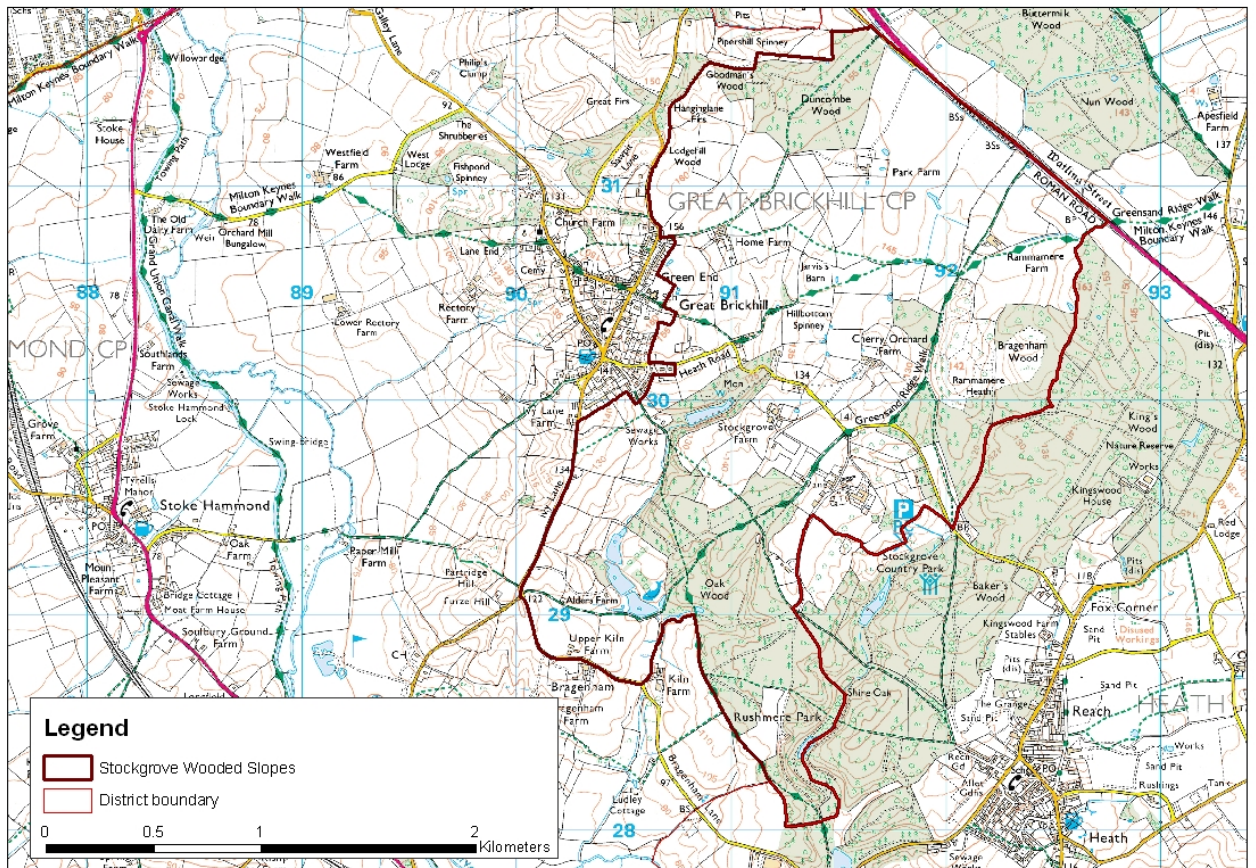
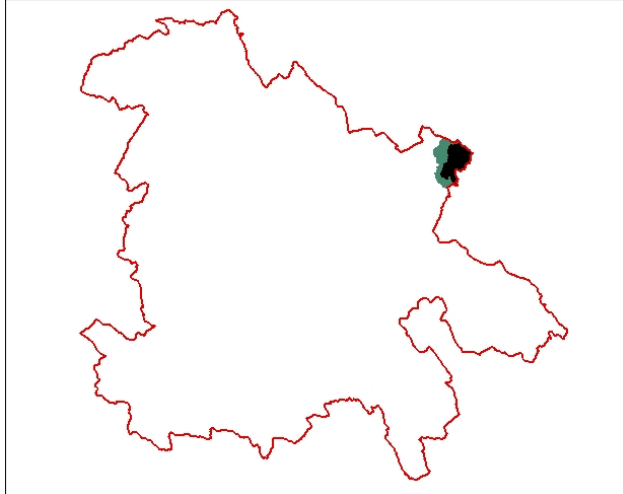


LCA 6.2 Stockgrove Wooded Slopes

Landscape Character Type: LCT 6 Greensand Ridge



LCA 6.2 Stockgrove Wooded Slopes (LCT 6)

Key Characteristics

- Undulating landform
- Extensive woodland cover
- Sparse settlement
- Pasture land within woodland setting
- Narrow winding lanes
- Pre18th century irregular fields

Distinctive Features

- Stockgrove Country Park
- Ramdamere heathland
- Network of lakes
- Coniferous woodland plantations
- Dispersed farmsteads
- Extensive areas of acid and neutral grassland
- Small areas of bracken
- Large areas of neutral grassland
- Acidic grassland
- Fen

Intrusive Elements

- Traffic on A5

Location Lying east of Great Brickhill village directly to the east of the Brickhills Scarp LCA.

Landscape character Undulating eroded sand ridge which extends beyond the LCA boundary. Extensive woodland cover under forestry management. Mixed deciduous and coniferous tree cover. Parkland managed as country park. Varied agricultural use with pastureland to the south and a large open arable field to the north. Pockets of heathland cover. The area is crossed by single narrow winding lane connecting Great Brickhill with Heath and Reach but there is an extensive network of footpaths.

Geology The area consists of a large deposit of Woburn sand overlain in the north by glacial till. There are some undifferentiated glacial deposits around the eastern and western fringes. To the southwest a local valley has eroded the sand to expose a belt of West Walton calcareous mudstone.

Topography The highest part of the area lies to the northeast of Great Brickhill at a level of 150m AOD. The area has been eroded into a network of local valleys the lowest part of which fall to approximately 130m AOD.

Hydrology There are a number of streams that run off the Stockgrove upper slopes. These often feed ponds or small lakes before draining down the scarp face to join the river Ouzel to the west.

Land use and settlement Mixed woodland and plantations with grass pasture. Sparse settlement with dispersed farmsteads.

Tree cover Coniferous plantations predominate but with small blocks of broadleaved oak woodland. Bragenham and Duncombe Wood are ancient.

Biodiversity This LCA has very diverse habitats. As the name suggests, Stockgrove Wooded Slopes contains a high proportion of woodland habitat, most of which is coniferous although lowland mixed deciduous woodland and broadleaved woodlands, priority and broad habitat types respectively, are also found. Part of the woodland in the east is included within the Kings and Bakers Woods and Heath SSSI, a site rich in floral and faunal diversity as a result of a range of soil types.

The remaining areas are in grassland which also includes a high proportion of broad and priority habitat types comprising respectively large areas of neutral and of acidic grassland, and smaller areas of lowland calcareous and lowland dry acidic grassland. Small areas of fen and bracken are also present in the southwest. Aquatic habitats are also represented in the small lakes and streams. There is very little arable habitat.

Historic environment Watling Street Roman road forms the area's north eastern boundary but otherwise there is little known archaeology. Extensive secondary woodland cover on former heathland with much pre 18th century enclosure and some assarts in the north of the area. There are also some modern enclosures and prairie fields. Stockgrove Park House built 1929-38 lies in a park of earlier 19th century origins.

Designations

Conservation Areas at Great Brickhill (3)
Archaeological Notification Areas – 1No.
SSSI: Kings & Bakers Woods & Heath (4)
CWS – 1 No.
BNS – 2 No.

LCA 6.2 Stockgrove Wooded Slopes (LCT 6)



Conifer woodland north of Kiln Farm.



Scots Pine woodland on Heath Road.

LCA 6.2 Stockgrove Wooded Slopes (LCT 6)

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	High
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Dominant
Tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	High

Guidelines	Conserve
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Condition

Overall the condition of the landscape is considered to be very good. The pattern of elements is unified by the dominant feature of extensive woodland cover over the rolling landform. There are few visual detractors and those that are present are often screened by the wider woodland setting. This supports the definition of a strongly unified landscape. Cultural integrity is variable with Stockgrove Park and wider historic landscape with wide public access over the area being positive but otherwise a lack of known archaeological sites, other historic buildings and areas of modern landscape change. Ecological integrity is strong due to high connectivity, large areas of broad habitats of district significance and designated sites including Sites of Special Scientific Interest and County Wildlife Sites. Functional integrity is considered to be strong.

Sensitivity

The area is distinguished by its elevation over the surrounding areas and extent of woodland cover. Historic continuity is supported by moderate sense of place. Due to the elevated nature of landform the area dominates its surroundings, made more prominent by the mature woodland cover. Although the tree cover is concentrated around the Stockgrove area it is sparse in the north where there are large open arable fields thus rating woodland cover as intermittent. Visibility is high particularly from the fringes of the area where there are long distance views over surrounding areas. Overall the degree of sensitivity remains high.



Large paddock within a woodland setting adjacent to Cherry Orchard Farm.

LCA 6.2 Stockgrove Wooded Slopes (LCT 6)

Landscape Guidelines Conserve

The landscape guidelines for the Stockgrove Wooded Slopes 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 the condition and extent of hedgerows through traditional cutting regimes.
- Maintain the sparsely settled rural character of the landscape.
- Encourage the retention and strengthening of heathland character of parts of the area.
- Retain the existing extent of grassland and bracken.
- Maintain at least the current condition of lowland dry acid grassland.
- Encourage good management practice on the existing acid grassland.
- Maintain extent and condition of fen habitat.
- Maintain and improve condition of existing woodland management using traditional techniques to create and manage a wide diversity of habitats.
- Encourage the preservation and management of the historic field pattern.
- Support and promote the recreational use of the area with access and interpretation.
- 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.
- Encourage the management and enhancement of views from publicly accessible land.