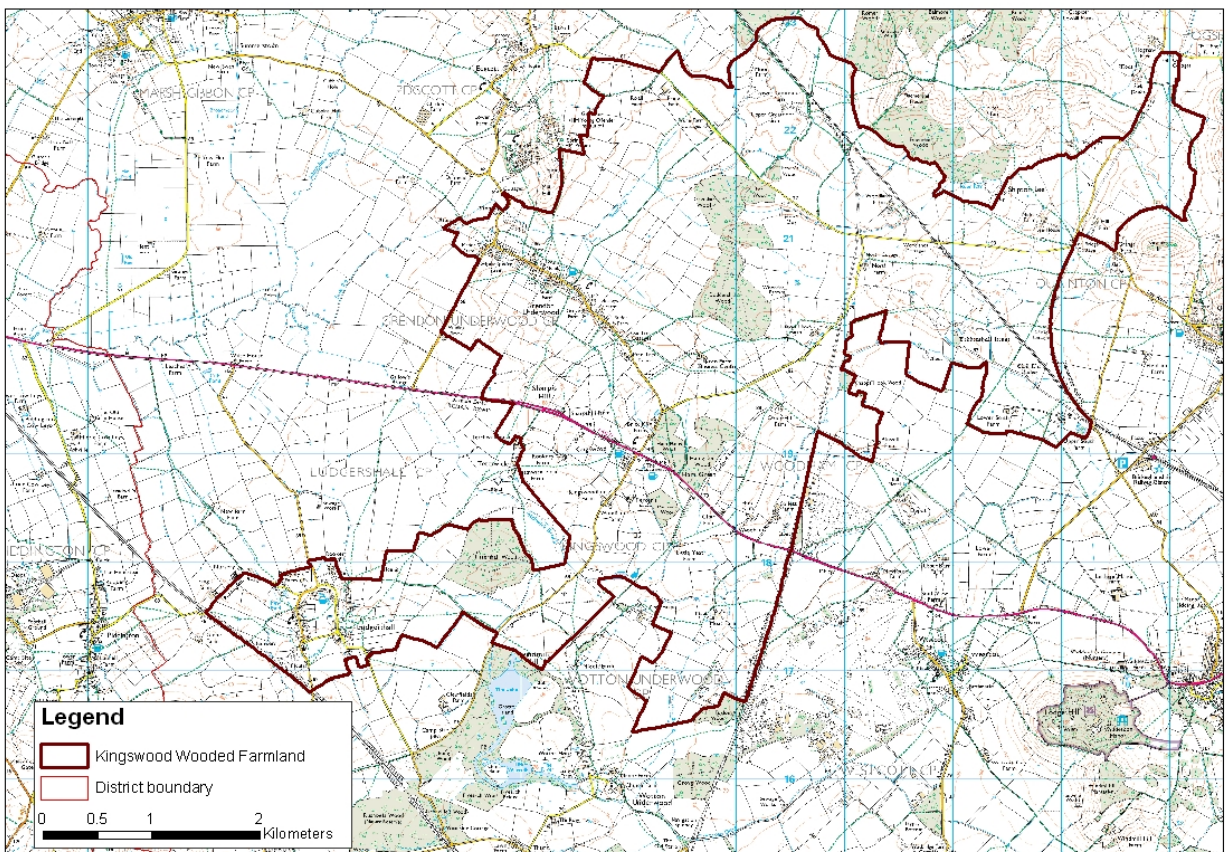
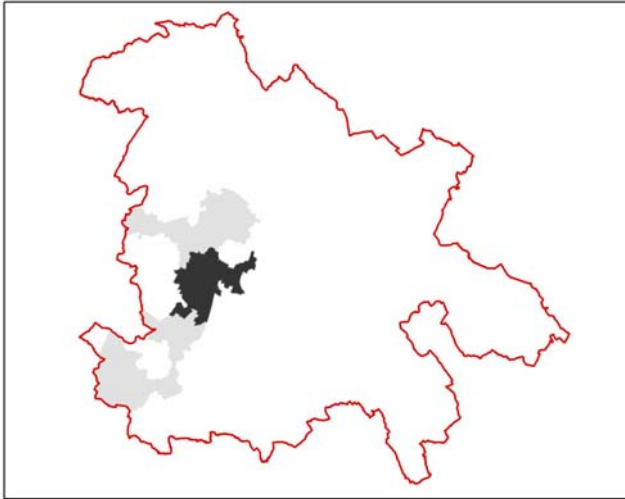


LCA 7.4 Kingswood Wooded Farmland

Landscape Character Type: LCT 4 Wooded Rolling Lowlands



LCA 7.4 Kingswood Wooded Farmland (LCT 7)

Key Characteristics

- Predominantly grassland
- High density ancient woodland
- Oaks in hedgerows
- Sparsely settled
- Retains field pattern of early enclosure
- Partly within medieval hunting forest of Bernwood

Distinctive Features

- Akeman Street Roman Road
- Village of Grendon Underwood
- Small historic barns in fields
- Views of Finemere Hill (LCA 9.1) and Quainton Hill (LCA 9.2)
- Deserted Medieval Villages
- Ridge and furrow at Grendon Underwood
- Disused railway tracks
- Veteran trees and trees within fields
- Large blocks of broadleaved woodland

Intrusive Elements

- Pylon line
- Calvert landfill site
- Young Offenders Institution
- Development adjacent to A41
- Traffic on A41

Location Straddles part of the western side of the district to the north and south of the A41 west of Aylesbury.

Landscape character A gently sloping or undulating landform with some small hills. It is predominantly pastoral with large areas of ancient woodland. The south of the area was once part of the medieval hunting forest of Bernwood. Hedgerows are generally strong and clipped with fine mature oak trees adding to the sense of a landscape with good tree cover. To the south of Grendon Underwood there is a line of small hills. Although there is settlement within the area it is mostly at the edges, much of the area retains a slightly forgotten character with areas of less intensive management and narrow curving lanes.

Views within the area are generally across open farmland with good tree cover whilst those out of the area are generally up to Finemere Hill LCA 9.1 and down to Marsh Gibbon Vale LCA 8.1. There is little visual intrusion although the landfill operations at Calvert Claypits LCA 7.2 and the young offenders Institution at Grendon have an impact on the north western edge. Traffic and small development adjacent to the A41 also has a slight negative impact but this is very localised. There is also a pylon line across the centre of the area. This remains however, a good quality agricultural landscape unified by a strong hedgerow pattern often with fine and veteran oak tree. The woodland cover is good. It retains a good sense of place and sometimes has a remote slightly hidden character.

Geology Three broad geological areas. Divided between the Stewartby calcareous mudstones in the west and the Weymouth calcareous mudstones in the east. There is also a smaller pocket of Peterborough bituminous mudstone in the River Ray Valley north of Grendon Underwood.

Topography This area has an undulating landform with higher ground in the north, east and south and the lowest ground on the western boundary. Various streamlines have created a gently, undulating landscape with small hills. The general fall of the ground is often hard to decipher, however in the northeast the area rises to the high ground in the northeast on the side of Quainton Hill LCA 9.2. This area marks a small saddle of lower ground within a line of hills. The elevation range in the area is 65m to 125m AOD, with the lowest ground adjacent to Marsh Gibbon Vale LCA 8.1. However the majority of the ground lies between 70m and 80m with only small hills and the edges rising to higher levels.

Hydrology There are no major watercourses within the area, but it is drained by a number of meandering streams. These rise in the high ground on the north, east and south of the area and drain out to the River Ray within Marsh Gibbon Vale LCA 8.1. The highest ground between Quainton and Finemere Hill is also the watershed between water that falls to the River Ray and the Thames and water that falls north of the catchment line and drains towards the Great Ouse and the Wash.

Land use and settlement This is a predominantly grassland making up about three quarters of the area, the other quarter comprising arable and woodland. The two villages within the area are Grendon Underwood and Lugershall. Both are on the areas western boundary and on land immediately adjacent to the lower ground of Marsh Gibbon Vale LCA 8.1. Historically they probably had strong connections to the land within the vale. Throughout the rest of the area there is a scattering of farms, although at Kingswood on the A41 there is a dispersed settlement. The A41 is the old Roman Akeman Street and crosses through the area from east to west.

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Tree cover About a tenth of the area is woodland, most of this is concentrated in a band running north to south through the area. There is also scrub along the disused railway line. The tree cover within hedgerows is variable being generally stronger close to areas of woodland. In these areas large mature and veteran oak trees are a notable feature. The tree cover is also generally stronger along roads.

Biodiversity The main habitat groups characterising this LCA are grassland and woodland. The grassland is mainly improved but there is a significant area of the broad habitat type neutral grassland in the east of the area at the Grendon and Dooddershall Meadows CWS noted for unimproved meadow flora and farmland birds. In addition the priority habitat type lowland meadow is found at the Grendon Underwood Meadows CWS. There are also slivers of calcareous grassland.

Broadleaved woodland features throughout the area. The woodland habitats occur mainly in the two large centrally located blocks both designated as SSSIs. Wet woodland and deciduous woodland are both present. These woods are largely ancient woodland which is also found at Tittershall Wood which is located in the southwest of the area.

Standing water, a broad habitat type is present in numerous ponds.

Connectivity of habitats of importance is provided by the river Ray and its tributaries and by the hedgerows which are generally thick and well managed, although hedgerow connectivity to Tittershall Wood is less strong.

Historic environment This area was part of the medieval hunting forest of Bernwood. This would have been a mixed agricultural landscape of woodland rough grazing land such as Greatmoor & arable open fields. The character of the landscape can be divided into two, the area to the south and east is characterised by a combination of irregular enclosure and extensive patches of ancient woodland which makes up 10% of the area. The irregular field pattern is indicative of piecemeal enclosure probably in the late medieval or post medieval period. By contrast the landscape to the west around Grendon Underwood is defined by rectangular fields of parliamentary enclosure created in 1769. Hedgerow patterns in this part of the landscape are well preserved and the pastoral landscape has afforded the good survival of ridge and furrow. There has been significant hedgerow loss near to Calvert and south of Kingswood but the rest of the area the pre 1880 hedgerow pattern remains largely intact. Two avenues running out from Wotton Park extend into the southern part of this area.

The most prominent settlement is the village Grendon Underwood, which is a nucleated row and has conservation area status. However, nucleated settlement forms are the exception as elsewhere there are small dispersed settlements such as the hamlet of Kingswood, farm clusters and historic isolated farmsteads like Dooddershall. This area is also notable for its archaeological monuments especially medieval, moated sites and fish ponds. Significant sites can be found at Woodham, and Dooddershall House. There is also some evidence of Roman settlement, which is probably related to Akeman Street, now the A41, which runs east-west across the area. The area is also dissected by three 19th century railways, two of which are now dismantled.

Designations

Scheduled Ancient Monument: Moated Site at Grendon Underwood
Registered Park: Wotton Underwood (part)
Conservation Area at Grendon Underwood
EHRHP&G at Wotton House

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Archaeological Notification Areas – 34 No.
SSSI: Grendon & Doddershall Woods (2), Hame Home Cum Hamgreen Woods
CWS – 3 No.
BNS – 12 No.

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The majority of the area is in grassland. The hedgerow pattern is generally strong often with fine oak trees.



The area is sparsely settled which adds to its good sense of historic continuity.

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Summary of Condition/Sensitivity Analysis		Condition
Condition	Good	The condition of the landscape is considered to be good. This relates to the fact that a strong hedgerow pattern and good woodland cover unifies the landscape. Throughout most of the area there is little in the way of visual detractors. The area therefore appears to be strongly unified. The cultural identity is variable being strongly associated with the condition of the hedgerows. Ecological integrity is strong due to good connectivity, and relatively large areas of designated sites and habitats of district significance. This combination of a variable cultural identity and a strong ecological identity are considered to give the area as a whole a strong functional integrity.
Pattern of elements:	Unified	
Visual detractors:	Few	
Visual unity:	Strongly unified	
Cultural integrity:	Variable	
Ecological integrity:	Strong	
Functional integrity:	Strong	
Sensitivity	Moderate	
Distinctiveness:	Distinct	
Continuity:	Historic	
Sense of place:	Moderate	
Landform:	Apparent	
Tree cover:	Intermittent	
Visibility:	Moderate	
Guidelines	Conserve and Reinforce	

Sensitivity

This landscape has a distinct landscape character relating to the strong hedgerow and woodland pattern across the undulating landscape with a good sense of historic continuity. This produces a moderate sense of place. The landform is apparent and the tree cover considered to be intermittent because although there are fine trees in many hedgerows they are often widely spaced. This produces a landscape of moderate visibility. Overall the sensitivity of this landscape is considered to be moderate.

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Landscape Guidelines Conserve and Reinforce

The landscape guidelines for Kingswood Wooded Farmland are as follows:

- Encourage the retention and strengthening of the existing historic hedgerow pattern with new hedgerow trees, predominantly oak.
- Maintain and improve condition of existing hedgerows through traditional cutting regimes.
- Encourage the survey and preservation of veteran trees.
- Maintain the extent and condition of woodland particularly ancient broadleaved woodland, using traditional techniques to create and manage a wide diversity of habitats.
- Maintain and improve condition of existing hedgerows connecting Tittershall Wood.
- Promote information and understanding about the historic importance and appropriate management of historic woodland features such as irregular edges, assarts, banks and ditches.
- Maintain the sparsely settled and slightly remote character of the landscape.
- Retain and enhance views from publicly accessible land to surrounding higher ground.
- Consider encouraging the establishment of new woodland reflecting the historic pattern to reduce the visual impact of intrusive elements such as pylon lines and Calvert landfill operations.
- Encourage the preservation of small historic agricultural buildings, which are a distinctive feature of the landscape.
- Encourage the preservation and interpretation of the areas rich historic environment including that of the medieval hunting forest of Bernwood.
- Encourage the preservation of historic earthworks and ridge and furrow by maintaining a continuous grass sward and do not allow bare patches of soil to develop.
- Encourage the preservation and restoration of parkland landscapes.