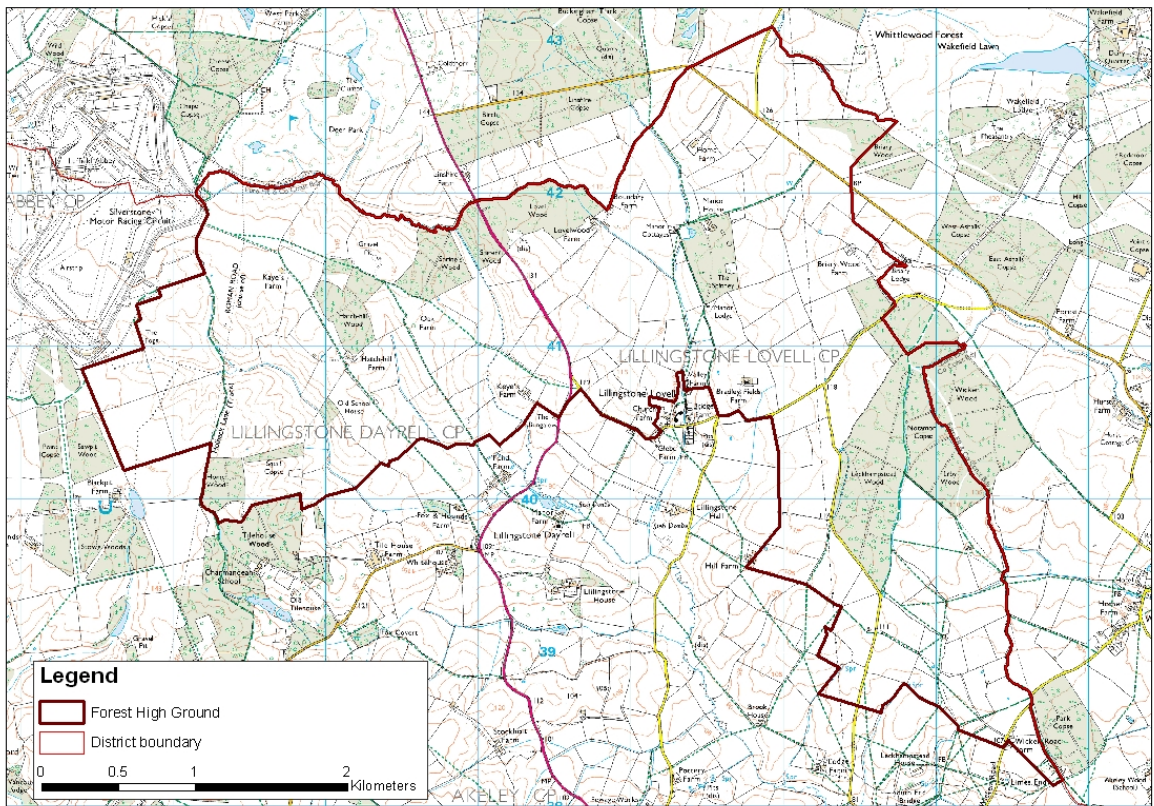
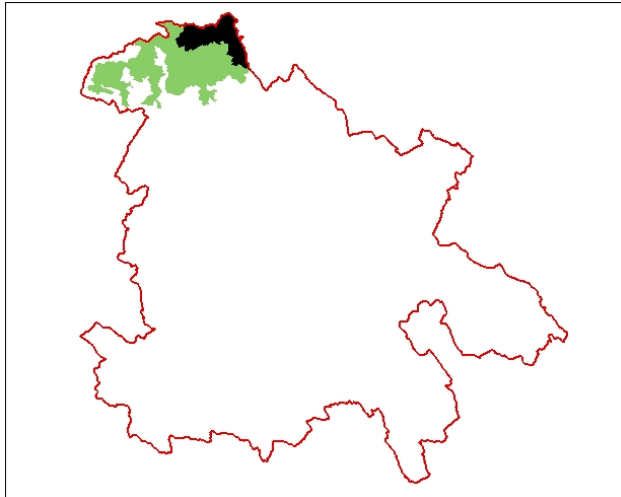


LCA 1.2 Forest High Ground

Landscape Character Type: LCT 1 Wooded Ridge



LCA 1.2 Forest High Ground (LCT 1)

Key Characteristics

- High ground sloping gently towards south
- High ground incised by streams
- Predominantly arable
- Variable field size
- Large woodlands
- High density woodland cover
- Low density of settlement
- Remote open character

Distinctive Features

- Ancient woodland remnants of Whittlewood Forest
- Long distance views to south
- Hedgerow trees notably oak

Intrusive Elements

- Pylon lines

Location The area occupies high ground along the boundary with Northamptonshire. The area is L-shaped and is bisected by the A413 running north to south. The village of Lillingstone Lovell is immediately adjacent to the southern boundary, which is defined by the more undulating pastoral settled landscape of LCA 1.5 Lillingstone Wet Farmland. The western boundaries are with the Stowe Parkland and Silverstone Race Track.

Landscape character This area of high ground is unified by its open character and high level of woodland cover. The impression of a well-wooded landscape is strengthened by adjacent woodland over the county boundary in Northamptonshire. The landform varies from very gently sloping to land that falls steeply to narrow stream valleys. Views are a distinctive feature and are often long distance views to the south or views enclosed by a woodland backdrop. In places where the field pattern has been lost or is very fragmented character can become so open it is bleak. There is very little settlement however some farms are prominent with large traditional farmhouses on areas of high ground set back from roads. The area has a remote open character. Pylon lines are a negative feature in many views.

Geology Glacial till with limestone exposures in incised valleys.

Topography The high ground falls gently towards the south. Over the long northern and eastern boundary with Northamptonshire the ground generally continues to rise. Streams have in places cut small valleys that create a more undulating landscape, particularly in the west of the area. On the far western side one stream has created a small, well-defined valley with steep sides. The ground level ranges between 90-150m AOD.

Hydrology The area is drained by several streamlines running south. There are very few meanders suggesting they may have been straightened.

Land use and settlement Land use is mixed with a predominance of arable with fairly extensive areas of prairie farming. The proportion of woodland is circa 10%. Grassland uses amount to about 35% and associated mainly with the land falling to the streams in the centre of the area. Settlement is restricted to farms.

Tree cover The woodland cover is in fairly large blocks mainly on the northern boundary. Some blocks extend over the county boundary. In some views woodland appears contiguous with other large blocks of woodland nearby in Northamptonshire creating a woodland backdrop. Tree cover within hedgerows varies but it is predominantly oak and usually mature.

Biodiversity The area is generally divided into large blocks of habitat. At the centre a large area of improved grassland is found, although some unimproved/possibly unimproved grassland can be found within the LCA. To the east and west of the grassland is almost continuous arable land. Two relatively large areas of woodland habitats are also present to the east and west, with smaller fragments of woodland scattered within the LCA.

Because of its status as ancient woodland, much of the woodland is designated as either a County Wildlife Site or a Biological Notification Site.

Historic environment Originally part of the royal medieval hunting forest of Whittlewood. The historic landscape of the greatest sensitivity is concentrated on the areas of semi-natural woodland and assarts and a few

LCA 1.2 Forest High Ground (LCT 1)

historic settlements. About half the area is identified as having features of pre eighteenth century landscape, including large areas of pre 18th century enclosure. However, about a third of the area has lost its enclosure pattern to prairie farming and modern enclosure. 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.

Designations

Archaeological Notification Areas – 9 No.

CWS – 7 No.

BNS – 3 No.

LCA 1.2 Forest High Ground (LCT 1)



Typically open view of the eastern part showing poor hedgerow structure.



Undulating landform in the west with woodland running up to the Northamptonshire boundary.

LCA 1.2 Forest High Ground (LCT 1)

Summary of Condition/Sensitivity Analysis

Condition	Very Good
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
Strength of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

Guidelines	Conserve and Reinforce
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Condition

The condition of the landscape is considered to be very good. The majority of the landscape is unified by an historic hedgerow pattern a very low level of settlement and woodland. The only significant visual detractors in the area are pylon lines. The visual unity of the area combining the unified pattern of elements and the few visual detractors determines that this is a strongly unified landscape. The cultural integrity is considered to be variable in that in the pastoral areas close with good hedgerow pattern and woodland there is strong historic identity and good management however in some arable areas the hedgerows have been lost or are in decline and have few hedgerow trees. The ecological integrity for the area is considered to be strong it has a generally intact pattern of hedgerows, a high level of woodland cover and large areas of pasture adjacent to meandering streams, which appear to be in fairly low intensity

management. However some of the more intensively managed arable areas have a much lower ecological integrity. The variable cultural integrity and the strong ecological integrity combine to give an area of strong functional integrity.

Sensitivity

The landscape is considered to have a distinct character, which relates to the low level of settlement the open views, the good hedgerow pattern and the woodland. This along with the generally good sense of historic continuity gives the area a moderate strength of place. The landform is apparent and the tree cover generally intermittent varying between areas on the southern edge with open long distance views to the more enclosed intimate areas close to woodland. The apparent landform and the intermittent tree cover combine to give the area a moderate level of visibility. The moderate visibility and moderate strength of place combine to give the area as a whole a moderate level of sensitivity.



Large isolated farms often on higher ground are a local feature.

LCA 1.2 Forest High Ground (LCT 1)

Landscape Guidelines Conserve and Reinforce

The landscape guidelines for the Forest High Ground

- Encourage the management of hedgerows through traditional cutting regimes and the promotion of restoring gaps with indigenous species
- Promote good woodland management using traditional techniques aiming to create and maintain a wide diversity of habitats.
- Support and promote the identity of the medieval hunting forest of Whittlewood with new planting, access and interpretation.
- Encourage the establishment of new woodland of locally occurring native species. The woodland should be appropriate in scale to the landscape character of the area and reflect the historic landscape pattern.
- Promote the establishment of new hedgerow trees to improve the age diversity. Oak trees are the most typical trees in the hedgerows in this area.
- Conserve unimproved and semi-improved grassland wherever possible. Encourage the traditional management by grazing.
- Conserve and enhance the distinctive character of farms and settlements.
- Identify key views from publicly accessible locations and promote the retention and enhancement of these viewpoints.
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East of the A413 lanes are generally quiet and straight. (The land in the background is within LCA 1.5 Lower Lillingstone Wet Farmland).