment Record, as well as field patterns and boundaries; and researching and raising awareness of the history and time-depth of the area, improving protection and management of the area's heritage and people's enjoyment and understanding of historic assets which contribute to the strong senses of place and history.
- Conserving small-scale vernacular features which no longer serve their original purpose, such as water troughs and ponds, but which reflect the past cultural history of the area and contribute to the strong senses of place and history.
- Maintaining field patterns, hedgerows and limestone and ironstone drystone walls (where they are in good condition) and restoring or re-creating both hedgerows and walls using local ironstone and limestone and the Midlands style of hedge-laying, and maintaining the distinctive A-shaped, high, thick hedgerows with their many standard trees, where condition has declined or where they have been replaced by fencing, to maintain and increase habitat connectivity and the cultural influence of farming patterns in the landscape.
- Providing easily accessible sites of archaeological, historical and cultural interest for both educational and public use and encouraging appropriate interpretation of the qualities of the landscape and the importance of its historic buildings, parkland, battlefield sites and archaeological features, to improve understanding and enjoyment of the historic environment.

SEO 2: Conserve, enhance, expand and restore the semi-natural and farmed features of the area – including the mix of agricultural production, particularly the pasture and meadows, patches of semi-natural habitats, and veteran and ancient trees – to enhance biodiversity and landscape character and to safeguard the continued sustainable provision of food.

For example, by:

- Expanding, restoring and managing the remaining semi-natural habitats – especially remnant hay meadows, species-rich pasture and meadows, parkland, acid and calcareous grassland, purple moor-grass, lowland heath, reedbeds, flood plain grazing marsh, hedgerow and woodland habitats – through appropriate grazing and management, to increase diversity of habitat mosaics and encourage a wide structural diversity and a variety of flowering plants that can provide both feeding and breeding sites for pollinators and pest regulators and increase connectivity through creating corridors, buffers and stepping stones of habitats important for insects and other biodiversity.
- Encouraging sustainable farming methods which produce a wide range of crops, safeguarding food supplies into the future and ensuring the future viability of farms in the area without compromising delivery of other ecosystem services such as water and soil quality, soil erosion and biodiversity.
- Seeking to balance efficient farming production with conservation of the historic environment and biodiversity, promoting farming systems which also maintain and restore the farmed landscape and range of habitats, field boundaries, areas of parkland and woodlands, encouraging retention of remaining permanent pasture, reversion of arable to pasture, (particularly in ex-parkland sites), managing grazing of grassland habitats and neighbouring areas at levels that will encourage good ecological condition and extending the influence of remaining high-quality patches of unimproved grassland by developing links to increase connectivity, improve habitat condition, encourage species diversity, protect soil quality and carbon storage, and increase resilience to climate change.
- Encouraging re-introduction of previously declining traditional cattle breeds such as Hereford and Dairy Shorthorn to diversify the grazing regime, maintain the genetic diversity of agricultural animals against future threats and conserve the agricultural heritage of the area; and encouraging the promotion of local brand meats to try to increase the viability of traditional breeds.
- Encouraging the agricultural practice of hay-making to maintain and enhance the remaining species-rich meadows, and encourage restoration of hay-making to suitable meadows to increase biodiversity and connectivity of the remnant hay meadows and to encourage a variety of flowering plants that can provide both feeding and breeding sites for pollinators and pest regulators which contribute to food provision services.
- Conserving and managing ancient and veteran trees in both parkland and hedgerows to benefit invertebrate fauna and encourage selection

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and management of future veteran and ancient trees from the current mature stock, to ensure continuity of this rare resource.

- Surveying the road verges of the National Character Area (NCA) to map the location of species-rich verges and to establish whether current verge management is appropriate; and encouraging appropriate management regimes of such verges to ensure that these local features are retained in the landscape, contributing to the semi-natural grassland resource, and maintaining and enhancing species diversity and insect populations.
- Managing arable cropping patterns and arable cultivation, encouraging winter stubbles and wide field margins to encourage priority species such as rare arable plants and the full range of farmland birds and mammals and, where possible, seeking a reduction in the use of pesticides, herbicides and nutrients, to enhance biodiversity and reduce diffuse pollution.
- Encouraging biomass production including miscanthus and short rotation coppice in areas of high yield potential which do not suffer from soil erosion or conflict with food production, important sites for biodiversity, archaeology, historic landscape or views from the ridgelines and avoiding planting biomass crops in fields which are crossed by rights of way or adjacent to popular routes to avoid conflicts with recreation and enjoyment of the countryside.
- Encouraging good hedgerow management in areas of biomass planting, protecting and restoring the traditional Midlands hedgerow style with its high, A-shape and many hedgerow trees in order to mitigate the landscape impacts of biomass crops.
- Encouraging best practice and minimisation of the use of pesticides and herbicides where possible, to minimise impact on pollinators and reduce impacts on water quality, encouraging management of arable land to maximise use of natural pest control methods through beetle banks, grass margins and headlands in fields.
- Developing interpretation of the key features and assets of the area, particularly its geology, farming practices, habitats and biodiversity and providing easily accessible and 'access for all' sites of wildlife, historical and geological interest for both educational and public use.
- Encouraging volunteers to undertake tasks such as surveying and conserving the wildlife, historical, cultural and geological interest to increase knowledge and understanding.

Narrow lanes with wide grassy verges bordered by high, thick hedges occur throughout the area.

SEO 3: Conserve, manage and enhance the river catchments and reservoirs, improving water quality and flow management and benefiting biodiversity and recreation through managing soils, diffuse pollution and run-off, reconnecting flood plains and extending natural habitats.

For example, by:

- Enhancing and managing the quality of the watercourses, to maintain them as distinctive features in the landscape and enhance their riparian habitats and wildlife interest, restoring, expanding and linking riparian semi-natural habitats such as wet woodland, valley mires, reedbeds and grazing marsh along watercourses in the valleys; and reconnecting rivers with their flood plain watermeadows to slow run-off and improve water storage capacity, while reducing flood risk and soil erosion, and improving water quality, climate regulation, habitat networks, resilience to climate change and recreation opportunities.
- Promoting sustainable use of local water resources and use of water efficiency measures by commercial, agricultural and domestic users to reduce consumption where possible, especially in new developments, ensuring that any further abstraction is carefully monitored and controlled to avoid having an impact on water flow in the rivers.
- Managing river and reservoir banks, flood plains and riparian habitats to ensure a robust cover of semi-natural vegetation, and ensuring river engineering works are carried out in an ecologically sensitive manner to naturally filter the water, reduce soil erosion and sedimentation, and reduce poaching by stock through wide buffer strips, fencing, broadleaved woodland and scrub and controlling invasive non-native species which threaten the stability of river banks.
- Working with land managers and authorities in nearby NCAs to address water flow issues at a catchment scale, including implementation of the River Nene Catchment Flood Management Plan[4].
- Encouraging implementation of the vision and objectives of the Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area, including tackling water resource and flow issues and encouraging uptake of advice and grants available through the Catchment Sensitive Farming Schemes targeted on the area to manage watercourses to prevent diffuse water pollution, allow water tables to rise where appropriate, and to promote good soil management in the priority catchments.
- Encouraging best practice in soil management, adopting Defra's Code of Good Practice (2009) and the Environment Agency's 'Think Soils' initiative (2008), to ensure continued sustainable food production which does not compromise other ecosystem services.
- Ensuring that farm infrastructure is able to reduce rates of point and diffuse pollution generated in and around the farms through improved, roofed silage, slurry and manure storage, grey water separation, rainwater storage, improvements to storm overflows and good handling facilities.
- Reducing soil erosion through provision of livestock drinking troughs, sediment ponds and traps, swales with check dams, piped culverts in ditches, resurfacing of gateways, livestock and machinery tracks, watercourse

[4] River Nene Catchment Flood Management Plan, Summary Report, Environment Agency (December 2009)

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crossings, gate relocation and hard bases for drinkers and feeders, while ensuring their sensitive design in this high-quality landscape.

- Managing non-riparian woodland, parkland and hedgerows and creating new native woodland to increase water infiltration, slow flows, reduce soil erosion, act as wind breaks, improve soil quality through increased organic matter and soil fauna, and bind soil in proximity, avoiding sites of biodiversity or archaeological interest.
- Promoting extensive grazing of pasture where possible, protecting wet soils from heavy grazing, poaching and compaction, applying light applications of farmyard manure rather than artificial fertilisers to encourage build-up of soil organic matter to increase carbon storage/retention and drought tolerance of crops; and encouraging techniques such as direct drilling, inclusion of break crops and retention of winter stubble to protect soil.
- Working with the farming community to promote good nutrient and pesticide management, managing applications of pesticides, slurry and manure to maximise uptake and reduce run-off where possible, by avoiding manure spreading in winter on frozen, hard ground or very wet ground, or when there is no grass growth, and use of biobeds.
- Seeking to plan cultivation timings carefully and, where possible, minimising machinery and stock movements in wet conditions and avoiding using heavy machinery on wet soils to avoid damage to and compaction of topsoils and improve water infiltration, reducing surface run-off, increasing resilience to drought and encouraging the use of minimum tillage techniques such as direct drilling to reduce soil exposure and break-up.

The Northamptonshire Uplands near Newnham showing an example of the extensive ridge and furrow which orrurs frequently on permanent pasture throughout the area.

SEO 4: Conserve, maintain and promote local building styles and materials and plan strategic growth, infrastructure development and mineral extraction to ensure they protect remaining areas of high tranquillity, strengthen local sense of place and biodiversity, and increase adaptation for climate change through multifunctional green infrastructure networks, building on existing resources such as canals, rivers and access routes, creating strong ecological and recreation networks.

For example, by:

- Protecting the remaining areas with a strong sense of rural remoteness and tranquillity, their gently rolling, rounded hills with their many long, low ridgelines, the great variety of landform and the many wide, far-reaching views into and out from the NCA, from tall, vertical or large-scale developments.
- In the part of the NCA which lies in the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), conserving and enhancing natural beauty and supporting forms of quiet open-air recreation that do not conflict with the purpose of designation and which value the high-quality landscape and natural environment in this area; and encouraging use of the finer-grained information in the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan and the Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines, ensuring that landscape opportunities are maximised in ways which do not conflict with the purpose of designation.
- Maintaining the integrity of historic settlement patterns, houses and historic farm building types and layouts, encouraging use of best practice and traditional techniques and materials in the conservation, maintenance, restoration and repair of listed and other historic buildings, including the use of ironstone, cob and brick with thatch, pantile or clay tile roofs.
- Encouraging sympathetic conversions of historic buildings and new developments in the towns of Banbury and Daventry and in nearby villages which respect the particular character, vernacular styles and materials of each.
- Retaining the distinctive, quiet, rural character of the farmland, villages and farms where it still persists, through maintaining the nucleated settlement pattern and rural lanes, restricting development primarily to the main settlements and ensuring it is appropriate in scale and reflects local vernacular styles and materials.
- Planning a strong landscape framework as a context to potential development expansion around Daventry, Banbury and the main transport corridors, ensuring that new development and infrastructure does not have a negative impact on landscape character; considering the visual impact of modern development, particularly urban intrusion and loss of tranquillity; and managing improvements to minor roads to maintain the existing character of the rural road network with its narrow lanes and wide grassy verges.
- Protecting areas of existing green infrastructure in developed areas, especially parks and urban tree planting, and encouraging their restoration, expansion and replacement.

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- Encouraging green infrastructure planning and provision and urban tree planting in new development which link with surrounding rural areas and recreation provision, reducing the heat island effect, and which reflect and reinforce existing landscape character and integrate new development into the area without challenging the existing strong pattern of settlement and enclosure, or the vernacular styles and materials.
- Encouraging multifunctional restoration and enhancement of gravel extraction sites along the Nene Valley and planning to restore new extraction sites once extraction is complete, to conservation end uses; and creating new wetland habitats and providing access and recreational opportunities.
- Encouraging new development and extensions, where proved necessary, and repair work to existing historic buildings that reflect the local building styles, materials and detailing, and maintain heritage significance, and ensuring that on-farm developments respect the original form, style and materials of adjacent farmsteads, retaining and encouraging sympathetic restoration or conversion of redundant buildings which respects their particular local character, vernacular styles and materials.
- Protecting the remaining strong senses of remoteness and tranquillity in areas away from the main settlements and transport corridors, by controlling development and use of night-time lighting, especially on the higher ground.
- Managing and replanting the areas of mature amenity tree planting which shelter many of the villages, using a wide range of species to build in resistance to new tree diseases and to ensure retention of this distinctive local feature.
- Controlling lighting in new developments and conversions, for example by using down-lighters, timers and sensors, to minimise light pollution.
- Avoiding inappropriate development in flood risk areas and minimising run-off from new development, promoting use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) in urban areas to help mitigate the impact of flooding; designing new off-mains developments in rural areas to include sustainable drainage systems to improve water infiltration and protect the aquifers; and promoting best practice to prevent effluent leakage from existing septic tanks.
- Maintaining and expanding public access, including the many long-distance walking routes, encouraging provision of new areas of open access, seeking opportunities to improve and expand the rights of way network, and creating additional multi-user paths.
- Encouraging recreational activities which respect the special qualities of the area and finding ways to manage access, visitor pressure and demand, to prevent conflict between different users or adverse effects on the natural or historic environment.

Additional opportunity

1: Conserve, enhance, expand, connect and manage the many, often visually prominent, small, broadleaved woodlands and coverts, areas of wood pasture, sheltering planting around settlements and parkland to enhance biodiversity and landscape character, provide timber and wood products, and assist with regulation of water quality, soil quality and soil erosion.

For example, by:

- Restoring and encouraging management of the existing small, broadleaved and remaining ancient woods, parkland, wood pasture and areas of amenity tree planting around villages, for local timber use and wood fuel, to restore structural diversity, increase woodland connectivity and biodiversity, reduce soil erosion, improve water quality and landscape interest, encourage woodland species of birds and retain the benefits to climate regulation of high soil carbon and active carbon sequestration associated with woodland.
- Re-introducing active coppice management where this will enhance woodland habitat and wildlife interest, strengthening hedgerow networks, particularly where hedgerows connect areas of woodland, and encouraging the planting of a wide range of tree species to increase resilience to climate change and new diseases.
- Encouraging new small-scale planting and expansion of existing broadleaved woodland for timber production and to enhance landscape and biodiversity, in appropriate locations where it can be accommodated without compromising key features of the area such as the views from the ridgelines, the open landscape character with prominent scattered small hill-top woods, parkland, archaeological features or priority habitats while respecting the shape and scale of existing woodlands.
- Encouraging sympathetic management of the existing coniferous blocks through thinning, selective felling and reshaping, to develop open glades and softer edges which follow the landform, and increase the proportion of broadleaved species and enhance the ground flora.
- Encouraging planting and management for local timber production of the hedgerow and waterside trees to maintain a well-wooded appearance on enclosed land and along rivers.
- Encouraging the creation of new woodland and tree planting in association with new developments to break up their impact on the landscape, reflecting the existing sheltering planting patterns around some villages in the area, which contribute strongly to their sense of place.
- Encouraging the use of a wide range of tree species in new planting to maximise resilience to climate change and novel diseases, and to reduce reliance on oak and ash.
- Encouraging landowners, farmers, authorities and interest groups to survey and monitor for tree disease and to seek to identify and propagate locally resistant strains of ash and oak.
- Encouraging local and regional markets for biomass and wood fuel to support sustainable woodland management.

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APPENDIX 4

OWLS: UPSTANDING VILLAGE FARMLANDS

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Landscape Types:

Upstanding Village Farmlands

16. UPSTANDING VILLAGE FARMLANDS

Regional Character Areas

Northamptonshire Uplands.

Location

This landscape type covers the elevated landscapes in the north of the county to the north and south of Banbury, around Claydon and Kidlington, Great Bourton, Bloxham and Deddington.

Overview

A hilly landscape with a strong pattern of hedgerows and nucleated villages characteristically built from the local ironstone.

Key Characteristics

• A steep-sided, undulating landform.
• A well-defined geometric pattern of medium-sized fields enclosed by prominent hedgerows
• A strong settlement pattern of compact, nucleated villages of varying sizes with little dispersal in wider countryside.

Geology and landform

The Middle Lias series, a mix of clays and sands, largely dominates this area. The beds are overlaid in places by the Marlstone Rock bed, an iron-bearing limestone that gives rise to the higher hills. To the south of Banbury, only parts of the ironstone are overlaid by the clays and thin limestones of the Upper Lias, as these have been eroded away over much of north

Oxfordshire. The rolling landform is apparent throughout the landscape type, and rises to a height of 160m around Mollington. Around Deddington and Bourton, the landform is shaped into prominent ridges and small gullies drained by ditches and streams.

Land use and vegetation

The land uses are mixed. Arable copping dominates the areas around Deddington, Hempton, Bodicote and Claydon, whereas grassland, interspersed in places with small patches of scrub and secondary woodland, is largely associated with the steeper slopes. Ridge and furrow pasture is a characteristic feature of this grassland. These fields are sometimes used for pony grazing. A number of wide, species-rich road verges are located in the more elevated northern part of the landscape type.

There is very little woodland and it is largely confined to small plantations on the steeper grounds and in the parkland at Williamscote. Patches of scrub are found growing in the steeper gullies.

Cultural pattern

There is a prominent pattern of geometrically-shaped fields enclosed by moderately tall hedges. The hedges give structure to the landscape and are dominated by hawthorn, elm and elder. Fields are moderately-sized, except for the larger arable fields around Bodicote. Hedgerow trees, of oak and ash, are generally sparse but become denser where they are associated with grassland. Most of the remaining trees are concentrated along roadsides, footpaths, bridleways and parish boundaries. The elevated nature of the landform, combined with lack of woodland and tree cover, results in a rather open landscape.

The pattern of well-defined nucleated villages is very characteristic. They are often situated on rising ground and slopes, linked by straight roads. This nucleated settlement pattern is in contrast to the few dispersed farmsteads in the wider countryside. The vernacular character is strong in most of the settlements, but is particularly prominent in the smaller villages to the north of Banbury including Bourton and Mollington. The larger settlements, such as Deddington, Bloxham and Adderbury also retain a core of buildings with a strong vernacular character. The distinctive ironstone used as building material gives rise to characteristic warm orange-brown buildings with stone or slate roof tiles.

BIODIVERSITY

Overview

This landscape type supports a range of locally important habitats, including deciduous woodland and plantations, as well as priority habitats such as acid and marshy grassland.

Key Characteristics

- Predominantly low-medium to medium bioscores.
- Priority habitats such as acid and marshy grassland.

General Description

This landscape type is located on the steep, undulating hills to the west of Banbury. Overall, it supports a range of locally important habitats including some deciduous woodland, plantations, semi-improved grassland and species-poor hedges with trees. There is only a limited range of other important and priority habitats such as ancient semi-natural woodland, species-rich hedgerows, parkland and acid and marshy grassland. These habitats are generally very small and isolated within the landscape type.

LOCAL CHARACTER AREAS

A. Mollington (NU/28 and NU/35)

Landscape Character

The area has medium-sized fields and a mixed farming pattern, with the larger fields associated with arable farming and the smaller grass fields largely restricted to the steeper slopes. Ridge and furrow pasture can be seen in places. Fields are enclosed by a prominent network of hawthorn and elm hedges with some ash and field maple. The hedgerow network is generally in good condition with dense, well-maintained hedges, although some internal field hedges tend to be low and gappy. Throughout this area there are thinly scattered, mature trees of oak and ash and a few small mixed plantations around Mollington.

Biodiversity

Bioscores/biobands: 32/LM; 54/LM
Locally important habitats include deciduous woodland, plantations, semi-improved grassland and species-poor hedges with trees. There are some species-rich ponds.

B. Wardington (NU/32)

Landscape Character

The area has small, regularly-shaped fields with both arable cropping and semi-improved grassland. The grassland tends to be restricted to the steeper slopes. Some ridge and furrow pasture can also be found. Fields are enclosed by hedges dominated by hawthorn, blackthorn, elm and field maple. There are sparsely scattered hedgerow trees of ash and oak, and a small deciduous plantation close to Williamscot. The hedgerow network is declining and hedges are often low, gappy and, in some places, removed altogether and replaced by fences.

Biodiversity

Bioscore/bioband: 100/MH
There are a number of locally important habitats including deciduous woodland, plantations, semi-improved grassland, scrub and species-poor hedges with trees. There is also parkland, with its associated mature trees, surviving acid grassland and heath along the embankments of a disused railway, and some marshy grassland along the Cherwell Valley.

C. Bodicote (NU/16)

Landscape Character

The area is characterised by large-sized fields dominated by arable farming, with some smaller grass fields used for pony grazing. They are enclosed by low hawthorn hedges which are generally in good condition. Hedges bordering roadsides and old lanes are taller, well-maintained and more species-rich. There are a few young ash, field maple and oak trees in the hedges, and some small tree clumps close to farms.

Biodiversity

Bioscore/bioband: 48/LM
Locally important habitats include plantations, semi-improved grassland, scrub and species-poor hedges with trees. There are also species-rich hedges bordering some roads and green lanes.

D. Bloxham (NU/9)

Landscape Character

The area is characterised by regularly-shaped, small-sized grass fields and larger arable fields. Ridge and furrow pasture is common. Fields are enclosed by a prominent network of intact hawthorn and elm hedges which, in places, are overgrown and gappy. Mature ash, oak and sycamore trees are scattered throughout the area. They are denser where there is more grassland, along roadsides, country lanes and the disused railway line.

Biodiversity

Bioscore/bioband: 48/LM
This area has a number of locally important habitats including deciduous woodland, plantations, semi-improved grassland, scrub and species-poor hedges with trees. There is also some parkland with its associated mature trees.

E. Deddington (NU/6)

Landscape Character

The area is dominated by large, geometrically-shaped arable fields. There is some semi-improved grassland, interspersed with scrub, on the steeper slopes. Ridge and furrow pasture is also evident. Fields are enclosed by a prominent network of low, intact hawthorn hedges. They are generally taller and thicker where they enclose grassland. Mature ash and oak trees are scattered throughout, and they are denser to the east of Deddington and along bridleways and old lanes. There are some minor watercourses along the valley bottoms.

Biodiversity

Bioscore/bioband: 36/LM
Locally important habitats include deciduous woodland, plantations, semi-improved grassland, scrub and species-poor hedges with trees.

FORCES FOR CHANGE

• The hedgerow network is generally intact and in good condition, even in places dominated by intensive arable farming. However, around Bodicote the hedgerow pattern is weaker, with roadside hedges tending to be overgrown and internal field hedges generally low and gappy.
• There is some residential development within the main settlements that is out of character, particularly in the larger settlements to the south of Banbury. There are also some industrial estates, but they are generally well screened by landscape planting.
• Other land uses, such as the disused airfield and wireless station near Barford, can be visually intrusive.

Landscape strategy

Conserve and enhance the strong pattern of hedgerows and hedgerow trees, and the nucleated settlement pattern and strong vernacular character of the villages.

Guidelines

• Strengthen and enhance the field pattern by planting up gappy hedges using locally

characteristic species such as hawthorn, and hedgerow trees such as oak and ash.
• Promote environmentally-sensitive maintenance of hedgerows, including coppicing and layering when necessary, to maintain a height and width appropriate to the landscape type, particularly along roadsides.
• Conserve the surviving areas of permanent and ridge and furrow pasture on the steeper slopes and hillsides.
• Maintain the nucleated pattern of settlements and promote the use of building materials, characteristically the ironstones and slate tiles of the Northamptonshire Uplands, and a scale of development and that is appropriate to this landscape type.
• Enhance tree cover through small-scale woodland planting next to streamlines and on steeper hillsides, so that it does not block off views of the landscape, keeping the feeling of openness.

Biodiversity Strategy

Ensure that all surviving priority habitats are safeguarded, in favourable condition and management, and enhanced to satisfy the actions and targets identified within the relevant habitat and species action plans. Safeguard, maintain and enhance all locally important habitats in a way that is appropriate to the landscape character of the area.

Guidelines

• There are very few priority habitats within this landscape and they tend to be small and isolated. It is important that they are safeguarded and in favourable condition and management through agreement with the landowner. Opportunities for expanding these habitats within the landscape type are very limited.
• Species-rich hedgerows are distributed throughout different parts of the landscape type, particularly bordering roadsides and green lanes. Priority should be given to safeguarding and maintaining this resource, particularly in those local character areas where they remain a significant feature.
• Opportunities for the establishment of other locally important habitats, such as semi-improved grassland and small deciduous woodlands, should be promoted in order to strengthen wildlife corridors and enhance the local landscape character.

Key Recommendations

• Safeguard and enhance the landscape character of the hedgerow network.
• Ensure that the few surviving priority habitats are in favourable condition and management.

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APPENDIX 5

CDC: IRONSTONE HILLS & VALLEYS

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CHERWELL DISTRICT LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

FOR

CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL

BY

COBHAM RESOURCE CONSULTANTS
AVALON HOUSE
MARCHAM ROAD
ABINGON
OXON
OX14 1UG

NOVEMBER 1995

7292

Figure 5

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

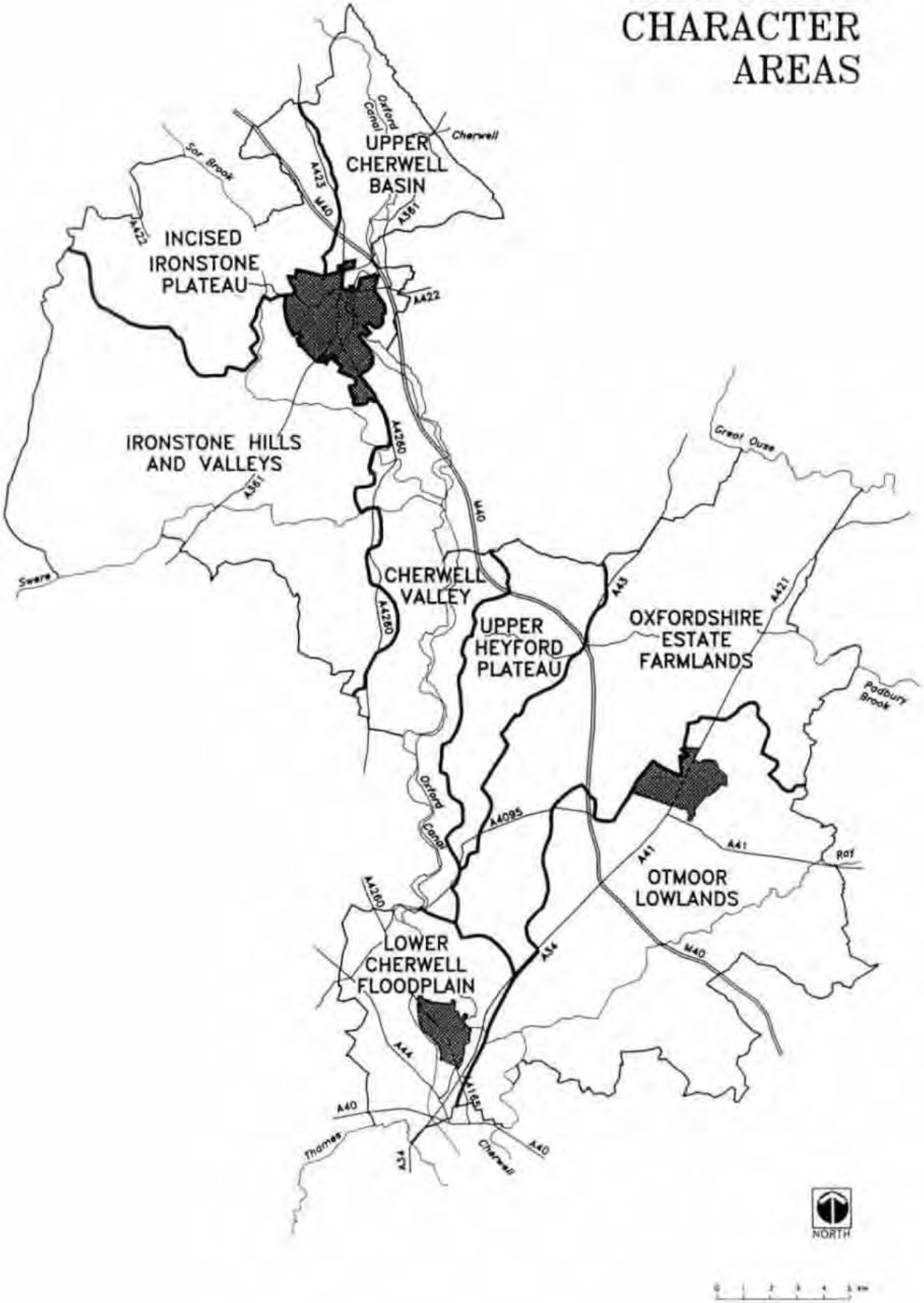
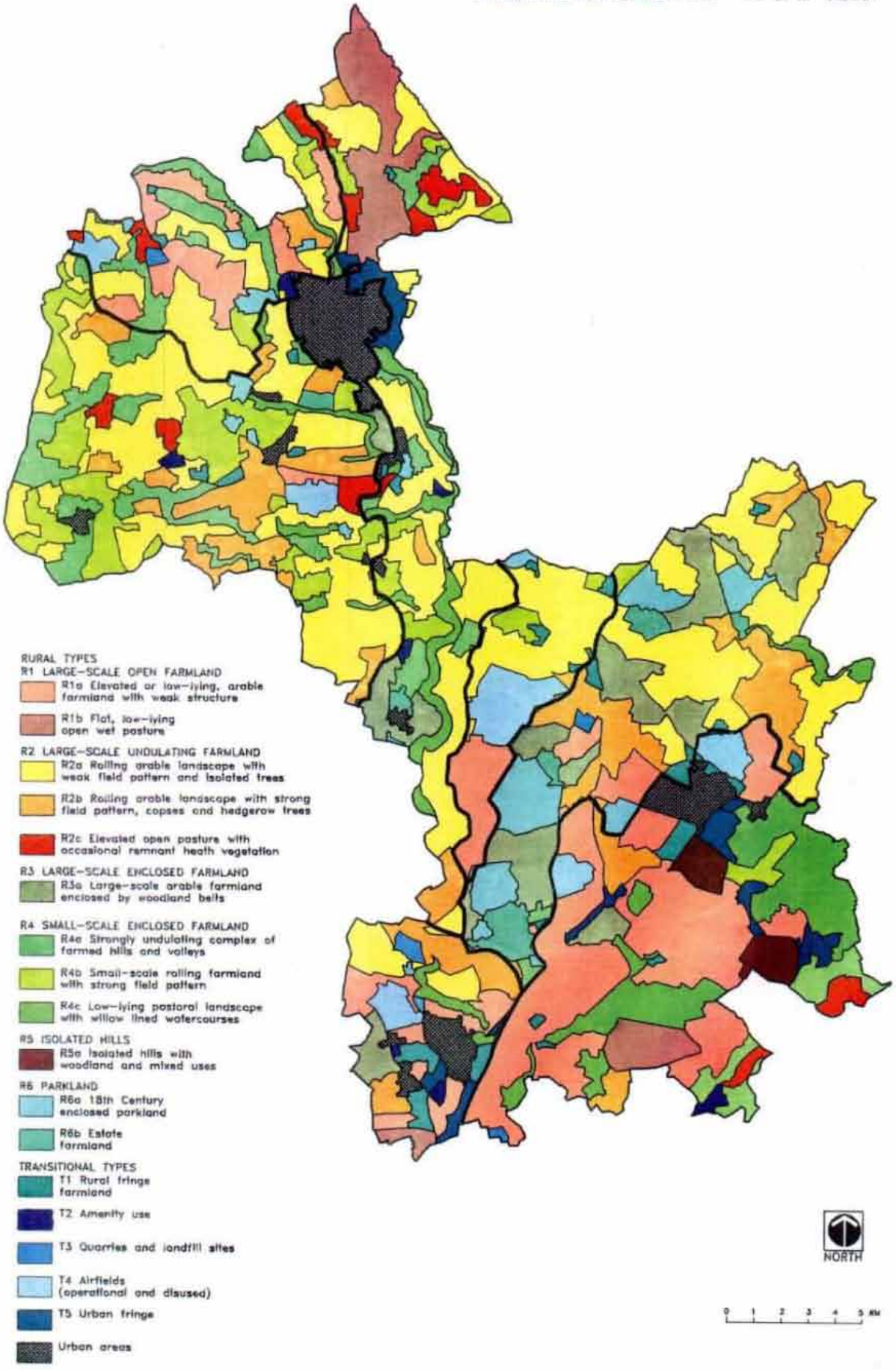


Figure 6

LANDSCAPE TYPES



3.32 North-east of Kidlington there is a Roman Villa site, including a well, which is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). The site of Hampton Gay Deserted Medieval Village is likewise designated and the earthworks are clearly visible. Buildings of interest include Yarnton Manor, a Grade II* listed building, originally dating from the early seventeenth century. The present garden at the Manor was recreated in the late 19th century following the lines of a much earlier seventeenth century layout, and part of the 10 hectare park was once an extensive deer park.

IRONSTONE HILLS AND VALLEYS

3.33 The Ironstone Hills and Valleys are found in the north west of the district, and is one of the larger character areas, extending from the Cherwell Valley to the Oxfordshire/Warwickshire county boundary. This is an upland area which forms part of the northern extent of the Cotswold Hills - indeed, the Cotswolds AONB extends over part of this character area at Epwell. The main distinguishing features are its extremely complex topography and the style of vernacular buildings which is unique to the Banbury region. The unspoilt ironstone villages and tranquil countryside are remote and isolated, particularly towards the west of the character area.

Landform and landcover

3.34 The geology of this area is faulted and fairly complex, which gives rise to a correspondingly complicated topography. Marlstone Rock Bed, an iron-bearing limestone with local sandy deposits, overlies the Middle and Lower Lias clays. This highly coloured Ironstone gives the character area its name. Faulting has uplifted an area of White Limestone and Northampton Sandstone, around Tadmarton and the Sibfords. A second line of faults lies along an east west line from Hook Norton, through Wigginton, South Newington and the Barfords.

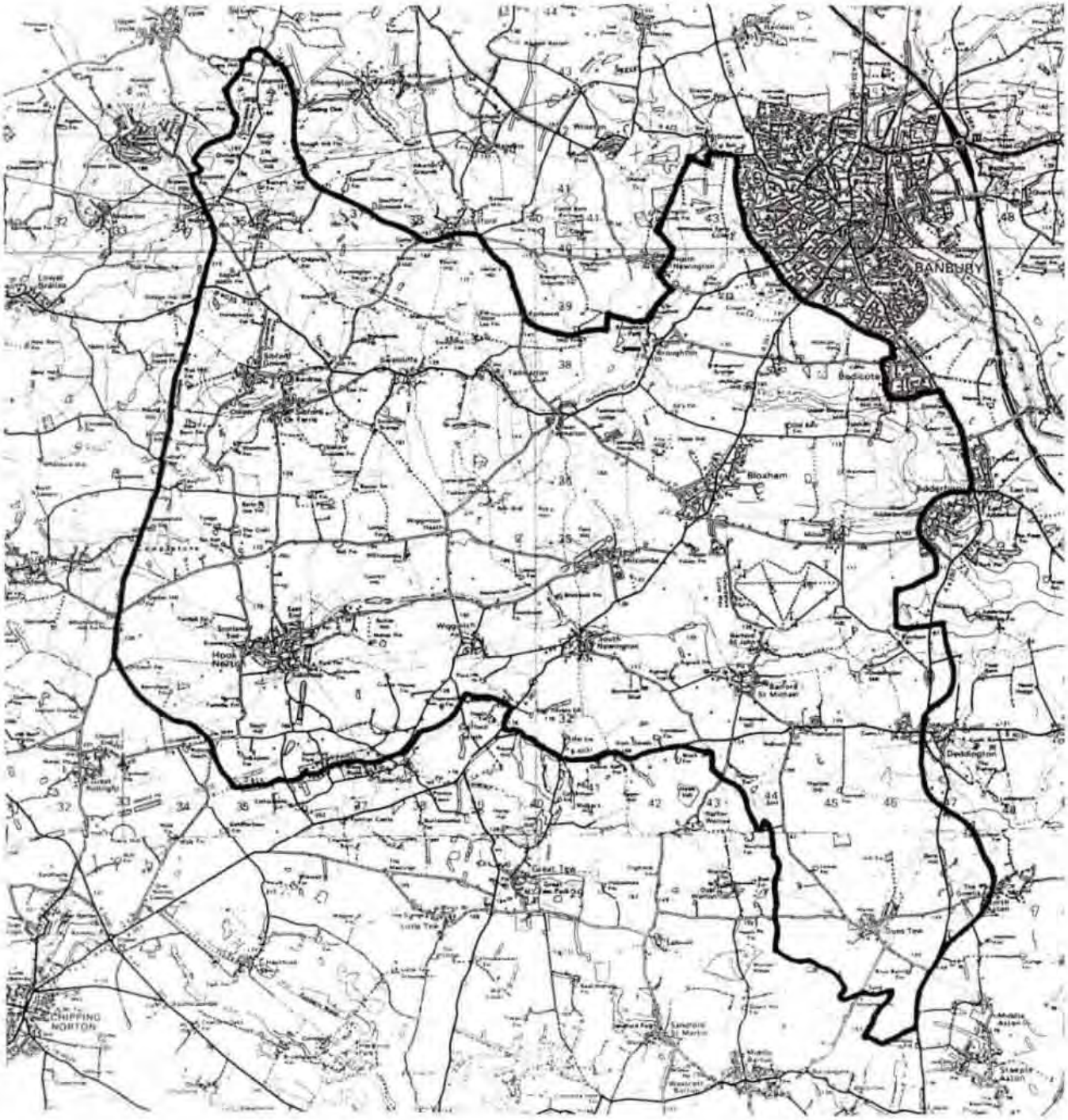
3.35 Since the area is faulted and uplifted, and also cut through by numerous small streams, the landscape is divided into very steeply sided, convoluted valleys with narrow valley bottoms and rolling, rounded hill lines. Underlying geology has given rise to iron rich clay soils of a characteristic red colour, much of which is classed as grade 2 agricultural land.

3.36 Main drainage routes follow the fault lines. To the south, the River Swere flows eastwards along fault lines running into the Cherwell and subsequently draining to the south east, into the River Thames. The River Stour rises in the vicinity of Wigginton Heath. Joined by minor streams from the Sibfords, the Stour flows westwards into the Avon. Thus the hills form part of a major watershed which divides the drainage system of the Severn from that of the Thames. The watershed runs northwards through Epwell Hill and Shenlow Hill to Edge Hill and north-eastwards across the Burton Dassett Hills.

Figure 10

IRONSTONE HILLS AND VALLEYS

NORTH



SCALE 1:100,000

3.37 Rolling hills with rich soils are considerable agricultural assets and much of this area is in arable cultivation, the main crops being winter cereals with potatoes and sugar beet. In some areas, medium and large arable fields are still surrounded by hedges and the boundaries marked by hedgerow trees. However, much of the higher land and gentler slopes now have a fairly open arable landscape, with local areas where clearance has been so extreme that even post and wire fences have not been retained to demarcate field boundaries.

3.38 However, the area is riddled with steep sided valleys and narrow valley floors with a pattern of smaller fields and mixed farming, predominantly permanent pasture. Many hedgerows are unmanaged and growing out, and road verges sometimes include narrow stands of trees, which gives a well-treed impression, although the area lacks larger woodlands. Streams in valley bottoms are locally marked with old willows with some pollarding, and with wet pasture.

Variations in landscape character

3.39 Many of the steeper slopes have resisted mechanised arable farming. Here, a pastoral scene of small grazing fields divided by hedgerows prevails on the steepest slopes dominating the scene, the landscape being made up from a **strongly undulating complex of farmed hills and valleys (R4a)**. Wherever the landform levels out slightly, the small fields can be ploughed and crops of winter cereals grown. The resulting landscape is an intricate blend of mixed farming, with small variations in scale and local land use being closely related to topography, a tightly knit **small scale rolling farmland with strong field pattern (R4b)**

3.40 Lanes and minor roads run straight along ridges wherever possible, dipping sharply down the valley sides to connect with villages. Hedgerows are mostly dense, well grown barriers, although where arable farming prevails they are closely trimmed. The practice of hedge laying is still continued locally as a means of maintaining a stockproof boundary. Many of the hedges contain mature hedgerow trees, the dominant species being oak and ash, with beech on the limestone outcrops. However, the hedges have an extremely high elm component, and where young trees are regenerating naturally, this is the dominant species.

3.41 Wherever the landform opens out sufficiently, intensive use is made of the rich, fertile soils. In these **rolling arable landscapes with weak field pattern (R2a)** fields are large, hedgerows are often weak and gappy, reinforced with fences, and in some places field boundaries have completely disappeared. In one extremely open landscape at Wigginton Heath, new hedges have been planted, bringing some division back into an otherwise 'green desert'. Banks which would have been topped with hedges still remain along roadsides.

3.42 In the highest and most exposed areas, where hill tops stand up above the already elevated land, there is **undulating elevated pasture with remnant heath (R2c)** where patches of gorse, bracken and scrubby heath vegetation break up the poor grasslands. These patches contribute considerably to the character of the area, serving as a reminder of its essentially upland heath nature.

Special features

3.43 Some of the district's oldest features, the distinctive line of Iron Age hill forts, which top the hills to the west of Banbury, are found in this character area. They include Tadmarton and Ilbury Camps and Madmarston Hill, where the earthworks are still highly visible, although a further three hill fort sites are known. The bivallate hillfort at Tadmarton is the most impressive, although it is now bisected by a road and absorbed into a golf course.

3.44 Broughton Castle is also of interest. Built in the early fourteenth century as a fortified manor house, it remains one of the finest and most complete medieval houses in the country. The eighteenth century park by John Davenport includes landscaped grounds with a moat, while the late nineteenth century gardens were laid out by Gertrude Jekyll. The later picturesque parkland at Swerford, which lies partly within Cherwell and partly within West Oxfordshire, was influenced by Loudon.

3.45 Sunken lanes are a particular feature of this area, with steep banks rising up on either side of the roads as they dip down the valley sides. Occasionally, these banks are reinforced by drystone walling, many of which are overgrown by hedgerow plants.

INCISED IRONSTONE PLATEAU

3.46 The Incised Ironstone Plateau is situated to the north of the Ironstone Hills and Valleys. Both areas have a number of common characteristics, but the plateau landform is substantially different. It is a far less complex, unfaulted, complete unit, divided by streams which create a simple landscape of ridges and valleys which extends around the north-west of Banbury.

Landform and landcover

3.47 This area is geologically similar to the Ironstone Hills and Valleys with a layer of Marlstone Rock Bed overlying the Middle and Lower Lias clays. However, the area has a more straightforward topography, consisting of relatively high land forming a level or gently rolling plateau. West of Hornton and at Shenlow Hill the land rises to 200m, with gentle slopes falling eastwards towards Banbury. Tributaries of the Sor Brook have cut down through the plateau creating a series of roughly parallel valleys.

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APPENDIX 6

CDC BANBURY LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT & CAPACITY STUDY
ADDENDUM 2014

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Cherwell District Council

Banbury Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment

Assessment Addendum

(18/08/2014)

Arndale Court, Otley Road, Headingley, Leeds, LS6 UJ

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Email: landscape@wyg.com

4.10.28 Although isolated areas of woodland development would be acceptable within the area, blanket development of woodland would be inappropriate due to the effects upon landscape character. Development of woodland and green infrastructure in association with recreational development would however be possible. There is a Medium capacity for woodland development.

Future Management and Maintenance

4.10.29 Management should ensure safeguarding of the landscape context of Salt Way as a historic route. If development occurs, consideration should be given to the implementation of structure planting to the south of the development to mitigate views across Sor Brook valley, and the development of a green infrastructure network should be considered.

4.11 Site 111 (formerly Part of Site G)

Site Overview

4.11.1 The area is located on the south east edge of Banbury between Banbury and Bodicote and located immediate south of Salt Way and north of the cricket ground. The north site boundary is formed by Salt Way and the east boundary by White Post Road. To the west and south west is arable farmland extending south to Wykham Road and an area of allotments.

4.11.2 The site is located within Natural England National Character Area 95 Northamptonshire Uplands. At a county level, OWLS identifies the area as being within the Upstanding Village Farmlands Landscape Type.

4.11.3 At the district level, the site is located within the Ironstone Hills and Valleys Landscape Character Area.

4.11.4 For details relating to OWLS landscape character areas refer to Appendix F.

Key Features and Site Visit Information

4.11.5 A site walkover was carried out on 22nd November 2012 to carry out the 2013 LSCA and a further site walkover was carried out on 26th June 2014 to reassess the area taking into consideration the revised area boundary. See Figure L11 for landscape context and Figure P11 for site record photographs.

4.11.6 The area comprises arable farmland, the grounds of a private residential property and day nursery located in the north east corner of the area and an area of grassland associated with the cricket ground. There is a footpath passing through the area in a north to south orientation connecting Salt Way with Wykham Lane.

4.11.7 The southern boundary of the west field is not defined as it forms a single field extending from Salt Way in the north to Wykham Lane in the south. The site has low voltage transmission lines passing through it although these are not dominant features of the area.

Landscape Sensitivity

4.11.8 The area comprises a relatively simple arable landscape although the field boundaries are mature and diverse in their composition. The western field is part of a large scale field although divided for the purpose of this study. Within the east of the area there is relatively dense tree cover associated with the residential property and day nursery which was inaccessible for survey purposes. The sensitivity of natural factors is Medium to Low.

4.11.9 Within the site area there is one Recorded Heritage Site adjacent to the west site boundary. Abutting the west site boundary there is also an Archaeological Constraint Priority Area. Within the wider heritage study area there are numerous heritage features associated with Bodicote although these are separated from the site area by the cricket ground. The sensitivity of cultural factors is Medium.

4.11.10 Within the site area there are few historical remains although the area does have a scenic quality in forming a buffer to the south of Salt Way on the edge of the urban area. The aesthetic value of the area is medium.

4.11.11 The area is representative of the local landscape character to the east and forms a unity with the adjacent fields; the field boundaries do however appear to have been removed in some locations. The buildings located within the north east corner of the site are in the local vernacular but the cricket ground pavilion building located immediately outside the southern site boundary is not and this is highly visible from within the area. The overall landscape quality and condition is Medium to Low.

4.11.12 The combined Landscape Sensitivity is Medium.

Visual Sensitivity

4.11.13 The area is heavily screened from the north and moderately screened from the west and east by vegetation located on the existing field boundaries. Views are possible into the site area from the cricket ground located to the south although the users are generally inwardly focused. The general visibility of the area is Low.

4.11.14 The area is generally viewed by recreational users walking footpaths and using the adjacent cricket ground. The visual sensitivity of the site to the surrounding visual receptors is Medium.

4.11.15 There is potential to provide mitigation on the site boundaries without altering the characteristics of the existing landscape. This is particularly the case on the boundary with the cricket ground and the southern boundary of the area in the west, which is currently undefined. There is a Medium sensitivity to mitigation.

4.11.16 The combined Visual Sensitivity is Medium to Low.

Landscape Character Sensitivity

4.11.17 The Landscape Character Sensitivity has been derived using 'Table 3 Overall Landscape Character Sensitivity' as set out within Section 3.0 Scope and Methodology.

4.11.18 The Landscape Sensitivity has been assessed as Medium sensitivity and the Visual Sensitivity has been assessed as Medium to Low sensitivity. Using the matrix in Table 3, this results in a Medium to Low Landscape Character Sensitivity for Site 111.

Landscape Value

4.11.19 There is a Recorded Heritage Site located within the west of the area. There are no landscape or ecological designations within the area. The value of designations is Medium to Low.

4.11.20 Much of the site is screened to the north, east and west and as a result there are limited views available into the site area. Views are however possible from within the cricket ground located to the south. The site is moderately tranquil as a result of the distance from main roads. The scenic value and tranquillity of the site is considered to be Medium value.

4.11.21 The site is not accessible for public use however a public footpath does pass though the area and Salt Way passes along the north site boundary, which is a locally important feature. The area is important in preventing coalescence of Banbury and Bodicote and therefore plays an important function in visual terms. The perceived value is Medium.

4.11.22 The value of Site 111 is Medium.

Landscape Capacity

4.11.23 The Landscape Character Sensitivity and Landscape Value are combined as shown in Table 5 to arrive at the potential Landscape Capacity. In general, the potential Landscape Capacity of Site 111 is Medium to High. The potential for each considered development type is discussed further below.

Capacity for Residential Development

4.11.24 Visually the area is relatively well contained and therefore able to accommodate development from a visual point of view, however, the land provides an important buffer between Banbury and Bodicote. The area could accommodate development as long as the site is designed carefully in the eastern section to ensure a feeling of visual and physical separation is maintained. The capacity for recreational development is Medium to High.

Capacity for Employment Development

4.11.25 There is a Low capacity for both industrial and commercial development as this would not be in keeping with the surrounding areas and landscape character.

Capacity for Recreation Development

4.11.26 There is a Medium capacity for both formal and informal recreation. The area could accommodate formal recreation associated with the adjacent cricket ground. Informal use could also take place in the east area of the site as there is already an area of amenity grassland.

Capacity for Woodland Development

4.11.27 The site could accommodate woodland development which would be helpful in maintaining the separation of Banbury and Bodicote however this may look visually awkward within the wider landscape context and therefore is not recommended.

Future Management and Maintenance

4.11.28 Future management of the area should ensure the safeguarding of the landscape context of Salt Way as a historic route. If development occurs consideration should be given to structure planting to the south of the development to restrict long distance views from the south and also to maintain the separation of Banbury and Bodicote.

5.0 Comparison of Data Used

Data Comparison

5.1.1 WYG have compared the data used for the Banbury Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study (WYG, 2013) and that provided for the Banbury Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study Addendum (WYG, 2014).

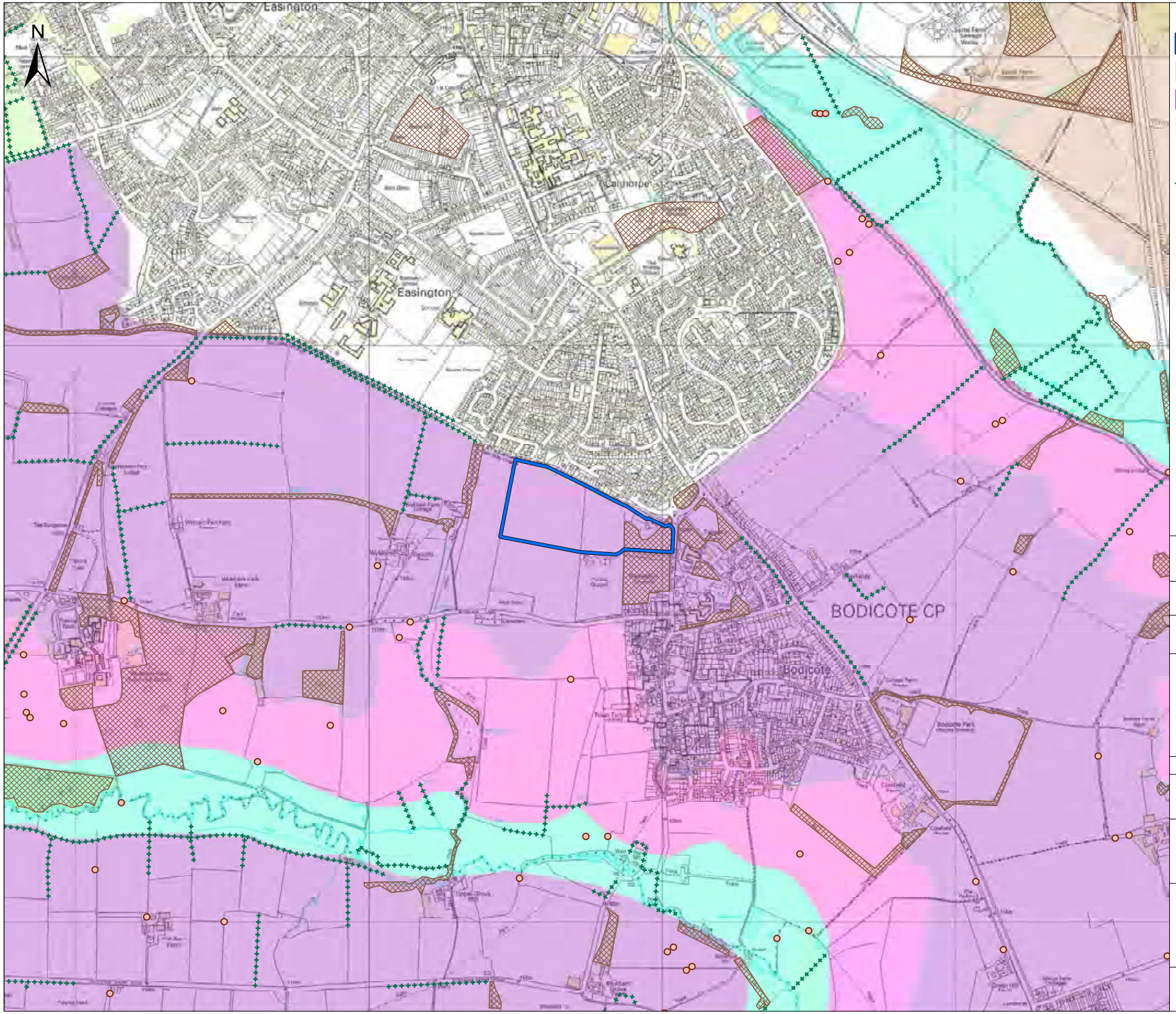
5.1.2 GIS data sets were provided by Cherwell District Council to WYG in November 2012. The following provides a summary review of the differenced in data used between the 2013 Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment and this Addendum.

Landscape

5.1.3 A review of the datasets provided in relation to landscape features and designations has been carried out as part of this addendum. This related to the following datasets:

- Registered Parks and Gardens;
- Possible Old Trees;
- Linear Woodland Features;
- Individual Woodland Parcels;
- Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study Landscape Character Types; and
- Areas of High Landscape Value.

5.1.4 A review of the mapping provided in 2012 against the mapping provided in 2014 has identified no changes that will result in alterations to the original assessment of areas in landscape terms.



Legend

- Site Boundary
- Conservation Area
- Registered Park And Garden
- Ancient Woodland
- Possible Old Trees
- Linear Woodland Features
- Individual Woodland Parcels

Landscape Types:

- Clay Vale
- Farmland Plateau
- Farmland Slopes & Valley Sides
- Pasture Hills
- River Meadowlands
- Rolling Village Pastures
- Upstanding Village Farmlands
- Vale Farmland
- Wooded Pasture Valleys & Slopes

0 50100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800

Metres

TP	MA	July 2014	V1
Created:	Checked:	Date:	Version:

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Sheet Size: **A3** Scale of Original:**1:12,500**

Client:
Cherwell District Council

Project:
Banbury Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment Addendum

Title:
Site 111 (formerly part of site G) Landscape

Office:	Project No:	Figure No:
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APPENDIX 7

LOCAL PLAN 2031 EMERGING POLICIES MAP

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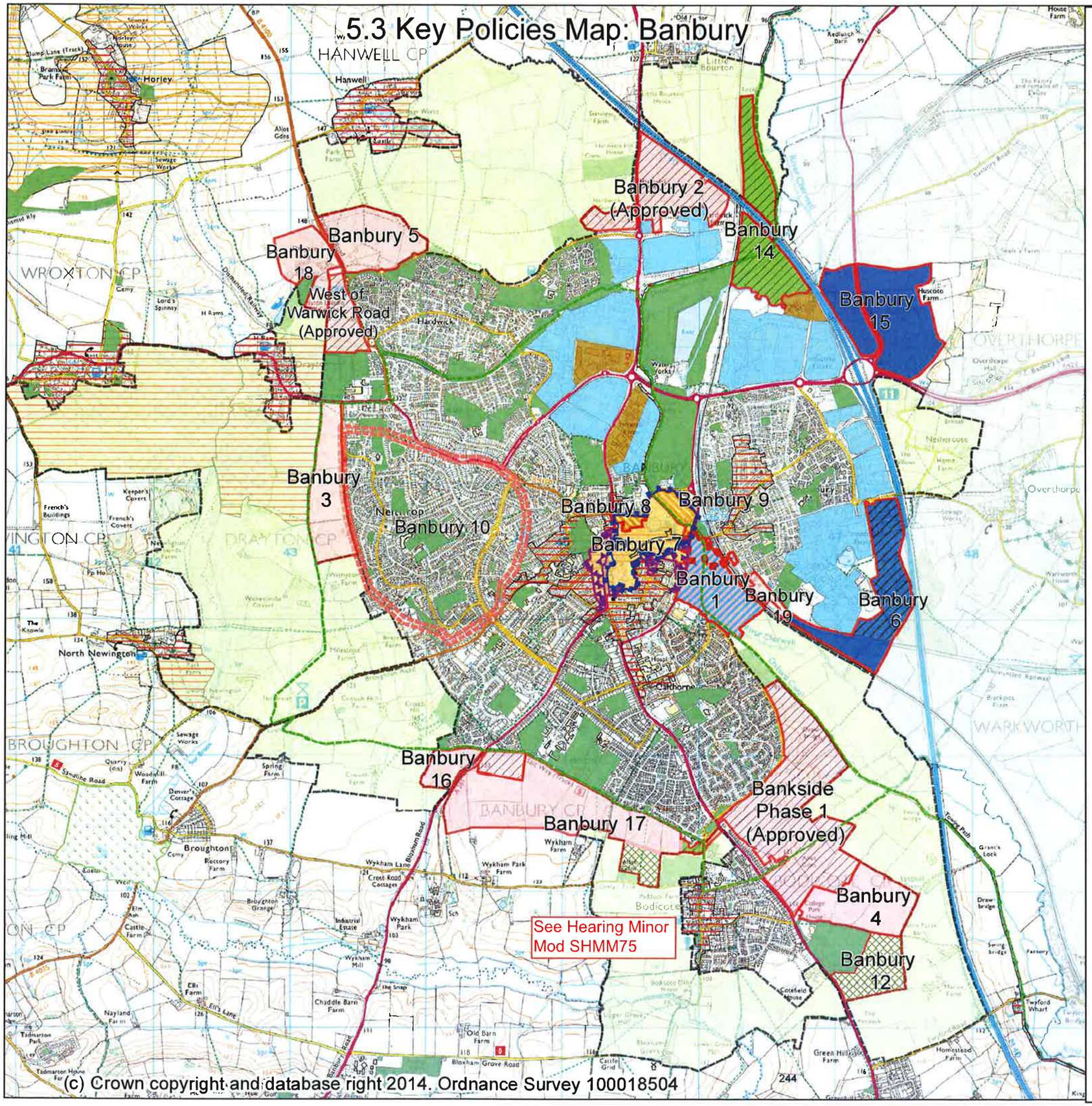
5.3 Key Policies Map: Banbury



Key

- Town Centre Shopping Area (Extended)
- Town Centre Commercial Area
- Primary Shopping Frontage
- Banbury Circular Walk/Oxford Canal Trail
- Existing Strategic Employment Sites (Indicative)
- New Employment Sites
- Approved Employment Sites
- Town Centre Extension (Area of Search)
- Mixed Use (Housing and Employment)
- Bolton Road Development Area
- Spiceball Development Area
- Expanded Town Centre
- Existing Retail Parks
- Strategic Housing Sites
- Approved Housing Sites
- New Green Space and Parks
- Outdoor Sports Provision
- Bretch Hill Regeneration Area (Indicative boundary)
- Green Buffer
- Existing Green Space
- Conservation Target Areas
- Conservation Areas
- Parks and Gardens
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- South Northamptonshire

Strategic Developments:

1 Banbury Canalside

2 Hardwick Farm, Southam Road East and West (Approved)

3 West of Bretch Hill

4 Land at Bankside Phase 2

5 North of Hanwell Fields

6 Employment land west of M40

7 Strengthening Banbury Town Centre

8 Bolton Road Development Area

9 Spiceball Development Area

10 Bretch Hill regeneration area

12 Proposed Banbury United FC relocation

14 Cherwell Country Park

15 Employment Land North East of Junction 11

16 South of Salt Way - West

17 South of Salt Way - East

18 Land at Drayton Lodge Farm

19 Higham Way

0 500 1,000 2,000 Metres

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landscape planning • ecology • arboriculture

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