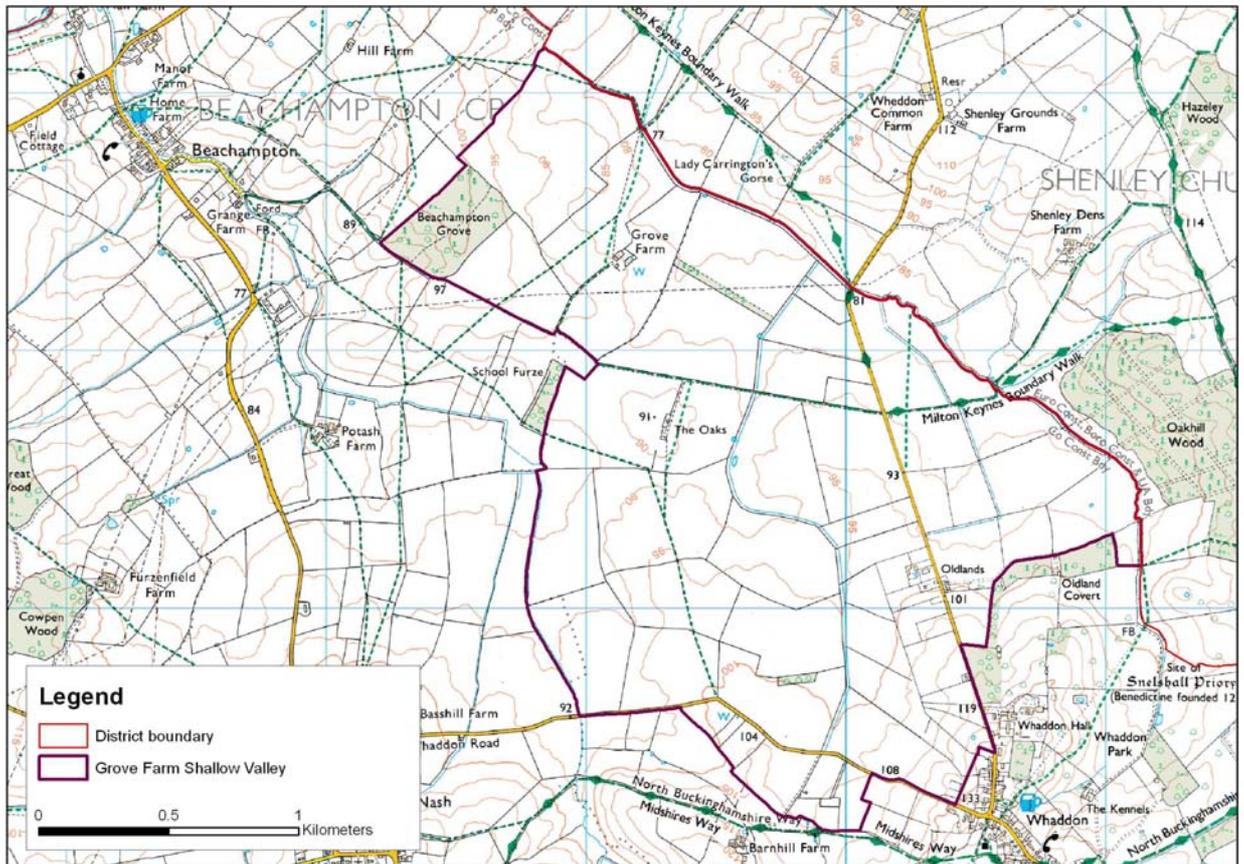
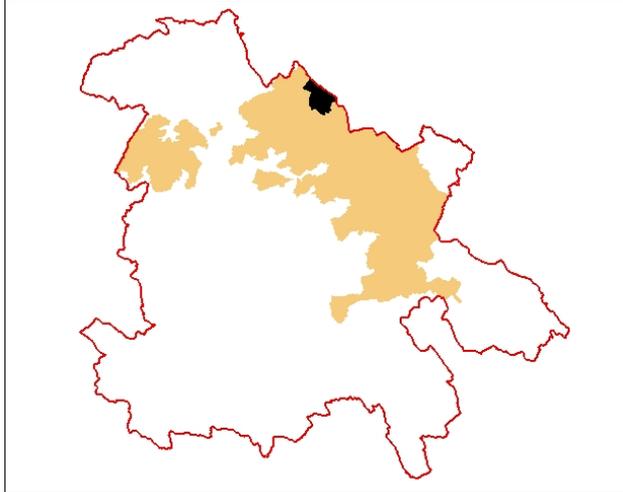


LCA 4.5 Grove Farm Shallow Valley

Landscape Character Type: LCT 4 Undulating Clay Plateau



LCA 4.5 Grove Farm Shallow Valley (LCT 4)

Key Characteristics

- Gently rolling landform
- Shallow valley drains into Great Ouse catchment
- Open landscape with large fields
- Sparsely populated
- Network of streams and ditches

Distinctive Features

- Large arable fields
- Predominantly arable use in valley bottom
- Dispersed grassland around fringes
- Single large woodland block
- Shelterbelts
- Straight local roads
- Dominance of arable habitat

Location Adjacent to the Milton Keynes District boundary, south of Calverton and east of Beachampton.

Landscape character A wide shallow valley, crossed by numerous streams draining off the Chase to the south, which is defined by the Shenley Ridge to the east and the Nash to Beachampton Road to the west. The western boundary is less clearly defined. The area is sparsely populated with a few dispersed farmsteads, intrinsically rural and predominantly in arable use. There are large fields with some woodland and shelterbelts on the fringes including recent woodland planting. Grazing and improved pastureland is found on the southern fringe adjacent to Whaddon village.

Geology Glacial till with mudstone (Peterborough Member) with a belt of calcareous mudstone (Stewartby Member) along the southern boundary.

Topography The landform falls from south to north and is gently undulating as it falls towards a local valley that runs to the east of Grove Farm. It is separated from Beachampton to the west by a gentle clay ridge which rises to 100m AOD. East of Grove Farm the valley drops to a level of 80m AOD where it crosses the District boundary.

Hydrology The area around Grove Farm and the ridge to the south generally drains north into the River Great Ouse catchment. The valley crosses the District boundary south of Calverton before joining the Great Ouse at Stony Stratford.

Land use and settlement Land use is predominantly arable with prairie scale fields especially in the north. Smaller parcels of grassland are dispersed around the upper slopes and fringes of the area. There is no settlement other than the three farmsteads of Grove Farm, the Oaks and Oldlands in the south. Milton Keynes is not visible in the landscape despite its proximity.

Tree cover Woodland cover is sparse comprising occasional shelterbelts. Hedgerow trees are predominantly oak and ash with occasional willow and poplar and follow small streams and ditches.

Biodiversity The habitats present are predominantly arable with some grassland, mainly in the south. The grassland is mostly improved, with a small amount of unimproved grassland distributed randomly. Additional interest is provided by several fragments of woodland, most are very small. However two larger blocks are present in the north including the ancient woodland of Beachampton Grove. In the south is an area of priority habitat type – lowland wood-pasture and parkland.

Historic environment Mainly an area of late enclosure of the open fields of Whaddon which survived until 1841. Fields are medium to large in size but they still reflect the historic field pattern suggesting that arable intensification has not caused significant field amalgamation and loss of pattern except in the north where there are prairie fields. The area is crossed by a distinctive long straight enclosure road. There are no listed buildings and few recorded archaeological sites. Views northwards from Whaddon Hall across the eastern part of the area to an eye-catcher at Shenley Dens Farm may have been historically significant.

Designations

CWS – 1 No.

LCA 4.5 Grove Farm Shallow Valley (LCT 4)



Looking west over arable fields from the Stratford Road.



Distinctive straight alignment of Stratford Road, looking towards Whaddon.

LCA 4.5 Grove Farm Shallow Valley (LCT 4)

Summary of Condition/Sensitivity Analysis

Condition	Moderate
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Visual detractors:	Few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Poor
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Weak

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

Guidelines **Conserve and Enhance**

Condition

Overall the condition of the landscape is considered to be moderate. The area, which is sparsely settled, covers a wide shallow valley which is unsettled and retains its intrinsic rural character. The pattern of elements is coherent. There are few visual detractors. Cultural integrity is poor as the area lacks historic buildings or archaeology. More positively, the historic field patterns survive and there is a significant relationship of the area to Whaddon. Ecological integrity is moderate due to suboptimal connectivity and the low incidence of designated sites and habitats of District significance. The overall functional integrity is weak.

Sensitivity

The area retains its local distinctiveness. Historic continuity is reflected in the lack of development and the open rural character. Sense of place is moderate supported by the landform which helps to contain views within the valley, whereas there are longer distance views from the upper valley slopes. The sense of openness is supported by the intermittent level of tree cover. Overall the area is considered to be of moderate sensitivity.



Beechampton Grove seen from Nash.

LCA 4.5 Grove Farm Shallow Valley (LCT 4)

Landscape Guidelines Conserve and Enhance

The landscape guidelines for Grove Farm Shallow Valley are as follows:

- Encourage the retention and strengthening of the historic hedgerow patterns with replanting.
- Enhance existing hedgerows with new tree planting
- Maintain the condition and extent of unimproved and semi-improved grassland wherever possible. Encourage good management practices.
- Promote traditional management techniques to maintain a wide diversity of habitats.
- Encourage the establishment of buffer strips of semi-natural vegetation between watercourses and arable fields.
- Encourage landowners to improve ecological diversity by maintaining varied land maintenance regimes to benefit landscape and habitats.
- Promote connectivity of habitats.
- Identify key views from publicly accessible locations and promote the management and enhancement of these viewpoints.



Loss of mature trees on the Whaddon Road in the south of the area.