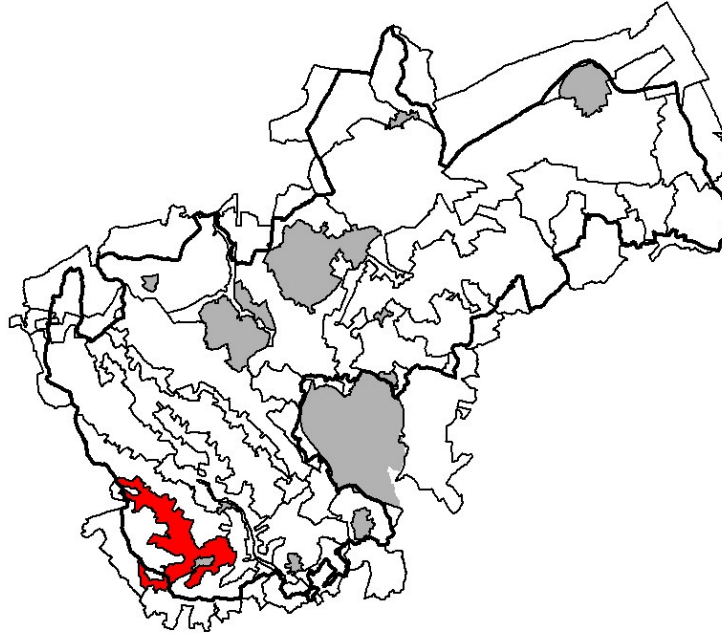


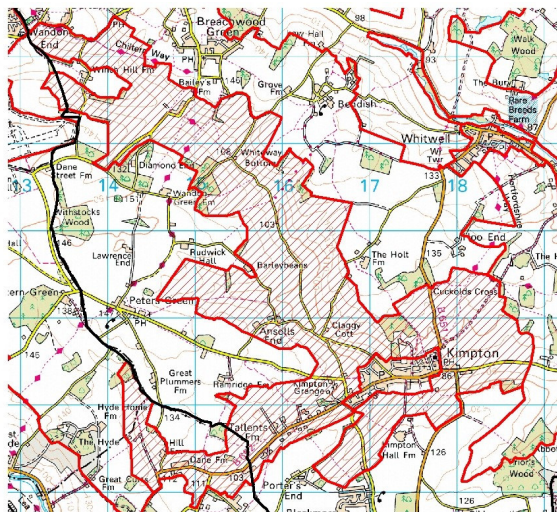
LOCATION



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved North Hertfordshire District Council LA078794, 2004

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA

The Whiteway valley extends from the eastern edge of Luton to a point west of Kimpton where the valley joins the Whitwell valley. Kimpton village lies at the confluence of the two valleys. The head of the Kimpton valley is located west of Plummers Lane, joining Kimpton Bottom Lane at Dane Farm.



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved North Hertfordshire District Council LA078794, 2004

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Steeply sided dry valleys with Whiteway Bottom Lane following the bottom of the valley and the B652 Kimpton Bottom Road to the south. To the north of Whiteways small winding lanes cross perpendicular to the line of the valley. Predominantly arable use. Whiteways Bottom is largely devoid of settlement whilst Kimpton Bottom has a linear settlement. Locally smaller field parcels on the more steeply sloping land. Scattered woodland parcels along the top edge of valley sides.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Steep sided valley slope
- Dominant arable use
- Scattered woodland parcels

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- Abuts Luton Airport runway

ASSESSMENT**PHYSICAL INFLUENCES****Geology & soils**

Free draining loamy brown soils over Upper and Middle Chalk. Chalk is masked by overlying Clay-with-Flints and peri and post glacial coombe deposits.

Topography

Narrow valley in upper reaches gradually widening at confluence with other tributaries. The valley is approximately 1km wide east of Kimpton.

Degree of slope

Typically 1:10 slopes to valley sides.

Altitude range

Valley falls from 135m at suburban edge of Luton to 80m at Kimpton Mill. 125m at the head of the Kimpton valley.

Hydrology

Whiteway valley is a dry valley, but in time of high water table the historic river Kym can reappear at Kimpton Bottom. This can be influenced by Netherfield Spring. Drinking water aquifers lie under and adjacent to Luton Airport runway.

Land cover and land use

The predominant land use is arable farming.

Vegetation and wildlife

Limited woodland cover in the upper reaches of the valleys. Large woodland block to the north of Kimpton (Park Wood). Ancient semi-natural woodland is present on valley sides such as Hurst/Sewetts Wood, groves near Rowdalls Plantation and Hoo Park. Most of this woodland tends to be transitional between oak/hornbeam and ash/beechn, depending on the presence or absence of chalk near the surface. Cherry is also common.

Many of the woodlands have been replanted with alien conifers.

Fragments of calcareous grasslands remain along Kimpton Bottom and on road verges at Whiteway Bottom and north of Kimpton.

There are records of dormouse in Laysbury Dells. Kimpton is important for pipistrelle and brown long-eared bats.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

In 1086 Kimpton was assessed for 4 hides and formed part of the possessions of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux. The village of Kimpton still retains its 12th century church of St Peter and St Paul. To the west of Kimpton lie ring ditches, linear ditches and enclosures of unknown origin

Field pattern

The historic agricultural landscape comprises a mixture of prairie fields with post-1950s boundary loss, pre-18th century irregular enclosure, pre-18th century irregular sinuous enclosure, 18th century and later enclosure and ancient woodland. Today a high proportion of hedges have been removed, there is predominantly large-scale field pattern but with smaller fields on some steeply sloping ground. Smaller field parcels associated with fringes of settlements and along Kimpton Bottom, west of Kimpton.

Transport pattern

A combination of primary routes following valley bottoms interconnected by small winding lanes often sunken and rising up the valley side.

Settlements and built form

The historic settlement pattern is characterised by outlying cottages, villages and farmsteads. The Character Area includes the larger settlement of Kimpton and incorporates some associated ribbon development. The scattered farmsteads are further up the valleys. Kimpton contains several 17th century houses and cottages.

EVALUATION

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

The Character Area is a combination of undeveloped open landscapes, mainly in the upper valley reaches, with a feeling of remoteness, contrasting with the well settled, sub-urban character in the lower part of the valley.

Rarity & distinctiveness

Landscape type frequent in the west of the District.

VISUAL IMPACT

More recent ribbon development associated with Kimpton and Whitwell intrudes into the valley setting especially associated pony paddocks and stabling. Some narrower steeper sided valleys provide sense of visual containment. From certain vantage points, especially where there is little woodland cover, there are long distance views down the valley.

ACCESSIBILITY

Whereas the road network follows the valley bottoms, with feeder roads connecting to adjacent areas, the network of rights of way often cuts across the valleys.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) have undertaken Tier B (Community of Place) consultations. Views of the local community have been sought and contributor's responses to each of the Character Areas will be analysed and a summary of the responses provided by HCC.

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

LC1 Landscape Conservation Area
GD 1909 Hoo

EVALUATION

CONDITION

Land cover change:	Widespread
Age structure of tree cover:	Mixed
Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:	Relic
Management of semi-natural habitat:	Not obvious
Survival of cultural pattern:	Relic
Impact of built development:	Low
Impact of land-use change:	Moderate

Matrix Score: **Poor**

ROBUSTNESS

Impact of landform:	Prominent
Impact of land cover:	Apparent
Impact of historic pattern:	Insignificant
Visibility from outside:	Locally visible
Sense of enclosure:	Contained
Visual unity:	Coherent
Distinctiveness/rarity:	Frequent

Matrix Score: **Moderate**

CONDITION	GOOD	Strengthen and reinforce	Conserve and strengthen	Safeguard and manage
	MODERATE	Improve and reinforce	Improve and conserve	Conserve and restore
	POOR	Reconstruct	Improve and restore	Restore condition to maintain character
		WEAK	MODERATE	STRONG
		ROBUSTNESS		

EVALUATION

INHERENT LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY

Landscape Character Sensitivities

- A largely rural character throughout Kimpton and Whiteway Bottom, which would be vulnerable to the addition of further urbanizing features
- The character area is a rolling and steeply incised dry valley system with side valleys feeding in. The valleys are significant features of the area and loss of character or lack of management to these would be detrimental to the area
- The landuse is predominantly arable fields, but with smaller fields on the steeper valley sides, where the land is used for grazing, cattle and sheep. Horsiculture paddocks are also present and associated with settlement fringes
- Hedgerows are the traditional boundary treatment but losses have occurred or they have become fragmented. The area would be vulnerable to further loss of hedgerows
- Scattered woodland blocks, generally along the top edge of the valley sides are a feature and loss of this characteristic would be highly detrimental to the area
- The area is tranquil with generally quiet minor roads. The roads that follow the valley bottoms include Whiteway Bottom Lane and the B652 Kimpton Bottom Road. These are crossed by smaller winding lanes. The roads are characterised by hedgerows and hedge banks, which are well trimmed. However some of these have been removed towards Luton Airport. The character area is vulnerable to further loss of these features
- There is limited settlement in the character area. Kimpton has linear ribbon development to the B651 with small estates behind. Whiteway Bottom is also characterised by isolated outlying cottages, villages and farmsteads, found further up the valleys. The character area is vulnerable to inappropriate or unsympathetic development and any form of development not in character or scale with the area
- Fragmented areas of surviving calcareous grassland are present in Kimpton and Whiteway Bottom. The character area would be vulnerable to loss or lack of management of this habitat
- Luton Airport abuts the west of the character area and is a visible and audible detractor to the character of Kimpton and Whiteway Bottom. The landscape is degraded to a degree by man made features, including the control tower and lighting. The flight path of overhead aircraft also reduces the tranquillity and rural character of Kimpton and Whiteway Bottom
- Good public access through numerous rights of way, particularly around Kimpton, including the Chiltern Way and the Hertfordshire Way

Overall Kimpton and Whiteway Bottom is considered to be of **moderate to low sensitivity**. The incised valley, arable landuse and winding lanes create a strong rural character. However Luton Airport and the associated man made elements to the north are detractors to the area creating an urban influence, which juxtaposes with the character of Kimpton and Whiteway Bottom

EVALUATION

Visual Sensitivities

- Views vary significantly between open and wooded horizons
- Views along and across the marked valley network are an important feature in the character area
- Long distance views from the higher vantage points are an important feature of the Character Area
- Luton airport is a visual detractor for the character area

In visual terms, Kimpton and Whiteway Bottom is considered to be of **moderate to low sensitivity**. Views along the valley and long distance views from vantage points would be sensitive to the introduction of additional urbanizing features.

LANDSCAPE VALUE

Overall Kimpton and Whiteway Bottom is considered to be of **moderate low landscape value**. Aspects of particular value within Kimpton and Whiteway Bottom are the incised valley which forms a striking landform, the relatively few rural lanes with associated hedge banks and hedgerows and the relative tranquillity. However Luton Airport introduces incongruous elements adjacent to the character area, which dilutes the rural character of Kimpton and Whiteway Bottom

EVALUATION

CAPACITY TO ACCOMMODATE DEVELOPMENT

Large urban extensions and new settlements (>5ha)

This type of development would not be appropriate within this Character Area, due to its rural character. It would be of an inappropriate scale and would introduce elements that would urbanise the landscape, altering the character and removing the existing key characteristics. Visual impacts would also be high, due to the panoramic and cross valley views currently experienced. Increased housing development would be likely to affect the existing narrow, twisting lanes, which could erode the character of the landscape. Proximity to the Luton Airport flight path would affect residential amenity. The landscape capacity for major urban extensions or new settlements is considered to be low.

Smaller urban extensions (<5ha)

This type of development would not be entirely appropriate within this Character Area, due to its rural and undeveloped character. Visual impacts could be high, due to the views along the valley and the long distance views currently experienced. Some small scale expansion at the periphery of Kimpton, carefully designed and in keeping with the existing character of the village, could possibly be accommodated. Proximity to the Luton Airport flight path would affect residential amenity. The landscape capacity for small urban extensions is considered to be moderate to low.

Major transport developments/improvements

This type of development would not be appropriate within this Character Area, due to the largely rural character of most routes at present. Upgrading of existing narrow lanes could erode the character of the landscape. The landscape capacity for major transport developments/improvements is considered to be low.

Commercial/warehouse estates

This type of large scale development would not be appropriate in this character area. There are not currently any large scale developments of this type within the area, although there are some visual associations with Luton Airport to the north of the area. Existing minor roads would be inappropriate for any significant larger volumes of traffic and/or HGVs. Any 'improvements' to the existing network would cause damage to the landscape character. The landscape capacity for commercial/warehouse estates is considered to be low.

Individual large/bulky buildings

There may be some limited capacity for sympathetically located and designed individual large buildings, particularly if they were of an agricultural character and in keeping with the rural character. However, large buildings could be highly visible within the Character Area if not carefully located would erode the rural and intimate character of Kimpton and Whiteway Bottom. The landscape capacity for individual large/bulky buildings is considered to be low to moderate.

Large scale open storage

The rural character of Kimpton and Whiteway Bottom would make it difficult to accommodate large scale 'open' uses without significant impact. This would not be in keeping with the character of the area and likely to be very open to view on the sloping ground and introduce new elements that would conflict with the existing characteristics. The landscape capacity for large scale 'open' uses is considered to be low.

EVALUATION

Mineral extraction/waste disposal

This Character Area is currently relatively rural in appearance. It would be difficult to accommodate mineral extraction as it would be visually prominent and not be in keeping with the character of the area. If proposals were consented, any restoration proposals could include regarding but should include for additional planting in character with existing patterns.

The landscape capacity for mineral extraction is considered to be low to moderate. Waste disposal would be a problem in all character areas due to the presence of aquifers.

Incremental small scale development

There may be some capacity for carefully located and designed small scale developments within the Character Area, particularly if they were to the periphery of existing settlements and of rural character. However, due to the existing character any proposals would need clear justification to avoid the erosion of the rural character of Kimpton and Whiteway Bottom.

The landscape capacity for incremental small scale developments is considered to be low to moderate.

Utilities developments e.g. masts, pylons, wind turbines

Luton airport, which abuts the character area, includes such developments in close proximity of the character area and within views from Kimpton and Whiteway Bottom. New utilities developments or structures such as masts or wind turbines would have a further impact on the rural character of Kimpton and Whiteway Bottom. Large scale developments, including additional facilities for the airport and tall elements would be highly visible within the north of the Character Area, as well as being potentially visible in surrounding Character Areas to the east.

The landscape capacity for utilities developments is considered to be moderate to low.

GUIDELINES

Nb. These guidelines apply only to land within North Hertfordshire

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE
Strategy: Improve and Restore
Landscape management guidelines

- Promote management of ancient woodland to encourage a diverse woodland flora
- Promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and areas of semi-natural habitat and the creation of links between habitat areas
- Promote hedgerow restoration along the lines of historic field boundaries and for the creation of visual links between existing woodland areas
- Promote the use of traditional field hedges in place of post and wire enclosures to new grazing areas
- Promote the diversity of hedgerow species and the planting of standard hedgerow trees
- Promote arable reversion to grassland to improve mosaic of habitats and to aid water quality and recharge of aquifer
- Conserve patterns of distinctive co-axial fields to valley slopes and retain and restore related enclosure
- Maintain a balanced pattern of land use within valleys
- Retain and manage sunken minor roads to valley sides with the high hedges and tunnels of vegetation and rich ground flora to verges
- Maintain and extend the rights of way network
- Encourage the development of new calcareous grassland habitats
- Protect and preserve the pattern of narrow winding lanes and associated hedge banks, sunken lanes, verges and hedges
- Protect the tranquil nature of Whiteway Bottom by ensuring that no adverse development is permitted
- Promote strong landscape enhancements in the countryside to the edge of any proposed development to settlement edges, to retain rural character of adjacent valley corridors. Consider recreation of former historic traditional woodland and hedges as pattern for enclosure
- Manage and enhance the valleys as corridors for green infrastructure proposals for the local population and habitat creation including both the wider main valleys and the secondary hidden narrow valleys
- Encourage the planting of appropriate broadleaved woodland and vegetation to screen new development that could intrude in panoramic rural views
- Retain the rural character of Kimpton and Whiteway Bottom ensuring that any new development is appropriately sited and of a scale, form and style appropriate to the Character Area
- Avoid the location of new development in visual intrusive locations, such as on upper valley slopes or where they would be visible on the skyline
- Ensure that new development does not necessitate the removal of existing woodland blocks or the loss of surviving calcareous grassland habitats and ancient hedgerows
- Ensure that lighting associated with new development does not create additional urbanising influences on the character Area
- Promote strategies for reducing the visual impact of the existing developments associated with Luton Airport
- Ensure any airport related development is visually contained from the wider Character Area

Built development guidelines

- Conserve the traditional character of Kimpton and Whiteway Bottom, ensuring that any development located on the edge of existing settlements uses appropriate vernacular materials and features to avoid inappropriate visual intrusion