

Appendix 1: Methodology

Approach

- Ap1.1** This Landscape Character Assessment follows the method promoted by Natural England through **'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment' (2014)**, which embeds the principles of the European Landscape Convention (ELC) within it.
- Ap1.2** The assessment has been prepared **within the framework set by Natural England's National Character Areas**, and aims to join up with **surrounding authorities' LCAs**. It supersedes the 2004 Wokingham LCA. The updates made in 2018 ensure that the evidence contained in this LCA is robust and up-to-date.

Process of Assessment

- Ap1.3** The process for undertaking the study involved five main stages, described below, namely:
- Desk-based review and classification;
 - Field survey;
 - Draft Report;
 - Stakeholder consultation; and
 - Final Report.
- Ap1.4** GIS was used throughout the study as the tool for collating, manipulating and presenting data.

Desk study

- Ap1.5** The initial desk based stage involved the collation of a wide range of mapped information to **'sense-check' the existing landscape classifications and** to update the baseline. Designations relating to cultural heritage, nature conservation and landscape were checked for any changes. Newly available data such as light pollution and tranquillity mapping also strengthened an up to date understanding of key trends.
- Ap1.6** Data used within the report, including data collated in the GIS database, is shown in the table below:

Table A.1: GIS data

Name	Source
Base OS mapping at 1:25K and 1:50K	Ordnance Survey
Terrain 50 Contour data	Ordnance Survey
Linear features, mass movement, artificial ground, superficial deposits and bedrock geology 1:50K	British Geological Survey
Administrative boundaries	Wokingham Borough Council
National Character Areas	Natural England
Public Rights of Way	Natural England
River features & flood zones	Environment Agency
Agricultural Land Classification	Natural England

Nature conservation designations	Natural England (national datasets) and Wokingham Borough Council (local datasets)
Priority habitats	Natural England
Historic Landscape Character Areas Historic Landscape Characterisation dataset	Wokingham Borough Council
Heritage designations	Historic England (national datasets) and Wokingham Borough Council (local datasets)
Dark skies	CPRE
Infrastructure	Ordnance Survey
Local Plan	Wokingham Borough Council

Classification

- Ap1.7 Classification is concerned with dividing the landscape into areas of distinct, recognisable and consistent common character and grouping areas of similar character together.
- Ap1.8 The update of the landscape classification for Wokingham is based on a review of the 2004 LCT and LCA boundaries. Minor adjustments were made to boundaries where development had changed key characteristics (e.g. border between A3 Blackwater River Valley and B3 Blackwater River Valley with Open Water) or small landscape character areas were amalgamated where they are geographically adjacent to each other and the key characteristics applied equally to both (e.g. an area to the front of the Thames Valley Business Park was amalgamated with LCA A1 Thames River Valley). The main settlements, although noted in the text, have been omitted from this rural assessment.
- Ap1.9 This process resulted in the definition of 14 Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and 28 landscape Character Areas (LCAs) for Wokingham. The classification was undertaken at a scale of 1:25,000 and shown on a 1:250,000 scale base map at Figures 4.1 and 4.2.

Field Survey

- Ap1.10 A field survey was undertaken in August and September 2018 to review and refine the draft classification, make notes on landscape character and take photographs to help with subsequent assessment. This specifically focussed on:
- verifying and fine-tuning the classification of the landscape types and areas identified;
 - verifying and identifying key characteristics;
 - collecting aesthetic/perceptual information on character;
 - identifying valuable landscape attributes;
 - assessing landscape condition; and
 - gathering visual information on key issues and opportunities for future management.

Draft Report

- Ap1.11 A draft LCA report was submitted to the WBC Steering Group for comment in November 2018.

Consultation

- Ap1.12 The draft LCA report was made available to key communities of interest (neighbouring LPAs, town and parish councils, Natural England etc.) requesting comment on the draft particularly in relation to the landscape value and key changes in the landscape impacting on condition and highlighting future management needs. Responses to this process are included as Appendix 3 below.

Final Report

Ap1.13 Following comments from WBC Steering Group and stakeholders, the 2018 Landscape Character Assessment report and updated LCA classification were finalised.

Landscape Character Area Descriptions

Ap1.14 The descriptive profiles for the updated Wokingham LCA are presented at Landscape Character Area level and arranged by their respective Landscape Character Type within the borough. Descriptions of each area were updated to reflect changes in the landscape since the Cheshire LCA was written in 2004, particularly in relation to agricultural and land use change, climate change and large-scale residential development and associated infrastructure within the borough.

Ap1.15 Each LCT section begins with an overview map showing the location of the LCT within Wokingham and its relationship with other LCTs, a summary of the character of that LCT and the component LCAs within it.

Ap1.16 The descriptive profiles of the LCAs within Wokingham are structured as follows:

Map and summary of location and landscape character

Ap1.17 A location map (1:25,000 scale) shows the extent of the LCA and its relationship with other LCAs, followed by a summary paragraph explaining its location and defining landscape character.

Representative photos

Ap1.18 These help the reader appreciate the visual character of the LCA.

Landscape character

Ap1.19 This section provides a description of the landscape character of the LCA:

- Key Characteristics: In bullet point format, the key characteristics provide a detailed explanation of the character of the LCA.
- Cultural Landscape: a description of significant cultural heritage features in the landscape including designated cultural heritage assets;
- Natural Landscape: a description of significant natural features in the landscape including designated habitats;
- Perceptual Landscape: a description of significant perceptual features in the landscape including tranquillity and dark skies.

Evaluation

Ap1.20 The evaluation provides an understanding of what is important in each LCA and why, the condition and key issues impacting each area and a strategy to help inform a forward-looking strategy for the borough.

- Valuable Landscape Attributes: identifies the qualities that are particularly valued for their contribution to landscape character (i.e. if any one attribute ceased to exist, it would change the character to the detriment of the landscape);
- Landscape Condition: summarises judgements about the physical state of the landscape and its intactness. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements which make up the character of the landscape;
- Key Issues: identifies factors, including past, current and likely future trends that bring about change in the landscape;
- Landscape Strategy: landscape guidance focused on development management considerations to conserve and enhance the landscape of the area.

Appendix 2: Glossary

This glossary should be seen as complementary to that in Annex 2 of the NPPF (2019).

Term	Definition
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum (sea level).
Agricultural Land Classification	The classification of agricultural land in England in Wales.
Analysis	The process of breaking the landscape down, usually in descriptive terms, into its component parts in order to understand how it is made up.
Ancient trees and veteran trees	<p>Individual trees or groups of trees with wood pastures, historic parkland, hedgerows, orchards, park and other areas. They are often found outside ancient woodlands. Irreplaceable habitats with some or all of the following characteristics:</p> <p><i>Ancient trees</i></p> <p>An ancient tree is exceptionally valuable. Attributes can include its great age, size, condition, biodiversity value (as a result of significant wood decay and the habitat created from the ageing process), cultural and heritage value.</p> <p><i>Veteran trees</i></p> <p>A veteran tree may or may not be very old, but it has decay features, such as branch death and hollowing. These features contribute to its biodiversity, cultural and heritage value.</p>
Ancient woodland	Woodland which the evidence shows has had continuous woodland cover since at least 1600AD and has only been cleared for underwood or timber production. It is an extremely valuable ecological resource, with an exceptionally high diversity of flora and fauna.
Afforestation	The legal process of placing land under the jurisdiction of the Forest Law ostensibly for the purposes of hunting begun in the 11 th century.
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – a statutory national landscape designation.
Approach	The step-wise process by which a landscape assessment is undertaken.
Arable	Land used for growing crops.
Assart	The informal enclosure of private farmland by encroachment into woodland or heath.
Assessment	An umbrella term used to encompass all the many different ways of looking at, describing, analysing and evaluating landscape.
BAP	UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species and habitats were identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK

	BAP. The original lists of UK BAP priority habitats were created between 1995 and 1999 and were subsequently updated in 2007. See http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5155 for further information.
Biodiversity	The measure of the variety of organisms present in different ecosystems.
Brownfield site	A development site which is re-using previously developed land.
Built form	The characteristic nature of built development.
Carr woodland	Marsh or fen woodland in waterlogged terrain. Characteristic trees include alders and willows.
Characteristic	An element that contributes to local distinctiveness (e.g. narrow winding lanes, vernacular building style).
Classification	A process of sorting the landscape into different types, each with a distinct, consistent and recognisable character.
Combe	A small dry valley, without a permanent watercourse.
Condition	A judgement on the intactness and condition of the elements of the landscape.
Coppicing	The traditional method of woodland management in which trees are cut down to near the ground to encourage the production of long, straight shoots, which can subsequently be harvested.
Description	Verbal description of what a landscape looks like. This is usually carried out in a systematic manner, but it may also include personal reactions to the landscape.
Disafforestation	Removal of areas from a Royal Forest and associated Forest Law, not to be confused with the loss of any woodland (or deforestation).
Drift	The name for all material of glacial origin found anywhere on land or at sea, including sediment and large rocks.
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
Element	A component part of the landscape (e.g. hedges, roads, woods).
Enclosure	The placing in private hands of land to which there were previously common rights; the merging of commonly held strip fields to form a block surrounded by hedges.
Equine development	A term used to describe areas on the fringes of settlements which are dominated by horse paddocks, stable buildings and associated paraphernalia.
Eutrophic	The state of a water body when it has an excess of nutrients usually derived from agricultural fertilisers or intensive stock keeping facilities. The process by which a water body becomes overloaded with nutrients is known as eutrophication and leads to a dense plant population and algal blooms, the decomposition of which kills animal life by depriving it of oxygen.
Feature	A prominent, eye-catching element (e.g. wooded hilltop, church spire).

Floodplain	The area that would naturally be affected by flooding if a river rises above its banks, or if high tides and stormy seas cause flooding in coastal areas.
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
Grassland	Land used for grazing. Grassland can be improved (by management practices) semi-improved (modified by management practices and have a range of species less diverse than unimproved grasslands), or unimproved (not treated with fertiliser, herbicide or intensively grazed and consequently species diversity is high).
Greenfield site	A development site, usually on the fringes of a settlement, which has not previously been used for built development.
Habitat	The natural home or environment of an animal, plant, or other organism.
HLC	Historic Landscape Characterisation
Hydrology	The science dealing with the occurrence, circulation, distribution, and properties of the waters of the earth and its atmosphere.
Intact	Not changed or diminished.
Land cover	Combinations of land use and vegetation that cover the land surface.
Landmark	An object or feature of a landscape or town that is easily seen and recognized from a distance, especially one that enables someone to establish their location.
Landscape	The term refers primarily to the visual appearance of the land, including its shape, form and colours. However, the landscape is not a purely visual phenomenon; its character relies on a whole range of other dimensions, including geology, topography, soils, ecology, archaeology, landscape history, land use, architecture and cultural associations.
Landscape character	A distinct pattern or combination of elements that occurs consistently in a particular landscape.
Landscape character area (LCA)	A unique geographic area with a consistent character and identity, which forms part of a landscape character type.
Landscape character type (LCT)	A generic term for landscape with a consistent, homogeneous character. Landscape character types may occur in different parts of the county, but wherever they occur, they will share common combinations of geology, topography, vegetation or human influences.
Landscape condition	Based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape, and about its intactness, from visual, functional and ecological perspectives. It reflects the state of repair or intactness of individual features or elements (relating to that feature's primary condition or ultimate <i>desire</i>).
Landscape strategy	Principles to manage and direct landscape change for a particular landscape type or character area including identification of any particular management needs for specific elements.

Landscape value	The relative value that is attached to different landscapes. In a policy context the usual basis for recognising certain highly valuable landscapes is through the application of a local or national landscape designation. Yet a landscape may be valued by different communities of interest for many different reasons without any formal designation, recognising, for example, perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness; special cultural associations; the influence and presence of other conservation interests; or the existence of a consensus about importance, either nationally or locally.
Listed Building	A building, object or structure that has been judged to be of national importance in terms of architectural or historic interest.
Local Plan	A development plan prepared by local planning authorities.
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
Natural character	Character as a result of natural or semi-natural features such as woodland, grassland, hedgerows etc.
NCA	National Character Areas - defined within the <i>National Character Area Study, Natural England (2013)</i> - NCAs divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, history, and cultural and economic activity.
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NNR	National Nature Reserve
Nucleated settlement	A settlement that is clustered around a centre, in comparison to a linear or dispersed settlement.
Open-field system	An area of arable land with common rights after harvest or while fallow. The fields date from the medieval period and are usually without internal divisions (hedges, walls or fences).
OS	Ordnance Survey
Outcrop	The emergence of a stratum, vein or rock at the surface.
Parliamentary fields / enclosure	Fields formed by a legal process of enclosure (or inclosure), typically during the 18 th and 19 th centuries – by passing laws causing or forcing enclosure to produce fields for use by the owner (in place of common land for communal use).
Pastoral	Land used for keeping or grazing sheep or cattle.
Pollarding	A traditional woodland management practice in which the branches of a tree are cut back every few years to encourage new long, straight shoots for harvesting. Differs from <i>coppicing</i> because the cuts are made at sufficient distance from the ground to prevent them from being eaten by animals.
Remediation	Process by which a contaminated or damaged site is repaired and brought back into more general use, or for a specific purpose (e.g. wildlife conservation).
Remnant	A part or quantity left after the greater part has been used, removed, or

	destroyed.
Riparian habitat	Riverbank habitat.
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SANGS	Suitable Alternative Green Space
Scheduled Monument	Nationally important archaeological sites or historic buildings, given protection against unauthorised change.
Semi-natural vegetation	Any type of natural vegetation which has been influenced by human activities, either directly or indirectly.
Sense of Place	A person's perception of a location's indigenous characteristics, based on the mix of uses, appearance and context that makes a place memorable.
Sensitive	The response to change or influence.
Skyline	The outline of a range of hills, ridge or group of buildings seen against the sky.
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
Time depth	The time period expressed in the landscape, or the extent to which the landscape reflects a certain time period (a landscape with greater time depth will comprise older elements than a landscape with lesser time depth).
Topography	Combinations of slope and elevation that produce the shape and form of the land surface.
Valuable landscape attributes	Positive features and characteristics that are important to landscape character and that, if lost, would result in adverse change to the landscape.
Vernacular	Buildings constructed in the local style, from local materials. Concerned with ordinary rather than monumental buildings.

Appendix 3: Consultation Response

- Ap3.1 The following organisations were issued with the draft LCA report and provided comments. Comments were considered and included where relevant when compiling the final version of the LCA.

Consultee
ACER Whitegates Residents Association
Bracknell Forest Council
Earley Town Council
Historic England
Natural England
Winnersh Parish Council
Woodley Town Council

Appendix 4: User Guide

This LCA can be used by planners, developers and land managers to take account of what is valued in or characteristic of the landscape when considering new development including new land uses. It should also be used to pursue opportunities to enhance and strengthen landscape character wherever possible. The need for the evidence base provided in the LCA is all the more apparent in the context of continual pressures to accommodate new development, including new land uses, primarily the need for new housing and associated infrastructure.

The flow chart below aims to help the use of the LCA. It is arranged around a number of key stages, setting out a series of questions as prompts to ensure available information is used to shape proposals and assist in planning decisions.

