

## Appendix 2

### Landscape Character Area Descriptions

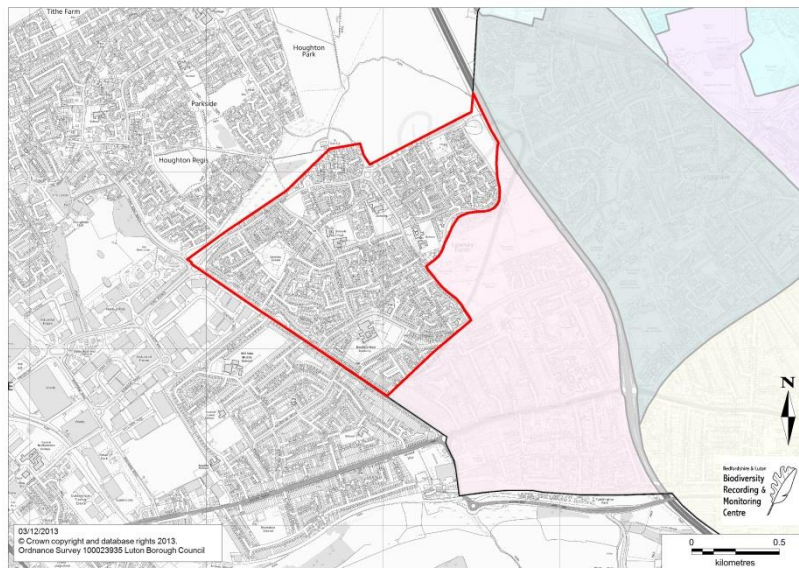
#### The Landscape Character Areas:

LCA 1a	Lewsey North	LCA 11	Vauxhall Way Green Corridor
LCA 1b	Lewsey South	LCA 12	Round Green to Hart Hill Dipslope
LCA 2a	Luton North Industrial	LCA 13	Wigmore Rural
LCA 2b	North Luton Rolling Fringe	LCA 14	Luton Airport
LCA 3	Leagrave	LCA 15	Dane Street Farm & Someries Farm
LCA 4a	Lea Valley Upper	LCA 16	Luton South Industrial
LCA 4b	Lea Valley Middle	LCA 17	Town Centre
LCA 4c	Lea Valley Lower	LCA 18	High Town
LCA 5	Western Transit Corridor	LCA 19a	Dallow Downs Valley Side
LCA 6	Biscot	LCA 19b	Dallow Valley Side Urban
LCA 7	Chiltern Fringe	LCA 20	Town Centre Transition
LCA 8a	Bradgers Hill Corridor	LCA 21	Farley Hill Plateau
LCA 8b	Hart Hill	LCA 22	Stockwood Park
LCA 9a	Stopsley Common South	LCA 23	Stockwood Fringe
LCA 9b	Stopsley Common Mid		
LCA 9c	Stopsley Common North		
LCA 10a	Stopsley Centre		
LCA 10b	Stopsley East		
LCA 10c	Stopsley West		

#### Points to Note:

1. Although the whole of Luton has been categorised, several areas are highly urbanised and with little or none of the underlying landscape evident. Therefore it has not been possible to assess quality / condition in the majority, but the section has been left in the descriptions for consistency. No attempt has been made to specifically assess the quality of the urban environment.
2. The descriptions for areas 2a, 2b and 3 draw from the 2007 Chalk Arc Landscape Character Assessment, which is acknowledged as a primary source of information alongside field surveys.
3. The boundaries of the LCAs can be slightly arbitrary in urban areas where underlying landscape is barely evident, and wholly arbitrary where they are formed by administrative boundaries.
4. The Luton Townscape Study (LBC, 2012) has also been used to support survey work, particularly in the most urbanised areas, though it is noted that this assessment looks only at residential areas.

## Character Area 1a: Lewsey North



### Description and Characteristics

A wholly urban area, so difficult to define in landscape terms. The majority of the area is made up of relatively modern residential houses, generally 1960s and 1970s, with some more contemporary post-1980s development in the north-east part. Many streets have a quite open feel but with few trees. There are a reasonable number of green spaces (though several are school grounds) helping with the open feel. The land rises to the east and south.

The area is bounded to the north by a wedge of green space, with residential development in Houghton Regis immediately to the north of this, and more open countryside stretching out to Chalton Cross Farm. Within the wedge of greenspace there are some areas of quite dense trees. The boundary to the west/south-west is Poynters Road, with Houghton Regis beyond. The M1 forms the eastern boundary, and is largely elevated and impenetrable, though there is an underpass at the northern end connecting the green corridor in this area with green space in Leagrave (LCA 3). The M1 is moderately well screened in terms of noise and visibility of vehicles, though taller lorries are visible. Lewsey Park forms part of the southern boundary, which runs along the top of the moderate chalk hill/plateau, and Leagrave High Street forms the remainder.

Ravenhill Way is a relatively long and winding road that offers height and opportunities for views across town and also south to Blows downs.

Views across the green wedge and more open countryside to the north are severely interrupted by pylons.

**View along northern edge**

**View North towards Chalton Cross Farm**



### Analysis

#### **Quality/Condition**

Difficult to assess due to almost wholly urban nature of the area.

Tranquility is generally moderate.

#### **Sensitivity**

High. The area is particularly sensitive to any change to the green corridor/open countryside to the north – it is noted that road and other development is due to take place here as it is completely covered within a 'Strategic Allocation' area in the Central Bedfordshire Draft Development Strategy.

### Issues

There is a lack of accessible greenspace within the area.

Any development to the north will effectively land-lock this area, putting increasing pressure on existing greenspaces and making it feel more urban.

### Opportunities

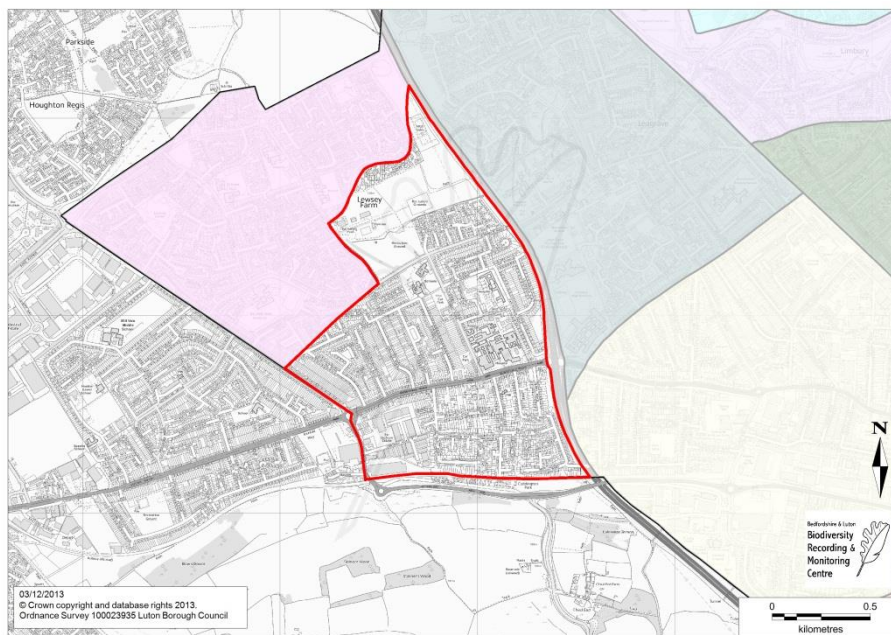
The green wedge to the north and open countryside do provide a gateway to the countryside which appears to be currently under-used. Enhancement/more active management of this area would encourage greater use, engaging people with the countryside nearby. Although relatively flat and featureless it would still be of value. Given the Central Bedfordshire Strategic Allocation, the need will be to ensure green space is well designed, links together as part of a network linking out to the wider countryside. Alongside development, the area of open countryside to the north could be enhanced through tree planting, creation of access infrastructure, waterbodies and other features. Any major road development should take account of the need for permeability and access to the countryside. Any masterplanning must take account of these issues.

There is also an opportunity to open up the area around the 'reservoir' in the green corridor in the north-east of this area, close to the M1. It is currently fenced with incongruous palisade fencing, but appears to hold little/no water and therefore pose no greater safety risk than other green spaces.

### Constraints

The chief constraint is the wholly urban nature of this area, alongside the M1.

### **Character Area 1b: Lewsey South**



### Description and Characteristics

Another largely urban area, bounded by the M1 in the east (largely raised and with only a few underpasses (for major roads), LCA 1a to the north, and the route of the guided busway (often on a raised embankment) to the south. The western boundary is the administrative boundary with Central Bedfordshire, with the urban area of Houghton Regis immediately adjacent.

Lewsey Park forms much of the northern part of this area, and is a key landscape feature with its steep chalk valley side, wide open spaces, parkland trees, a stream valley with willows (evidence of the older landscape of Lewsey Farm) and high ground along its north/east edge, providing an attractive area also popular recreationally. The high ground offers panoramic views across Luton (with high rise flats in Leagrave in the middle ground), Dallow Downs and to the south, to Blows Downs. The M1 is also visible and audible from here.

The foot of Blows Downs, a steep chalk valley side, is just to the south of this area, beyond the guided busway embankment (with trees and scrub) and the Hatters Way road, a busy single carriageway largely cut into the landscape. Blows Downs are visible from several locations within the area. The urban edge (actually in Central Bedfordshire) extends right up to the foot of the steep

valley side. The Downs are largely open but with a low tree/scrubline and chalk scars, and form an attractive backdrop to the area.

This area is also predominantly residential (including the ward of Challney as well as part of Lewsey), but there are also more office and industrial buildings, the large site of the Luton and Dunstable Hospital buildings and the busy dual carriageway Dunstable Road. The area undulates beyond Lewsey Park, though the majority is relatively low-lying. It does rise up again to the south of Lewsey Park, notable when travelling south along Lewsey Road.

The M1 is also evident where it crosses over Legrave High Street, but it is screened and 'ground level' road noise generally drowns out its audible impact.

**View over area from Blows Downs**



**View west towards high rise flats in Legrave**



**Lewsey Park**



**View to Blows Downs**



## Analysis

### **Quality/Condition**

Not possible to assess due to urban nature of the area, though Lewsey Park is a well-managed landscape (but with some buildings).

Tranquility is generally low.

## **Sensitivity**

Generally low/moderate, with the exception of Lewsey Park (and the green corridor to the north of it) is the key sensitivity.

## Issues

The M1 is a visual and in places audible feature.

Dunstable Road is very busy and noisy.

## Opportunities

Lewsey Park is of sufficient landscape quality to be considered for local landscape designation.

The green corridor north of Lewsey Park offers an opportunity for people to travel through the landscape to the open countryside.

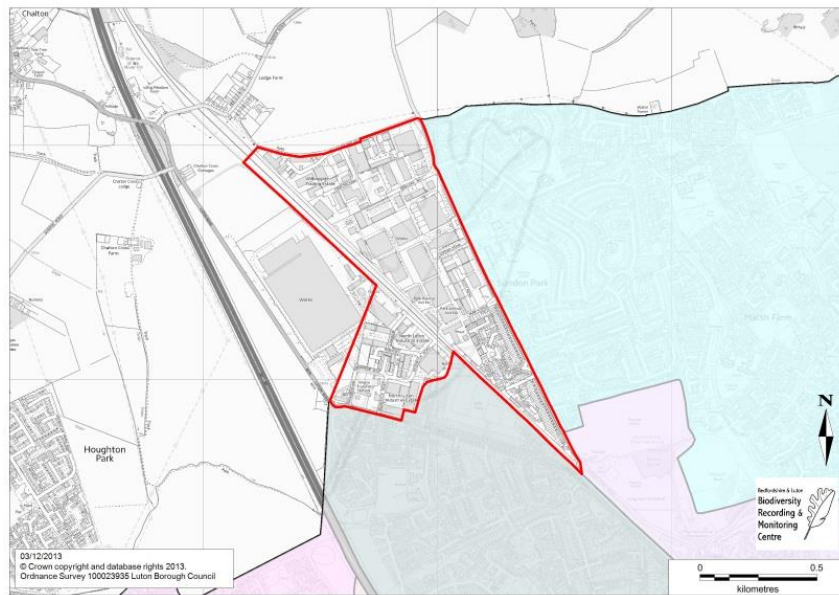
There are opportunities for interpreting the landscape at the top of Lewsey Park with its panoramic views, engaging people with the wider landscape.

The route of the Guided Busway represents an opportunity to develop a new landscape feature, with trees and scrub being retained alongside the linear feature. The route extends to the east into the town centre and to the west into Dunstable. The development of the green elements along the corridor should be carefully managed and monitored.

## Constraints

The urban nature of the area is a key constraint. Unfortunately there are no real opportunities to ameliorate the impact of the Dunstable Road, and the M1 is also a key constraint.

## Character Area 2a: North Luton Industrial



### Description and Characteristics

A largely flat and low-lying area dominated by industrial buildings, located on the northern edge of Luton. It is bounded to the west by the administrative boundary, with similar landscape and land use in this hinterland between the character area and the M1, although the main rail line forms part of this boundary, going on to bisect the LCA. The northern boundary is also the administrative boundary, but also the urban edge of the town. The boundary with the Leagrave LCA to the south marks a change to a more residential area, as does the boundary to the east (the Sundon Park Road).

Large and prominent, two-storey container buildings are regularly laid out in grids along access roads, with metal cladding being a predominant material. Car park areas are the other main feature.

There is very little by way of vegetation, with a few grass verges and poor quality structural planting.

Farmland to the north is low-lying chalky farmland. Hedgerows along Camford Way and Luton Road delineate and soften the boundary of the industrial estate, and views to the adjacent farmland are afforded over the top and through gaps in the hedgerows.



## Analysis

### **Quality/Condition**

Not possible to assess due to built-up nature of the area. Tranquillity is generally moderate, although the mainline railway passes through the area.

### **Sensitivity**

Low.

### Issues

Landscaping appears not to have been a consideration when planning and designing this area, so only major re-development would create significant opportunities.

The area to the north is identified as a Strategic Allocation by Central Bedfordshire's Draft Development Strategy.

### Opportunities:

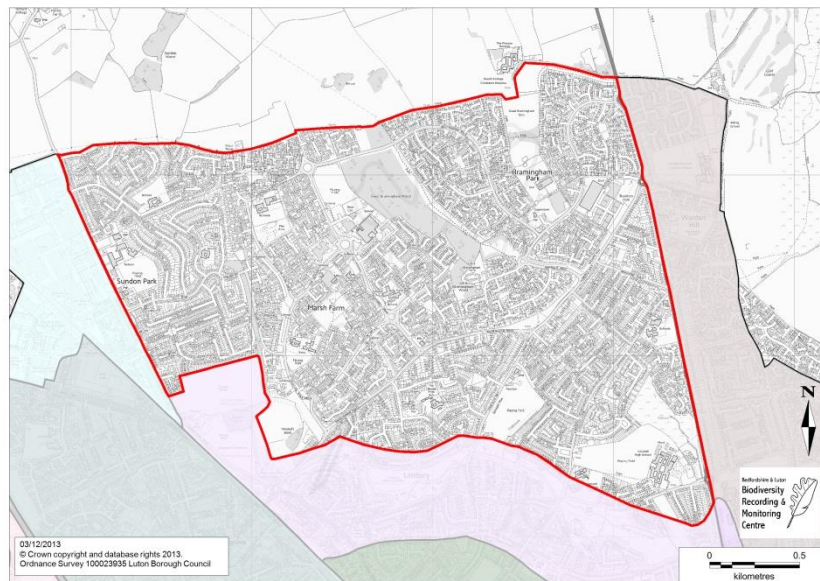
Notwithstanding the comments made above, it would be possible to make some small improvements by improving structural planting and street trees to enhance the area visually and create corridors. Maintaining either side of the railway as a green corridor would also be beneficial.

Any development to the north should look to enhance the urban-rural interface, especially as this is at a point where the railway enters Luton.

### Constraints

The size and nature of buildings/industrial estates, along with the railway line, are the key constraints.

## Character Area 2b: North Luton Rolling Fringe



### Description and Characteristics

This area is bounded to north by the urban edge (and administrative boundary with Central Bedfordshire), with Character Area 10B (Houghton Regis North Rolling Farmland) identified in the South Beds LCA (2007) to the north. To the east the major arterial A6 (New Bedford Road) forms the boundary, to the south the Upper Lea Valley (LCA4a) and to the west it is bounded by the more industrial townscape of LCA 2a.

The higher ground to the north slopes down towards the Lea valley to the south, but the area also has a 'rolling' feel when travelling east/west, with dry valleys running north to south and 'spinal' roads cut across these giving a rolling experience. A good example of this is Quantock Rise, and the experience is enhanced by the open streetscape including open green space either side.

Panoramic views, while disrupted by the built environment, can still be viewed across the town and beyond. Such locations include the top of Whitehorse Vale and Northwell Rise, and Bramingham Park. It is possible to see Dallow Downs and higher ground to the south.

The area is largely residential, with schools/colleges and a supermarket. At the bottom of Whitehorse Vale the wide open road, school and community centre buildings and open green areas help create a not unattractive and colourful landscape. Housing is generally mid/late 20<sup>th</sup> century with the western 'third' (Sundon Park) developed between and after WWII with a suburban feel and wide roads and pavements and occasional trees. The middle third (Marsh Farm) contains slightly more modern post-war developments, with wide roads, areas of open space tree planting. The eastern third (Bramingham) was the most recently developed within this area, with estates dating from the 1980s onwards. Again roads are wide with green areas and trees.

Birdsfoot Lane is typical of this area, wide and undulating with some green spaces and trees, offering occasional views to the wider landscape including across to Warden and Galley Hills and Bradgers

Hill. Icknield Way leading to Bramingham Road forms a windy spinal route with a reasonable green corridor, hedged or open amenity grassland. The Five Springs high rise flats are a major incongruous feature and dominate the west of the area, but the mature tree avenue (pre-dating the flats) immediately to the west does screen them to a degree from this direction, and is a key landscape feature in its own right (extending northwards as the 'Henge'). The landscape of Leagrave Park, including the important Scheduled Monument of Wauluds Bank, helps partially screen the flats to the south.

There is a good spread of varied greenspaces, with some of a significant size. Bramingham Park is a large open space, more formal in the southern half and considerably less formal looking at its northern end with longer grass, occasional parkland trees and a more natural feel. A green corridor extends to east where it meets Bramingham Lane, which is the boundary between the urban edge and open countryside. Keech Hospice buildings (just outside the area) are incongruous, otherwise the green corridor provides a good interface with the adjacent countryside, softening the boundary, with a laid hedgerow and trees, extending to the east beyond A6. Views from the southern section of Bramingham Park are high quality and panoramic, with good views east to Warden and Galley Hills but also to the south and west across the town and to the wider landscape.

Bramingham Wood is a significant and important landscape feature, occupying a valley ridge that slopes down from the urban edge south. It is visible from many locations in the area, providing an attractive wooded backdrop. A school playing field to the west buffers this important woodland.

In the south-east of the area Stony Hill offers panoramic views across the town to the north-east, south, south-east, south west with good views across to Warden Hill in particular (though views to south obscured in many places by palisade fencing). Linked to Stony Hill, Cowslip Meadow/The Riddy, a remnant meadow, is open in nature with reedbeds, small areas of scrub, pools and springs draining into the Lea. It offers an oasis of tranquillity screened from A6 by line of trees – a little incongruous with the open nature of the site, but an effective screen. Some housing, school buildings and mast visible but the Meadow itself has narrow informal paths and no infrastructure so feels quite 'wild'. Adjacent housing to north and west is very tight to the site boundary and detracts to a degree.

The A6 north of Cowslip Meadow rises steadily to the aptly named Hillcrest Avenue and Lancaster Avenue, then levels out before dropping back down a little. Although busy it is a wide and often tree-lined road with large properties and green spaces bounding it.

**Bramingham Wood viewed from east and north-west**



**Views east from Bramingham Park – from south and north**



**Cowslip Meadow**



**Five Springs flats and Beech Avenue**



**View from northern fringe (Hampshire Way)    Quantock Rise**



Analysis

**Quality/Condition:**

Moderate tranquillity, slightly lower to west as nearing busier roads, train line.

**Sensitivity**

The northern edge, particularly where gaps provide views and access to the wider countryside is an area of high sensitivity to change, otherwise low.

## Issues

The identification of a Strategic Allocation in the Central Bedfordshire Draft Development Strategy that covers the entirety of the area immediately to the north is a major issue. High quality masterplanning of this area will be critical in ensuring that the landscape impact of development is minimised. Potential issues with this include the impact on the rural-urban interface, impact on views, impact on access and isolating greenspaces such as Bramingham Park that currently join with open countryside.

## Opportunities

The proposed development to the north does provide an opportunity to create an improved urban-rural interface, albeit at the expense of significant areas of land that has landscape value – the current urban edge is generally of poor landscape quality with few attempts to soften its impact (and also suffers from fly-tipping). The development area will need to include significant areas of greenspace and connecting routes, so the landscape value of these should be maximised.

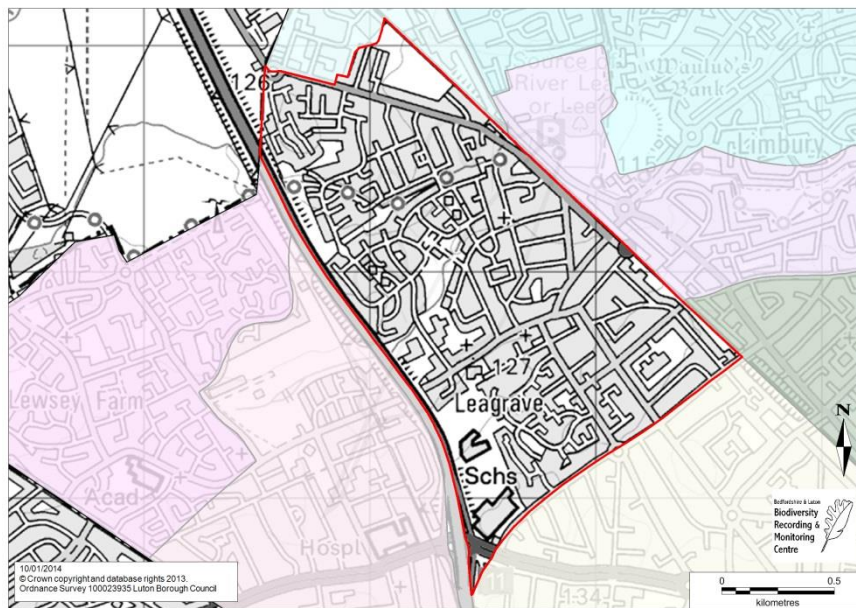
Opportunities to create linking green corridors out of Luton, at the northern end of Bramingham Park and north of Bramingham Wood should be taken. At the latter, there is a small field (White Horse Vale green space) adjacent to the Wood, separated only by the road (Whitehorse Vale), which provides a direct link to the urban edge and wider countryside beyond. This site would benefit from improved management and hedge/tree planting to create a virtually continuous link to the wider countryside. Any such enhancements should, though, be carried out sensitively, taking account of existing value of the more open areas. The route of the Thedeway (ancient route), running along the northern edge, should be preserved as a green corridor within any development.

Bramingham Park and Bramingham Wood are of sufficient prominence and landscape quality to merit consideration for local landscape designation. Cowslip Meadow and Stony Hill could also be considered as part of a wider area of the Lea Valley (to help establish stronger connectivity).

## Constraints

The Strategic Allocation area noted above is also a significant constraint, as is the largely urban nature of the rest of the area.

### Character Area 3: Leagrave



#### Description and Characteristics

A mostly residential area, bounded to the east by Toddington Road and adjacent railway, and in the west by the M1. To the south the boundary is the Stoneygate Road. A largely flat and low-lying area with some undulation, a stream runs through the north and another through the middle of the area (these tributaries of the Lea are lost to view at or before they reach the railway line). Housing is largely post-war suburbs, with a cluster of high rise flats in the north-west dominating views. Streets are generally quite wide, with open areas. At the northern end the land is slightly higher and there is a small area of interface with a more open area, where there is a small greenspace and old hedgerow, and the M1 visible beyond.

The railway is visible (and audible) in places, but in others it is screened by conifer hedge or fencing. To the north it is subsumed into the industrial area (LCA 2a).

There are a reasonable amount of green and open areas, though some of these are school grounds so not accessible. The greater concentration of accessible green spaces is to the east, focused on the stream valleys. Some, such as green spaces adjacent to Mayne Road, make good use of the stream valley landscape and furniture such as the 'trim trail' is of a sympathetic wooden design. Others, such as those near Brickley Road, are more urban, open and barren (and dominated by high rise flats). The stream does have a 'chalk stream feel' to it, and the banks are well managed with longer vegetation at the stream edge, grading to shorter vegetation. Bridges are generally ugly grey metal/concrete constructions, and a long section of the stream is overgrown with trees which are over mature and dominate narrow green wedge of stream corridor. This stream also links with greenspace to the west, adjacent to the M1, where an underpass does provide a narrow (in landscape terms) link to green spaces to the west (LCA 1a).

It is possible to see the higher ground of Lewsey Park to the west in places, and from high ground to the north of Dunstable Road (e.g. Stoneygate Rd) provides views across to Dallow Downs.

## Analysis

### **Quality/Condition**

Wholly urban area so not possible to assess landscape quality/condition. Moderate tranquillity but drops to low to the west as approach M1. The northern part of the M1 is elevated with acoustic fencing, but lorries and signage are visible.

### **Sensitivity**

Generally low, with the interface with greenspace at the northern point an area of moderate sensitivity.

### Issues

Potential development to the north, including the Woodside link, would completely cut the northern end of this area off.

### Opportunities

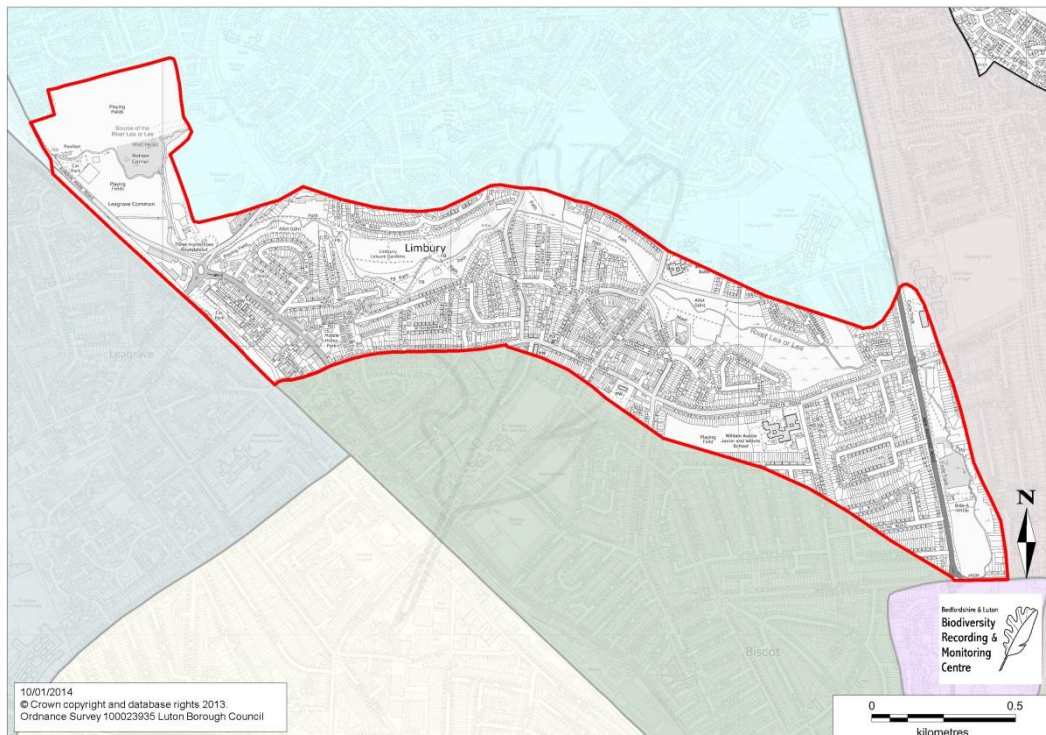
Retain the green edge to the north.

There is also an opportunity to make more of the landscape value of the streams, linking them with adjacent green spaces, managing for wildlife to give a naturalised feel. Opportunities should be taken to create a more natural stream profile, and to bring back to the surface where culverted.

### Constraints

The M1 and the railway are the key constraints, alongside the generally urban nature of the area.

## Character Area 4a: Lea Valley Upper



### Description and Characteristics

A low-lying relatively linear area following the shallow valley of the River Lea. It is bounded by the generally higher ground of LCA 2b to the north, the railway to the west and the higher ground of LCA 7 to the east. A largely residential area with some industry, but still retaining an almost continuous green corridor either side of the river, which is generally between one and three metres wide. The area extends from Leagrave Park in the west to Barnfield College and the A6 in the east – despite being severed by the New Bedford Road the valley feel remains as the river turns to flow south. At the southern end the river is culverted underground (where it crosses the A6 again).

Residential areas are mainly pre-/inter-war, with more modern development at the eastern end. Despite residential development, the influence of the valley is still evident beyond the green corridor, for example Neville road slopes gently down to the river and up again. The western end of the area is busier and less tranquil.

While views are generally more restricted, as would be expected in the bottom of a river valley, the higher ground in Leagrave Park does offer panoramic views, and in the east of the area views from residential streets perpendicular to New Bedford Road (such as Fountain Road) across the Lea valley to Bradgers Hill give the impression of a strong green wooded corridor. Rosslyn Crescent also provides good views out over part of the valley.

High rises dominate the landscape at the northern part of Leagrave Park, but are rarely visible beyond this site due to the sloping landform.

The interlinked corridor of green spaces adjacent to the Lea are a key landscape feature, from the source at Leagrave Park through green spaces with meadow and scrub habitats, and surfaced access

routes providing access. The area to the east of the A6 includes a mix of scrub, woodland and more open areas, plus the Bide-a-While Park, a designed green space adjacent to the road. At various points the valley has an almost remote and tranquil feel, with vegetation creating a screen from urban development and sound.

Despite some modification the river retains a natural feel along much of its length through the area, with meanders and some riffles and pools. However, in places vegetation clogs the channel, slowing the flow and causing siltation. There are also areas of thick vegetation on the bankside, hiding the river from view in places.

While some bridges are urban-looking and incongruous, others are more attractive. There are also concrete structures such as culverts at various locations, with large, unattractive culverts where the river is pushed underground near Barnfield College to cross the A6.

**Five Springs Flats (from Legrave Park), partly screened**



**Limbury Meads**



### View east from A6 towards Bradgers Hill



### Analysis

#### **Quality/Condition**

The green corridor running through the area is largely in a good condition, well managed and with good variety. There are sections of the river and adjacent banks that require intervention to restore flows, clean the bed and open up views of the river.

Tranquility is generally moderate to high, with small areas of low tranquillity where roads intersect, particularly the A6 and Bramingham Road.

#### **Sensitivity**

High. The whole corridor is highly sensitive to change, as it is relatively narrow and enclosed.

### Issues

Relatively few issues in landscape terms, though general awareness and appreciation of the river are low.

### Opportunities

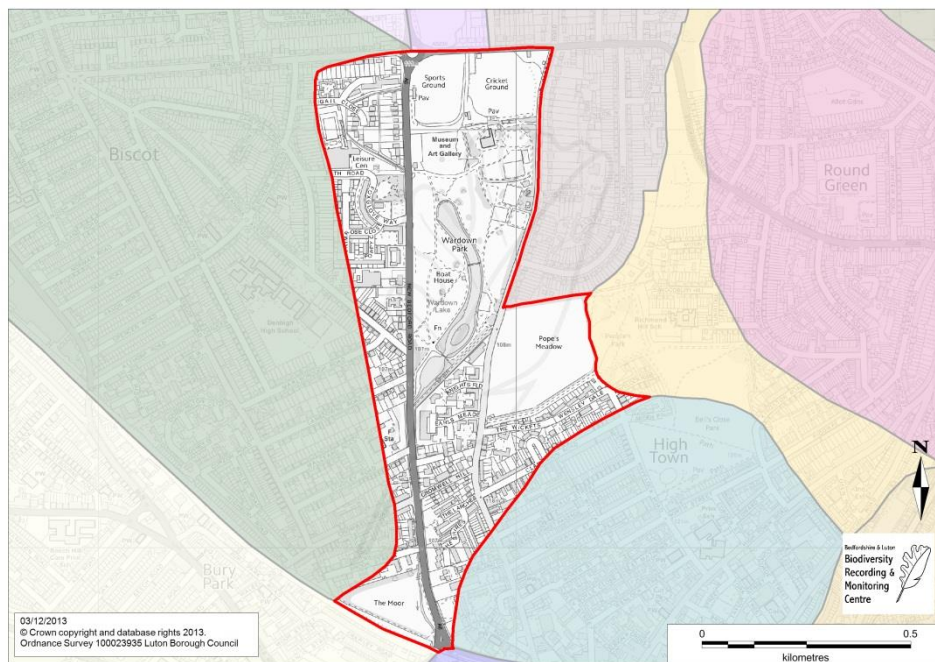
The quality of the connecting corridor merits consideration for local landscape designation.

Further strengthening of the corridor would help protect and enhance the area. Creating gateway features where roads cross would help link green spaces visually and raise awareness that the 'stream' being crossed is actually the Lea. Managing rank vegetation within and adjacent to the channel would open up views of the river and improve its form. Some bank lowering and re-naturalising of the channel would enhance it further. Removal of incongruous structures, including bridges and concrete culverts (replacing with more sympathetic designs) would make a real difference visually.

### Constraints

The urban area generally restricts any expansion of the green corridor.

## Character Area 4b: Lea Valley Middle



### Description and Characteristics

This area is clearly part of a river valley, with the Lea running north to south, but is also dominated by the A6 New Bedford Road running parallel. The northern boundary (largely with LCA 4a) is where Stockingstone Road and Montrose Avenue bisect the A6 at the northern end of Wardown Park. The land rises more significantly to the east than to the west, running up towards the Bradgers Hill corridor (LCA 8a). The open space of the Moor, with tree avenues, forms the southern boundary – the actual boundary is the railway embankment.

The river itself re-emerges from a culvert on the western side of the A6 and is visible almost to town centre, with the southern boundary of this area being close to the point where Lea is culverted underground. Parallel to the main channel and road is a less attractive, rectangular concrete 'overflow' type channel to the east which feeds and flows out of the lake in Wardown Park.

Green spaces are a key feature of this area, with Wardown Park, People's Park and the Moor. At the Moor, although quite straight, the Lea is relatively natural looking with riffles and pools and natural looking, well managed banks.

Wardown Park includes a moderately large area of formal park with a large ornamental lake (with bridges), play area, attractive buildings (boathouse and pavilion), trees, planted beds, benches and formal surfaced paths. Fences and boundaries are well maintained. To the north it slopes upwards and has more of a 'parkland' feel, and includes large old trees, the Museum building, tennis courts, car parks and putting green. Beyond this is an open sports pitch with pavilion building, and a cricket pitch largely surrounded by tall beech hedges or high wall/fence. It is a very popular park.

Much of the eastern side is green space, while to the west it is more residential. Residential areas are generally inter- or post-war, with wide streets and large front gardens.

The area does not offer much by way of views, with the exception of the top of Pope's Meadow which has some elevation and looks out westwards across the town. Wardown Park contains attractive internal vistas.

Although a significant detractor due to traffic and noise, New Bedford Road is generally quite attractive, being wide with mature tree avenues.

### The Moor



River Lea at The Moor

The Moor – Railway Embankment to rear



New Bedford Road

Wardown Park



### Wardown Park Lake – Popes Meadow in Background



#### Analysis

##### **Quality/Condition**

Quality is generally high, with Wardown Park having a high level of design and management, and the Moor and Popes Meadow both being relatively attractive green spaces.

Tranquility is generally moderate to low, especially close to roads.

##### **Sensitivity**

Moderate. The parks in general are enclosed on all sides and the area would be highly sensitive to change.

#### Issues

Roads are generally detractors, especially New Bedford Road, due to levels of traffic. The railway at the southern end of the Moor is relatively well screened.

#### Opportunities

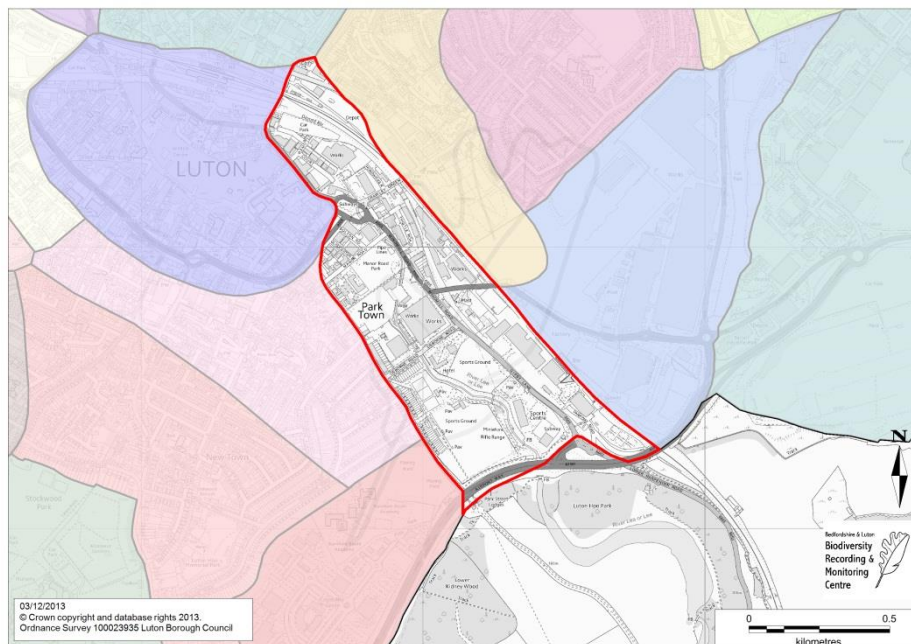
It would be beneficial to bring the river back to the surface where it currently runs underground, though opportunities are extremely limited and would require significant investment.

A minor improvement could be achieved by re-siting the recycling bins adjacent to Pope's Meadow so that they do not obstruct sight lines between this site and Wardown Park.

#### Constraints

All three parks are constrained by urban development around them.

## Character Area 4c: Lea Valley Lower



A flatter area to the south of the town, the northern part is the former Power Court area currently being re-developed. To the south of this is the roundabout with the A505 where the River Lea re-emerges from being buried underground. Beyond an area of industrial/office type buildings the river flows through a more open area, surrounded by sports pitches and facilities of the Vauxhall Recreation Club, with a hotel in the north of this part. The river is largely invisible, though trees/scrub along its straight, heavily modified channel indicate its presence. It flows out of the area at its southern boundary, under the steeply embanked A1081 Airport Way (to re-emerge in the parkland of Luton Hoo).

Gipsey Lane runs through much of the area, with a retail park adjacent. The mainline railway line forms the eastern boundary (with LCAs 8b and 16), while rising ground to the chalk valley side forms the western boundary.

There is little by way of accessible green space, with the majority of the southern part being privately owned – the Manor Road Recreation Ground being the main exception. It includes a section of the river running along its eastern side, which although heavily modified is quite attractive and accessible.

There are good views west up to the chalk valley side, with its Victorian water tower and the Capability Green Business Park. To the east there are views up to Hart Hill (with its Victorian Water Tower). The A1081 Airport Way blocks all views of Luton Hoo to the south, with the exception of a small underpass at Park Street, where a tall hedge does extend at least a fragment of the parkland landscape into this area.



## Analysis

### **Quality/Condition**

Where it is possible to assess quality, it is generally moderate, with a range of detractors even in the least developed areas, including buildings, pylons, abandoned sports facilities etc. The river channel is heavily modified.

Tranquillity is generally low, although in the centre of the more open area there are quieter areas. The proximity of the airport means there are frequent audible interruptions alongside the noise from roads and trains.

### **Sensitivity**

Overall moderate, but the southern, more open part of the area is extremely sensitive to change. The loss of open space would completely change the landscape.

## Issues

Development pressure is high – land here is extremely valuable given the proximity to the M1 and airport.

The river is largely invisible and separated from its floodplain, which has been ‘lifted’ in part to enable sports facilities to be created.

The embankment of the A1081 completely severs this part of the landscape from Luton Hoo.

## Opportunities

Enough quality and importance in landscape terms in the southern part of the area remains to merit consideration for local landscape designation.

In the north the re-development of Power Court could create opportunities for bringing the river back to the surface and making a feature of it.

In the south there are significant opportunities to re-connect the river with its floodplain, create a more natural form and channel and create habitats such as meadows and wet woodland.

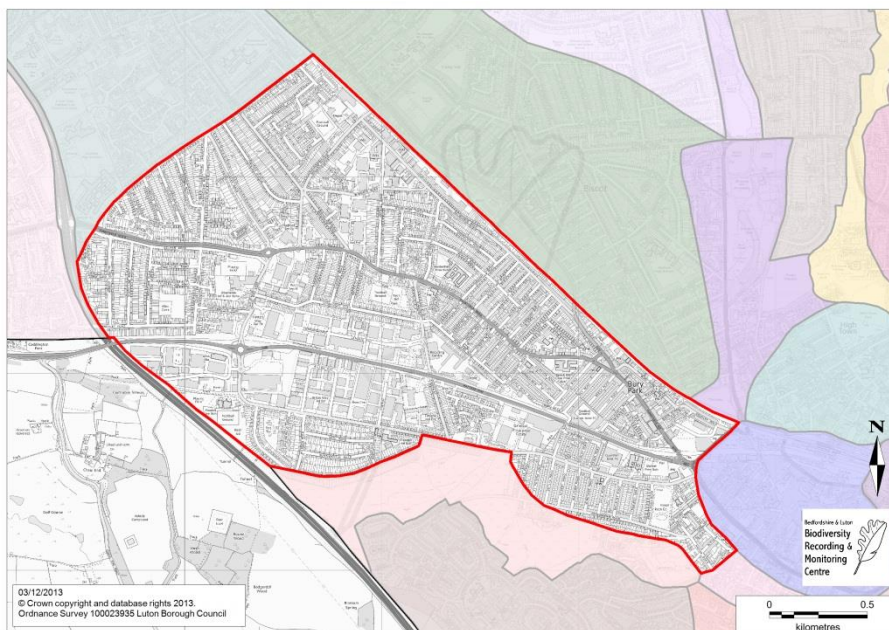
Access should also be provided within this area – significant development is planned nearby, and this is already an area of severe access deficit. Such access would connect people with the landscape

and the river, with opportunities to interpret this and the wider surrounding landscape. While there is no opportunity to re-connect with Luton Hoo in a landscape sense, there are opportunities to enhance access.

### Constraints

In addition to the general constraint of the built environment, the generally private nature of the southern part of the area currently restricts opportunities. The embankment of the A1081 Airport Way is a major constraint.

### **Character Area 5: Western Transit Corridor**



### Description and Characteristics

A highly developed and urban part of the town, with a mix of residential, retail and industrial areas, and with major roads running through in a roughly east-west direction; the A505 Hatters Way and the part-dualed Dunstable Road. In addition to this the Guided Busway route also runs through the area alongside the A505. There is a subtle gradient from the west towards the town centre.

It is bounded by the railway line to the north-east, Legrave (LCA 3) to the north, Dallow Downs (LCA 19a) to the south and the M1 to the west. The town centre is at its very eastern end. Industrial and retail areas are generally in the south and west adjacent to the main road routes, which are elevated in places, providing views across the town. There is very little landscaping within these areas, which have large expanses of car park in addition to large, rectangular buildings.

Residential areas are largely pre/inter-war with wide streets particularly to north and west, but closer to the town centre there are Victorian terraces with narrow streets to the south and east.

There is little green space. Dallow Downs, immediately to the south, is a prominent landscape feature, visible from various points in the area, particularly the higher points, although often through

gaps or partially obscured. Good views are possible, for example, from the Kingsway Road Recreation Ground.

The gasometer near the foot of Dallow Downs is also a prominent feature, especially when viewed from the Downs.

**Industrial/Retail Parks**



**Dunstable Road (western end – M1 overhead)**



**Guided Busway**



**Gasometer (viewed from Dallow Downs)**



## Analysis

### **Quality/Condition**

It is not possible to assess quality due to the highly urbanised nature of the area.

Tranquillity is generally low. The area around the dual carriageway section of Dunstable Road where it passes under the M1 is particularly noisy. Where the Guided Busway route drops down below street level there are actually areas of moderate tranquillity.

### **Sensitivity**

Generally low, but remaining greenspaces are sensitive to encroachment.

## Issues

General noise and built environment.

## Opportunities

The Guided Busway corridor has created a green corridor that should be maximised in terms of enhancing landscape and linking spaces and habitats. It also provides an access opportunity for people. The management and development of this green corridor should be monitored and enhanced where opportunities arise.

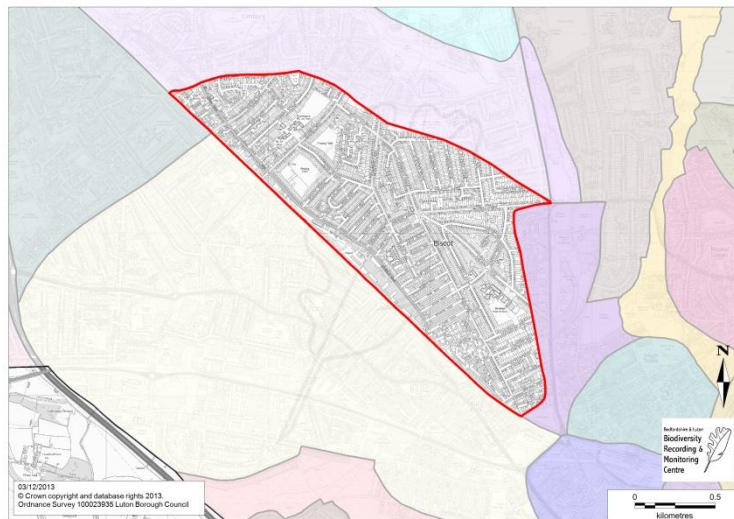
The Kingsway Road Recreation ground is one of the few reasonable sized open spaces with panoramic views across to Dallow Downs. However the greenspace itself is dominated by a football pitch and quite barren. Some landscaping and planting to naturalise this greenspace (without disrupting views) would be beneficial.

Car parks in retail and industrial parks could be enhanced through hedge and tree planting.

## Constraints

The built environment in general, including road corridors, is a constraint.

## Character Area 6: Biscot



### Description and Characteristics

An almost wholly urban area with little landscape character apparent. Bounded by the railway line to the south and west and the Upper Lea Valley Character Area to the north and east.

The streetscape is mixed, with some areas of contemporary development and inter-war development with fairly wide roads (the latter also having some small green areas and street trees) but also older areas of Victorian terraces with narrower streets and little by way of trees and green spaces.

### Analysis

#### **Quality/Condition**

Not possible to assess landscape quality.

Tranquillity is generally low, moderate in places.

#### **Sensitivity**

Low.

### Issues

No landscape specific issues.

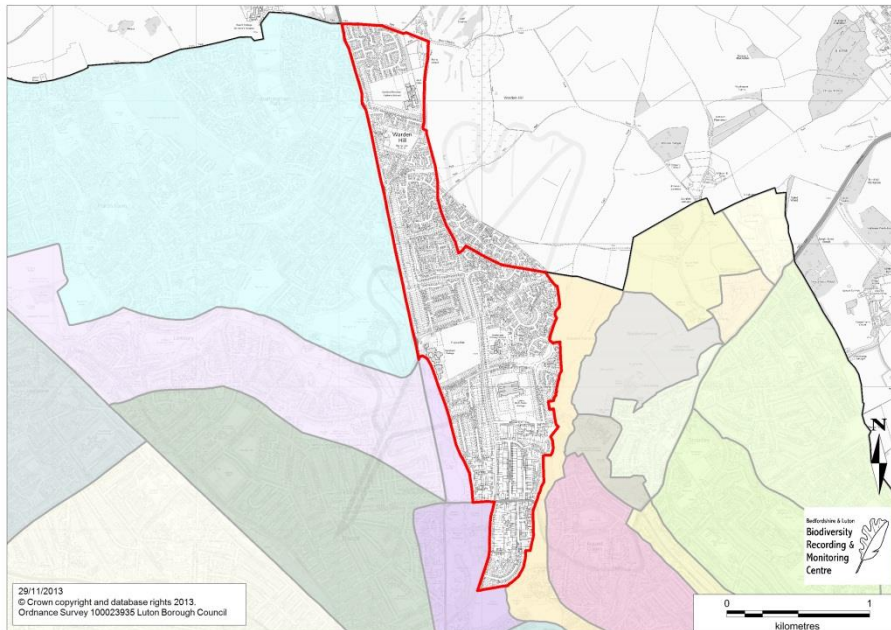
### Opportunities

No specific opportunities.

### Constraints

A largely urban area. Railway line is a specific constraint.

## Character Area 7: Chiltern Fringe



### Description & Characteristics:

An area of rolling topography in the north of the town, situated at the foot of the chalk valley side of Warden and Bradger's Hills and stretching south towards the centre of the town. It is bounded to the west by the New Bedford Road and to the north-east by the gently sloping land at the foot of Warden Hill, where there are ancient hedgerows and routeways forming the boundary. At the southern end the eastern boundary is more heavily influenced by direct proximity of Bradgers Hill, while to the west the Lea Valley corridor forms the boundary.

The influence of the chalk is evident in the rolling landform and where soils are visible at the urban/rural fringe.

Much of the area consists of contemporary developments, particularly on the urban / rural fringe, with relatively wide roads and curvilinear estate roads. Primary roads such as Cromer Way give a pleasant, undulating journey reflecting the landscape and offering views across it. There are also post-war suburbs with wide streets and larger front gardens, plus educational establishments with large green spaces around them. There are some significant green spaces including People's Park, with Popes Meadow, a large, open space with tree avenues, sloping up to a wooded ridge.

The area has good, if not immediately apparent, access to the countryside including Warden and Bradger's Hills via green lanes and other footpaths. Some of these old green lanes extend into the built-up environment, with accompanying ancient hedgerows, such as the Hexton Highway.

There are good views of the hills of the chalk valley side from many parts of the area, and also views south and west from higher points.

There is an area on the urban edge which is actually within the Central Bedfordshire administrative area, and has not been included within this LCA. However, it could be considered as part of this LCA as it is very similar in character to surrounding areas.

Road names reflect the landscape in this area, with Hillcrest Avenue and Hillview Crescent as well as Warden Hill Road (alongside the other Norfolk-themed names in this part of the area). Several roads frame views of Warden Hill.

**View from Stockingstone Road looking north along Wychwood Avenue**



Analysis:

**Quality/Condition:** Not applicable due to wholly urban nature. Urban / rural fringe areas are in moderate condition, with an inconsistent edge.

The built environment generally complements the landscape reasonably well, with few tall or incongruous buildings. There are some exceptions, such as flats at Arden Place immediately adjacent to, and at times seemingly within People's Park, with little regard to blending with the adjacent landscape. While the more modern developments are denser, the fact that there is still a gap between the urban edge and Warden and Bradger's Hills means that their setting is less impacted than elsewhere (e.g. Lewsey/Blows Downs). In some parts of the rural/urban fringe fencing has been erected as part of the original estate design, blocking views and access – in at least a couple of areas this has been knocked down, possibly to improve views and access. The New Bedford Road is the largest and busiest road, but is wide and tree-lined for much of its length, with houses well set back having large front gardens.

Few hedgerows extend into the urban area, but where they do they add visual and historical interest as well as ecological value.

Tranquillity is variable, but generally lower towards the west and the New Bedford Road, and higher at the rural/urban fringe.

**Sensitivity:** Low, except at the urban/rural fringe where it is high, and where the elevated wooded ridge provides a backdrop for the adjacent residential areas (e.g. Wardown Crescent, Stockingstone Road).

The sometimes elevated area, with views across town as well as towards Warden and Bradger's Hills and combination of wide curved streets and straighter roads with avenue trees gives a degree of distinctiveness and continuity, plus a 'sense of place' (though the latter is created as much by views outside the LCA rather than the area itself).

#### Issues:

With little possibility of further development in the urban area, the main issue within this zone would be if green spaces were developed, not only reducing greenspace in a town with an existing deficit, but also changing the nature of the area.

The real issue would be if development were to occur on the eastern boundary, as this would severely impact the setting of the chalk hills, disrupt or obliterate views and reduce the legibility of access to the countryside. Green spaces on the very fringe are also particularly vulnerable, and if lost will result in reduced permeability and a harder urban edge.

#### Opportunities:

There are real opportunities to conserve the hedgerows and ancient routes that exist on the very fringe of this area, and which extend into the built environment in places. While there is some interpretation of the adjacent landscape, there is further opportunity in this area to engage people with the wider landscape from within the town.

Gapping where hedgerows have been lost and further reinforcing the routes along the fringe, creating a wider, consistent green corridor with linked green spaces would be very beneficial. Improving viewpoints from the edge of the built environment could be achieved with little impact upon views in the opposite direction.

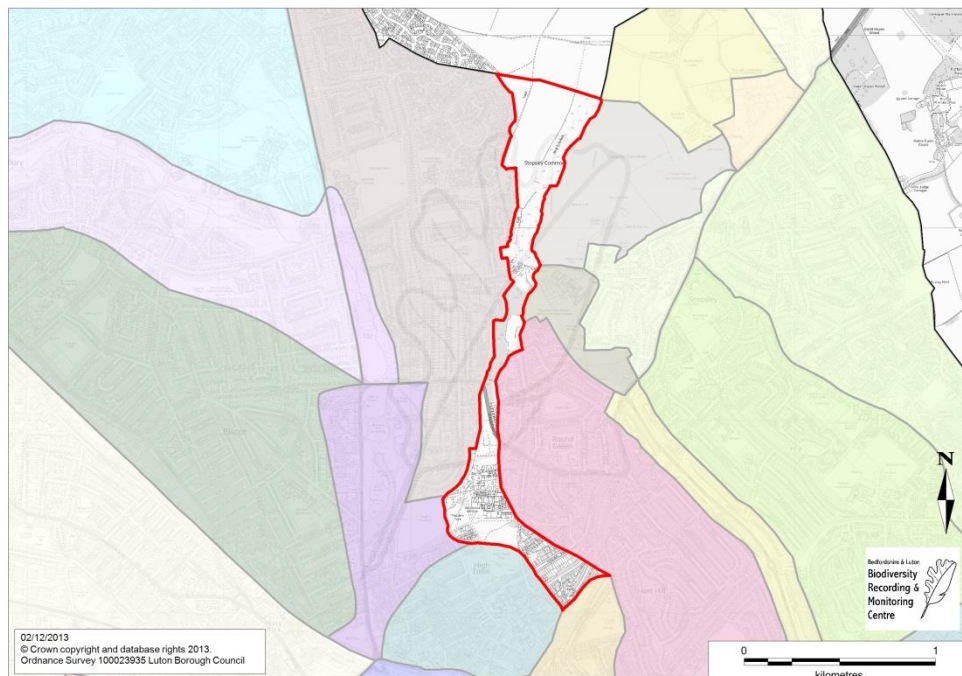
The greenspace at the eastern end of Weybourne Drive is also an opportunity for introducing people to the wider landscape of the chalk hills. It is an obvious corridor, with an old hedgerow leading out into the wider landscape (Birdsfoot Way Trail) but is largely neglected with rank vegetation and a rutted path. Enhanced management, improved access, planting and interpretation, with a greater emphasis on the Birdsfoot Way Trail, could all help create a mini 'gateway' to the Chiltern Hills.

The area close to the northern extremity, between Turnpike Drive and the golf club, could benefit from some opening up of thicker scrub areas and better integration with the wider landscape. It shows levels of use, particularly as a transit corridor, and being outside the AONB and Green Belt but important to the setting of Warden Hill this area is potentially worthy of protection through local landscape designation.

Constraints:

The built environment constrains opportunities to create green corridors or open up the landscape within the urban area.

**Character Area 8a: Bradgers Hill Corridor**



Description & Characteristics:

An elongated, steep chalk valley side, with significant woodland and scrub, running north-south into the town as a continuation of the chalk hills including Warden and Galley Hills. Relatively rural in nature at the northern end, this area becomes more urban towards the south, but the chalk valley side remains prominent. An area of very high landscape value, the northern part is covered by AONB designation.

It is bounded by the Chalk Fringe LCA to the east (LCA 7) and Stopsley Common (LCA 9) to the west, but also the urban areas of Round Green and High Town to the south and east. The escarpment-like western edge leads to a plateau on the eastern side. The setting of the rural part is generally well protected by a wide area of arable land between the hill and the urban edge, though this significantly narrows towards the south.

In the urban area it forms an important green corridor, with steep slopes making development difficult. It includes the upper, wooded area of People's Park, a highly accessible site. Estates and dwellings are nestled into it, providing them with an attractive wooded backdrop. It is crossed by roads in the urban area, most notably the Stockingstone Road, from which stunning panoramic views are available.

**Panoramic View from Stockingstone Road Leisure Gardens**



**View over Stockingstone Road Greenspace**

**Wooded backdrop to Stockingstone Road**



**Backdrop to residential area**

**View from foot of Bells Close Recreation Ground**



**Backdrop to Bushmead Road**

**Proximity of urban edge**



Analysis:

**Quality/Condition:** The rural section is largely in good condition, the urban area is in moderate condition (it was felt it was possible to assess condition in an urban area because of the prominence of the landscape feature).

The chalk valley side is generally well-buffered from the urban area until it nears and then bisects the urban edge. Woodland provides a strong sense of character, and highlights the chalk hill within the urban area. Although severed by Stockingstone Road it remains a strong landscape feature, and the opening created at this point of high elevation offers stunning views across much of the town.

The wooded ridge provides the backdrop for several housing estates before becoming more seriously denuded to the south of People's Park, within the more built-up part of High Town.

At this point the urban environment is of a generally low quality, with a mix of residential (Victorian and more modern) and industrial buildings, with the busy High Town and Hitchin Roads further bisecting it.

The ecological value of the wooded ridge is high, forming a green corridor utilised by a range of species. It also includes areas of chalk grassland, particularly at the northern end. Strip lynchets are visible in places and allude to ancient cultivation. They are made more visible where trees and scrub have been cleared to create chalk grassland, which also opens up views.

Accessibility is variable. In the rural section there is a good network of footpaths, although steep slopes must be climbed. The underlying chalk geology is often evident where paths are worn. In the urban section, while there is a good network of roads and pavements, some of the areas are inaccessible. Stopsley Common and People's Park provide good access opportunities.

Tranquillity is high in the north, in the more rural area, but decreases towards the south to a low point at the Hitchin Road.

**Sensitivity:** High, except at the southern end where it is low. Any loss of trees would have a significant impact.

The elevated, wooded ridge, with its strip lynchets and ancient routeways creates a distinctive landscape, with a strong sense of place.

#### Issues:

Both the urban and rural sections of this area are vulnerable. The rural section is vulnerable to further development encroaching upon the chalk valley side, particularly close to where it meets the urban area and there is currently only a narrow arable field and a small wedge of greenspace providing separation. While these may seem an attractive site to develop, it would significantly harm the setting of Bradger's Hill.

Within the urban area any further development could result in harm to and loss of trees, which would have a significant landscape impact, particularly in terms of continuity. The most vulnerable area is the plateau above.

#### Opportunities:

If sensitively managed, there are opportunities to clear further trees and scrub from Bradger's Hill, creating landscape, historic environment and ecological benefits. Further areas of chalk grassland as part of the wider mosaic would significantly enhance the ecological value, and if such clearance took place where strip lynchets occur then better visibility of these ancient cultivation terraces could be achieved, raising awareness of what can otherwise be obscure features. It could also result in new viewpoints in elevated positions, and potentially also improved access corridors. These would also create interpretation opportunities. Any such clearances would have to take into account potential impacts on the visual amenity of the wooded ridge, and also ensure that strong connectivity is achieved through woodland and scrub.

The arable land at the foot of Bradger's Hill could be turned back to chalk grassland, creating a strong buffer between the urban area and the chalk valley side.

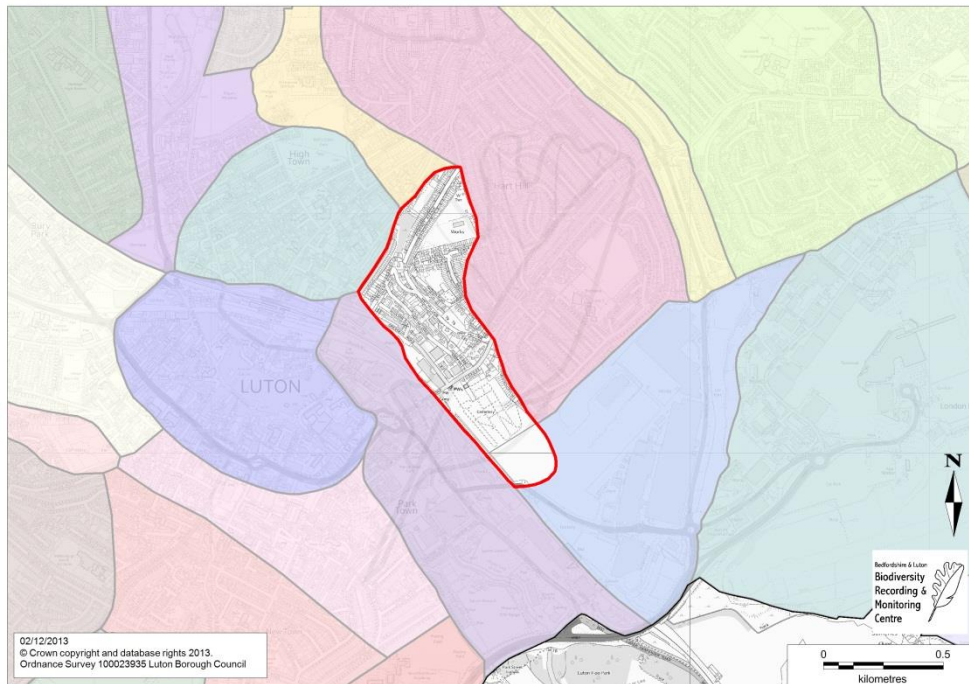
The Stockingstone Road greenspace is a real opportunity for interpreting the landscape. Although tranquillity is low, it offers a stunning vista from which panoramic views across much of Luton and beyond are visible. It gives a real sense of the size of the town and how it is nestled in the gap between chalk hills. Subtle and strategic location of benches and interpretation, combined with some lowering of the tree/scrub line (taking care not to expose sheltered properties), alongside other enhancements to make more of this space could bring real benefits.

The parts of the area of high landscape value outside of the AONB designation would make a strong candidate for local landscape designation and should be put forward for consideration.

#### Constraints:

The built environment, particularly at the southern end in High Town, creates a significant constraint to re-connect woodland and other habitats, and the landscape in general, with that in the Hart Hill area.

## Character Area 8b: Hart Hill



### Description & Characteristics:

A continuation of the elongated, steep chalk valley side of Bradger's Hill (8a), this area is much more urbanised. However, there are still significant areas of woodland and green spaces that help retain some of the identity of the chalk valley side, and the continued elevation provides a dominant and attractive landscape feature close to the town centre. Despite the proximity of housing (which is actually interspersed within areas of woodland), roads and industry, the area is largely visually intact with woodland appearing continuous from the Hitchin Road towards the more industrial land to the south. Other greenspaces contribute to the overall character area, both accessible and private. Near the southern end of this area, on the steep south-west facing valley side, the St Anne's Cemetery makes a positive contribution to the landscape, with hedges, tree avenues and open areas. Beyond this the hill continues a short distance before entering the more industrial area to the south and east, where the landscape is significantly modified. This small section of the landform is much more open.

The area is defined by the Hitchin Road at the north, dividing it from the Bradger's Hill area, and the railway and light industrial areas at the foot of the slope close to the town centre. The boundary to the north and east is defined by the top of the valley side. At the very top sits the Victorian Hart Hill Water Tower, a landmark feature visible from various locations across the town and across the Lea Valley from its 'twin' on Bailey Hill.

In various locations views across the town are visible, though often obscured or partially obscured by either trees or houses.

**Hart Hill in background, viewed from town centre**



**St Anne's Cemetery**

**Hitchin Road Spinney as a backdrop to Hartley Road**



Analysis:

**Quality/Condition:** The area is generally in a moderate condition, with some pockets in good condition (St Anne's Cemetery, some woodland) and others in poor condition (road intersections, southern extremity).

Housing is generally either Victorian terraces with narrow grid-like streets or post-war suburbs, more open and spacious. There is some residential development within wooded areas, providing an attractive setting but eroding the continuity and landscape quality. In addition to the busy Hitchin Road at the northern end, the area is also bisected by another busy road, the Crawley Green Road. The rail corridor at the foot of the valley side, other major roads nearby and the proximity of the airport all combine to produce generally low levels of tranquillity.

The ecological value of the wooded areas is relatively high, forming a green corridor utilised by a range of species. It is this connectivity that also creates the landscape integrity.

Roads, pavements and urban footpaths form the main access to this area, with the latter providing access through some of the wooded areas. There are some accessible greenspaces, but also other inaccessible ones (such as the area around the water tower). St Anne's Cemetery is accessible.

The area makes a big contribution to Luton's sense of place, with the name 'Hart Hill' widely used in the local area, the wooded valley side a visible landscape feature, particularly from parts of High

Town, the town centre and across the Lea valley. The distinctive water tower is visible on the skyline from many locations.

**Sensitivity:** High. Any loss of trees would have a significant impact on quality and continuity.

Issues:

This landscape is very vulnerable. It is an attractive landscape close to the town centre, which makes a big contribution to the setting of the town and its sense of place. However, it is unprotected by designation, and much of the tree stock is mature and requires management.

The southern end of the area is also vulnerable because the landscape has been modified previously by industrial use, and could be perceived as ripe for development.

Opportunities:

The main opportunity for this area is to consider the most scenically valuable areas for local landscape designation, offering them a degree of protection.

The areas of woodland should be positively managed to sustain them.

The area to the south of St Anne's Cemetery could be restored and planted to bring it back as a functional part of the landscape. Any development of the adjacent area should take this into account, protecting the setting of the Hill.

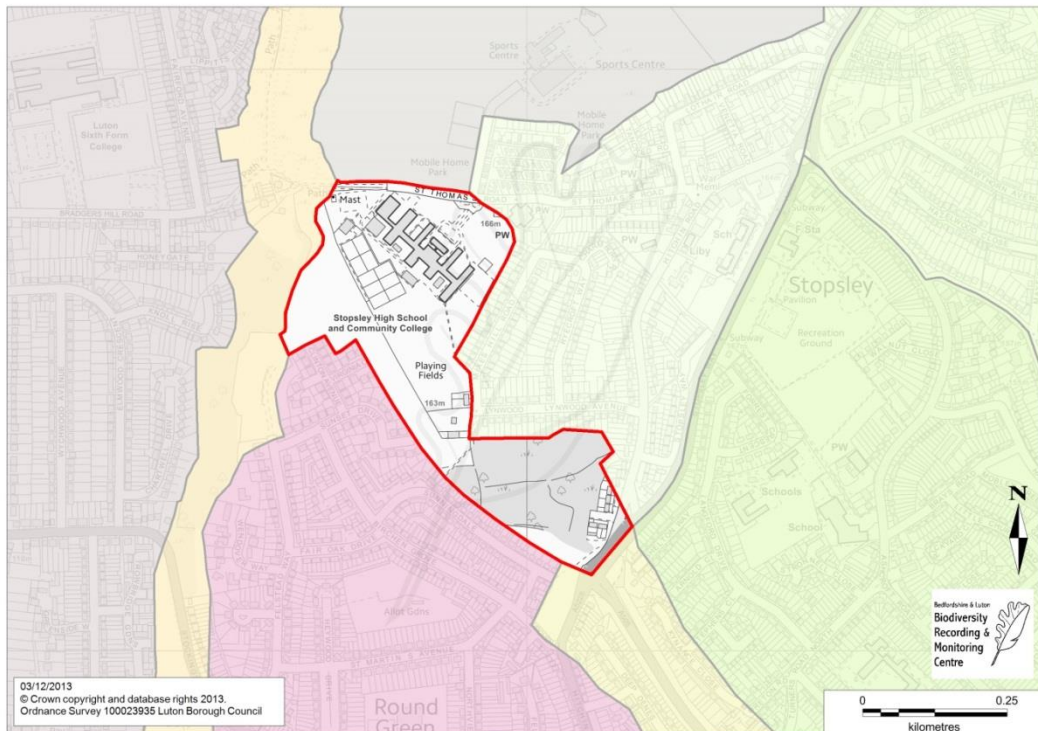
Sensitive redevelopment of any sites to the west would also help protect and enhance the setting of the Hill.

Opportunities to enhance the urban alleyways and paths through the wooded areas (potentially linking up to form a trail) also exist, improving opportunities for raising awareness and appreciation of the landscape.

Constraints:

The built environment creates a significant constraint to re-connect woodland areas, including those to the north in the Bradger's Hill area. Low urban quality and anti-social behaviour issues may restrict opportunities to create trails/interpretation.

## Character Area 9a: Stopsley Common South



### Description and Characteristics

A plateau area dominated by Stopsley High School in the north and Mixes Hill Wood in the south. It is divided from the rest of Stopsley Common by the school buildings and grounds, with Stopsley Common Mid (LCA 9b) immediately adjacent to the north by the tree-lined sunken lane of St Thomas' Road. To the west and south the area is bordered by the more built up LCA 12, and to the west it is bordered by Bradgers Hill (LCA8a) where the land drops significantly away.

An open green corridor of grassland with scrub stretches from the woodland and runs alongside the rear of the school, but despite the elevation views are limited, except at northern end. While not of the quality of other greenspaces nearby, and narrow in width, it is an important link.

Mixes Hill Wood includes some mature oak trees, especially at entrance, otherwise trees are of no great antiquity, but it is still a pleasant island of woodland. It is obviously important recreationally, with a surfaced path and other less formal ones.

Incongruous features include the school fence, a leylandi screen for a future phase of development that has not happened (there is even an overgrown road footprint), blocking views out over the town. Both Mixes Hill Wood and the adjacent green space have been impacted by development, including some ongoing at the time of survey.

### Area behind Stopsley School



Connecting Green Corridor

Development next to Mixes Hill Wood



### Analysis

#### **Quality/Condition**

Quality is moderate to high, with a lack of positive management apparent in the green corridor in particular. The school buildings and fence are detractors.

#### **Sensitivity**

High due to isolated nature of woodland and narrow width of green corridor.

### Issues

Proximity of development is hemming in and isolating this area.

A lack of positive management is apparent.

### Opportunities

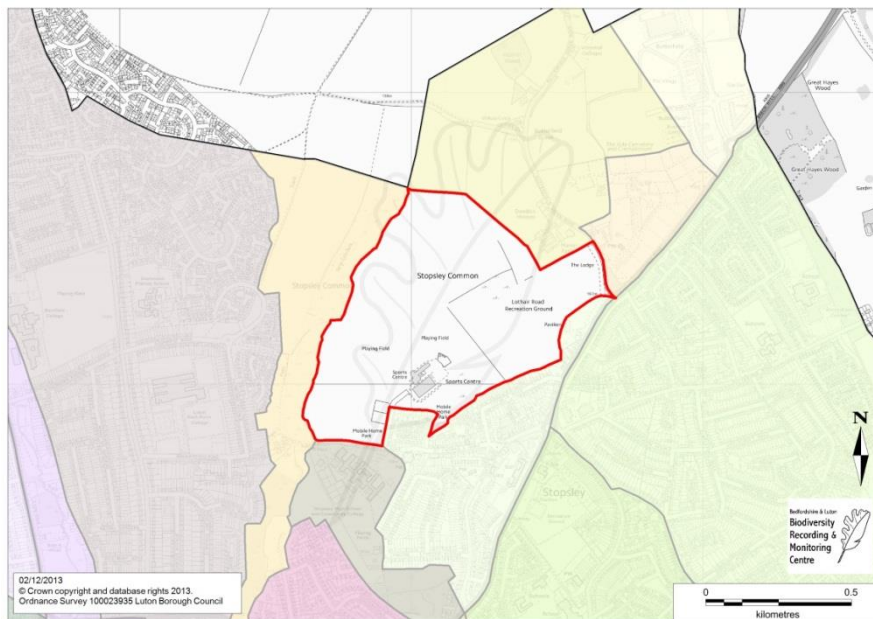
Protection and enhancement of this green corridor, keeping Mixes Hill Wood linked to nearby green infrastructure.

While not significant enough in isolation, this area could be considered for local landscape designation as part of the Bradgers Hill corridor.

### Constraints

The school site, with incongruous chain link fence, constrains opportunities in the area.

## Character Area 9b: Stopsley Common Mid



### Description and Characteristics

#### Clay with flint geology

An open plateau with extensive panoramic views towards Warden Hill and over the northern part of the town. With open grassland, recreational grassland (a visibly brighter green) and ancient hedgerows, the only built element, a sports centre building, had been earmarked for demolition at the time of survey. The clay with flint geology is evident, and crop marks and other features of interest relating to late pre-historic/Roman agrarian activity are present. There are also late iron age/early roman landscape enclosures and trackways. Lynchets and chalk pits (late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century) are visible adjacent to St Thomas' Road. Part of the area is SSSI, other parts are County or District Wildlife Sites.

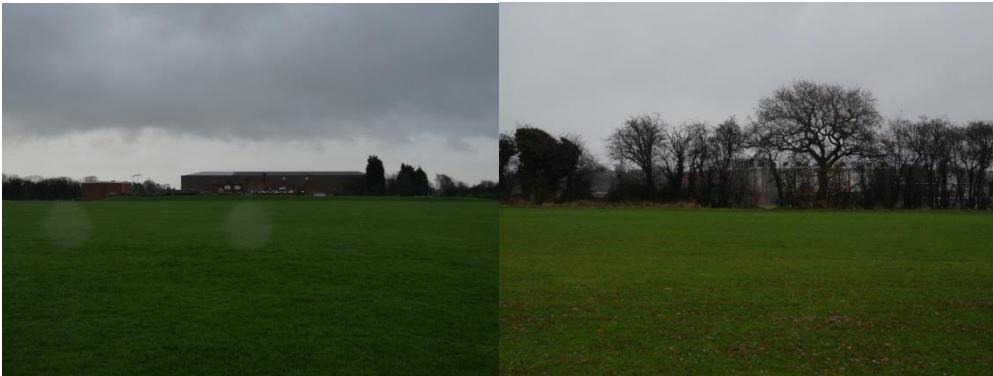
The area is bounded to the north-west by Bradgers Hill (LCA 8a), to the south by LCA 9a, and to the north by the Butterfield Green area (LCA 9c). An adjacent mobile home park is screened with Leylandi.

#### Views from and over Stopsley Common



**Old Sports Centre Building**

**Old Hedgerow (new sports centre in background)**



### Analysis

#### **Quality/Condition**

High. Grassland is well managed.

#### **Sensitivity**

High – a wide open landscape, highly sensitive to any vertical structures.

### Issues

The urban edge is of poor quality.

### Opportunities

The area is of sufficient landscape quality (similar to adjacent AONB) to be considered for local landscape designation.

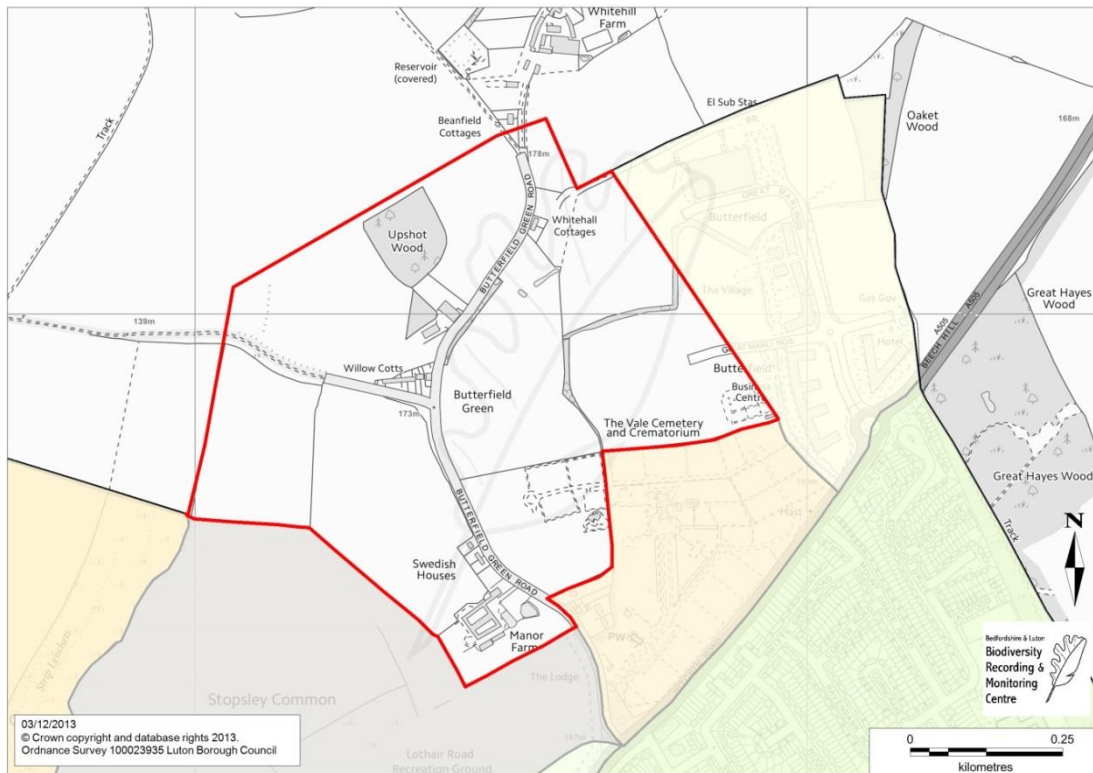
The old sports building is incongruous. It is understood it is due for demolition – this creates an opportunity to re-instate grassland sympathetically.

The old hedgerow would benefit from management, but this would open up views of the new sports/aquatics centre building to the wider area.

### Constraints

None.

## Character Area 9c: Stopsley Common North



### Description and Characteristics

Another open plateau area, but including a small area of woodland and farm buildings, as well as country lanes. The area includes Butterfield Green, which is the last of the original hamlets from which Luton formed and still includes the actual Green. There is more arable farming and the area becomes slightly more rolling. To the south is Stopsley Common (LCA 9b), to the south-east Stopsley cemetery (LCA 9d) and to the east Butterfield Green Industrial Park (9e).

### *Photos*

### Analysis

### **Quality/Condition**

High.

### **Sensitivity**

High, due to open nature and attractive low key features.

### Issues

Potential re-development of Butterfield Green Industrial Park would need to be delivered sensitively.

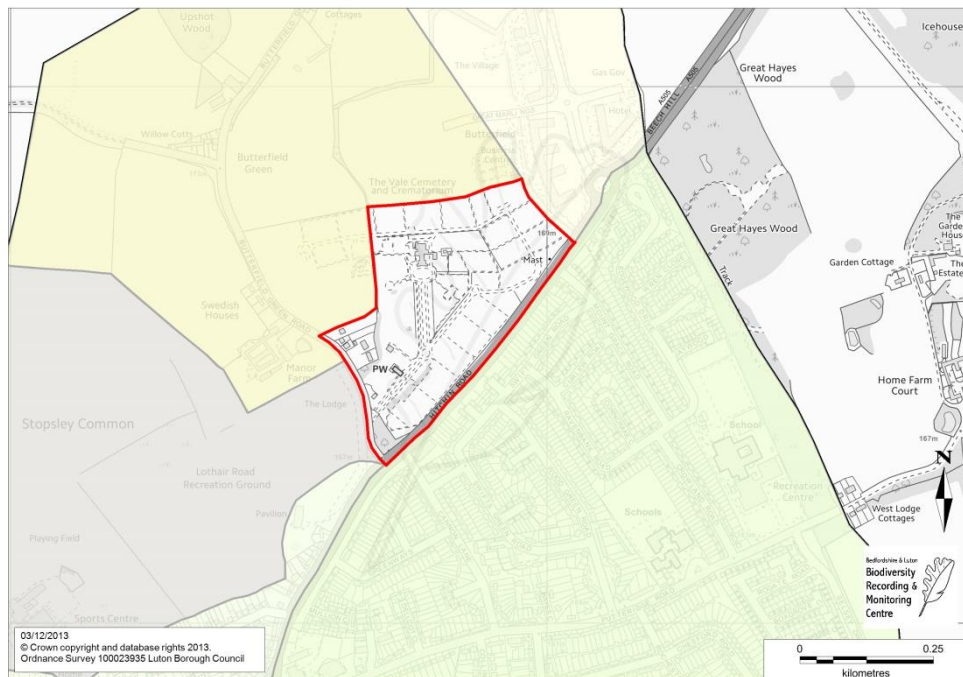
## Opportunities

Non-AONB parts should be considered as part of a wider area (Stopsley Common) for local landscape designation.

## Constraints

Cemetery to south.

## **Character Area 9d: The Vale Cemetery**



## Description and Characteristics

A typical, if large, cemetery – with a network of asphalt roads (including a main ‘circuit’) between open space with several hundreds of, if not thousands of gravestones. A variety of trees add to landscape value. Some buildings (including a crematorium) and car parking, the cemetery is surrounded by a high leylandi hedge, particularly alongside the A505 which forms the boundary along one side (with LCA 10b). To the north-east is Butterfield Green Business Park (LCA 9e), to the north is the wider countryside around Butterfield Green (LCA 9c) and to the west Stopsley Common (LCA 9b). This area significantly contrasts with all adjacent areas.



### Analysis

#### **Quality/Condition**

High – very well designed and managed. Trees are in good condition.

Tranquillity varies from moderate adjacent to the road to high on the northern edge.

#### **Sensitivity**

Low - the cemetery is well protected from external impacts by the surrounding hedge.

### Issues

The surrounding hedge is significant and incongruous in the landscape.

### Opportunities

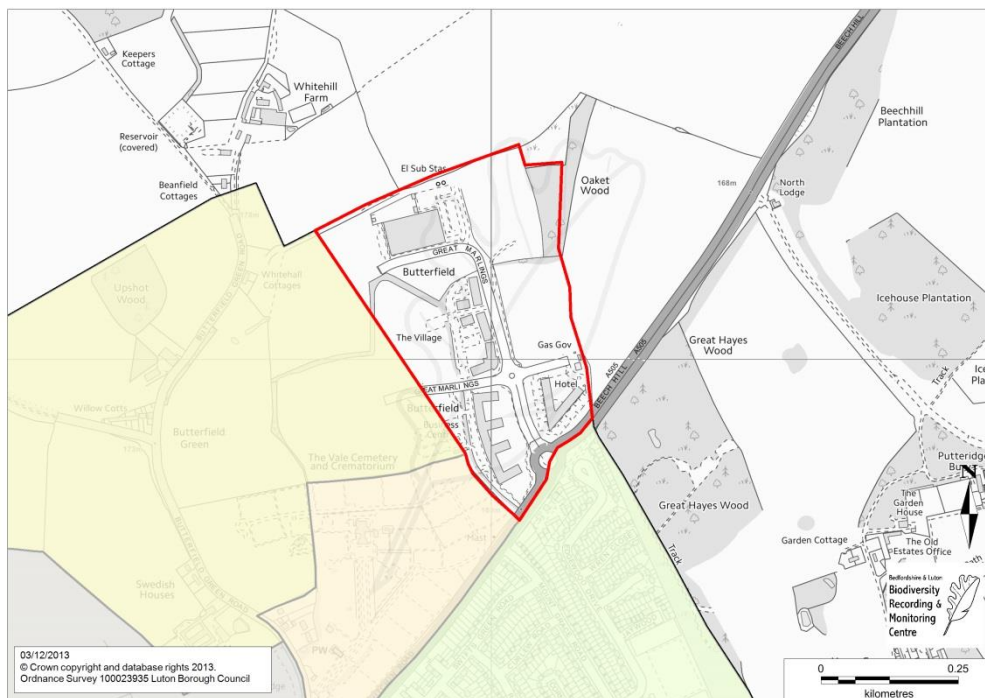
The removal of the hedge screen is not considered a realistic opportunity.

The trees in the cemetery should continue to be well managed.

### Constraints

The current footprint of the site is a constraint, but extension to adjacent areas would not be considered a landscape improvement.

## Character Area 9e: Butterfield Green Business Park



### Description and Characteristics

A modern business park with modern buildings of various styles, large open areas and views to rolling arable areas beyond. The area has a modern feel, with roads, flagpoles and car parks. It is in stark contrast with all adjacent areas, with some screening by trees particularly to the east. The area to the east is part of the Chilterns AONB.

To the north and east and west are open, rolling farmland (including LCA 9c). To the south-east is the (screened) Vale Cemetery (LCA9d) and to the south is the A505 (with residential area of LCA 10b beyond).



### Analysis

#### **Quality/Condition**

High – well managed spaces, modern buildings.

## Sensitivity

Low – an artificial landscape.

## Issues

Due to the poor performance this area could be re-developed – this would be likely to result in residential development.

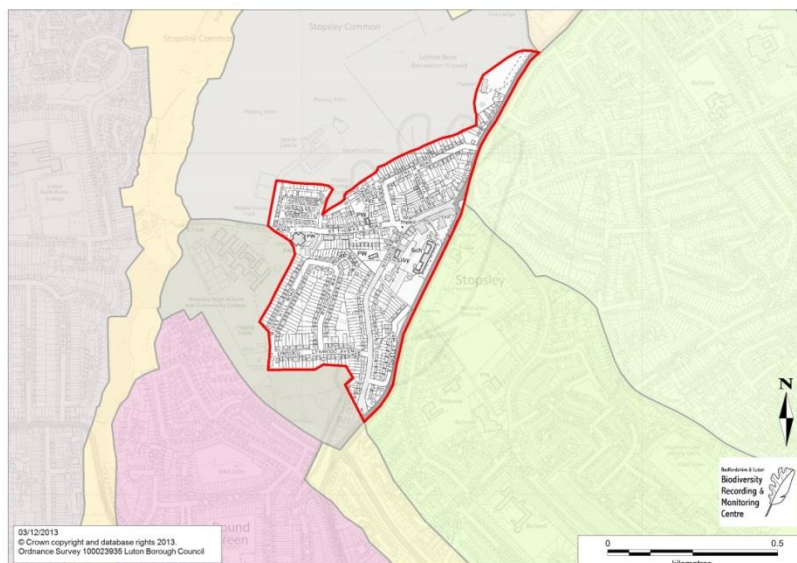
## Opportunities

The potential redevelopment could offer an opportunity to blend in more sympathetically with the wider landscape, including the AONB and Putteridge Bury nearby (across the A505). Any development would need to be carefully designed with views to the wider countryside retained and good quality greenspace, but lower profile housing could be an improvement in landscape terms.

## Constraints

Current business park use is a constraint. It is improbable that redevelopment would not include significant built development, given the pressure on land for housing in Luton.

## Character Area 10a: Stopsley Centre



## Description and Characteristics

The urban centre of Stopsley 'village'. The more open LCAs 9a and 9b are adjacent to west and north, the more recently developed wider area of Stopsley to south and east (LCA 10c), separated by the busy arterial A505. Residential areas are largely post-war suburbs.

The church is surrounded by Scots Pines, creating a notable landmark visible from some distance in certain directions. A narrow green corridor of various types of greenspace does extend through from the church south-wards.



### Analysis

#### **Quality/Condition**

Not applicable due to urban nature. Tranquillity is low, largely due to the busy A505.

#### **Sensitivity**

Low.

#### Issues

Noise impact of the A505.

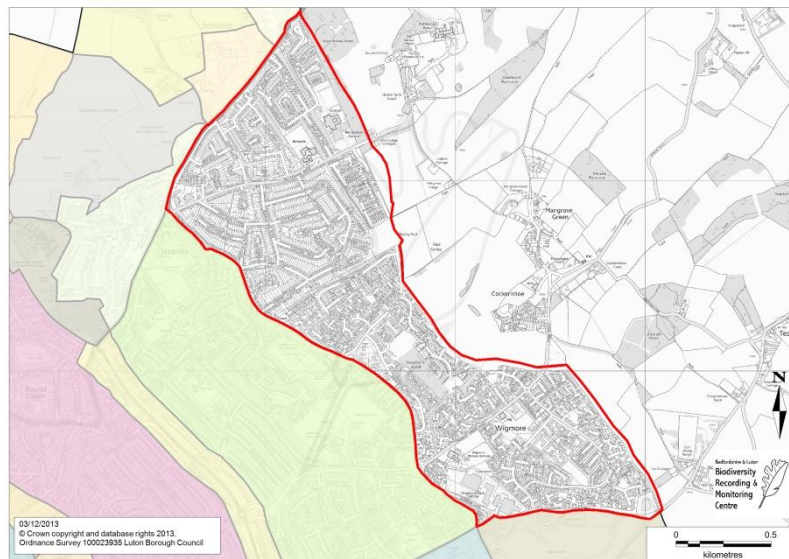
#### Opportunities

None identified.

#### Constraints

Highly constrained urban area.

## Character Area 10b: Stopsley East



### Description and Characteristics

A largely urbanised area but including the urban fringe with the wider rolling countryside to the east.

The area runs along a gentle ridge, which is still evident, with Wigmore Lane forming the western boundary and running along the dry valley bottom. To the west is the Stopsley West LCA (10c) and to the south (bounded by the Eaton Green Road is Wigmore Park (part of LCA 13, Wigmore Rural). To the north the wide and busy A505 divides this LCA from the Vale Cemetery (9d) and Butterfield Green Business Park (9e).

The A505 enters Luton at this point, on the brow of a hill. It is a relatively attractive gateway, with the wall of Putteridge Bury and adjacent woodland to the south, although the Butterfield green Business Park is incongruous with this to the north (see LCA 9e). Trees/hedgerow continue into Stopsley, providing landscape continuity.

Residential areas are largely post-war suburban development with predominantly semi-detached housing, wide streets and some urban trees. The Wigmore area at the southern end contains more contemporary post 1980s development, still with fairly wide roads and areas of amenity space.

The urban rural boundary is a key element of the local landscape, with a thin strip of former parkland and woodland (part of Putteridge Bury) within the Luton Borough boundary, and views across to Putteridge Bury and the rolling farmed (arable) countryside with copses, wooded belts and hedgerows to the east (the Breachwood green Ridge LCA in Hertfordshire). The area adjacent to the north of this area still has a strong parkland 'feel', with oak avenues in a now arable landscape. Great Hayes Wood screens the school and recreation centre from the wider countryside.

There is evidence of recreational use on the urban edge, leading out into the wider countryside. The Selsey Drive green space provides a relatively rare break in the urban edge.

From the urban edge industrial looking buildings are visible to the south and east, and the airport is evident. The urban edge is generally less intrusive upon the wider countryside than elsewhere in Luton.

Further south fine views continue across a stream valley and rolling arable countryside with areas of woodland and hamlets such as Cockernhoe, with a larger woodland visible to the south-east. The greenspace corridor on the edge of this area (88) is well-used and extends into the town and links to Slaughter Wood, which although privately owned and not accessible is an important landscape feature and is of ecological importance, and appears to be well managed. Slaughter Wood is enhanced by the corridor links with wooded areas and hedgerows out to the urban edge, providing a wooded feel to parts of the boundary. Being located on top of the ridge Slaughter Wood is visible from various locations, including a high point on Hayling Drive, and provides an attractive backdrop to the relatively modern housing surrounding it.

The Crawley Green Road provides an attractive gateway to the town, and is relatively quiet.

To the south of the Crawley green Road the boundary with the urban area is demarked by a more formal, linear greenspace with a narrow grass strip between the modern 1990s housing and its wooden panel fences to the west and an attractive hedgerow with tree belt to the east (although the stream is no longer visible). Beyond the hedgerow arable land with hedgerows slopes up, with a larger area of woodland to the north-east (Brickkiln Wood). This green corridor is well used, and while the hard-topped path is slightly incongruous it is needed due to the level of use. The tree belt includes a wide mix of species including Scots Pine, and although not wholly natural-looking it does provide an attractive and colourful feature. At the very southern end is a small, deep-sided reservoir, enclosed by an unattractive and urban-looking palisade fence with Leylandii and scrub.

The Wandon End Road rises up into Luton and becomes the Eaton Green Road. The airport is largely screened by landform to the south and west, and this is also a relatively attractive route into Luton, though busier than the Crawley Green Road. It is tree lined to the south, with views into Wigmore Valley Park (part of LCA 13, with its open spaces, hedgerows, trees and sports pitches evident beyond the roadside tree line) as the road reaches a plateau. To the north, on the urban edge, there is a narrow green space with a lone of poplars next to housing development.

Once onto the plateau it becomes a much more urban environment with views over the immediate part of the town and airport noise more prominent. Views across Wigmore Valley Park at this point include more buildings in the immediate foreground. A hotel building provides a landmark adjacent to a roundabout, where the land begins to drop down again. Views here extend to the wider, rolling countryside beyond the Park.

From within the area, the view across dry valley to south-west includes school playing fields and the Wigmore Lane Leisure Gardens mixed in with the residential areas as the land gently slopes back up.

Wigmore Church, a quasi-pyramidal, modern building is a landmark feature on the Crawley Green Road. Adjacent green space includes mature oak trees and sympathetic wooden play equipment.

**Estate wall boundary with A505**



**View east from eastern edge near Putteridge**



**Eastern Urban Edge**



**Crawley Green Road 'Gateway'**



**Boundary Greenspace south of Crawley Green Road / Adjacent farmland and woodland**



## Analysis

### **Quality/Condition**

The strip of open countryside adjacent to the urban area, including part of Putteridge Bury, is of relatively high quality. The urban-rural interface is more sympathetic than other parts of the town's perimeter.

Quiet background noise from A505 and airport – but medium to high tranquillity

Tranquillity is highly variable, with the more peaceful areas towards the rural edge to the east, but with the airport having a higher impact to the south. Road corridors tend to be noisier, with low tranquillity on or near the A505, Wigmore Lane and Eaton Green Road, though as mentioned above Crawley green Road is relatively quiet where it enters the urban area.

### **Sensitivity**

The urban-rural edge is highly sensitive along the eastern and southern edge of this area.

## Issues

Areas to the east have been suggested for development in the past.

The urban area has a relative lack of accessible greenspace (Slaughter Wood is private).

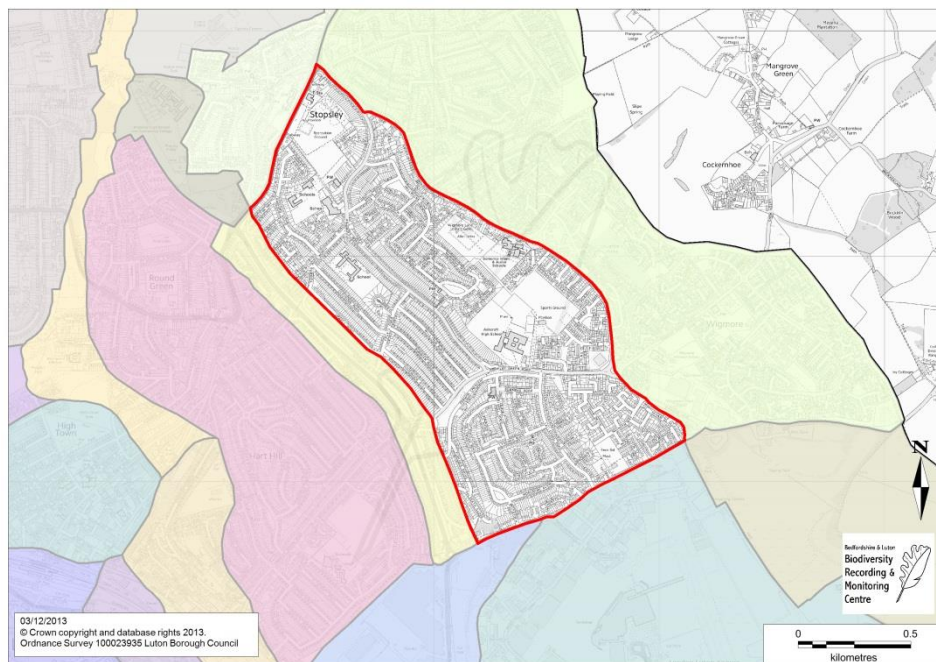
## Opportunities

There is an opportunity to protect and enhance a green corridor along the eastern edge, connecting into the urban area and existing greenspaces.

## Constraints

The administrative boundary with Hertfordshire is tight to the urban edge for the majority of the eastern side of this area.

## Character Area 10c: Stopsley West



### Description and Characteristics

An urban area occupying a low ridge running north-west to south-east. Wigmore Lane forms the boundary with LCA 10b to the north-east. The land rises up to the south-west, with views from various points, before dropping down again to Vauxhall Way (LCA 11). Residential areas are largely post-war, with some more modern developments (e.g. Someries Hill). The Crawley Green Road runs across the southern part of the area, rising and then dropping with an adjacent terraced open greenspace with occasional ash trees linking to the green corridor along Vauxhall Way (and continuing beyond). At the northern end the A505 is tree-lined as it approaches Vauxhall Way. To the north is LCA 10a, and to the south the airport (LCA 14).

There is generally more green space than in the adjacent LCA10b, with a swathe of school grounds, allotments and recreation grounds. Several of these include old oak trees, occasionally in lines, remnants of the landscape prior to development.

To the south the airport is a major landmark.

**Oak in urban greenspace**



**Greenspace with line of ash trees**



## Analysis

### **Quality/Condition**

The area is generally too urban to assess landscape quality or condition. Tranquillity is moderate or low, especially near major roads or close to the airport.

### **Sensitivity**

The area would be sensitive to the loss of greenspace, especially as it is 'landlocked'.

### Issues

Traffic noise at the northern and southern ends, along with the airport to the south, create high levels of disturbance.

Green spaces with significant numbers of ash trees, particularly where these have been planted in 'avenues', would be severely impacted if ash die-back disease were to affect the area.

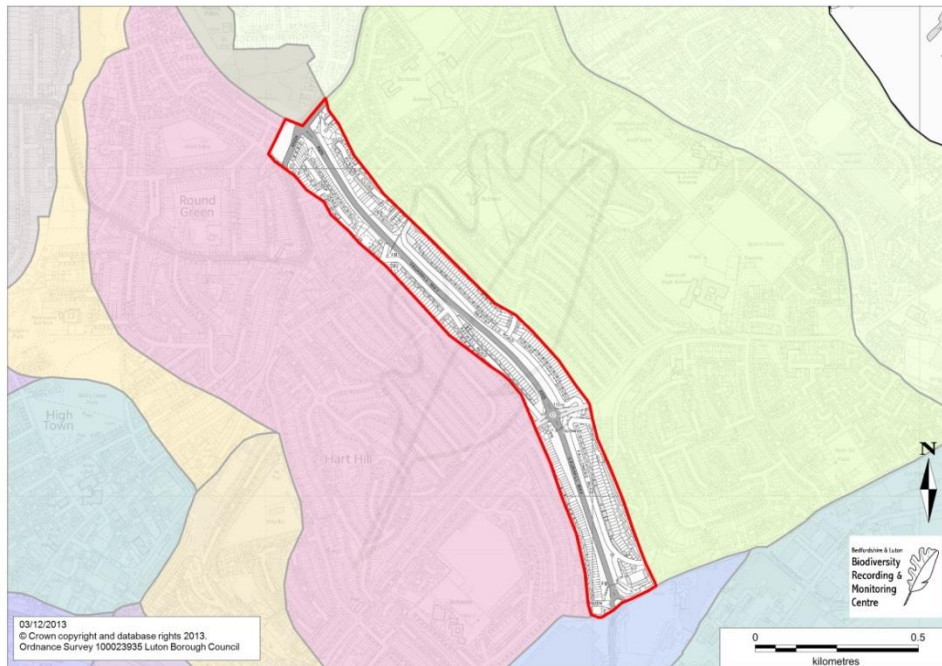
### Opportunities

Some of the relatively bare greenspaces would benefit from additional tree (or bulb) planting to increase aesthetic appeal and structural diversity.

### Constraints

A 'landlocked' urban area with busy roads and an airport adjacent.

## Character Area 11: Vauxhall Way Green Corridor



### Description and Characteristics

A long, narrow and enclosed green corridor located between Stopsley (LCA 10c) and the Hart Hill area (LCA 12). The Vauxhall Way road is the main feature, being a busy arterial road serving the airport and southern part of town, and linking to the A505 in the north. With hedges, scrub and trees it does have a 'wooded' feel (especially at the northern end), but the road is dominant and street furniture (lighting, signs, bridges) further detract. It is not a natural feature, being formed when the road was created, and some of the grassed areas have a 'terraced' appearance. The tree avenue on the eastern side is more evident than that on the west (presumably one was originally planted either side). There are also stretches of hedge. Although it is bisected by roads, roundabouts and bridges there is still a sense of continuity, with further links to the north to green space and woodland.

South of the Crawley Green roundabout the corridor opens out, with a view down to the cliff-like cutting into chalk valley side with the airport buildings evident above.





## Analysis

### **Quality/Condition**

Moderate condition, with some evidence of management of the green areas, but lots of street 'clutter'.

Tranquillity is low.

### **Sensitivity**

Loss of trees would make much starker. Retention of trees, scrub and hedgerows important.

### Issues

High levels of traffic bring noise and visual disturbance.

Airport nearby.

Road intersections separate green space elements.

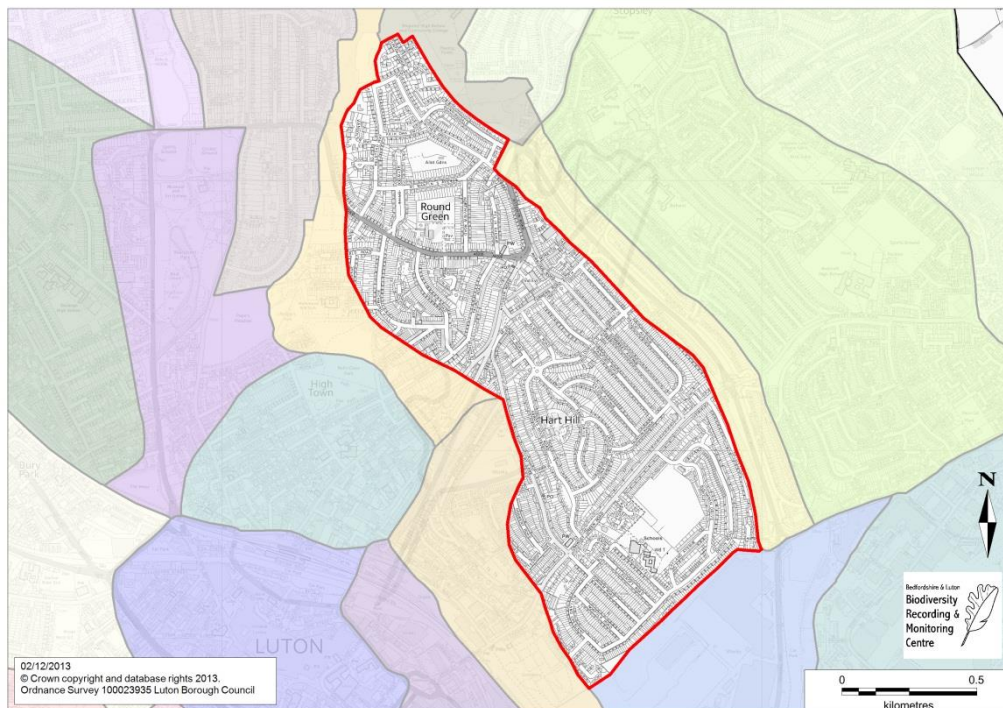
## Opportunities

Overall strengthening of the corridor, with increased maintenance of scrub and hedges would improve visual amenity. Additional hedge planting would connect areas of existing hedge, and could mean that incongruous sections of fencing could be removed. Bulb planting could improve visual appearance by adding colour.

## Constraints

It is a very narrow, constrained area with high traffic flows.

## **Character Area 12: Round Green to Hart Hill Dipslope**



## Description and Characteristics

Almost like a true dipslope to Hart Hill to the west (LCA 8b, and part of 8a), the area is heavily residential. In the northern part there is a mix of close knit Victorian terraces with pre-, inter-, and post war development, with the latter being more dominant in the south. It is bordered to the east by the Vauxhall Way corridor (LCA 11) and a more industrial area (LCA 16) to the south.

Green spaces are few and far between, the main one of note being Powdrills Field Neighbourhood Park in the south. A domed high point (understood to be former landfill – clay capped), this open space provides panoramic views around, particularly to the south and east. Although the views contain clutter and urban landscapes, they do give a sense of the surrounding area and the site has slightly higher tranquillity than its surrounds.

## Views from Powdrills Field Neighbourhood Park



### Analysis

#### **Quality/Condition**

Not possible to assess quality or condition due to urban nature.

Tranquillity is moderate.

#### **Sensitivity**

Loss of any green space would have a particularly big impact due to the limited amount available in this area.

### Issues

Busy roads, lack of greenspace, proximity of the airport and the landlocked nature of the area are the key issues.

### Opportunities

With little opportunity to create open space the most has to be made of existing spaces. Powdrills Field would benefit from some additional tree planting, and could also be a focal point for landscape interpretation.

### Constraints

Urbanised, landlocked nature of area. Views are of urban/industrial areas.