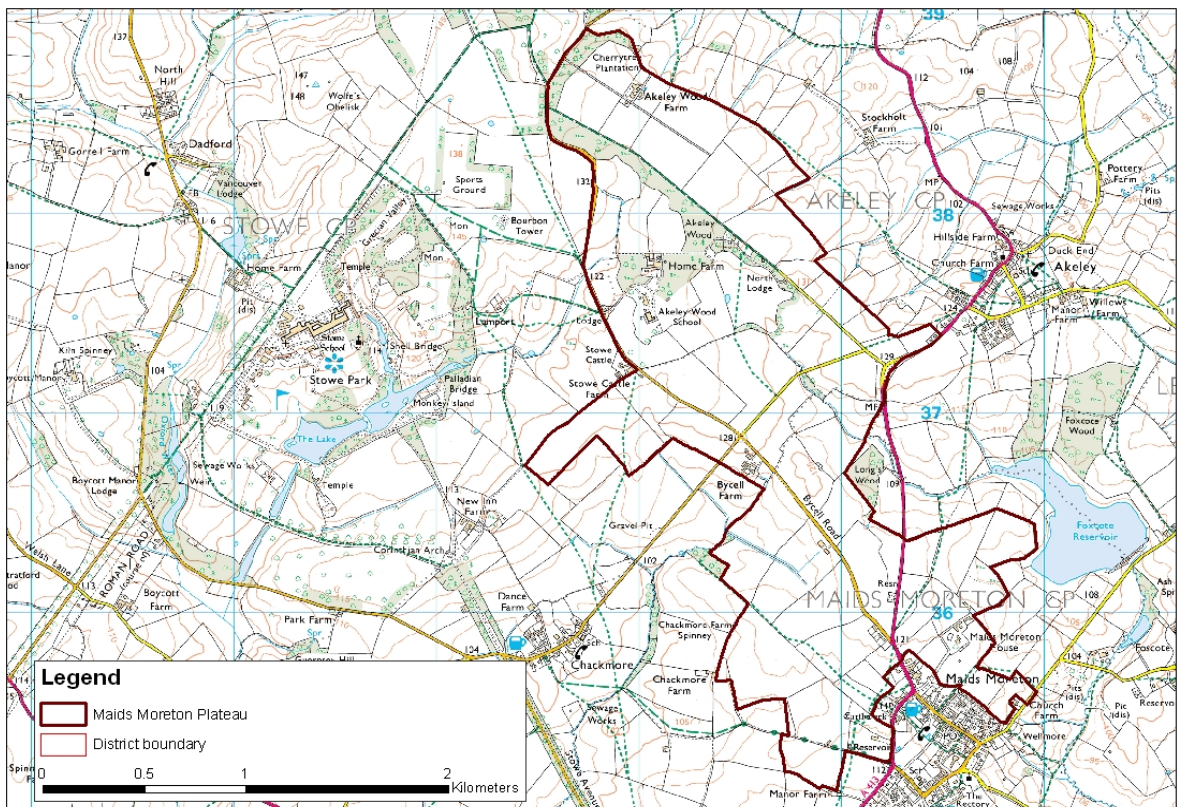
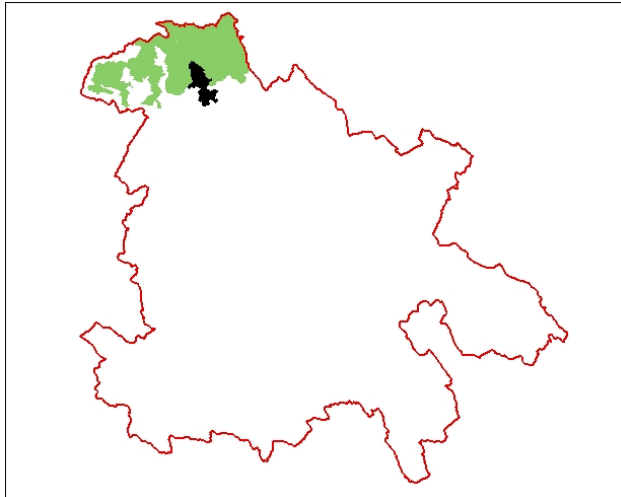


LCA 1.7 Maids Moreton Plateau

Landscape Character Type: LCT 1 Wooded Ridge



LCA 1.7 Maids Moreton Plateau (LCT 1)

Key Characteristics

- Flat gently sloping landform
- Open views
- Straight lanes with wide grass verges
- Large woodland in the north
- Strong hedgerows cut low
- Predominantly arable farming in medium sized fields
- Smaller fields and more pasture close to Maids Moreton

Distinctive Features

- Views of Stowe Castle
- Trees around Maids Moreton House

Intrusive Elements

- Two small concrete reservoir buildings
- Slight intrusion of suburban edge of Maids Moreton and Buckingham

Location The Maids Moreton Plateau is the area of high ground to the north of Buckingham extending northwards from the village of Maids Moreton to Akeley Wood Farm. The landform is the southerly extension of the higher ground running along the border between Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire. To the east and west are lower areas with stream tributaries of the Great Ouse. The A413 passes through the area from north to south.

Landscape character The plateau has a predominantly flat open character, with good views out reinforced by a low level of settlement, a strong pattern of hedgerows and a large area of woodland in the north.

Geology A central north-south band of Cornbrash limestone dominates the underlying geology. The area is overlain by a mosaic of Till and glaciofluvial deposits.

Topography The elevation of the plateau drops gently from the north towards the south, from circa 130m to 110m AOD. The village of Maids Moreton and part of the northern edge of Buckingham also lie on the plateau but outside of the area.

Hydrology There are no rivers running through the area. The plateau acts as a minor watershed with short sections of the heads of streams draining from either side of the plateau. To the east the head of one stream drains into the Foxcote valley to join the Great Ouse east of Buckingham. On the western side there is the head of another stream that drains past Chackmore eventually joining the Great Ouse west of Buckingham.

Land use and settlement This is predominantly a mixed agricultural area of medium sized regular fields. There are much smaller fields often of pasture close to Maids Moreton and Akeley Wood School, defined by stronger and higher hedges.

Settlement is restricted to farms that are fairly thinly scattered. The area runs up to the edge of Maids Moreton where a few houses extend out into the area from the residential edge. Subsidiary uses include allotments and a rugby club and the business centre at Maids Moreton House.

Tree cover There are large areas of woodland in the north around Akeley Wood School. Several woodlands also occur close to the boundary, which increases the impression of a wooded landscape.

The hedgerows have variable tree cover most notably of ash in the south and oak in the north. Tree cover in hedgerows is highest close to the edge of Maids Moreton and Akeley Wood School. The trees around Maids Moreton House are a notable feature of the area.

Biodiversity The area is largely composed of arable habitat and improved grassland, both of which are distributed unevenly throughout the area. The grassland is mainly improved although some unimproved is present in the west. A small area of parkland occurs in the south.

Significant woodland habitat is restricted to Akeley Wood in part a CWS which runs diagonally northwest to southeast across the northern half of the Plateau. The woodland comprises a narrow corridor of broadleaved, and of lowland mixed deciduous woodland, the latter being a priority habitat type.

LCA 1.7 Maids Moreton Plateau (LCT 1)

Small areas of standing water are scattered throughout which with the good hedgerow network contribute to habitat connectivity.

Historic environment This area was once part of the medieval hunting forest of Whittlewood reflected in a large part of the woodland in the north being ancient woodlands. There are only small areas of pre 18th century enclosure. The majority of the hedgerow pattern in the north relates to 19th century enclosure and in the south to 18-19th century parliamentary enclosure. The area has very small areas of new enclosure and recreation adjacent to the edge of Maids Moreton and Akeley but has no major areas of prairie farming. The area is covered by the Whittlewood Project which aims to investigate the areas landscape history and archaeological interest particularly in relation to medieval settlement patterns, although despite this there are only limited archaeological records. There are listed buildings at Akeley Wood school which abuts Stowe Park.

Designations

Archaeological Notification Areas – 2 No.
CWS – 1 No.

LCA 1.7 Maids Moreton Plateau (LCT 1)



Looking west across open farmland with distant views.



View from open farmland looking towards Maids Moreton.

LCA 1.7 Maids Moreton Plateau (LCT 1)

Summary of Condition/Sensitivity Analysis

Condition	Good
Pattern of elements:	Unified
Visual detractors:	Few
Visual unity:	Strongly unified
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Coherent
Sensitivity	Moderate
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate
Guidelines	Conserve and Reinforce

Condition

Generally the condition of the landscape is considered to be good. The pattern of the hedgerows remains strong especially close to Maids Moreton creating a unified landscape. There are few detracting features in a generally open landscape. This creates a strongly unified landscape. The cultural integrity is considered to be variable, as although the hedgerow pattern remains generally strong the tree cover is variable being poorest around arable fields whilst the archaeological and built heritage is not prominent. There are large sections of well, clipped hedgerows where new trees will not establish without special measures. Ecological integrity is moderate despite a strong connectivity, because of a general lack of broad habitats of District significance and statutory designated sites.

Sensitivity

The landscape is distinct and the historic continuity is generally well expressed in the field pattern. Overall the sense of place is moderate. The landform is apparent and its elevation above the ground to the east and west and the intermittent tree cover gives an open character with some good long distance views over the surrounding countryside. Overall the sensitivity is considered to be moderate.



Pasture on the edge of Maids Moreton. The trees in the background are around Maids Moreton House.

LCA 1.7 Maids Moreton Plateau (LCT 1)

Landscape Guidelines Conserve and Reinforce

The landscape guidelines for the Maids Moreton Plateau are as follows:

- Encourage the restoration of the historic hedgerow pattern where it has been lost to enhance the landscape character and strengthen the ecological diversity. Where necessary use historic maps to identify where hedgerows have been lost.
- Maintain and improve the condition of existing hedgerows through traditional cutting regimes.
- Conserve the small fields of pasture with good hedgerows close to the residential edge
- Encourage the establishment of new hedgerow trees particularly oak and ash trees.
- Encourage the establishment of larger woodland in the centre of the area to extend the wooded character of the high ground and expand woodland habitat.
- Encourage the establishment of small community woodlands within the field structure close to the edge of Maids Moreton.
- Maintain the condition and extent of broadleaved woodland.
- Maintain the extent of unimproved and semi-improved grassland wherever possible. Encourage good management practice.
- New housing and alterations to existing housing should be designed to reflect the traditional character of the area and use locally traditional materials.
- Promote the retention of the character of minor roads by the management of hedgerows and verges and limiting urbanising elements such as signage and kerbing.
- Respect the setting of Stowe Park.
- Maintain connectivity of habitats.



View towards Stowe Castle from the northern part of the area.