

LCA 2.6 Barretts End Open Farmland (LCT 2)

Key Characteristics

- Gently sloping valley sides
- Small stream
- Undulating open landscape
- Predominantly arable in prairie fields
- A few small woodland blocks
- Very variable hedgerow quality
- Low density of settlement
- Small area of sensitive historic landscape
- Open character not remote

Distinctive Features

- Stream line often straightened
- Views down to Great Ouse valley

Intrusive Elements

- Pylon line
- A422 road

Location Undulating ground to the east of Buckingham on the district and county eastern boundary. The southern boundary to LCA 3.1 Lower Great Ouse Valley is marked by the A422. To the north lies the higher ground of LCA 1.5 Lillingstone Wet Farmland and the Foxcote Valley LCA 2.5 is to the west.

Landscape character The landscape is open and rolling predominantly in arable and where most of the historic landscape pattern has been lost to prairie farming. Small areas of woodland just beyond the boundaries prevent it being completely featureless. Nevertheless small pockets of early landscape pattern do remain close to the stream south of Leckhampstead and in the far northwest corner where there are assarts associated with woodland within Foxcote.

Views south over the Great Ouse valley are a notable feature of the area but marred by traffic on the A422 which is visually intrusive.

Geology Glacial till overlain by undifferentiated glacial deposits but with small local limestone exposures and alluvial deposits.

Landform A transitional area between the Great Ouse valley and the wooded ridge to the north. The landform is predominantly undulating with a small stream valley. Elevation ranges from 75-110m AOD.

Hydrology The ground falls towards a stream line in the centre of the area but on the southern edge some land drains directly towards the Great Ouse. Much of the stream's course appears to have been straightened. There are a few small ponds often close to the stream.

Land use and settlement Predominantly arable with large prairie fields but small areas of grassland occur adjacent to the stream line running southeast from Leckhampstead and on the higher ground on the western boundary close to Foxcote.

The area has very little settlement with just a few houses and farms close to the southern edge of the dispersed settlement of Leckhampstead.

Tree cover Woodland is limited to three small blocks but woodland just over the boundaries gives the impression of the character area being more wooded. Tree cover within hedgerows is very variable and tends to relate to the hedgerow condition. Hedgerow tree cover tends to be better in the north and along roads.

Biodiversity Biodiversity interest is limited due to the dominance of arable fields. Terrestrial habitats are otherwise restricted to a small amount of improved grassland habitat and the very small fragments of broadleaved woodland. Aquatic habitats comprise a few ponds and a number of small watercourses but do include a stream and a river designated as a BNS.

The hedgerow quality and continuity reduces connectivity between habitats.

Historic environment Although the majority of the area was within the medieval royal hunting forest of Whittlewood very little of the historic landscape remains having been lost to prairie farming in the 20th century. Only two fragments of important features exist at Grove Spinney, which is an ancient woodland and settlement at the edge of Leckhampstead. Elsewhere about 25% is identified as pre 18th century enclosure and parliamentary and

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later enclosure, these areas tend to be close to the stream line or on the edges of the area and are often grassland. The area is traversed by minor Roman roads and includes part of the Foscote villa and another Roman settlement as well as ridge and furrow south of Leckhampstead.

Designations

Archaeological Notification Areas – 7 No.
BNS – 2No.

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Looking south to the A422 and the Great Ouse valley in the background.



The eastern part showing poor hedgerow pattern in foreground and stream line in the middle distance. The rising ground in the background is in Northamptonshire.

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Summary of Condition/Sensitivity Analysis

Condition	Poor
Pattern of elements:	Incoherent
Visual detractors:	Few
Visual unity:	Coherent
Cultural integrity:	Poor
Ecological integrity:	Weak
Functional integrity:	Very weak

Sensitivity	High
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Tree cover:	Open
Visibility:	High

Guidelines	Restore
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Condition

The landscape condition of this area is poor. The hedgerow pattern has been eroded to such an extent that most of the area there is an incoherent pattern of elements. There are few visual detractors. The visual impact of the A 422 is limited to the south of the area. The pylon line runs north-south through the western side of the area. Overall the landscape is considered to have a coherent sense of unity. The cultural integrity is considered to be poor as the hedgerow pattern is generally lost or in poor condition, although it is retained adjacent to the lanes and close to the south side of Leckhampstead. Ecological integrity is weak due to suboptimal connectivity partly because of gappy hedgerows, and relatively low areas of designated sites and habitats of District significance. Functional integrity is very weak.

Sensitivity

This is a distinct landscape where the remaining hedgerows and narrow lanes give a sense of historic continuity and a moderate landscape character. The tree cover is considered to be open as there is little in the way of woodland and a general lack of hedgerows with trees across most of the area, concentrated close to the stream. The apparent landform and open level of tree cover create a landscape, which is considered to have a high level of visibility. The moderate sense of place and high level of visibility combine to give a landscape of high sensitivity.



Woodland within adjoining LCAs often defines horizons – here the woodland is in LCA 2.5 Foxcote.

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Landscape Guidelines Restore

The landscape guidelines for Barrett's End Open Farmland are as follows:

- Encourage the restoration of the historic field pattern where it has been lost with replanting of hedgerows. To enhance the landscape and strengthen ecological diversity. Where necessary use historic maps to establish field pattern.
- Encourage the management of hedgerows through traditional cutting regimes and the restoration of gaps with indigenous species and the establishment of new hedgerow trees.
- Promote good woodland management.
- Encourage the establishment of new woodland of locally occurring native species. The woodland should be appropriate in scale to the landscape character of the area and reflect the historic landscape pattern.
- Maintain the condition and extent of unimproved and semi-improved grassland wherever possible. Encourage good management practices.
- Encourage the establishment of buffer strips of semi-natural vegetation along all watercourses.
- Promote connectivity of habitats.
- Encourage landowners to improve ecological diversity by establishing and maintaining varied land maintenance regimes to benefit landscape and habitats.
- Conserve ridge and furrow earthworks.



The open arable landscape is often quite featureless. The stronger hedgerows as on the right, are often adjacent to roads.