

TYPE 6: WOODED GREENSAND RIDGE

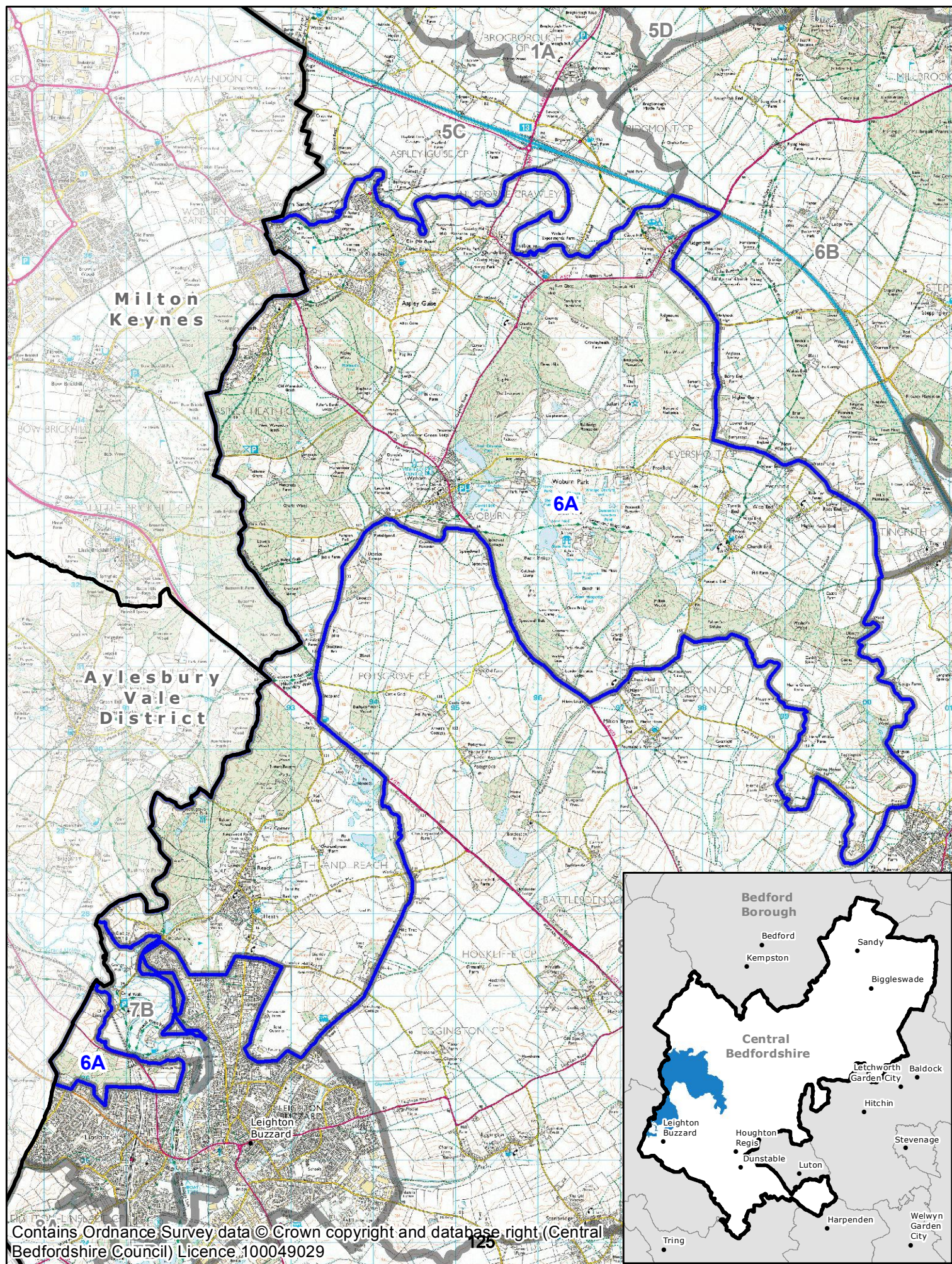
Key Characteristics

- A large scale, elevated landscape (up to 150m AOD) providing extensive views.
- A narrow, prominent ridge running southwest-northeast across Central Bedfordshire and forming a strong horizon, divided by the Rivers Flit and Ivel which have carved distinct valleys.
- Relatively steep sides define the edges of the ridge, particularly on the north-west facing side – the landform becoming flat to undulating on the ridge top.
- Underlying solid geology of Lower Greensand capped in places with drift deposits of Boulder Clay.
- Large woodland blocks and plantations make this a heavily-treed landscape – forming wooded horizons and a strong sense of enclosure.
- Intensive arable crop production occurring within a network of large geometric fields
- Primary transport routes cut north-south through the ridge. The A507 runs east-west.
- A number of historic houses, parks and gardens, including Woburn Abbey and Park – impart a designed character on the landscape.
- Active and restored mineral extraction works (sand pits) intersperse wooded areas.
- The Greensand Ridge Walk follows the entire length of the ridge.
- A number of nationally important (SSSI and NNR designated) including heathland and woodland.
- Communication masts are locally prominent vertical structures.

Location and Boundaries

- 6.1 The *Wooded Greensand Ridge* landscape type lies to the north of Central Bedfordshire . It occurs over a band of Lower Greensand geology that stretches southwest to northeast – forming a prominent ridge and a marked contrast with the surrounding lowland clay vales. The boundaries of the landscape are determined by the geological outcrop, the slopes of the pronounced landform and the extent of wooded land cover.

6A: Woburn Greensand Ridge



6A Woburn Greensand Ridge

Location and boundaries

- 6A.1 This large scale, rolling, elevated landscape occurs north of Leighton Buzzard predominantly over the solid band of Lower Greensand and with a distinctive ridge topography. It extends west from the *Mid Greensand Ridge* (6b) to the border with Buckinghamshire and is intersected by *Ouzel Greensand Valley* (7b) at its far western extent. The extensive woodland resource and presence of Woburn Abbey and park contribute to the distinctive character of the area. In comparison with character area 6b this part of the ridge has a gentler northern transition to the vale and is notable for areas of large scale mineral extraction.

Summary of landscape character: Key characteristics

- 6A.1.1 A large scale, rolling, elevated landscape occurring over the solid band of Lower Greensand (running SW to NE across Central Bedfordshire).
- 6A.1.2 Areas of highest ground (surrounding Woburn Park) are generally underlain by drift deposits of boulder clay.
- 6A.1.3 Predominantly under arable cultivation but considerable areas of pasture, contained by extensive woodland. Strong underlying heathland character.
- 6A.1.4 Large, deciduous and mixed woodland blocks (many ancient) - e.g. King's Wood, Washer's/ Daintry Woods, result in a strong wooded context - forming distinct wooded backdrop to views and a strong sense of enclosure. Large plantations of Scots pine are also a feature.
- 6A.1.5 Woburn Park and Abbey and its associated areas of woodland and plantations are an important feature. The red brick perimeter walls of Woburn Park impart a strong designed character. The deer and safari park provide recreational and ecological resources.
- 6A.1.6 Primary transport routes including the M1, A5, A507, A5130, A4146, A4012 together with a number of secondary roads cross the ridge.
- 6A.1.7 A number of historic houses, parks and gardens including Woburn Abbey, Crawley Park, Stockgrove and Rushmere Country Parks.
- 6A.1.8 Active and restored mineral extraction works are dispersed across the area, often associated with woodland e.g. sand pits on the edge of Heath and Reach, disused workings at old Wavendon Heath.
- 6A.1.9 Concentration of SSSI designations associated with areas of ancient semi-natural woodland, heathland, open water and improved neutral and acid grassland include King's Wood Heath and Reach and Wavendon Heath Ponds.
- 6A.1.10 Small scale, picturesque villages of Woburn and Aspley Guise characterised by consistent building materials of red brick, clay tiles, white windows. Recent expansion at Heath and Reach is sympathetic to the traditional style and use of materials.
- 6A.1.11 Landmark churches act as distinct focal points in the landscape e.g. St. Mary's Church at Woburn.
- 6A.1.12 The Greensand Ridge Walk and Milton Keynes Boundary Walk crosses along a significant length of the area connecting *Woburn Greensand Ridge* with the adjoining *Mid Greensand Ridge* (6b).
- 6A.1.13 Bordered by the urban edge of Leighton Buzzard, views to which are channelled by woodland cover at Rushmere.

Landscape Character Description

Physical and natural landscape

- 6A.2 The *Woburn Greensand Ridge* forms the western section of the prominent band of Lower Greensand that rises dramatically above the surrounding landscapes to define much of Central Bedfordshire. This part of the ridge is distinctive as a result of its strongly articulated landform and the extent of tree cover - forming an elevated wooded belt, visible from considerable distance. The ancient broadleaved woodland and Scots pine plantations combine to create a strong sense of enclosure - creating a dramatic contrast where views open out to large tracts of arable land and areas of pasture. Underlying the agricultural and wooded landscapes is a strong heathland character, relating to the greensand and thin acidic sandy soils. There are variable fields and roadside boundaries - ranging from mature shelterbelts to gappy, short cut boundaries to intact evergreen hedges enclosing lanes through areas of woodland e.g. New Wavendon Heath.
- 6A.3 Active and restored mineral workings also have an influence on landscape character - sand pits interspersing areas of woodland and often visible along the roadsides. Historic houses, parks and gardens are central to the character of the *Woburn Greensand Ridge* - Woburn Park and Abbey in particular, with its extensive areas of parkland is central to the development of the landscape since the middle ages - with considerable influence beyond the park boundaries.
- 6A.4 This part of the ridge includes primary transport corridors and large scale quarrying activity. However, there are numerous features that have ensured the intimate, rural character of the ridge has been retained, such as the areas of pasture, the extensive woodland tracts, which limit views to Leighton Buzzard, and the picturesque red-brick villages.



View of the village of Ridgmont over arable fields from Eversholt Road



The rolling and wooded landscape seen beyond a hedgerow-lined Aspley Lane

Biodiversity

- 6A.5 This is a well wooded elevated landscape, with particularly good survival of ancient semi-natural woodland to the west and south of the area. To the south at Heath and Reach the King's Wood and Baker's Wood forms part of the largest single area of ancient woodland in the county. Elsewhere, the woodland also includes more recent plantations. Parts of the area have been disturbed by quarrying, most notably for fuller's earth at Wavendon Heath - which has subsequently been restored for commercial forestry and sand extraction close to Leighton Buzzard. Arable farming remains the main land use, with localised areas of pasture around settlement and within parkland. A notable concentration of pasture occurs to the south in the area around 'Heath and Reach'. Estates and parkland are a key characteristic of the landscape and Woburn Park contains many ancient trees as well as extensive areas of semi-improved neutral and acid grassland. Other areas of unimproved grassland remain along road verges and small isolated sites such as Aspley Heath field. The underlying heathland character persists along rides within woodland such as Wavendon Heath - with acid wetland habitats present as small flushes also within the Wavendon Heath Ponds SSSI and local areas of heathland in the areas around 'Heath and Reach'. Numerous springs rise at the junction of the Greensand and

underlying clay and these feed into streams that flow to the lower lying clay vales - an example being the small stream that flows between Woburn and Aspley Guise.

- 6A.6 The Greensand Ridge is a Nature Improvement Area.

Visual and perceptual character

- 6A.7 A distinctive and heavily wooded area with a strong sense of enclosure. Where views open out to large open fields there is strong contrast. A landscape of rural character typified by areas of pasture, woodland tracts and picturesque red-brick villages but in which additional elements such as quarrying and transport corridors detract at a local scale.

Cultural pattern and historic character

- 6A.8 The lighter soils of the Greensand ridge were a focus of activity in the Mesolithic period, and occupation in the later prehistoric period is indicated by the Bronze Age barrows (scheduled) at The Knoll, north of Leighton Buzzard, and the probable former Iron Age hillfort at Craddocks Camp, Heath and Reach Mesolithic occupation
- 6A.9 Outcrops of Greensand tended to be marginal land within the medieval landscape, and largely occupied by heathland or woodland. Agricultural land, whether arable or pasture, was more focused on the areas of overlying boulder clay. As a result, the west of the Woburn character area is dominated by ancient woodland and plantations on former heathland; a further band of woodland east of Woburn Park runs along the edge of a boulder clay ridge.
- 6A.10 The presence of Woburn Abbey has dominated the development of the landscape since the middle ages, both as a religious house and as the centre of a large post-dissolution estate. North and west of the Park, the present pattern of arable fields originated as result of 19th century reorganisation of earlier irregular fields, in the interests of arable improvement; it has been subject to much 20th century boundary loss.
- 6A.11 Twentieth century sand extraction has dominated the area east of Heath and Reach.
- 6A.12 Earthwork sites are mostly limited to pockets of ridge and furrow. Medieval settlement earthworks have been recorded at Overendgreen, Heath and Reach, as an island largely surrounded by sand quarrying.



The historic core of Husborne Crawley medieval village

Settlement pattern; built character

- 6A.13 The historic cores of the nucleated medieval villages at Aspley Guise, Husborne Crawley and Ridgmont have been supplemented by linear settlements of Bedford Estate cottages. Woburn itself was a planned market town, located just outside the Abbey precinct for maximum economic benefit; its present character owes much to the lack of substantial growth or industrial development after the 18th century.

- 6A.14 To the east, the parish of Eversholt has a distinct settlement pattern comprising a large number of settlement 'ends', leading to the survival of areas of small irregular fields. To the south Heath and Reach was formerly two small hamlets but has coalesced and partially merged with Leighton Buzzard – although it retains essential features of a rural village based around a hill top village green.
- 6A.15 The small villages on the Greensand Ridge have a consistent unified architectural style e.g. red brick, clay tiles and white render that contributes to the strong rural character and contrast to the adjacent town of Leighton Buzzard.

Evaluation

Landscape Change

Past Change	Potential Future Change
Mineral extraction, in particular sand pits interspersing wooded areas e.g. at Heath and Reach.	East of Leighton Linslade urban extension.
Some large scale leisure developments e.g. Woburn Safari Park and associated buildings/infrastructure e.g. visitor centre and car parking facilities.	Potential for small scale development at Woburn Sands, Aspley Guise and Husborne Crawley, creating the impression of a more continuously settled area.
Housing expansion e.g. Heath and Reach and resulting in the near merger of Woburn Sands, Aspley Guise and Husborne Crawley.	Future heathland restoration projects creating more extensive linked areas of heathland.
Development of primary transport routes.	Renewable energy developments.
Expansion of Leighton Buzzard towards Heath and Reach at the southernmost point of the area.	
Development of the Linslade western bypass.	
Wind energy development at Heath and Reach.	

Key positive landscape features/ strategic sensitivities of the landscape

- 6A.1.14 Prominent landform creating a distinctive undeveloped skyline and horizon in the view from much of Bedfordshire. Any change on the ridge - land management or development/quarrying could threaten this important characteristic.
- 6A.1.15 Extensive woodland cover - an important, recreational and visual resource that unifies the landscape. Significant survival of ancient woodland with recorded medieval woodbanks. King's Wood Heath and Reach - the largest remaining ancient woodland in Bedfordshire. The woodlands require active and sustained management.
- 6A.1.16 Heath and acid grassland - which are remnants of a historic landscape and provide a resource for future landscape restoration.
- 6A.1.17 Woburn Park and Abbey (grade 1 registered landscape) and its associated areas of woodland and plantations provide an important landscape, recreation and ecological resource. The red brick perimeter walls of Woburn Park impart a strong designed character. The influence of the landscape extends beyond the park boundaries and is sensitive to inappropriate development and woodland planting.
- 6A.1.18 The 19th century field pattern north and west of Woburn Park, resulting from an important period of agricultural improvement.
- 6A.1.19 A number of historic houses, parks and gardens including, Toddington Manor, Stockgrove Country Park, Rushmere Park, which are an important feature of the landscape.

- 6A.1.20 Small scale villages of Woburn and Aspley Guise with distinct and unified architectural style associated with the Woburn Estate landscape. The distinctive village Ends around Eversholt that are sensitive to expansion and gradual merger.
- 6A.1.21 The Greensand Ridge Walk and Milton Keynes Boundary Walk provide recreational access to the adjoining *Mid Wooded Greensand Ridge* (6b).
- 6A.1.22 Landmark churches act as distinct focal points in the landscape e.g. St. Mary's Church at Woburn.
- 6A.1.23 Areas of pasture which intersperse the arable landscape creating a diverse mosaic.
- 6A.1.24 The distinctive settlement pattern and associated irregular small fields of Eversholt.
- 6A.1.25 Access opportunities and rights of way including the Greensand Ridge Walk and Milton Keynes Boundary Walk which provide links into the urban areas;
- 6A.1.26 Wooded context providing screening and integration of development, as at Aspley Guise and Leighton Buzzard.
- 6A.1.27 Strong unity and sense of place as a result of landscape features of relatively high value such as ancient woodlands, unimproved grassland, heathland, historical and cultural attributes and recreational value.

Visual Sensitivity

- 6A.1.28 Role of the ridge as the backdrop to the Vale (5c) - the heavily wooded northern edge of the ridge is elevated, exposed and highly visible area with clear reciprocal views to and from the adjacent low-lying, flat landscape. These views are sensitive to adverse change such as unsympathetic development within the foreground of the vale as seen from the ridge top. Likewise any adverse change - such as tall development or unsympathetic felling on the ridge top would be highly visible in views from the Vale.

Landscape Strategy

The overall strategy is to **conserve and enhance** the landscape of the Woburn Greensand Ridge. Key features that should be conserved include the ancient woodland, estate parkland and areas of pasture. Enhancement opportunities predominantly relate to improving its condition, which, with appropriate landscape management, would improve the integrity of the landscape and strengthen its character. There are also opportunities to restore elements that have been lost such as areas of heathland and acidic grassland.

Guidelines for New Development

- 6A.1.29 Conserve the consistent, unified architectural style e.g. red brick, clay tiles and white render of the small villages on the Greensand Ridge that create a rural character and a strong contrast to the adjacent town of Leighton Buzzard.
- 6A.1.30 Monitor the expansion of the villages of Woburn, Aspley Guise, Heath and Reach and Husborne Crawley to conserve their individual identity and prevent gradual coalescence.
- 6A.1.31 Conserve and enhance the historic parkland and estate landscapes with their woodland patterns, formal planting and built features such as estate walls. Any new landscape features or woodland planting should have regard to the designed character of the wider landscape around Woburn Park (not just within the park boundaries).
- 6A.1.32 Conserve the setting and views to landmark churches which act as distinct focal points in the landscape e.g. St. Mary's Church at Woburn.
- 6A.1.33 Protect and enhance the ancient irregular fields, particularly in Eversholt.

- 6A.1.34 Conserve the undeveloped wooded ridgeline connection with the *Salford-Aspley Clay Vale* (5c) and ensure any change (development) on the vale reflects this transition and respects the function of the flat vale as the foreground to the ridge.
- 6A.1.35 Conserve the contrast between the ridge and the adjacent low-lying clay vales landscape. Avoid development at the base of the northern ridge in order to conserve the contrast and dramatic change in landform and character between the two landscape types.
- 6A.1.36 Conserve panoramic views from the ridge across the adjacent *Salford-Aspley Clay Vale* (5c) and the role of the ridge itself in providing a strong wooded backdrop and horizon.
- 6A.1.37 Monitor the development of Woburn Safari Park and associated buildings/infrastructure e.g. visitor centre and car parking facilities whilst exploring opportunities for the restoration/improvement of areas subjected to considerable visitor pressure.
- 6A.1.38 Conserve the character of A roads and secondary roads that cross and align the greensand ridge (e.g. Aspley Lane, Mill Road) and limit urbanising influences through widening/kerbing and ensure that traffic management measures are sympathetic to the rural character. Prevent further fragmentation of the landscape.
- 6A.1.39 Conserve the strong wooded context to settlements and use this as a template for integration of new development.
- 6A.1.40 Consider opportunities for extending and connecting the existing woodland and heathland resource, particularly through the creation of additional broadleaved woodland and heathland mosaics.
- 6A.1.41 Ensure restoration of sand pits respond to their setting and contribute to landscape character, nature conservation and recreational objectives e.g. consider opportunities for creating further areas of heathland or acidic grassland on the ridge, particularly to enhance connectivity of habitat.
- 6A.1.42 Utilise local vernacular materials where appropriate to reinforce local distinctiveness.

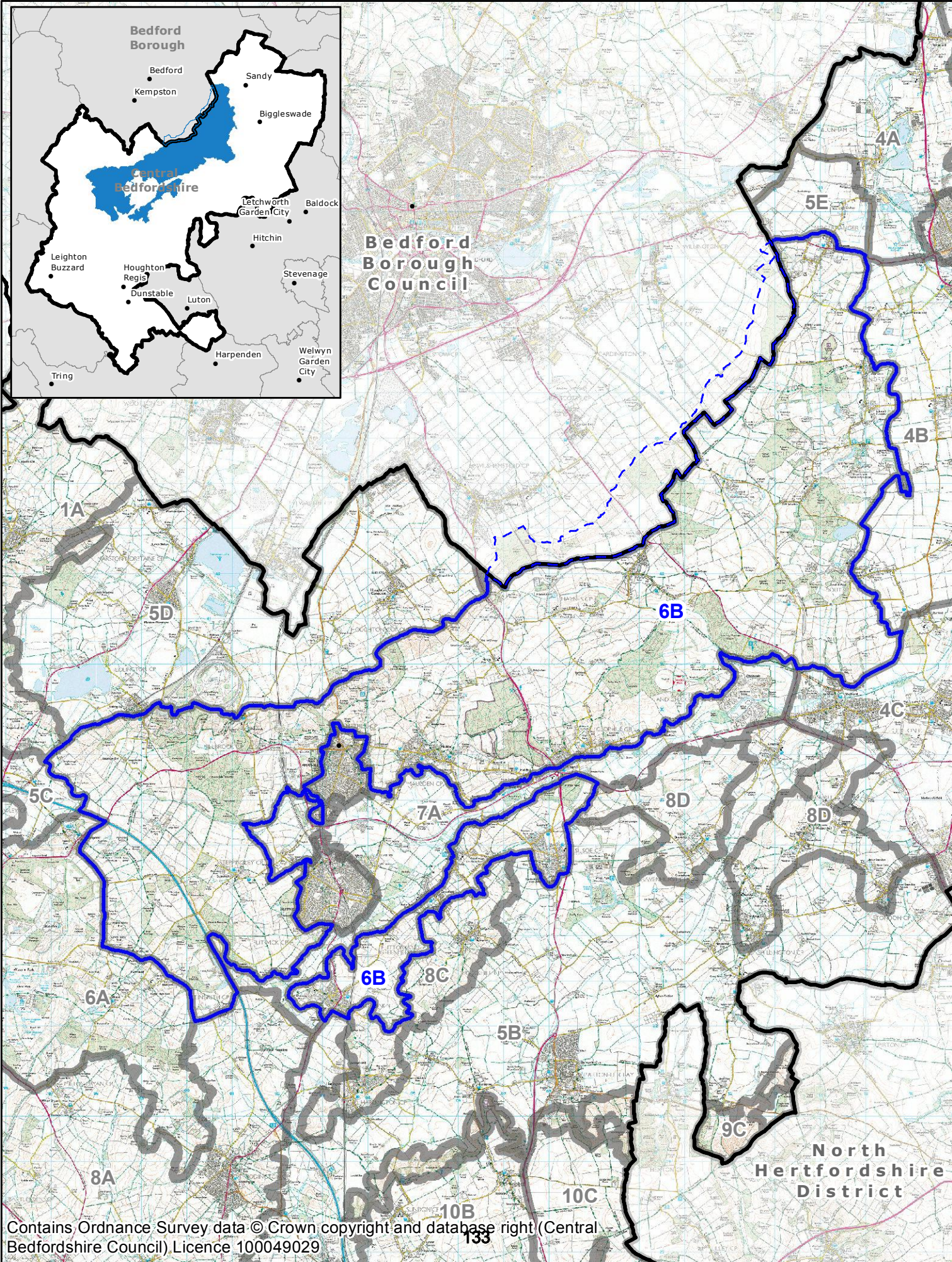
Landscape Management Guidelines

- 6A.1.43 Conserve the ancient woodland and ensure that it is brought into suitable management, including re-introduction of coppice where appropriate. The safeguarding of woodland earthworks is also a priority.
- 6A.1.44 Assess the potential for heathland restoration/creation particularly through diversification of existing coniferous plantations by selective tree felling and restoration of sand extraction sites. Consider the effects of any large scale felling on key views to the ridge.
- 6A.1.45 Conserve the remaining areas of pasture and seek to ensure continued grazing management.
- 6A.1.46 Conserve the parkland landscape through veteran tree management, repair of boundaries and sympathetic management of grassland.
- 6A.1.47 Conserve the recreational value of the landscape by continuing to maintain open access opportunities and rights of way including the Greensand Ridge Walk and Milton Keynes Boundary Walk which provide links into the urban areas.
- 6A.1.48 Conserve the wooded context of the ridgeline, buffering views to development on the ridge.
- 6A.1.49 Enhance the landscape buffer at the western urban edge of Leighton Linlade to screen development from open views.
- 6A.1.50 Enhance the condition and structure of hedgerow boundaries by focussing hedgerow renewal between remaining sections, to strengthen landscape pattern and ecological value and by actively applying a consistent management strategy.

Also refer to the following documents:

- Mid Bedfordshire Green Infrastructure Plan: Greensand Ridge
- Secrets of the Sands HLF project
- Greensand Nature Improvement Area

6B: Mid Greensand Ridge



6B Mid Greensand Ridge

Location and boundaries

- 6B.1 This large scale, elevated landscape forms the central section of the band of Greensand that stretches SW - NE across Central Bedfordshire. The steep slopes defining the northern edge of the ridge form a prominent backdrop to the *North Marston Vale and East Marston Vale Clay Vales* (5d and 5e) and provide commanding views across these adjacent low-lying, open landscapes. Cut by the *Flit Greensand Valley* (7a), the ridge is divided into two sections, with a southern outlying area abutting the contrasting *Barton-le-Clay Clay Vale* (5b) and the *Harlington-Pulloxhill Clay Hills* (8c) with which there is a subtle character transition. The northernmost part of the character area (part of the north-facing escarpment) falls within Bedford Borough – refer to the companion LCA for Bedford Borough.

Summary of landscape character: Key characteristics

- 6B.1.1 A large scale ridge with a gently undulating ridge top; forming part of the prominent band of Greensand that extends SW- NE across Central Bedfordshire.
- 6B.1.2 Dramatic northwest facing slope forming a distinct backdrop to the *North Marston Vale and East Marston Vale Clay Vales* (5d and 5e), as well as far-reaching, clear views across these adjacent open landscapes.
- 6B.1.3 Divided by the course of the River Flit which has carved a valley through the Greensand and created a small outlying section of the ridge to the south of the valley.
- 6B.1.4 Agricultural land is primarily in arable cultivation but with some variation of land use i.e. pockets of pasture and free-range pig farming that bring localised variation. There is a greater proportion of pasture on the northwest facing slope.
- 6B.1.5 Strong underlying heathland character with fine examples of remnant heathland and neutral/acid grassland.
- 6B.1.6 High ecological value - the area supports several nationally important sites for nature conservation including Kings Wood, Glebe Meadows, and Copper's Hill- all SSSI. Cooper's Hill is the largest heathland site remaining in Bedfordshire.
- 6B.1.7 Strong wooded context with extensive areas of deciduous woodland (a large proportion of which is ancient), mixed woodland and coniferous plantations e.g. Exeter Wood, Maulden Wood and Rowney Warren Wood. Woodland located along the northwest facing slope and northern half of the ridge top forms part of The Forest of Marston Vale Community Forest.
- 6B.1.8 The contrast of arable land and densely wooded areas creates contrasting perspectives from open and exposed to enclosed and sheltered.
- 6B.1.9 A large number of historic parks and gardens impart a designed character - including the Grade II* listed Southill Park and Old Warden Park and the Grade II listed Moggerhanger Park, Ickwell Bury and Ampthill Park.
- 6B.1.10 Parkland is a dominant land use, influencing not just the land within the park boundary but also the wider landscape for example through the creation or retention of tree clumps as part of significant vistas.
- 6B.1.11 Variable fields and roadside boundaries - ranging from mature shelterbelts to gappy, short flailed boundaries to intact holly hedges (surrounding Southill Park).
- 6B.1.12 A dismantled railway runs north-south through the area with railway bridges and tunnels in local views.
- 6B.1.13 Primary transport routes including the M1, A507 and A6 and Midland Mainline railway cross

north-south through the ridge and reduce tranquillity although large areas of the ridge have a remote character.

- 6B.1.14 Settlements comprise medium to small villages and hamlets (predominantly linear). Some have a varied character (due to modern expansion) e.g. Maulden and Silsoe with others (including estate villages) being consistent in terms of material and style such as Haynes (red bricks, clay tiles and timber-framed houses).
- 6B.1.15 The John Bunyan Trail and Greensand Ridge Walk cross significant tracts - connecting the ridge with the adjacent area.
- 6B.1.16 Bordered by the Georgian town of Ampthill that brings some urban edge characteristics to the landscape.

Landscape Character Description

Physical and natural landscape

- 6B.2 This is a dramatic, elevated landscape – forming part of the Lower Greensand that crosses diagonally across the north of Central Bedfordshire, forming a large scale ridge.
- 6B.3 This middle section of the ridge is particularly distinct as a result of its prominent north-west facing slope that rises dramatically from the adjacent, low-lying *Clay Vale* (largely within Bedford Borough). This strongly articulated slope offers a sense of containment to the vale as well as far-reaching and open views to the north. The slope defining the south of the ridge is less dramatic, forming a subtle transition to the adjacent *Clay Hills*. The ridge is divided by the River Flit which has carved a distinct valley through the greensand.
- 6B.4 The land use comprises a consistent and recognisable pattern of woodland blocks interspersed with expansive tracts of arable cultivation - creating changes in viewing experience from enclosed to open. There are some pockets of agricultural/land use diversity, such as free range pig farming, and these bring localised variation to the landscape. Large estate houses and surrounding parkland bring a notable formal designed character to the landscape, which often extends beyond the park boundaries through the retention or creation of significant tree blocks and clumps to form vistas.
- 6B.5 As with the whole of the greensand ridge, this landscape is defined by its strong underlying heathy character with small areas of remnant heathland and neutral/acid grassland. Cooper's Hill is significant as having the largest area of heather. The central section of the ridge is notable for the absence of mineral extraction works.
- 6B.6 The rural, and in places remote, character of the landscape has survived but visual and audible intrusions are evident where road corridors, including the M1 motorway and A507, cut through the landscape.

Biodiversity

- 6B.7 This is a well wooded elevated landscape, with particularly good survival of ancient semi-natural woodland along the north-west facing slopes and on the plateau top. In addition to the ancient woodland are areas of more recent plantation - many of which are on former heathland with heathy vegetation still present within rides and glades.
- 6B.8 The area includes a large number of sites designated as SSSI indicating national importance for biodiversity. Maulden Wood and Pennyfather's Hill SSSI is a large block of mixed, partly replanted deciduous woodland situated on a boulder clay cap. The site is notable for its exceptional invertebrate fauna which includes both county and national rarities, as well plant species which are uncommon in the county. The site also supports remnant open heathland within the plantations of Scot's pine. Kings Wood and Glebe Meadows, Houghton Conquest SSSI is a good example of ash-maple woodland and supports a rich variety of ground flora species, including several species that are uncommon in the county. Glebe Meadows are situated

adjacent to the northern boundary of Kings Wood, and form a species rich area of unimproved grassland. Other important woodland sites include Southill Lake and Woods SSSI which is an example of wet valley alder wood which has developed where springs and flushes arise at the junction of the Lower Greensand with the Gault Clay of mid-Bedfordshire. The woodland grades into open tall fen vegetation.

- 6B.9 The *Mid Greensand Ridge* has also retained two nationally important areas of unimproved grassland. Maulden Church Meadow SSSI is an unimproved pasture, characterised in its higher northern section by neutral grassland which has formed on a cap of boulder clay, while the southernmost part which has formed over the Lower Greensand, has developed more acidic grassland characteristics. Maulden Heath SSSI also forms an area of unimproved acid grassland and is situated on a gently south-facing slope of the Lower Greensand. The site consists of two distinct grassland areas, referred to as the eastern and western meadows, and supports a good range of acid grassland species.
- 6B.10 The parklands include many veteran trees as well as areas of semi-improved neutral and acid grassland.
- 6B.11 The Greensand Ridge is a Nature Improvement Area.

Visual and perceptual character

- 6B.12 Extensive views are afforded by the elevated aspect – clear, far views across adjacent lower lying open landscapes such as the vales. Areas of agricultural land on the ridge are primarily under arable cultivation, however considerable texture and visual interest is imparted by deciduous woodlands, relict heaths and areas of acid grassland, plus designed parklands. The area has a strongly rural and remote quality, with only localised intrusions in the form of the M1, A6, A507 and Midland Mainline Railway.



Extensive views from elevated ground towards the village of Haynes West End



View to Clophill Old Church from Cainhoe quarry

Cultural pattern and historic character

- 6B.13 The light Greensand soils were a focus for Mesolithic activity, particularly along the edge of the Flit valley. There is evidence in the form of cropmarks of later prehistoric & Roman settlement where boulder clay caps the top of the Greensand ridge.
- 6B.14 In the middle ages, areas where the Greensand outcrops were considered marginal land, and were used primarily for warrens and deer-parks (Millbrook Warren, Ampthill Warren, Ampthill Great and Little Parks, Haynes Warren, Rowney Warren). Estates were given as foundation grants for religious houses: Chicksands and Warden Abbeys. At Ampthill, a substantial residence built in the 15th century came into royal hands in the 16th and 17th centuries; for a time it was a favoured hunting retreat of Henry VIII.

- 6B.15 After the dissolution, many of the medieval parks and monastic estates were developed as extensive designed landscapes. During later centuries further country houses were founded with their own parkland making them the characteristic historic land use of the area, as for example at Ampthill Park, a Capability Brown landscape. The significance of the parks is noticeable not just within the park boundaries, but in the design of the wider landscape, for example, in the creation or retention of tree clumps as part of significant vistas.
- 6B.16 Ancient woodland survives on the crest of the ridge, and the associated field patterns (particularly in the northern part of the area) are mainly the result of ancient enclosure (assarting) out of former woodland. Where common fields existed between these areas of ancient enclosure they did not tend to be extensive.
- 6B.17 18th and 19th century enclosure was followed by extensive 19th century plantations on former heathland by the Bedford and Southill estates - Millbrook Warren, Coopers Hill, Maulden Wood, Rowney Warren. Land which had been in the common fields was divided up by regular boundaries, but many of these were removed during the 20th century.
- 6B.18 Towards the south-west, most of the irregular fields which were created by assarting, or when the deer-parks were subdivided in the later middle ages, were replaced by regular fields as part of the Bedford estates 19th century agricultural reorganisation.
- 6B.19 The military use of Chicksands Park in the 20th century has had a significant landscape impact.
- 6B.20 South of Flit valley, this area comprises mostly 19th century parliamentary enclosure fields, with some pockets of more ancient enclosure.
- 6B.21 Many moated sites have survived in the area, associated with woodland assarting, dispersed settlement or medieval deer parks. Those scheduled as ancient monuments are Newbury Farm (Silsoe), Westoning Manor, Wake's End (Eversholt), Maltings Spinney (Ridgmont) and Bolebec Farm, Maulden.
- 6B.22 Also scheduled is the site of Warden Abbey, surrounded by an extensive landscape of Cistercian water engineering. Ampthill Castle and Houghton House are sites of major significance, occupying prominent positions on the top of the Greensand escarpment, and both open to public access. Other important medieval earthworks can be found at Quince Hill, Old Warden (a ringwork), Bury Farm, Houghton Conquest (a pillow mound for the breeding of rabbits, though scheduled as a Neolithic long barrow) and manorial fishponds in Home Wood, Northill. The ruined church of St Mary, above the village of Clophill, is a prominent landscape feature marking a former focus of medieval settlement.
- 6B.23 The registered parks are Moggerhanger Park (grade II), Ickwell Bury (II), Old Warden, including the 19th century Swiss Garden (II*), Southill (II*), Chicksands (II), Ampthill (II) and Flitwick Manor (II).

Settlement pattern; built character

- 6B.24 Settlement form is varied, with some nucleation (Steppingley, Millbrook, Ampthill) but other areas are more dispersed; this is especially the case in the former parkland areas in Ridgmont and Liddington, and in the assart areas to the north-east. There is a line of small 'ends' along the dip slope at Maulden and Clophill, associated with small irregular fields. Haynes has several ends, with Ends also characteristic at Steppingley and Eversholt. Center Parcs, new housing and associated transport improvements including roundabouts on the A507 has extended an urban influence to the west of Ampthill. Ickwell is distinguished by its characteristic village green.
- 6B.25 Settlement is typically located in sheltered areas on the sloping valley sides and towards the base of the ridge as opposed to the more open ridge top. Red brick, white render and clay tiles are consistently used and unify the character of the settlements. Black tarred timber barns are a feature of the agricultural landscape.



Parts of the ridge are cut by large scale transport corridors such as the M1



View towards the estate and designed parkland of Haynes Park from Church End Road

Evaluation

Landscape Change

Past Change	Potential Future Change
Afforestation and plantation woodland.	Continued pressure for growth at Ampthill, Maulden and Clophill.
Agricultural intensification/ boundary loss.	Transport corridor upgrades.
Large scale transport corridors.	Habitat creation schemes (heathland).
Settlement expansion.	
Large scale leisure developments e.g. Center Parcs	

Key positive landscape features/ strategic sensitivities of the landscape

- 6B.1.17 Prominent landform creating a distinctive skyline and horizon in the view from much of Bedfordshire. Any change on the ridge - land management or development/quarrying could threaten this important characteristic.
- 6B.1.18 Remnant heath and neutral/ acid grassland which require active management to sustain ecological and landscape interest.
- 6B.1.19 Significant ecological value, containing a number of nationally important sites for nature conservation.
- 6B.1.20 Extensive areas of woodland cover, many ancient (and some now forming part of the Forest of Marston Vale) - providing an important recreational, ecological and visual resource. Existing woodland require active long-term management to sustain biodiversity and visual interest.
- 6B.1.21 A large number historic parks and gardens which impart a formal, designed character to the landscape - and have a significant influence on character beyond the park boundaries.
- 6B.1.22 Strong influence of the estates in the 19th century, in the form of plantations on former heathland, and reorganisation of field boundaries.
- 6B.1.23 Villages with a consistent traditional intact character which remain vulnerable to development, infill and settlement expansion and loss of individual identity - this is particularly the case for the more loose knit settlements and 'Ends'.

- 6B.1.24 Good survival of irregular field patterns, often associated with medieval moated sites, derived from medieval woodland assarting.
- 6B.1.25 A large number of nationally important medieval earthworks and monastic sites.
- 6B.1.26 Greensand Ridge Walk and John Bunyan Trail provide recreational access across the ridge and to the adjacent landscapes.
- 6B.1.27 Intact holly hedges at Eversholt, Steppingly and surrounding Southill Park are important local landscape features.
- 6B.1.28 Although interrupted in places, there is a pervading rural, remote quality to the landscape.

Visual Sensitivity

- 6B.1.29 Striking north facing slope providing far reaching views across the adjacent Clay Vales landscape (*North Marston Vale and Mid Marston Vale Clay Vales* (5d and 5e)), plus panoramic views southeast from the ridge towards Pottton and Ashwell.
- 6B.1.30 The prominent slope – which is distinctive in views from the north, south and east – would be sensitive to large scale development or changes in land management, particularly the northwest facing slope.

Landscape Strategy

This is a high quality biodiversity-rich historic landscape. The overall strategy is to **conserve and enhance** the landscape of the Mid Greensand Ridge (6b). The area should continue to provide a strong wooded backdrop and undeveloped skyline in the view from much of Bedfordshire. Conservation should focus upon positive features and especially those identified as being sensitive, notably the ancient woodland, estate parkland and areas of pasture. Landscape enhancement opportunities predominantly relate to improving overall condition of the ridge and reinforcing landscape elements so as to strengthen landscape pattern and overall character. There are also key opportunities to restore elements that have been lost such as the areas of heathland.

Guidelines for New Development

- 6B.1.31 Respect the consistent, unified architectural character of villages e.g. red brick, clay tiles and timber frames.
- 6B.1.32 Monitor linear development, infill of villages in order to prevent further settlement coalescence and loss of individual village identity – this is particular the case for the dispersed, loose settlements and 'Ends'.
- 6B.1.33 Monitor the expansion/widening of the transport corridors to prevent further fragmentation of the landscape.
- 6B.1.34 Conserve panoramic views from the ridge across the adjacent Clay Vales (5d, 5e).
- 6B.1.35 Conserve the ridge in providing a strong wooded horizon, skyline and backdrop to the surrounding vales - any ridge top change could have a major impact in views.
- 6B.1.36 Conserve views to and from the northwest facing slope and resist development at the foot of the slope that would threaten to dilute the dramatic contrast in character between the vales and the ridge.
- 6B.1.37 Conserve the character of rural roads, limiting urbanising influences e.g. kerbing and widening and erosion of verges. Ensure that traffic management measures are sympathetic to those areas with a strong rural character;

- 6B.1.38 Conserve the distinction between the ridge and the adjacent Flit Greensand Valley (7a) and ensure development does not spill over the ridge diluting the contrast between the two landscapes.
- 6B.1.39 Retain views to important local landmarks, particularly at gateways to villages – e.g. the church spire at Ridgmont or the tower at Maulden in views from the south, keeping such views free from development which would detract or obscure.
- 6B.1.40 Promote Green Infrastructure and explore options for improving recreational opportunities and public access. Nevertheless, it is important to consider the associated development of facilities e.g. visitor centres, car parking and potential impact of increased traffic that might impact upon the rural, tranquil character defining much of the ridge.
- 6B.1.41 Restrict expansion of development associated with the J13 and encourage woodland planting to reduce the visual dominance of infrastructure in views from the south west of the character area.
- 6B.1.42 Monitor equestrian development, pony paddocks, stables and stores.
- 6B.1.43 Conserve the medieval moated sites and safeguard their landscape setting.
- 6B.1.44 Utilise local vernacular materials where appropriate to reinforce local distinctiveness.

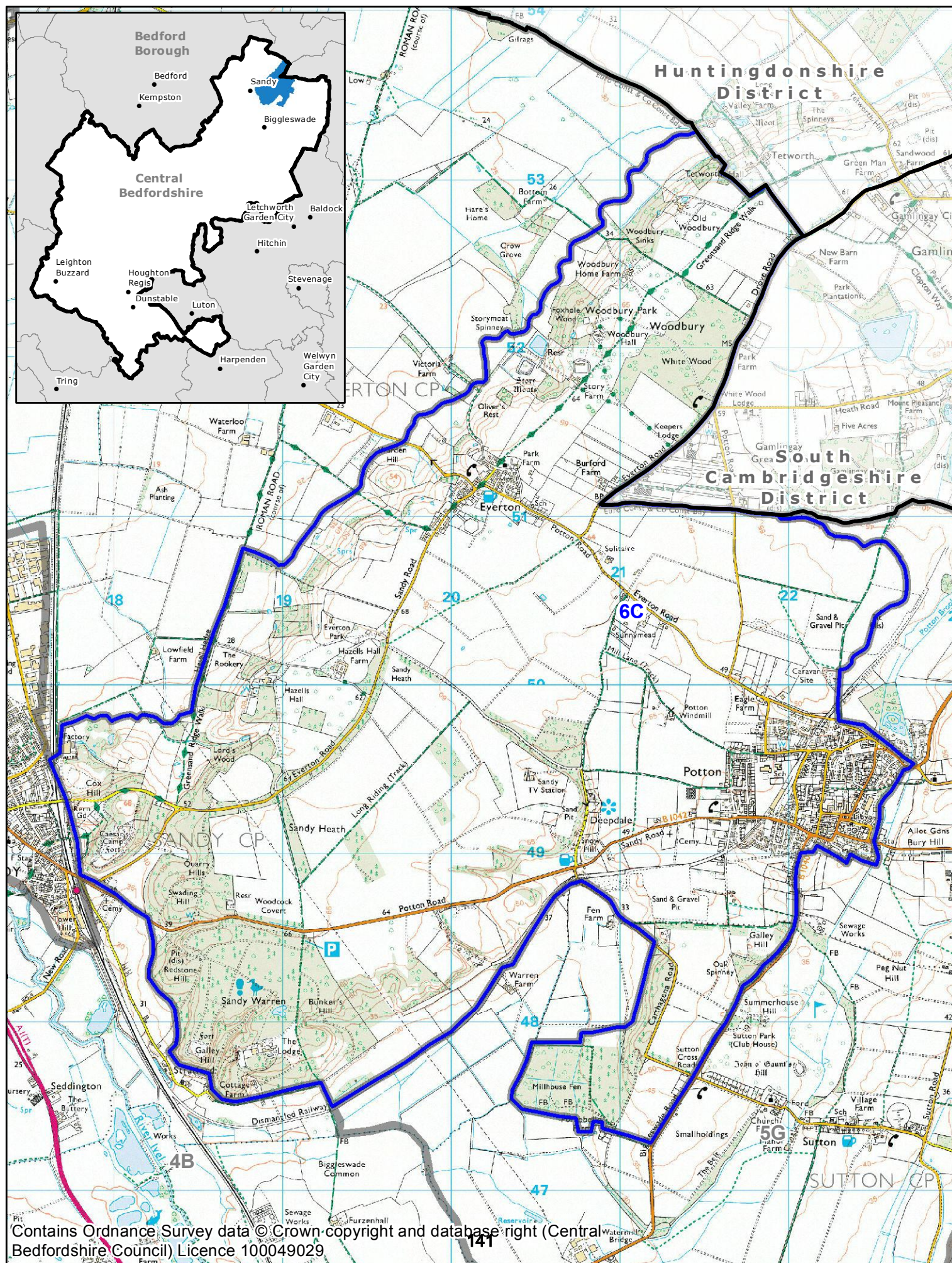
Landscape Management Guidelines

- 6B.1.45 Further heathland restoration, creation and extension of existing sites - particularly through diversification of existing coniferous plantation by select tree felling - ensure the effects of felling on long views to the ridge are taken into consideration. Extension or recreation of heathland should have regard to the historic pattern.
- 6B.1.46 Extend and connect existing woodland and heathland resource, particularly through the creation of additional broadleaved woodland and heathland mosaics. Extension or recreation of woodland should have regard to the historic pattern.
- 6B.1.47 Ensure the existing ancient woodland resource is brought into management, including reintroduction of coppice management where appropriate.
- 6B.1.48 Conserve the remaining areas of pasture and consider opportunities for restoration of pasture to create a mixed landscape mosaic. In particular retain and enhance areas of small irregular fields.
- 6B.1.49 Conserve and enhance the historic parkland landscapes with their associated woodland in order to retain the design qualities they bring to overall landscape character. Replace historic planting schemes in and around parks and safeguard the setting of historic parks.
- 6B.1.50 Conserve the recreational value of the landscape by continuing to maintain open access opportunities and rights of way including the Greensand Ridge Walk, John Bunyan Trail and woodland/forestry access.
- 6B.1.51 Enhance the condition and structure of hedgerow boundaries - reinstating sections so as to strengthen landscape pattern and ecological value.
- 6B.1.52 Monitor the growth of nurseries and their impact on landscape character.

Also refer to the following documents:

- Mid Bedfordshire Green Infrastructure Plan: Greensand Ridge
- Greensand Trust
- Marston Vale Forest Plan
- Clophill Green Infrastructure Plan
- Secrets of the Sands HLF project
- Greensand Nature Improvement Area

6C: Everton Heath Greensand Ridge



6C Everton Heath Greensand Ridge

Location and Boundaries

- 6C.1 This is the easternmost part of the *Greensand Ridge* landscape in Central Bedfordshire which continues over the county boundary into Cambridgeshire. It is geographically separated from the main part of the ridge (6a and 6b) by the wide valley of the Great Ouse (4a) and Lower Ivel (4b). This part of the ridge has a steep northern transition to the vale (5f) with a gentler undulating slope down to the vale to the south (5g) and west-facing escarpment to Sandy.

Summary of landscape character: Key characteristics

- 6C.1.1 An elevated landscape occurring over the solid band of Lower Greensand (running SW to NE across Central Bedfordshire). This character area forms the easternmost part of the ridge - it has a steep northwest facing 'escarpment' backed by an area of high undulating land forming the ridge top.
- 6C.1.2 Varied land cover pattern with large scale mosaic of plantation and deciduous woodland, open areas of heathland creation, arable cropping and set side - together creating a diverse textured landscape. Pine clumps are a distinctive landscape feature.
- 6C.1.3 Sense of scale and enclosure varying from enclosed dark beech plantations, to vast open panoramas from the ridge top, for example, Warden Hill near Everton. Experience of the landscape includes filtered views through woodland opened up for heathland creation, directed views associated with parkland planting, and extensive views from the open arable ridge top.
- 6C.1.4 Strong underlying heathland character (Sandy Heath, Potton Heath, Gamlingay Great Heath (Cams)) evident in road names e.g. 'Heath Road', verge and woodland understorey vegetation, and in the areas of heathland recreation initiated by the RSPB (Sandy Warren SSSI).
- 6C.1.5 Variable field and roadside boundaries - ranging from mature shelterbelts to gappy, short flailed boundaries to intact hedges.
- 6C.1.6 Large, deciduous, mixed and plantation woodland blocks - some of which are ancient - e.g. White Wood, to the north and woods associated with areas of parkland result in a strong wooded context - contrasting with more open arable areas.
- 6C.1.7 Strong estate parkland character - with houses, parkland planting, formal avenues, estate woodlands and gatehouse lodges forming an important landscape element at Woodbury Park, Hazells Hall, and Everton Park. To the south The Lodge is now the headquarters of the RSPB.
- 6C.1.8 Iron Age hillforts control the gap in the Greensand Ridge as at Caesar's Camp and Galley Hill.
- 6C.1.9 Springs occur along the steep northern ridge - otherwise water is largely absent within the landscape apart from a reservoir at Woodbury Park and a pond at The Lodge.
- 6C.1.10 Limited road network with a triangle of routes connecting settlements of Everton and Potton, and the market town of Sandy - at the foot of the ridge.
- 6C.1.11 The sparse road network contrasts with the extensive unmarked tracks which cross through the area providing access. The Greensand Ridge Walk is a popular long distance route.
- 6C.1.12 Historic town of Potton - archetypal small town, with attractive red and buff brick buildings clustered around the market square.
- 6C.1.13 Active and restored mineral extraction works are dispersed across the area including a sandstone quarry north of Potton Road and sand and gravel workings near Deepdale - undergoing progressive restoration. Workings are generally well screened within the

landscape.

- 6C.1.14 Small linear village of Everton above the 'escarpment' with the larger expanded village of Potton to the south, based around the market square.
- 6C.1.15 Landmark churches, with distinct towers act as focal points in the landscape e.g. at Everton. The church at Potton is by comparison set away from the village at the edge of the vale (5g). The mast at Sandy transmitter station is a dominant feature in views to the ridge and across the ridge. There is a small windmill north of Potton.
- 6C.1.16 Recreational landscape with facilities and extensive walks associated with the RSPB reserve and the long distance route of the Greensand Ridge Walk.

Landscape Character Description

Physical and natural character

- 6C.2 This is an elevated landscape - forming part of the Lower Greensand that crosses the north of Central Bedfordshire, forming a large scale ridge. Views to the ridge from the adjacent lower lying vale landscapes and the Ouse Valley are a key characteristic of Central Bedfordshire. Three Iron Age hillforts control the gap in the Greensand Ridge as at Caesar's Camp and Galley Hill.
- 6C.3 The strongly articulated north-west facing slope offers a sense of containment to the vale as well as providing far-reaching and open views to the north. The slope defining the south of the ridge is less dramatic, forming a subtle transition to the adjacent *Clay Vale*.
- 6C.4 The land cover pattern is consistent with large scale mosaic of plantation and deciduous woodland, open areas of heathland creation, arable cropping and setaside - together creating a diverse textured landscape. Pine clumps are a distinctive feature. The sense of scale and enclosure varies from enclosed dark beech plantations, to vast open panoramas from the ridge top, for example, Warden Hill near Everton. Experience of the landscape includes filtered views through woodland opened up for heathland creation, directed views associated with parkland planting, and extensive views from the open arable ridge top.
- 6C.5 A strong underlying heathland character (Sandy Heath, Potton Heath, Gamlingay Great Heath (Cambs)) is evident in road names e.g. 'Heath Road', verge and woodland understorey vegetation, and in the large areas of heathland recreation initiated by the RSPB (Sandy Warren SSSI).
- 6C.6 Large estate houses and surrounding parkland bring a notable formal designed character to the landscape - with houses, parkland planting, formal avenues, estate woodlands and gatehouse lodges forming an important landscape element at Woodbury Park, Hassells Hall and Everton Park. To the south, The Lodge is the headquarters of the RSPB.
- 6C.7 Active and restored mineral extraction works are dispersed across the area including a sand quarry north of Potton Road and sand and gravel workings near Deepdale which are progressively being restored. For the most part the workings are well screened within the landscape.

Biodiversity

- 6C.8 This is a well wooded elevated landscape. The woodland consists of some ancient semi-natural sites as well as more recent plantations - the latter frequently on areas of former heathland as at Sandy Warren. The area includes a number of parklands as at Woodbury Park and Hazells Hall which retain areas of pasture and ancient trees. The former heathland character of this part of the ridge is evident and areas of heathland and acid grassland persist at Sandy Warren - here a major restoration project is restoring areas of plantation to heathland, with the adjacent Sandy Heath Quarry also being restored to acid grassland and heathland. Small areas of unimproved neutral grassland are present e.g. at Everton Hill at Everton Churchyard. Elsewhere the ridge is mainly in arable use with local areas of pasture.

6C.9 The Greensand Ridge is a Nature Improvement Area.



Woodland at Cox Hill



Productive farmland enclaves west of Potton Church

Visual and perceptual character

- 6C.10 The distinctive north-west facing slope offers a sense of containment to the vale as well as providing far-reaching and open views to the north. Blocks of woodland provide a sense of intimacy and diversity in the landscape whilst far ranging views from elevated spots (e.g. near Everton) and designed parkland create a landscape of texture and interest.

Cultural pattern and historic character

- 6C.11 Cropmarks indicate the presence of late prehistoric or Roman occupation across the Greensand plateau. At the crest of the escarpment to the west are three Iron Age hillforts overlooking the Ivel Valley, where it cuts through the ridge. These controlled access through the river valley at this strategic location.
- 6C.12 The poor sandy soils were marginal land in the medieval period, utilised as warrens covering large areas of the plateau. Along the north-west facing crest of the escarpment, possibly attracted by a narrow outcrop of Ampthill Clay, there is a line of historic settlement foci, comprising Hassells, Everton, Story Farm (in a former detached part of the parish of Tetworth, Huntingdonshire) and Woodbury. These were associated with small irregular fields (old enclosures). Ancient woodland survives at Woodbury, which suggests this may have originated as an assart settlement. The historic land units belonging to these settlements took the form of long strips running from the Greensand plateau, over the escarpment down into the vale to the north-west, though this arrangement has been lost in more recent administrative boundary changes.
- 6C.13 At enclosure, the warrens were subdivided by regular field boundaries, many of which (particularly at Everton Warren) were removed in the 20th century. Other areas were laid out as parkland around country houses (Sandy Lodge, Hasells Hall and Woodbury Hall), with plantations established on the ridge overlooking Sandy.
- 6C.14 The three Iron Age hillforts - Sandy Lodge, Galley Hill (both scheduled) and Caesar's Camp - occupy prominent positions on the crest of the escarpment overlooking Sandy. Earthworks representing the remains of medieval settlement along the ridge overlooking the clay vale can be found at Everton and Woodbury, and the scheduled moated site at Story Farm (former Tetworth parish).
- 6C.15 The parkland at Hazells Hall is registered Grade II.

Settlement pattern; built character

- 6C.16 Settlement is largely nucleated and contained within the small village of Everton and the historic market town of Potton. Beyond this settlement is mainly limited to areas associated with historic parkland - farms and estate buildings and there is relatively little scattered settlement across the wider area. A linear collection of dwellings within the incised sandstone valley is a feature at Deepdale.
- 6C.17 Potton developed as a prosperous market gardening town with market garden plots largely being located within the adjacent character area east of Potton. The town is clustered around a central market square - of medieval origin with buildings ranging from the 16th century to the present day. St. Mary's church is reached by the Causeway and is a distinctive feature - set away from the town on the edge of the adjacent Vale. The sandstone church tower at Everton is a further landmark feature as is the mast at Sandy Transmitting station which provides a locational reference in views from a wide distance.
- 6C.18 The characteristic building material is ironstone and sandstone quarried locally and found in the larger houses, churches, for example Everton church, and occasional boundary features. Elsewhere vernacular buildings materials include red and buff brick - forming the distinctive centre of Potton, plus colour washed render, slate and clay tiles. The settlements, notably the edge of Potton have expanded to include considerable areas of more modern post war residential estates.

Evaluation

Landscape Change

Past Change	Potential Future Change
Quarry and subsequent landscape restoration of quarry pits e.g. Sandy Heath Quarry.	Construction of committed housing developments in Potton.
Loss of hedgerow boundary features.	Potential for further urbanisation of the road network.
Housing expansion at Potton.	Renewable energy developments.
Dilution of market gardening.	Reduction of coniferous woodland; regeneration of heathland.
Heathland restoration projects.	

Key positive landscape features/ strategic sensitivities of the landscape

- 6C.1.17 Prominent landform creating a distinctive skyline and horizon in the views from the vale (5f). Any change on the ridge - land management or development/quarrying could impinge on these views.
- 6C.1.18 Extensive mosaic of woodland and heathland - an important recreational, biodiversity and visual resource. The woodland and heathland require sustained management. The remnant heathland reflects the extensive heaths and warrens of the medieval period.
- 6C.1.19 Historic estate and parkland landscapes associated with The Lodge, Woodbury Park, Everton Park and Hazells Hall imparting a strong designed character.
- 6C.1.20 Iron Age hillforts (Sandy Lodge, Galley Hill, Caesar's Camp) which occupy a significant strategic position in the landscape.
- 6C.1.21 The distribution of former settlements along the crest of the ridge, associated with small irregular fields, and set within linear land units.
- 6C.1.22 The Greensand Ridge Walk which provide recreational access and links this outlying part of the ridge with the main ridge (6a and 6b) to the west.

- 6C.1.23 Landmark churches act as distinct focal points in the landscape e.g. at Everton.
- 6C.1.24 Considerable nature conservation value with SSSI designated heath, grassland and woodland habitats at Sandy Warren which require sustained management.
- 6C.1.25 Strong unity and sense of place which result from the combination of valued landscape elements including ancient woodlands, heathland, historic parkland and recreation.

Visual Sensitivity

- 6C.1.26 Role of the ridge as the backdrop to the Vale (5f) - the northern edge of the ridge is elevated, exposed and highly visible with clear reciprocal views to and from the adjacent low-lying vale landscape. These views are vulnerable to adverse change within the vale. Likewise any adverse change - such as tall development or unsympathetic felling on the ridge top would be highly visible in views from the vale. At closer range changes in land management such as creation of extensive areas of set aside or new crops on the steep northern slopes also has the potential to have a high visual impact being seen in plan form from below.

Landscape Strategy

The moderate condition and strong character of the Everton Heath Greensand Ridge (6c) suggest an overall strategy to **conserve and enhance** the landscape. Key features that should be conserved include the ancient woodland, estate parkland and function as a rural, wooded backdrop in views. The area has a strong underlying heathland character and conservation and restoration of heath is a key opportunity. Enhancement opportunities predominantly relate to improving its condition, notably hedgerow boundaries. There are also continuing opportunities to restore, extend and link areas of heathland.

Guidelines for New Development

- 6C.1.27 Improve the integration of the edge of Potton with its landscape setting.
- 6C.1.28 Conserve the essentially undeveloped wooded and open ridgeline in views from the adjacent vales (5f and 5g).
- 6C.1.29 Conserve the setting and views to landmark churches and other features which act as distinct focal points in the landscape.
- 6C.1.30 Conserve the contrast between the ridge and the adjacent low-lying clay vales landscape. Avoid development at the base of the northern ridge in order to conserve the contrast and dramatic change in landform and character between the two landscape types.
- 6C.1.31 Conserve the rural character of the secondary roads that cross and align the ridge (e.g. Potton Road, Everton Road) and limit urbanising influences.
- 6C.1.32 Ensure restoration of quarries and pits responds to landscape character and nature conservation objectives e.g. increasing consider opportunities for creating further areas of heathland on the ridge.
- 6C.1.33 Utilise local vernacular materials to add detail and reinforce local distinctiveness.

Landscape Management Guidelines

- 6C.1.34 Conserve the ancient woodland and ensure that it is brought into suitable management, including re-introduction of coppice where appropriate.
- 6C.1.35 Assess the potential for further heathland restoration/creation particularly through restoration of extraction sites and opportunities associated with redundant arable land and forestry plantations. Consider the effects of any large scale felling on key views to the ridge.

- 6C.1.36 Conserve the remaining areas of pasture and seek to ensure continued grazing management.
- 6C.1.37 Conserve and enhance the historic parkland and estate landscapes with their woodland patterns, formal planting, ancient trees pasture and built features such as estate walls and gate lodges.
- 6C.1.38 Conserve the recreational value of the landscape by continuing to maintain rights of way including the Greensand Ridge Walk.
- 6C.1.39 Conserve panoramic views from the ridge across the adjacent vales and beyond and the role of the ridge itself in providing a strong wooded backdrop and horizon.
- 6C.1.40 Enhance the condition and structure of hedgerow boundaries by focussing hedgerow renewal between remaining sections as to strengthen landscape pattern and ecological value by actively applying a consistent management strategy. In particular focus efforts on conserving surviving boundaries of the historic land units and consider reinstatement where possible.
- 6C.1.41 Conserve and enhance the old irregular fields and associated ancient woodland representing historic land use patterns along the north-west facing crest of the ridge.
- 6C.1.42 Encourage active management of areas used for horse grazing - including retention of hedge boundaries, minimising proliferation of temporary structures and active sward management.
- 6C.1.43 Conserve the site and setting of the archaeological features, notably the Iron Age Hill forts overlooking the Ivel Valley and the scheduled moat.

Also refer to the following documents:

- Mid Bedfordshire Green Infrastructure Plan
- Potton Green Infrastructure Plan
- Secrets of the Sands HLF project
- Greensand Nature Improvement Area