

Canterbury City Council

Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal

Final report

Prepared by LUC

October 2020



Canterbury City Council

Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Landscape Context

Structure of the report

- 1.1 This report is structured as follows:
- **Chapter 1: Introduction and Landscape Context** presents the background and purpose of the Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal, existing policy context and relationship to other landscape studies (this chapter).
 - **Chapter 2: Methodology for the Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal** presents a summary of the method and approach.
 - **Chapter 3: Formative Influences** looks at the physical and cultural influences that have shaped Canterbury District's landscape in the past.
 - **Chapter 4: Summary of Landscape Issues** looks at the influences which shape the current and future landscape.
 - **Chapter 5: The Landscape Character of Canterbury** presents an outline of the landscape character of the district and the landscape classification.
 - **Chapter 6: Canterbury Landscape Character Profiles** details the character of Canterbury District through a series of area profiles.
- 1.2 The report is supported by the following appendices:
- **Appendix A:** A glossary of terms.
 - **Appendix B:** Landscape Classification Changes
 - **Appendix C:** Biodiversity Appraisal Method
 - **Appendix D:** Description of Conservation Areas throughout the district.
 - **Appendix E:** A list of stakeholders and organisations consulted.
 - **Appendix F:** User guide for decision makers.

Background and purpose of the Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal

1.3 LUC was commissioned in May 2019 to review and refresh Canterbury City Council's landscape evidence base. This involved an update of the draft Canterbury Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal produced in 2012, to provide a comprehensive and up to date study for all land outside the defined settlements of Canterbury, Whitstable and Herne Bay. This update does not include the areas of the district within the Kent Downs AONB which is covered by a separate AONB Landscape Character Assessment (see para. 1.11). It aims to integrate with the AONB assessment and understand the relationship and landscape setting of the AONB.

1.4 The Canterbury District Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal (2020) provides a robust evidence base to underpin the review of the Local Plan and to assist in the local planning process. It is intended to both inform work on policy development and development management, guiding development and land management that is sympathetic to local character and the special qualities of the district, including encouraging the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019. It will also promote an understanding of how the landscapes of the district are changing as a result of a combination of natural, economic and human factors, and how they can be strengthened in response.

1.5 The Canterbury District Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal (2020) can be used to consider landscape character and biodiversity when planning any type of change. It is therefore designed to be used by all involved in decisions about proposals for change and development including:

- Landscape professionals;
- Developers, members of professional development project teams and other organisations who own or manage land;
- Other professionals involved in assessing the consequences of change on other aspects of the environment including future land management and implementation of agri- environment schemes;
- Planners and other officers in local government and government agencies who may be the recipients of

reports on the consequences of change and development; and

- Politicians, parish councils, local interest groups, amenity societies and the general public who may be involved in decisions about proposals for change and development.

1.6 The Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal should be read alongside other Council evidence bases and policies, including the adopted Green Infrastructure Strategy (2018). Other evidence sources should also be used where appropriate¹.

1.7 A User guide is set out in **Appendix F**. It is recognised that delivery of many of the guidelines are not the responsibility of Canterbury City Council, particularly those relating to landscape management, and will be implemented by others. Landscape Character and Biodiversity Assessment has a wider role in providing evidence that can be used in managing change for example the implementation of agri-environment schemes, opportunities for woodland creation and wider mitigation and enhancement opportunities in association with development. This document will also be an important element of the evidence base as the Council prepares policies for Biodiversity Net Gain.

The role of Landscape Character Assessment

1.8 Landscape character is defined as:

“a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse”².

1.9 **Landscape character assessment** is the process of identifying and describing such variations in character across a landscape – in this case the district of Canterbury. It also seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of features and attributes (characteristics) that make different landscapes distinctive. The landscape is the result of the interaction between people and the environment that gives an area a local identity. The 'landscape wheel' below illustrates how the different natural, cultural and perceptual attributes of a landscape combine to produce character.

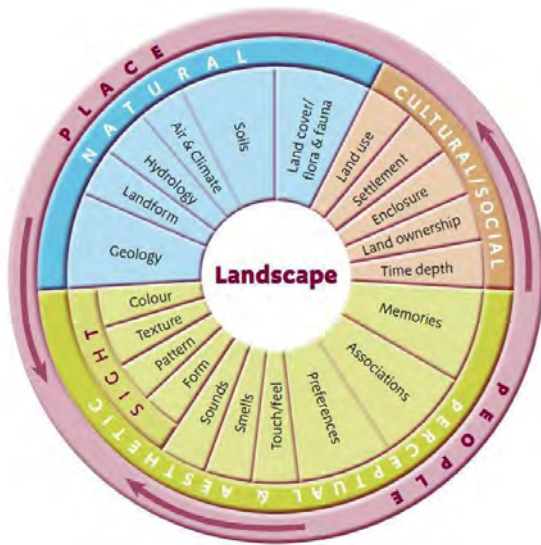
1.10 The process of Landscape Character Assessment is described in *“An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment”* (Natural England, October 2014).

1.11 Understanding the character of place and evaluating an area's defining characteristics is a key component in

¹ For example: DEFRA Magic map and Kent Living Landscapes.

² Natural England (2014), An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/691184/landscape-character-assessment.pdf

managing growth sustainably and ensuring that the inherent qualities of Canterbury District landscape can continue to be appreciated. Understanding of character can be used to ensure that any change or development does not undermine whatever is valued or characteristic in a particular landscape.



The 'landscape wheel' (Natural England, 2014)

Canterbury in context

1.12 Canterbury City Council is a district authority in the county of Kent, covering an area of 309 square kilometres (119 square miles)³ and includes a part of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The AONB forms the eastern part of the North Downs stretching from the London/Surrey border in a widening ribbon of rolling countryside to meet the sea at the cliffs of Dover. It makes up around a third of the district, forming the gently rolling chalklands south of the city of Canterbury. The Kent Downs AONB is the subject of its own separate landscape character assessment and is therefore excluded from the study area for the Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal (2020). The District Assessment has considered integration with the Kent Downs AONB Landscape Character Assessment (in progress draft received 2019) and the role of the surrounding landscape as part of its setting.

1.13 The Assessment has also considered integration with landscape character recorded for the surrounding district authorities, namely Thanet and Dover to the east, Swale and Ashford to the west, and Folkestone and Hythe to the south. To the north the district is bounded by the coastal edge along

the Thames Estuary. The location and context of the study area is shown on **Figure 1.1**.

1.14 The district has a population of 164,553, with a population density of 533 people per square kilometre⁴. Urban development is mainly concentrated within the three defined urban areas consisting of the City of Canterbury (in the centre) and the coastal towns of Whitstable and Herne Bay (in the north). Between these settlements, development is characterised by many smaller villages which have largely retained their historic settlement patterns; although in some cases suburbanisation has occurred, resulting in the expansion and formation of larger villages including Sturry, Blean, Hersden and Chartham. The rural environment of the district enhances the quality of life enjoyed by both urban and rural residents and the diverse landscape including coast, marshes, ancient woodlands, river valleys, orchards, farmland and rolling chalk is an important asset.

1.15 The district is relatively well connected with regards to its transport links. A number of A-roads bisect the district providing connections to the M2 and M20 motorways and links to the surrounding settlements including Ashford, Faversham, Margate, Ramsgate, Dover and Folkestone. Railway lines provide connections within the district to the rest of Kent as well as direct routes to London. These locational factors, combined with the quality of the rural areas and coastline, contribute towards making the area a popular place to live and work.

Policy context

The European Landscape Convention

1.16 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) came into force in the UK in March 2007. It is a convention of the European Council (EC) and remains in force after leaving the European Union (EU). The ELC establishes the need to recognise landscape in law; to develop landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management and planning of landscapes; and to establish procedures for the participation of the general public and other stakeholders in the creation and implementation of landscape policies. The ELC definition of 'landscape' recognises that all landscapes matter, be they ordinary, degraded or outstanding:

"Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors"

1.17 The ELC puts emphasis on the whole landscape and all its values and is forward looking in its approach, recognising

³ Office for National Statistics (2018), Standard Area Measurements for Administrative Areas in the United Kingdom <https://ons.maps.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=d6cc711f662940c59f1c7284448b52f6>

⁴ Office for National Statistics (2019), Mid-year population estimates <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationestimatesforukenglandandwalesscotlandandnorthernireland>

the dynamic and changing character of landscape. Specific measures promoted by the ELC of direct relevance to this study include:

- The identification and assessment of landscape; and
- Improved consideration of landscape in existing and future sectoral and spatial policy and regulation.

1.18 This updated Landscape Character Assessment will continue to make a key contribution to the implementation of the ELC in Canterbury district. It helps to reaffirm the importance of landscape and provide guidance for its future protection, planning and management. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

1.19 The revised NPPF, published in June 2019, states in paragraph 170 that:

'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

...protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality)' (para 170.a)

...recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland ...' (para 170.b).

1.20 The NPPF is supported by Planning Practice Guidance which recognises the role that Landscape Character Assessment plays in helping to understand the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape.

Existing Landscape Policy Context

1.21 The Canterbury District Local Plan was adopted in July 2017 and sets out the vision for the district until 2031.

1.22 The Local Plan states that the countryside has 'its own intrinsic value, the diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife' and that a 'high quality rural environment contributes to the economic, social and cultural well-being of the District'.

1.23 The key policy in relation to landscape character is Policy LB4 Landscape Character Areas. It states:

Proposals for development, and associated land use change or land management, should demonstrate that they are informed by, and are sympathetic to, the landscape character of the locality. In considering development proposals, the City Council will take every opportunity to reinforce, restore, conserve or improve, as appropriate, the landscape character of the area in which development is proposed.

Development will be permitted if the following criteria are satisfied:

- 1.** *Development would be appropriate to the economic and social wellbeing of the area;*
- 2.** *The site selection can be adequately justified, with the siting of development minimising the impact;*
- 3.** *Development would safeguard or strengthen tranquillity, features and patterns that contribute to the landscape character and local distinctiveness of the area;*
- 4.** *The scale, design, materials and landscaping measures are appropriate and would lead to an enhancement of the character of the landscape; and*
- 5.** *Development will promote maintenance, enhancement, and restoration of biodiversity as appropriate in accordance with policy LB9.*

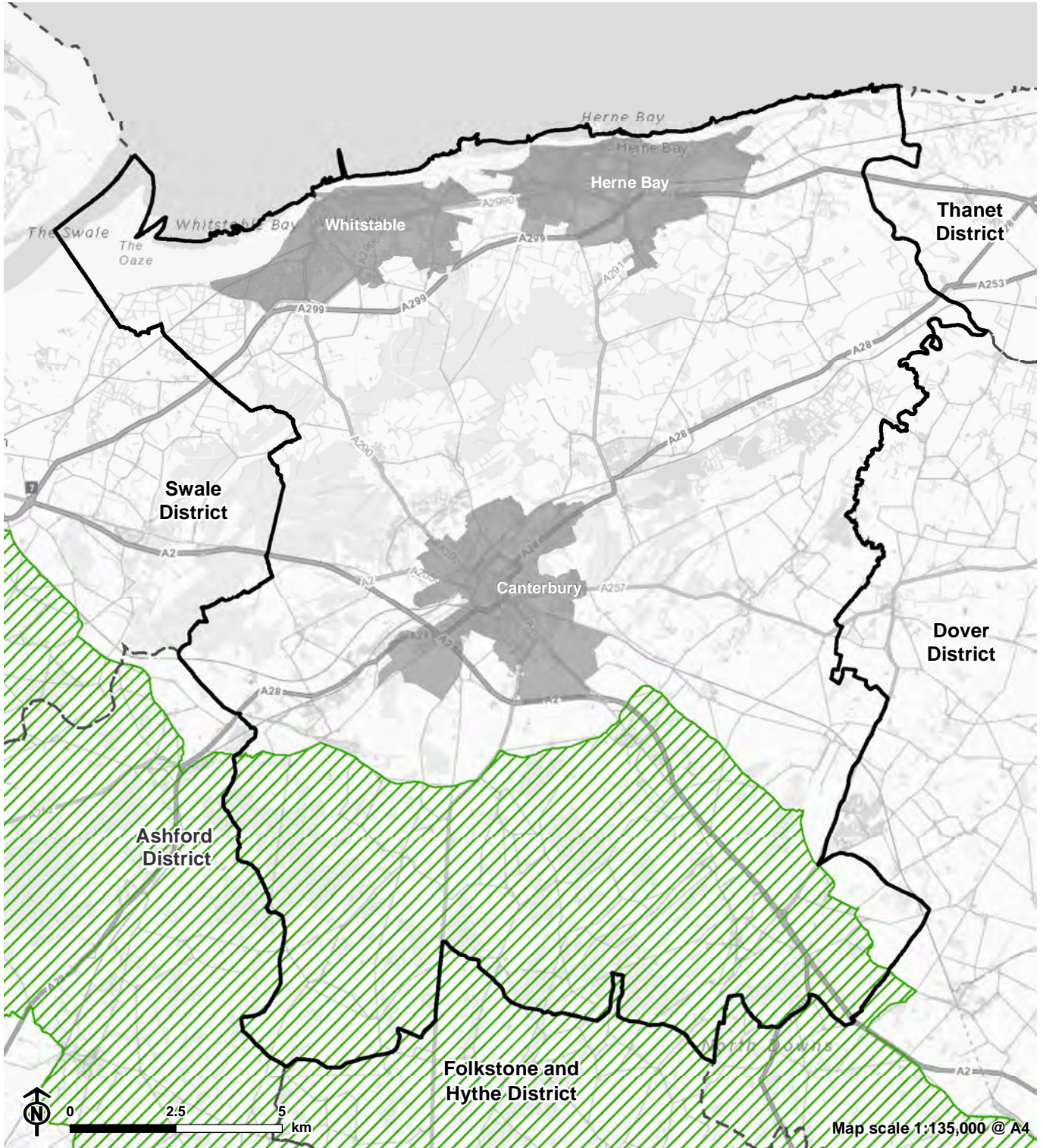
All development should take into account the sensitivity of the particular landscape to accommodate change. Development, or associated land use change or land management, which does not significantly adversely affect the landscape character of an area, will normally be allowed. The development should have regard to the Canterbury Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal to identify the character areas and features affected.

1.24 This Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal replaces the previous draft assessment from 2012 and forms a sound evidence base to support the landscape character policy above.

National and Local Landscape Designations

1.25 A substantial proportion of the Canterbury District is covered by national and local landscape designations. The nationally designated Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers the southern part of the District, forming rolling chalklands, and is the subject of a separate AONB landscape assessment.

1.26 This Landscape Character Assessment has also formed part of the evidence base for robust designation of Local Landscape Designations (LLD) to replace the existing Areas of High Landscape Value (AHLV).



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Source: Natural England

Figure 1.1: Location Plan

- Canterbury City Council boundary
- Adjacent Local Authority boundary
- Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Urban area

Relationship to published landscape studies

1.27 Landscape Character Assessment can be undertaken at a variety of scales and levels of detail. The Canterbury District Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal (2020) is part of a hierarchy of landscape character assessment information cascading down from the national to local level.

National level

1.28 At a national level, England is divided into 159 distinct National Character Areas (NCAs). Each is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, history and cultural and economic activity. There are descriptive profiles available for each NCA (published in 2014 by Natural England⁵) setting out information on landscape character, changes in the landscape and an assessment of ecosystem services delivered.

1.29 Canterbury District is largely covered by NCA 113 North Kent Plain, consisting of the land between the Thames Estuary to the north and the chalk of the Kent Downs to the south. NCA 119 North Downs covers the southern part of the district (encompassing the Kent Downs AONB) and the north-western corner of the district (at the Graveney Marshes and Seasalter Levels) falls within NCA 81 Greater Thames Estuary.

1.30 The Marine Management Organisation has commissioned strategic-scale seascape assessments to produce a national seascape character map for all of England's inshore and offshore areas. This consists of individual Marine Character Areas (MCAs) which cross marine plan areas and administrative boundaries. The shallow waters that form the northern edge of the district lie within MCA 16: The Swale, Kentish Flats and Margate Sand. Additionally, the tidal River Stour (which is a prominent water course running through the district) extends inland from Sandwich on Pegwell Bay (in the east) as far as Fordwich (in the centre of the district) and therefore forms part of MCA 11: Goodwin Sands and North Dover Strait. There is an opportunity for a more detailed seascape classification at the district level, within the national framework.

1.31 National landscape and seascape character areas within and surrounding Canterbury district are illustrated in **Figure 1.2**.

NCA 113 North Kent Plain

1.32 This NCA covers the land between the Thames Estuary and the chalk of the Kent Downs. It is an open, low and gently undulating landscape. Traditional orchards, hops and soft fruits give rise to the title the 'Garden of England', which are mixed with areas of arable, plus extensive ancient woodland at Blean. The NCA meets the sea between Whitstable and Deal, and there is a diversity of coastal habitats including soft cliffs, intertidal sand and mud and salt marshes. The area has a strong urban influence with several built-up areas including coastal towns and the City of Canterbury.

NCA 119 North Downs

1.33 The NCA forms a chain of chalk hills extending from the Hog's Back in Surrey and ending dramatically at the White Cliffs of Dover. Traditional small nucleated villages, scattered farms and large houses are joined by twisting sunken lanes, which cut across the scarp. Mixed arable, livestock and horticultural farming coexists with large ancient woodlands. The North Downs are cut by a number of valleys including the Stour. It encompasses the southern part of Canterbury District, largely contiguous with the AONB.

NCA 81: Greater Thames Estuary

1.34 The NCA is a remote and tranquil landscape of shallow creeks, drowned estuaries, mudflats and tidal salt marsh and reclaimed grazing marsh which lies between the North Sea and the rising ground inland. The coastal habitats are internationally important for biodiversity interest and support large numbers of overwintering and breeding wetland birds, rare plant and invertebrate species and diverse marine wildlife. The NCA is one of the least developed areas of the English coast, in contrast with surrounding large urban areas. It occurs within a small part of Canterbury District at the marshes at Seasalter.

MCA 16: The Swale, Kentish Flats and Margate Sand

1.35 This MCA covers the shallow waters which form the coastal edge of the Thames Estuary and the North Kent Coast. The extensive mud flats uncovered at low tide create a vast open expanse, contrasting with the developed coastal towns. The marshlands create a strong sense of remoteness and isolation between areas of settlements and are of high biodiversity interest. The shallow coastal waters provide opportunities for water-based recreation. The Kentish Flats wind farm adds to the dynamic character of the coastal waters.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles>

MCA 11: Goodwin Sands and North Dover Strait

1.36 This MCA is largely outside the district and covers the north of the Dover Strait. Within the district it extends inland along the tidal River Stour. The area contains a wealth of nationally valued natural and cultural heritage.

County level

1.37 At the county level, the Landscape Assessment of Kent (2004) provides a more refined study. The following six landscape character areas (LCAs) fall wholly or partly within the district:

- The Blean

- North Kent Fruit Belt
- The Stour Valley
- East Kent Horticultural Belt
- East Kent Arable Belt
- The Wantsum and Lower Stour Marshes

1.38 A summary of their key characteristics is provided in **Table 1.1**. The 2020 Canterbury District Assessments provides a greater level of detail and more up to date assessment than the County level study and provides an appropriate evidence base for planning and managing change at the District scale.

Table 1.1: Key Characteristics of Kent LCAs

Kent LCA	Key Characteristics
The Blean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Densely wooded. ■ Rounded hilltops with sparse nucleic settlements and few roads within the woodland. ■ Flat coastal plain. Haphazard seaside and leisure development. ■ Neglected pasture near the coast- a high proportion of unfarmed land.
North Kent Fruit Belt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Well enclosed, medium scale field pattern. ■ Rolling, quiet, picturesque. Traditional Kentish elements such as hops and orchards are characteristic. ■ Well managed, simple form. ■ The edge of the Canterbury urban area influences views, land use and circulation. ■ The views towards the Cathedral are very important. ■ Outlying villages are quiet and rural, but with an increasing suburban influence.
The Stour Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Flat valley floor, widening towards the river mouth. Long distance views of Canterbury Cathedral. ■ Valley sides are steep, dropping in height as the valley widens towards the river mouth. ■ Wetland pasture drained by well vegetated ditches and dykes; small scale, well enclosed field pattern. ■ Marshland, colourful reeds and grasses, lakes and open water. ■ Rich and diverse habitats. ■ Settlement on river at edge of floodplain and linear settlement surrounding the valley.
East Kent Horticultural Belt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Enclosed by hedgerows and shelterbelts, medium scale, gradually sloping or flat. ■ Some contained, small-scale landscapes in the central area. ■ Long views from higher ground. ■ Coastal and marsh edges.

Kent LCA	Key Characteristics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Diverse agriculture with vineyards, soft fruit, orchards and glasshouses. ■ Small isolated linear villages, some piecemeal development along roads based on original small hamlets or farms. Isolated, square, buff-coloured farm cottages. ■ Very narrow winding roads following the field and drainage pattern. Regimented, intensive feel to the farmland. Some blocks of unmanaged land, particularly towards the marginal wetlands.
East Kent Arable Belt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Open, rolling landform with large arable fields and well-wooded hilltops. Simple pattern to the landscape. ■ Narrow, winding lanes and dispersed settlement. ■ Parkland trees and 18th century estate villages. ■ Pine trees on field boundaries. ■ Disused collieries, and associated colliery villages.
The Wantsum and Lower Stour Marshes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Flat, open and remote. No settlement on marshland. ■ Reculver Towers and Richborough Fort mark the ends of the Wantsum Channel. ■ Regular field pattern fringed with dykes and drainage ditches. ■ Flood defences are characteristic elements. ■ River courses, flooding and water logging. ■ Coastal influences-climate, sand dunes and seabirds.

Local level

1.39 Landscape character does not stop at administrative boundaries but continues seamlessly into surrounding districts. This assessment therefore integrates with the Landscape Character Assessments of the adjacent authorities of Swale, Ashford, Dover and Thanet.

Kent Downs AONB Landscape Character Assessment

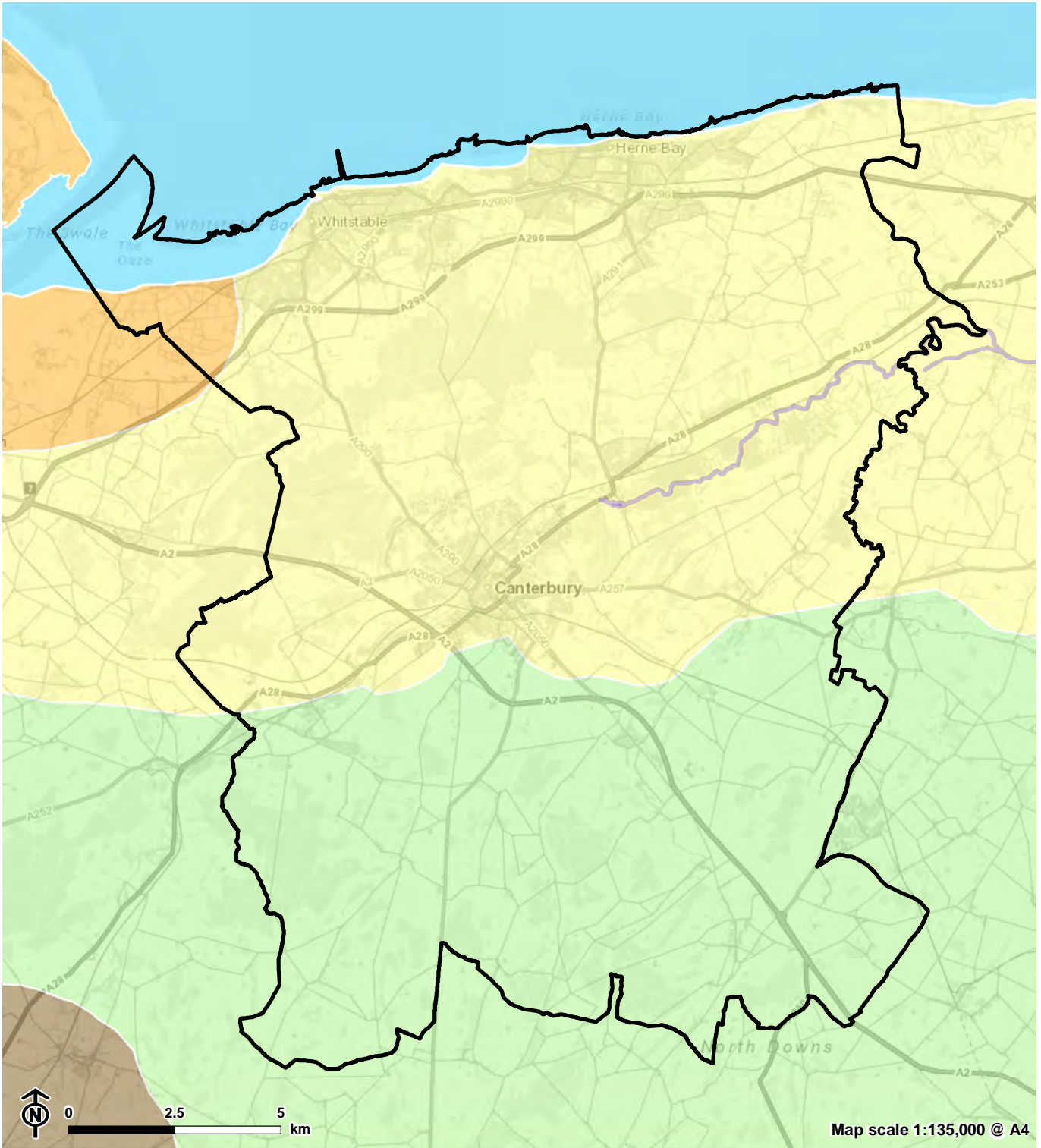
1.40 The Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal (2020) also considers the Kent Downs AONB as this designated landscape extends across the southern part of the district, although is outside the study area. The Kent Downs AONB Landscape Character Assessment (consultation draft, 2020)⁶ is at a larger scale than the detailed district assessment.

1.41 The Kent Downs AONB LCA characterises the land adjacent to the study area as the East Kent Downs LCA, divided into two Local Character Areas, Petham and Elham, as shown on **Figure 1.3**. The East Kent Downs key characteristics are:

- Long wooded ridges.
- Dry valleys with open valley bottoms.
- Extensive coppice and conifer woodlands.
- Coastal downs.
- Thick shaws or overgrown hedges on the valley sides.
- Narrow uncultivated banks or 'shaws'.
- Tiny remote settlements incorporating traditional building materials (flint, brick and tile).
- Large arable fields on ridge-top plateaux.
- Maze of sunken one-track lanes.
- Scattered military remains, e.g. pill boxes and gun emplacements.

1.42 The Stour Valley LCA lies adjacent to Canterbury district, subdivided into the Chilham and Wye Local Character Areas.

⁶https://kccconsultations.inconsult.uk/consult.ti/kentdowns_aonb/consultationHome

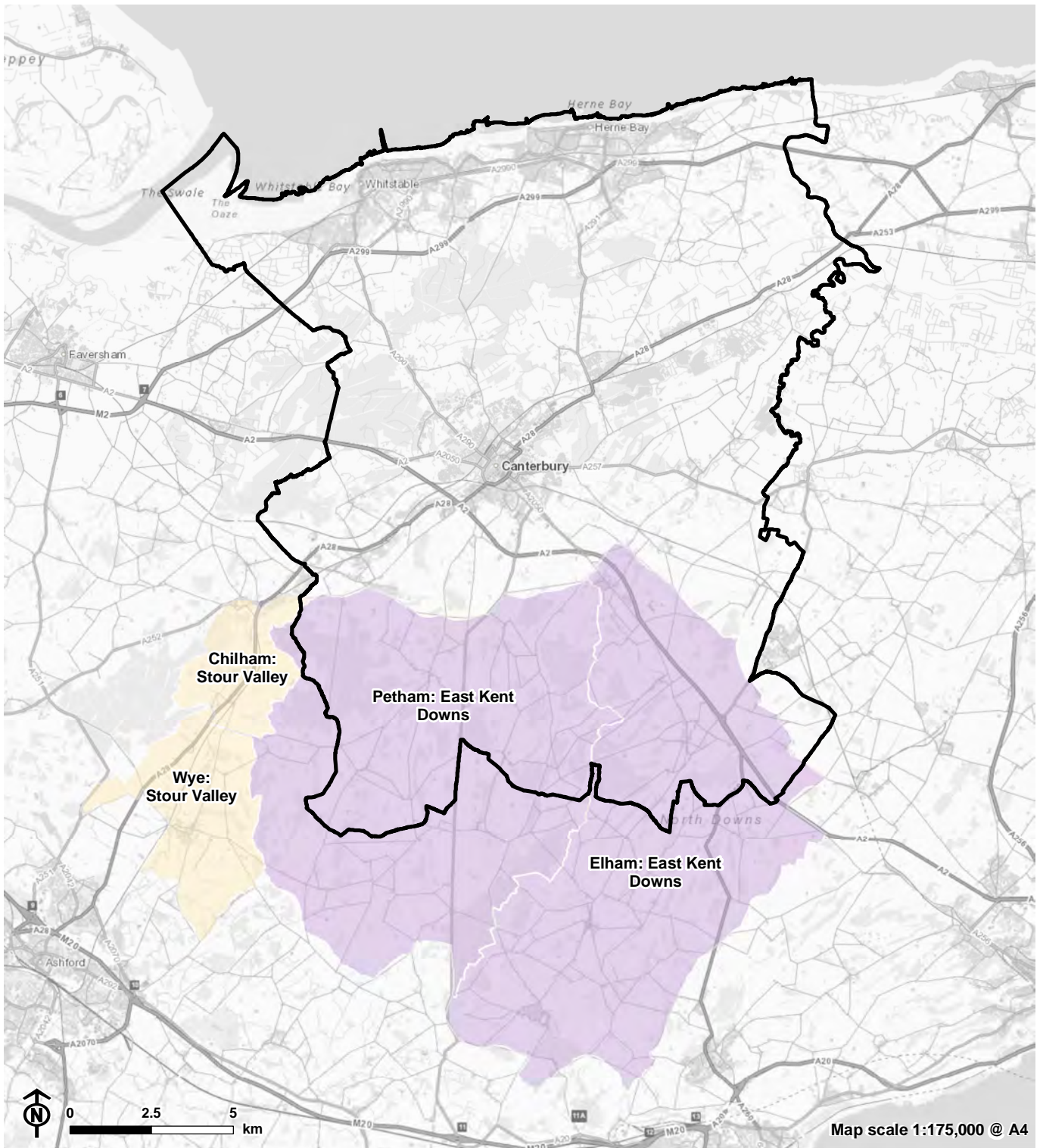


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Source: Natural England

Figure 1.2: National and Marine Character Areas

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Canterbury City Council boundary | Marine Character Area |
| National Character Area | Goodwin Sands and North Dover Strait |
| Greater Thames Estuary | Swale, Kentish Flats and Margate Sand |
| North Downs | |
| North Kent Plain | |
| Wealden Greensand | |



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Figure 1.3: Kent Downs AONB Landscape Character Types/Areas

- Canterbury City Council boundary
- Chalk Downs LCT
- River Valleys LCT



**Methodology for the
Landscape Character
Assessment and
Biodiversity Appraisal**

Chapter 2

Methodology for the Landscape Character Assessment

Approach

2.1 This document combines both Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal to provide a fully integrated strategy for managing the landscape and the essential environmental services it provides. This approach ensures that recommendations and guidelines are focused towards both landscape character and habitat networks.

2.2 The Landscape Character Assessment component follows the methodology promoted by Natural England through 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment' (2014)⁷, which embeds the principles of the European Landscape Convention (ELC) within it.

2.3 This 2020 Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal supersedes the 2012 Draft Canterbury Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal.

Process of Assessment

2.4 The process for undertaking the study involved four main stages described below:

- Desk-based review and classification;
- Field survey;
- Draft Report; and
- Final Report

2.5 GIS was used throughout the study as the tool for collating, manipulating and presenting data.

Desk study

2.6 The initial desk-based stage involved the collation of a wide range of mapped information to 'sense-check' the existing landscape classifications and to update the baseline. Designations relating to cultural heritage, nature conservation and landscape were checked for any changes.

2.7 Data used within the report, including data collated in the GIS database is shown in **Table 2.1**.

⁷https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/396192/landscape-character-assessment.pdf

Table 2.1: GIS Data

Name	Source
Base OS mapping at 1:25k and 1:50k	Ordnance Survey
Terrain 50 Contour data	Ordnance Survey
Linear features, mass movement, artificial ground, superficial deposits and bedrock geology 1:50K	British Geological Survey
Administrative boundaries	Canterbury City Council
National Character Areas	Natural England
Public Rights of Way	Natural England
River features & flood zones	Environment Agency
Nature conservation designations	Natural England (national datasets) and Canterbury City Council (local datasets)
Priority habitats	Natural England and Canterbury City Council
Historic Landscape Characterisation dataset	Kent County Council, Oxford Archaeology (South), Historic England
Heritage designations	Historic England (national datasets) and Canterbury City Council (local datasets)
Dark skies	CPRE
Infrastructure	Ordnance Survey
Local Plan	Canterbury City Council
Other online landscape references sources	e.g. Defra Magic Kent living Landscapes https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.KLIS.Web.Sites.Public/ViewMap.aspx

Classification

2.8 Classification is concerned with dividing the landscape into areas of distinct, recognisable and consistent common character and grouping those areas of similar character together.

- **Landscape Character Types (LCTs)** share broadly similar patterns of geology, topography, vegetation and human influences in each area in which they occur. Although not identical they share a common pattern of elements.

- **Landscape Character Areas (LCAs)** – Each landscape type is divided into a number of geographically specific character areas. These share generic characteristics with other areas of the same type but have their own particular identity or ‘sense of place’.

2.9 The update of the landscape classification for Canterbury District is based on a review of the 2012 Draft classification. Some adjustments were made to boundaries and some LCAs were reclassified into a different LCT. Changes to the landscape classification are outlined in **Appendix B**.

2.10 This process resulted in the definition of 9 LCTs and 42 LCAs for Canterbury District. The classification is shown on **Figures 5.1 and 5.2**.

Field survey

2.11 Field survey was undertaken between September and December 2019 to review and refine the draft classification, make notes on landscape character and take photographs to help with subsequent assessment. This specifically focussed on:

- Fine-tuning the classification of the landscape types and areas identified;
- Verifying and identifying key characteristics;
- Collecting aesthetic/perceptual information;
- Identifying valued landscape attributes;
- Gathering visual information on key issues and opportunities for future management.

Draft report

2.12 A draft report was submitted to Canterbury City Council for comment in February 2020 and following comments a final draft report was issued in July 2020 and made available for stakeholder consultation.

Stakeholder Consultation

2.13 Targeted consultation was undertaken with statutory consultees, key organisations and parish councils in August and September 2020. Details of stakeholder consultees are provided in **Appendix E**.

2.14 The final draft report was emailed to all 27 parishes in the district, with a map identifying which LCAs were within their parish boundary. Parishes were invited to provide comments on any parts of the document. Three parishes responded: Fordwich, Chartham and Wickhambreaux Parish Councils.

2.15 All comments were considered, and, where relevant and appropriate, incorporated into the final LCA report.

Final report

2.16 The Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal (2020) was finalised and issued in October 2020.

Landscape Character Area description and evaluation

2.17 The descriptive profiles for the Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal (2020) are presented at LCA level and arranged by their respective LCT within the district. Descriptions of each LCA were updated to reflect changes in the landscape since the Draft Canterbury Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal was produced in 2012.

2.18 Each LCT section begins with an overview map showing the location of the LCT within the district and its relationship with other LCTs, a summary of the character of the LCT and the component LCAs within it.

2.19 The subsequent descriptive profiles of the LCAs are then structured as follows:

Map and summary of location and landscape character

- A location map (1:25,000 scale) which shows the extent of the LCA and its relationship with other LCAs, followed by a summary paragraph explaining its defining landscape character and location.

Representative photos

- Photos to help the reader appreciate the character of the LCA.

Landscape description

2.20 This section provides a description of the landscape character of the LCA under each of the following headings:

- **Key Characteristics:** In bullet point format, provides a summary explanation of the character of the LCA.
- **Natural Influences:** a description of the most significant natural influences in the landscape including designated habitats.
- **Cultural Influences:** a description of the most significant historic influences in the landscape including designated cultural heritage assets.
- **Perceptual Influences:** a description of the most significant perceptual influences in the landscape.

Evaluation

2.21 The evaluation provides an understanding of what is important in each LCA and why, both from a landscape character and biodiversity perspective.

2.22 The key issues impacting the landscape in each area are analysed to inform a forward-looking strategy for the district under each of the following headings:

- **Key Sensitivities and Values:** identifies the qualities that are particularly valued for their contribution to landscape character (i.e. if any one of these attributes ceased to exist, it would change the character to the detriment of the landscape).
- **Biodiversity Appraisal:** identifies whether the area is located within a Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) and the associated relevant key targets. It also presents an overall evaluation of the broad habitat types present in the LCA, including those listed as priority habitat. Maps are included that illustrate existing habitats and BOAs. Further details of the method used to undertake the Biodiversity Appraisal is contained in **Appendix B**.

Guidance

- **Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities:** provides guidance to conserve and enhance the landscape and supporting habitats of the area.

2.23 As noted, it is recognised that delivery of many of the guidelines are not the responsibility of Canterbury City Council, particularly those relating to landscape management, and will be implemented by others. This Landscape Character and Biodiversity Assessment has a wider role in providing evidence that can be used in managing change for example the implementation of agri-environment schemes, opportunities for woodland creation and mitigation and enhancement opportunities in association with development.

Formative Influences



Chapter 3

Formative Influences

3.1 This chapter summarises the main physical and cultural influences which have shaped the landscape of Canterbury District. The detailed descriptions of different LCAs, that appear later in this report, highlight the key characteristics (both positive and negative) and valued attributes that are of most significance to the particular landscape concerned.

3.2 The landscape of the district has evolved through the interaction of the natural environment and human activities, through the combination of physical and cultural influences. Physical influences such as geology and landform, together with the pattern of settlement and land use are key determinants of landscape character.

Physical influences

3.3 The physical components of the landscape have the most tangible and fundamental influences upon its character, being the most permanent and least changeable aspect of its appearance. The underlying geology creates the 'backbone' of the landscape. The actions of weathering, erosion and deposition alter the landform, consequently influencing hydrological patterns and affecting the nature of soil conditions. This affects how humans have used and continue to exploit the landscape for agriculture, settlement and industry and, consequently, influences the nature of the vegetation and fauna that the landscape can support.

Geology and Soils

3.4 **Figure 3.1** illustrates the solid (or bedrock) geology that underlies the district. **Figure 3.2** shows the drift (or superficial) geology formed during the Quaternary period, which overlies the bedrock in places.

3.5 The City of Canterbury is located in the Stour Valley at the foot of the North Downs where the dip slope levels out and the clay cap of The Blean begins. To the north of the city, an extensive area of the London Clay formation (Thames Group) covers the area known as The Blean, with the resulting soils being heavy, poorly drained clay. Occasionally the clay is overlain with Head Gravel and where streams cross the clay there are localised deposits of Head Brickearth. Here the soils are base-rich, neutral, loamy soils that have a tendency to be affected by groundwater. To the south of the city is an area of the Upper Chalk formation (White Chalk Subgroup) overlain with deep, well-drained, fine, silty soils.

3.6 Running from the west to east between the Upper Chalk and London Clay formations is an area of the Thanet Sand formation and River Terrace Gravels. Here there are deep, fertile, well drained and often stoneless, fine, silty soils. Within it there are outcrops of thinner, acidic, well drained coarse, loamy and gravelly soils, such as at Denstead Wood (LCA D5). Similar, but sandier, soils are located at Old Park (LCA G1) and Trenley Park Woodlands (LCA G2) to the east. A band of alluvium is associated with the Stour Valley that cuts through Canterbury on a south west - north east axis. The alluvial soils in the valley are stoneless, clayey, fine, silty and loamy soils, affected by groundwater. Within the Stour Valley there are outcrops of thinner, acidic, well drained coarse loamy and gravelly soils, such as at Bigbury Hill (LCA D6). Likewise, there are alluvial deposits in the Little Stour and Nailbourne Valleys.

3.7 From the north-eastern corner of Herne Bay (at Bishopstone) to Hoath further to the south, the solid geology changes from the London Clay formation to the Tertiary deposits of the Thanet, Oldhaven and Woolwich Beds (which unconformably underlies the Lambeth Group). This change can be seen clearly on the coast where the cliffs change from sloping clay to more resilient vertical cliffs. Inland, overlying drift deposits create a mixed geology and the soils become more loamy. There are areas of the London Clay formation overlain with poorly drained loams, some Head Brickearth deposits with neutral loamy soils affected by groundwater, dry neutral loams over areas of Thanet, Oldhaven and Woolwich Beds and dry sandy soils associated with Head Gravel deposits.

3.8 The Seasalter Levels and Graveney Marshes to the west of Whitstable and the Chislet Marshes to the east of Herne Bay contain alluvial deposits. The soils in these areas are wet, base-rich, neutral, heavy soils. The underlying geology is the London Clay formation, a blue-marine clay weathering to brown, overlying Upper Chalk, which covers most of the historic Wantsum Channel with some pockets of sand and loams. There are also outcrops of Thanet Beds which are green-grey sands with shell beds and sandy clay which have been exposed alongside the Wantsum Channel. This is overlain with recent deposits of marine clays and some river alluviums producing a grey-brown silty clay.

Regionally Important Geological / Geomorphological Sites

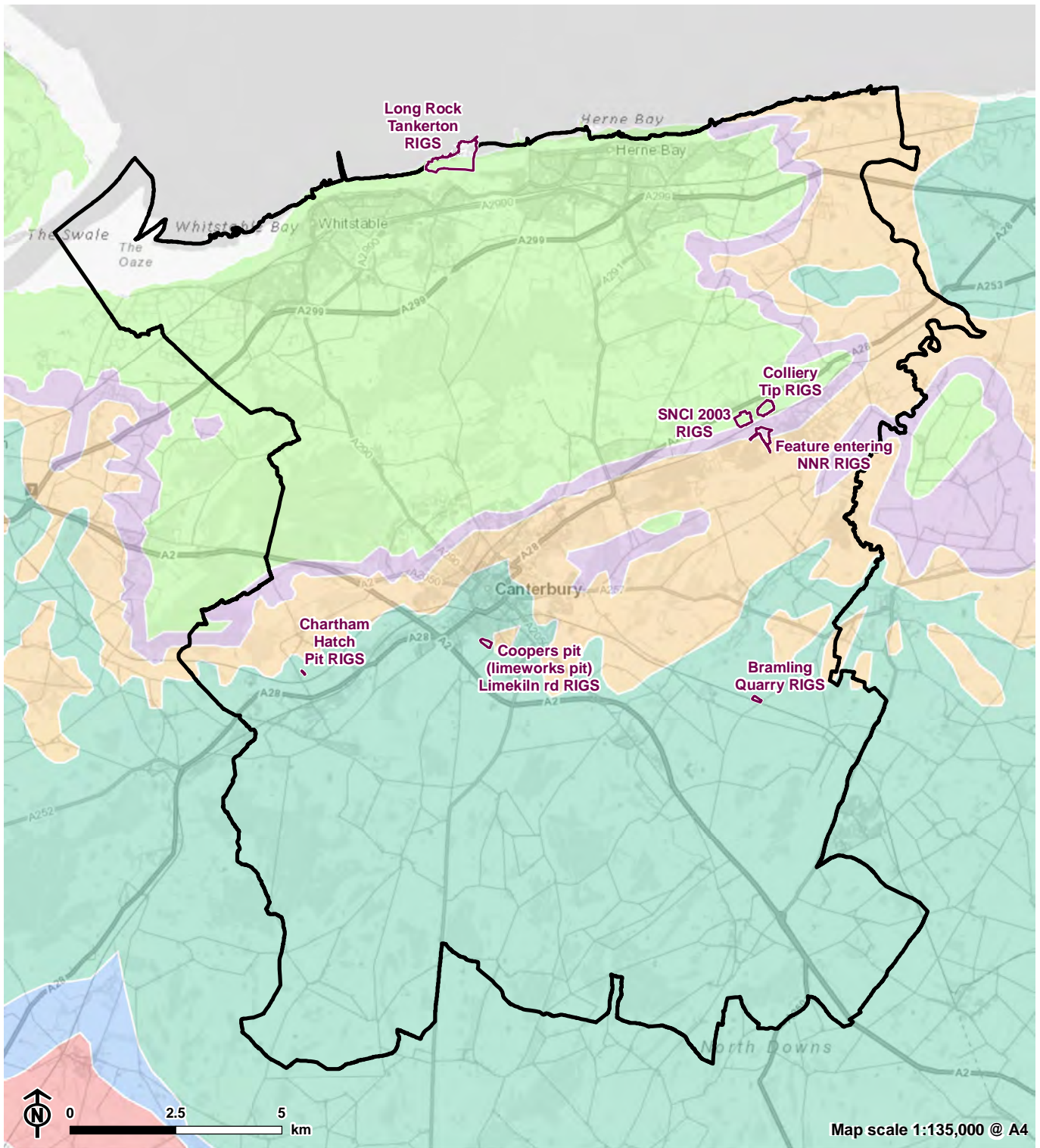
3.9 Regionally Important Geological / Geomorphological sites (RIGS) are non-statutory Earth Science sites designated by locally based RIGS Groups. RIGS are considered to be important as an educational, research, historical or recreational resource using locally developed criteria. RIGS sites identified within the Canterbury District are shown on **Figures 3.1 and 3.2** and named as follows:

- Chislet Colliery Tip;
- SSCI 2003;
- Cooper's Pit (Limeworks pit), Limekiln Road;
- Long Rock Tankerton;
- Feature entering NNR
- Bramling Quarry; and
- Chartham Hatch Pit.

Coastal Change

3.10 There have been considerable changes to the North Kent coastline since Roman times. At this time the land extended some 4 - 5 km further north. The explanation for this lies in the geological process of the gradual sinking of the whole of the North Sea Basin. In a sense the British Isles are slowly rising on the west and subsiding on the east. This change is further compounded by the gradual migration of the Thames Estuary to the south, eroding the North Kent coast and depositing on the South Essex coast. There has also been a gradual silting up of the Wantsum Channel that once separated the Isle of Thanet from East Kent. The channel remained navigable until the 1600s when attempts to keep it open were abandoned. Today the River Wantsum is little more than a drainage channel. The erosion of the coast along most of the district is managed today by various coastal protection measures including concrete seawalls, rock revetments, and shingle beach, constrained in parts by timber groynes. The notable exception is the Bishopstone cliffs which have been allowed to naturally erode from coastal processes. The natural erosion in this location provides for some special geological and wildlife features, protected by international (Ramsar, and SPA) and national (SSSI) designations. Over the last century there has been an observed increase in sea levels and wave activity, and this trend is expected to accelerate due to climate change, which will increase the pressure on the coastal protection measures.

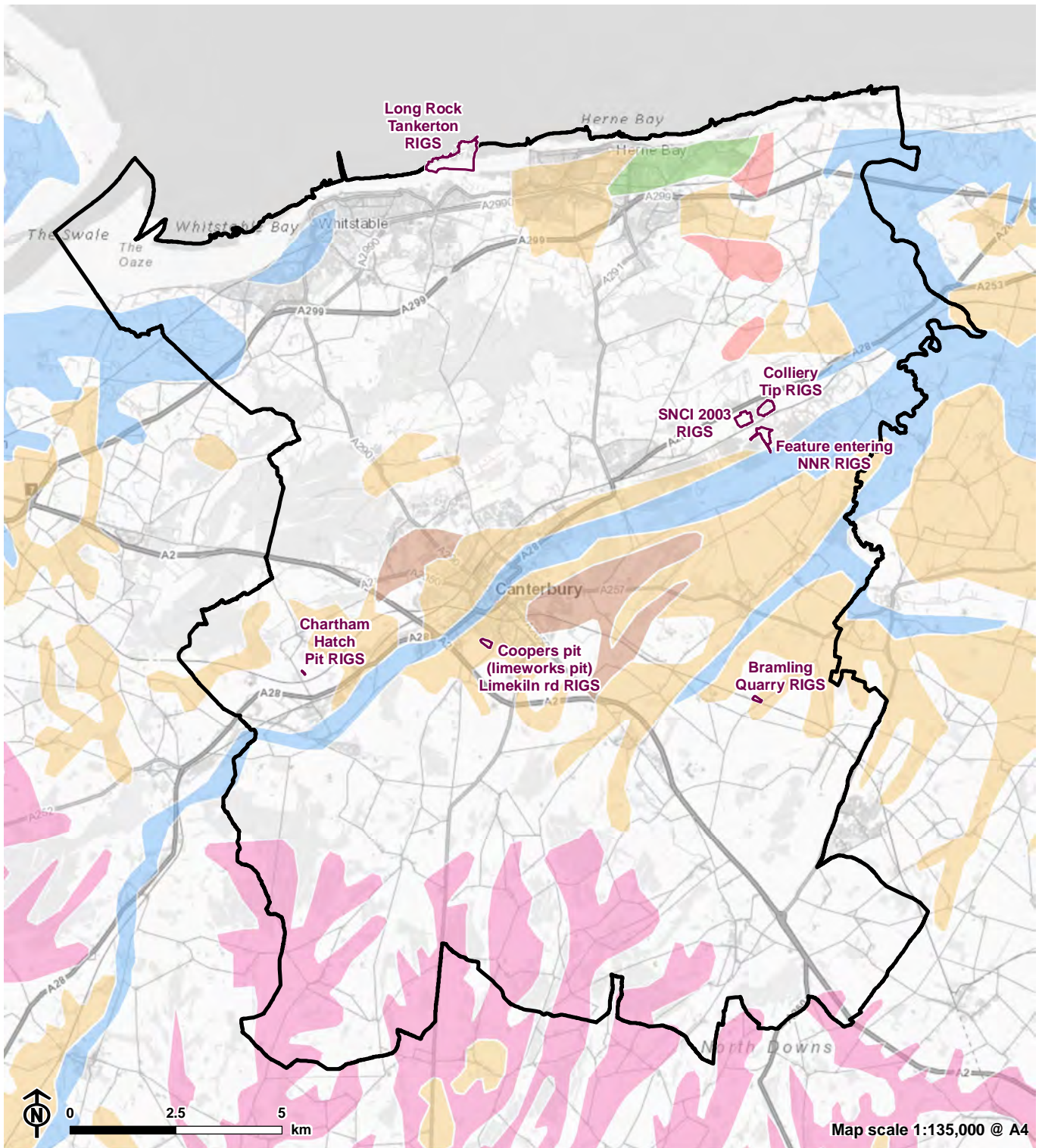
3.11 The Isle of Grain to South Foreland Shoreline Management Plan (South East Coastal Group, updated in 2010) identifies the future management of the Canterbury coastline for the next 100 years. In areas where coastal erosion would be detrimental to existing development, the future management is generally identified as 'hold the line' (where the existing defence line will be maintained). At Bishopstone and the cliff frontage along Reculver Country Park the future management is identified as 'no active intervention' (where there will be no investment in providing or maintaining defences). West of Seasalter the future management is defined as 'managed realignment' (where the shoreline is allowed to change with management to control or limit movement) in the medium to long term.



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 Source: British Geological Survey

Figure 3.1: Bedrock Geology

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Canterbury City Council boundary | Grey Chalk Subgroup |
| Regionally important geological site | Lambeth Group |
| Gault Formation And Upper Greensand Formation | Thames Group |
| | Thanet Sand Formation |
| | White Chalk Subgroup |



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Figure 3.2: Superficial Geology

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Canterbury City Council boundary | Brickearth |
| Regionally important geological site | Clay with Flints |
| Alluvium | Landslip |
| | River Terrace Deposits |
| | Sand and Gravel of Uncertain Age and Origin |

3.12 Realignment of coastal defences offers significant opportunity for coastal habitat creation in the intertidal zone (e.g. saltmarsh and mudflats) which should be explored in tandem with future realignment proposals

Landform and Drainage

3.13 **Figure 3.3** illustrates the topography and watercourses around Canterbury, which relates closely to the underlying geology. To the south of the city there is a gently rolling topography along the edge of the dip slope of the North Downs. To the east and west of the city there is a folded landform that is associated with the mixed geology.

3.14 The Stour Valley is characterised by the level floodplain and runs from the south-west to the north-east through the city centre, widening as it travels north-eastwards towards the coast. The north side of the Stour Valley is defined by a ridge that runs from north of Harbledown to Broad Oak and beyond. This ridge forms the edge of the London Clay plateau that drops evenly down to the valley floor. To the south-east of Canterbury the valley side is less distinct as the ground rises through a series of undulating ridges towards the North Downs.

3.15 To the north, there are three general topographical divisions in the Herne Bay and Whitstable Area - the low-lying coastal land; an area of undulating open country and the higher ground of The Blean.

3.16 To the north-east and north-west of the London Clay cap are the coastal marshes of the Chislet Marshes, and Seasalter Levels and Graveney Marshes. The landform is generally flat and low lying marked by ditches and dykes with relatively poor drainage, so it tends to become waterlogged in winter, and dry and cracked in periods of low rainfall. The Graveney Marshes originally extended much further seaward, and the Chislet Marshes are the result of the silting up of the Wantsum Channel.

3.17 Small streams flow across the London Clay formation from The Blean to the coast. From west to east these are known as Gorrell Stream, Swalecliffe Brook, West Brook and Plenty Brook. Gorrell Stream emerges around the junction of the Thanet Way and Borstall Hill and flows north east towards Whitstable before meandering through the town. It is mostly culverted throughout Whitstable and discharges to sea at Whitstable Harbour. Swalecliffe Brook emerges to the west of Clowes Wood and flows down to the west of Chestfield, discharging into the sea at Long Rock, north of Swalecliffe. West Brook flows north from Thornden Wood and discharges through a culvert to the west of Hampton Pier, and the Plenty Brook flows from West Blean Wood, across the former Herne Bay Golf Course and is then culverted under Herne Bay before issuing into the sea under the Neptune car park.

3.18 To the south and east of the district, where the London Clay changes to the Thanet, Oldhaven and Woolwich Beds, the differential erosion of the mixed geology creates a more rolling landscape. This forms the valley sides to the Great Stour and the backdrop to the flat Chislet Marshes former inlet, with extensive views across the marshes to Thanet and the East Kent coast. This area is incised by the Great and Little Stour Valleys, the Nailbourne and the Lampen Stream. A further stream, the Sarre Penn flows parallel to the Great Stour across the London Clay. These rivers and streams rise to the west and south of the study area and flow north and north-eastwards to the Wantsum and Chislet Marshes. A forked valley feature around Ford is created by small streams cutting into the Thanet Beds creating a distinctly rolling landscape.

Agricultural Land Use

3.19 **Figure 3.4** illustrates the quality of agricultural land, known as agricultural land classification. To the north of Canterbury City and the Stour Valley, the landscape lies within the intensively productive North Kent Plain. To the south of the city the landscape forms part of the North Downs. This is an extensive cereal belt that thrives on the deep calcareous soils of the North Downs dip slope across the county. This land is generally classified by the Department for Environment, Farming & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) as Grade 2. To the north of this is a belt of intensive orchards and hop gardens that runs generally from the east to the west of the city. This land is mostly Grade 1 and 2 and is part of an area of productive and extensive fruit growing associated with the deep well-drained soils overlaying the Thanet Beds and River Gravel Terraces.

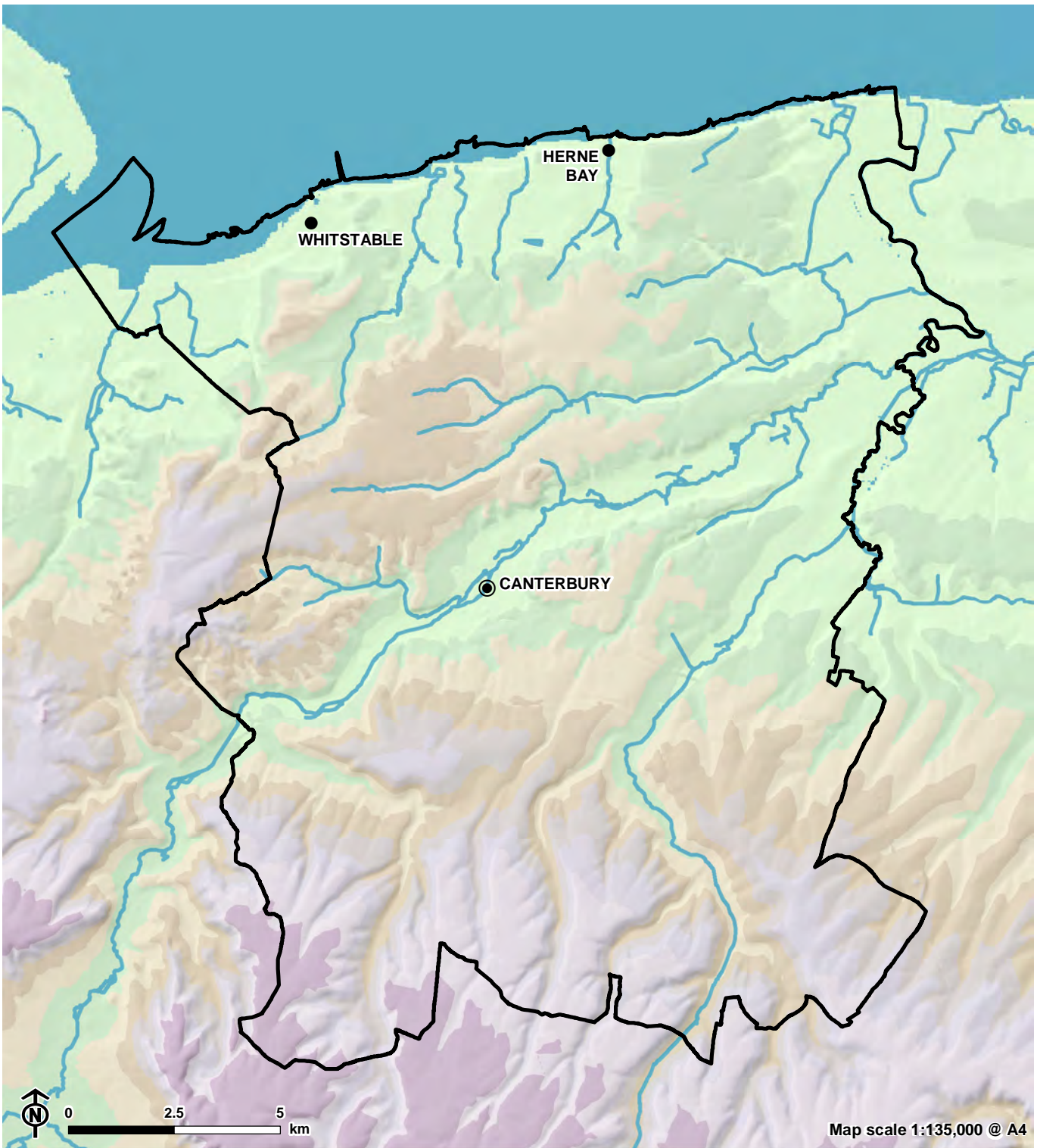
3.20 Other areas around the city are less intensively managed for agriculture. To the north of the city, where the soils are poorer and harder to work, the agriculture is less intensive and mostly Grade 3, with areas of Grade 4 land at The Blean and at Clapham Hill. Here there is pasture on the south facing slopes of the Stour Valley and woodland on the clayey soils of The Blean. In the Stour Valley where gravel extraction and development are not present, the waterlogged alluvial soils are managed as pasture.

3.21 The thin soils at Bigbury Hill and Old Park result in very little agricultural land use. There are a few small orchards and paddocks for pony grazing on Bigbury Hill. Old Park is managed partly as a golf course and before its closure in 2015, served as a Ministry of Defence (MOD) site, comprising a military training ground and rifle range associated with Howe Barracks which existed at St. Martins Hill. Old Park is largely a designated SSSI with important acid grassland, some woodland, a pond and other grassland areas.

3.22 To the north of The Blean the landscape is connected by blocks of woodland, built development and transport corridors.

In many places the pressure on the land is evident and there are numerous horse paddocks and holiday parks particularly on the lower grade agricultural land and near the coast. Where crop production is most viable the land is farmed very intensively often leaving only the narrowest of verges where the fields meet the roads. The heavy clay soils that cover most of the area around Herne Bay and Whitstable as Grade 3 agricultural land. These soils support mainly cereals with some pasture. To the east of Herne Bay the land is more productive where the drier more loamy soils are located. Here the land is generally classified as Grade 2. The mixed soils support mostly cereals although potatoes and field vegetables can be found.

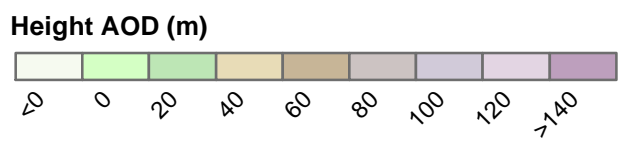
3.23 The low lying Seasalter Levels and Graveney Marshes are classified as Grade 3 and support grazing marsh. The Chislet Marshes are generally Grade 4 on the marshland with some pockets of Grade 1 around Chislet, Grade 2 around Reculver and Chitty and Grade 3 towards the district boundary in the east.

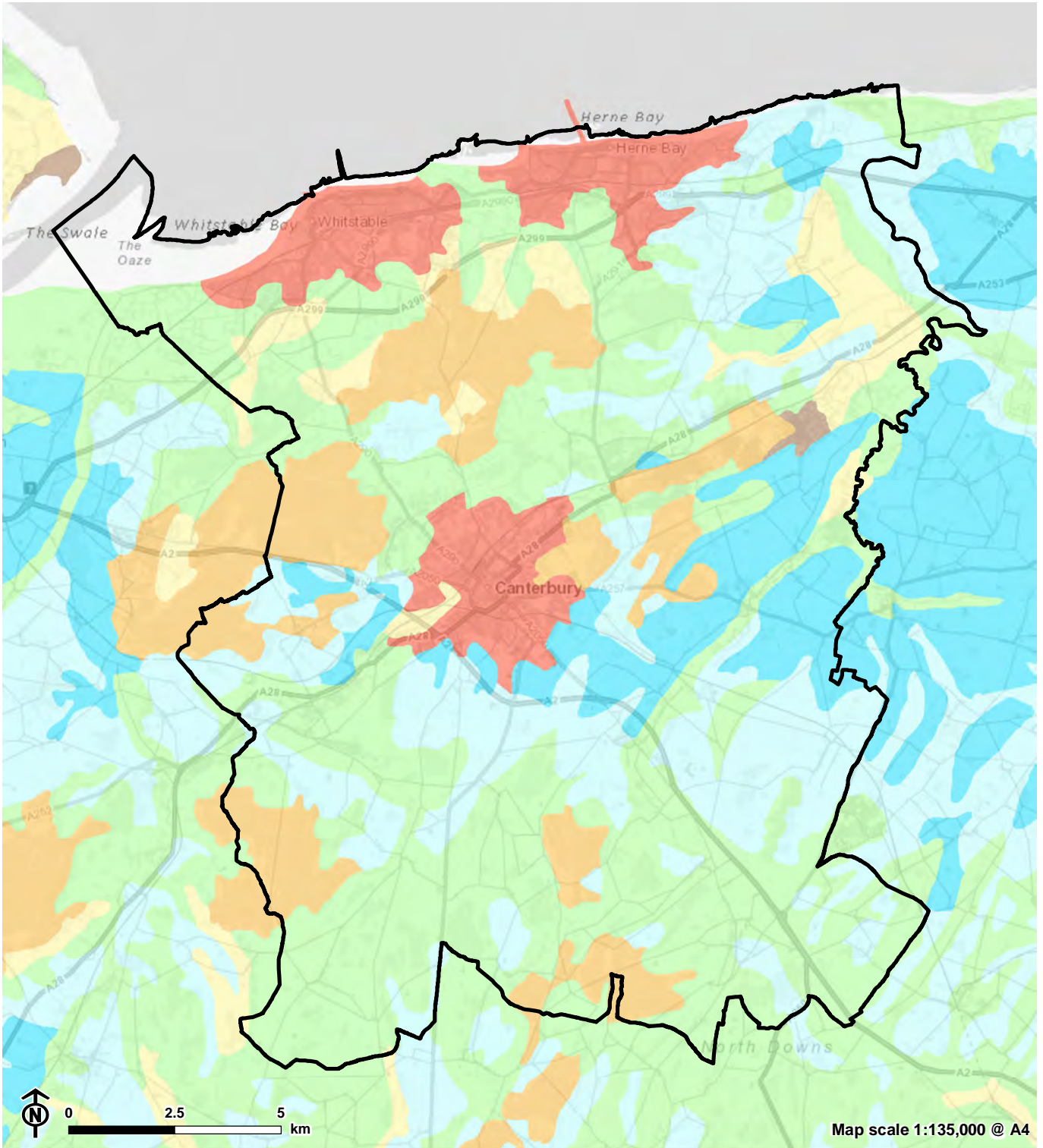


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Figure 3.3: Topography and Watercourses

- Canterbury City Council boundary
- Watercourse





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Source: British Geological Survey

Figure 3.4: Agricultural Land Classification

- Canterbury City Council boundary
- Grade 1
- Grade 2
- Grade 3
- Grade 4
- Grade 5
- Non agricultural
- Urban

Designated Wildlife Sites

3.24 A significant proportion of Canterbury District is covered by at least one form of biodiversity designation. Such designations exist at the International, National and Local (County) level, and include:

- European Sites – a collective term for sites designated under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 such as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Often wetland sites designated under the international Ramsar Convention are also included with these in practice. These sites are almost always covered by the SSSI designation as well (see below).
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) – A statutory UK designation under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Designated by Natural England, these represent the very best wildlife sites in the country.
- National Nature Reserves (NNRs) - are almost always SSSIs thus receiving statutory protection. Either owned or controlled specifically for wildlife by Natural England or held by approved bodies such as Wildlife Trusts.

- Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) – a non-statutory county designation, administered in Kent by the Kent Wildlife Trust and ratified by the Kent BAP Partnership.
- Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) - are designated by local authorities for both people and wildlife. They are semi-natural places that are of special interest locally and can be managed as such. They offer people opportunities for nature study or informal enjoyment. They may include sites that have one of the other designations listed above.

3.25 Such sites are afforded protection in the planning process, either through legislation (for statutory sites such as SSSIs and European Sites) or through planning policy (for local, non-statutory sites such as LWSs). **Figure 3.5** illustrates the main nature conservation designations located throughout the Canterbury District. Each relevant designated site is identified and described in the individual LCA profiles of this document.

3.26 There are twelve SSSIs within the study area (Canterbury District excluding the Kent Downs AONB), which are in variable conditions. **Table 3.1** below shows the status of the SSSIs within the study area. The percentages do not all add up to 100 as some parts of the SSSI are outside of the study area.

Table 3.1: Condition of SSSIs within Canterbury District

SSSI name	% of SSSI in Favourable condition	% of SSSI in Unfavourable Recovering condition	% of SSSI in Unfavourable No Change condition	% of SSSI in Unfavourable Declining condition
Chequer's Wood and Old Park	68	32		
Church Woods, Blean	69	8		
East Blean Woods	99	1		
Ellenden Wood	100			
Ileden and Oxenden Woods	34	3		
Larkey Valley Wood	100			
Preston Marshes		100		
Stodmarsh	61	21	18	
Sturry Pit		100		
Thanet Coast	14			
The Swale	6		3	
West Blean and Thornden Woods	49	42	3	6

3.27 The majority of the district's coastline within the intertidal zone is designated as SSSI, SPA and Ramsar sites. These overlapping designations reflect the importance of these coastal habitats for their wetland species interest and their importance for coastal birds.

3.28 Inland, along the Great Stour valley there are significant freshwater wetland habitats of international importance at Stodmarsh SSSI/SPA/SAC/Ramsar site. These are complimented by other SSSI and LWS wetlands throughout the catchment's floodplains and marshlands.

3.29 The ancient woodland dominated habitats of The Blean to the north and west of Canterbury are largely designated, as a combination of SAC/NNR/SSSIs and LWSs. Smaller and more isolated woodland habitats of designated national and county importance are to be found to the south and east of Canterbury as well. **Figure 3.6** shows the woodland coverage across the district.

Priority Habitats and Biodiversity Opportunity Areas

3.30 The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) identifies priority species and habitats that are most under threat and develops measures for their conservation. These measures are in addition and complimentary to the process of site designation and protection. The conservation of priority habitats has a statutory basis under section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and is also enshrined in Government Planning Policy (e.g. section 15 of the NPPF). Canterbury District is rich in priority habitats, with some notably large expanses of habitat in areas such as The Blean (e.g. ancient woodland), the Stour valley (e.g. wetland habitats), the North Downs (ancient woodland and chalk grassland), and the coastline (intertidal habitats).

3.31 The following broad habitat categories, based on the UK BAP, have been used in this study to identify different habitat networks and are described briefly below:

- Open water – This category includes both rivers, streams and standing open water such as ditches, ponds and reservoirs. Such habitats are vital for aquatic and amphibious organisms and the terrestrial animals that feed on them. Notable pond species include great crested newts. Watercourses provide habitat for key species such as otters, water voles, fish, aquatic invertebrates and birds such as kingfishers. Chalk rivers are particularly important due to their diversity and vulnerability to human impacts such as ground-water abstraction.
- Wetland – This broad category includes most habitats that are found on permanently or seasonally waterlogged soils and which also often contain small bodies of open water such as pools, ponds and ditches. These include reed swamp, fen, wet woodland, etc. which are often found in combination. They generally occur in low-lying areas within river floodplains and reclaimed coastal land where they can occur amongst and adjacent to grazing marsh (see below).
- Grazing marsh - periodically inundated pasture or meadow with ditches which maintain the water levels, containing standing brackish or fresh water. The ditches are especially rich in plants and invertebrates. Almost all areas are grazed, and some are cut for hay or silage. Sites may contain seasonal water-filled hollows and permanent ponds with emergent swamp communities
- Species-rich neutral grassland - unimproved species rich neutral grassland habitat has undergone a remarkable decline in the 20th century, almost entirely due to changing agricultural practice. It forms an important habitat for a variety of plants and the range of notable invertebrates that depend on this floristic diversity. Lowland meadows and pastures are also important habitats for skylark and a number of other farmland birds.
- Intertidal habitat - this includes habitats found between the tidal limits such as mudflats, saltmarsh, saline lagoons, shingle and littoral chalk bedrock. They form an important transitional habitat between terrestrial and marine environments, and are important for a range of fauna, notably invertebrates and birds.
- Acid grassland and heath - Acid grassland and heath occur on acid rock types such as sandstones and superficial deposits such as sands and gravels. In the lowlands, acid grasslands are now rare, and they provide an important reservoir of rare species. Lowland heathland contains vegetation dominated by species from the heath family or dwarf gorse species. The UK has an important proportion (about 20%) of the international total of this habitat, which is important for many birds, reptiles, invertebrates, vascular plants, bryophytes and lichens.
- Chalk grassland - Chalk grasslands contain an exceptional diversity of rare plants but are particularly characterised by a series of widespread grassland plants which are mainly restricted to lime rich soils. Invertebrate diversity often reflects this floristic richness.
- Woodland – Canterbury District's woodland network is based around irreplaceable existing ancient woodland (land that has had continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD). Less ecologically valuable, but still important, new, native broadleaf woodland opportunities are also identified as part of the potential network, often as 'stepping stones', buffers or hedgerow connections to

existing ancient woodland areas. In pre-history, before any significant human impacts occurred, woodland was by far the dominant terrestrial habitat covering most of the British Isles. Ancient woodland supports more species of conservation concern than any other habitat in the UK. However, the prevalent ongoing and widespread impact of Ash Dieback is having an effect on biodiversity and landscape character.

3.32 In addition to the habitats described above, species-rich hedgerows provide important refuges and conduits for wildlife through the landscape, and in particular may help to connect woodland blocks. However, Dutch Elm disease has had in the past a devastating influence on hedgerows within East Kent and, along with arable intensification, has led to a decline and loss of many hedgerows. Tree diseases including Ash dieback also threaten hedgerow trees which are an important landscape feature across much of Canterbury District.

3.33 The Kent Nature Partnership has created a strategy for the biodiversity of the county, identifying four key outcomes:

- Habitats and ecosystems on land (including freshwater environments);
- Marine habitats, ecosystems and fisheries;
- Species; and
- People.⁸

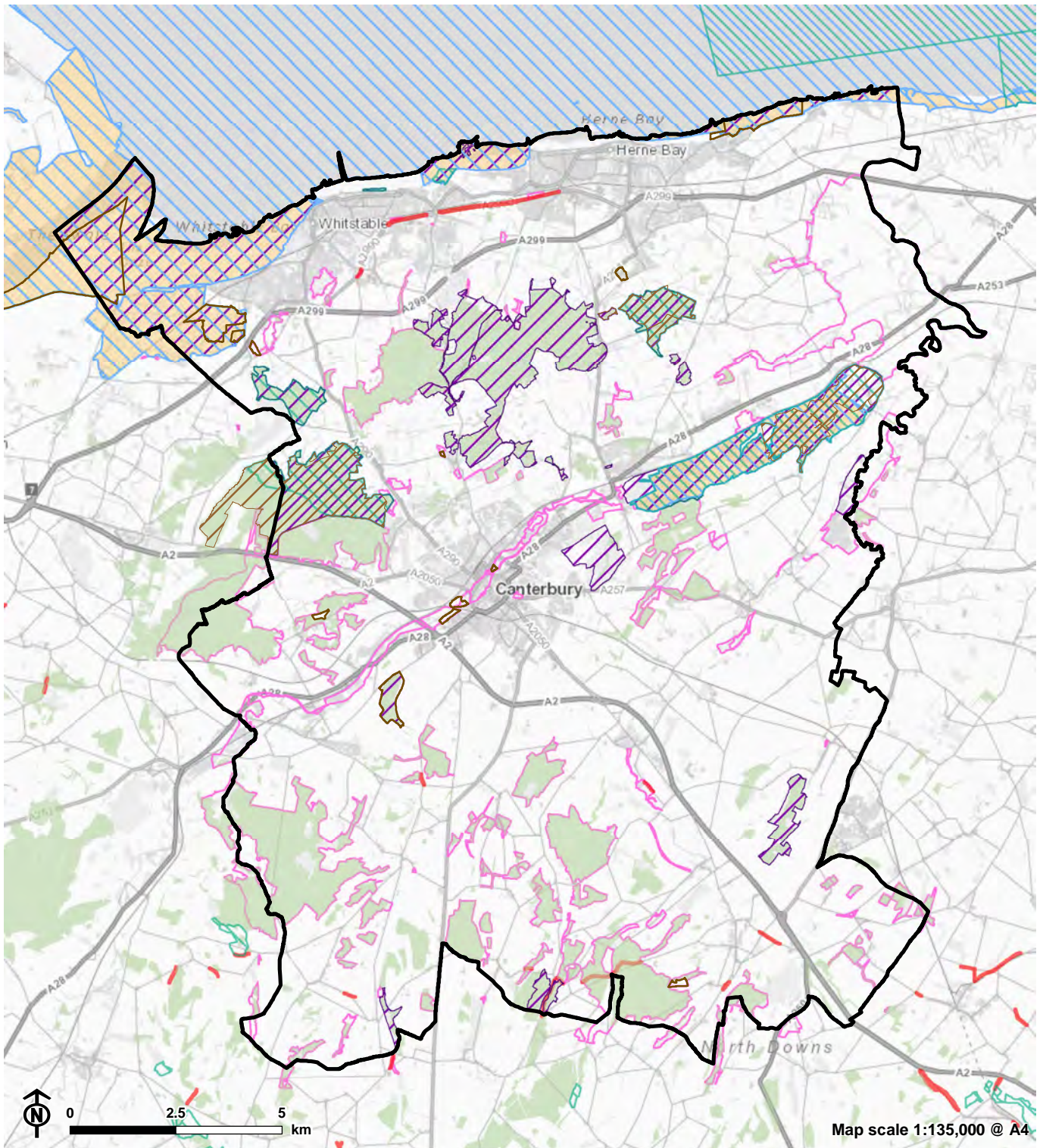
3.34 In order to secure the maximum biodiversity benefits the delivery of these will focus on Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs). The BOAs within the Canterbury District are listed below and shown on **Figure 3.7**:

- Thanet Cliffs and Shore;
- Lower Stour Wetlands;
- The Blean;
- East Kent Woodlands and Downs; and
- North Kent Marshes.

The areas outside the identified BOAs still have substantial biodiversity interest, and include a number of nature reserves, Local Wildlife Sites, ancient woodlands and other areas. In fact, substantial gains for biodiversity can be made in these areas where opportunities arise for habitat creation or better management. Their omission from the opportunity network only indicates that they are not as great a strategic priority for improving district- and county-wide habitat connectivity.

⁸ Kent Nature Partnership (2015) 'Kent Biodiversity 2020 and beyond – a strategy for the natural environment 2015-2025',

<http://kentnature.org.uk/uploads/files/Nat-Env/Kent-Biodiversity-Strategy-final.pdf>

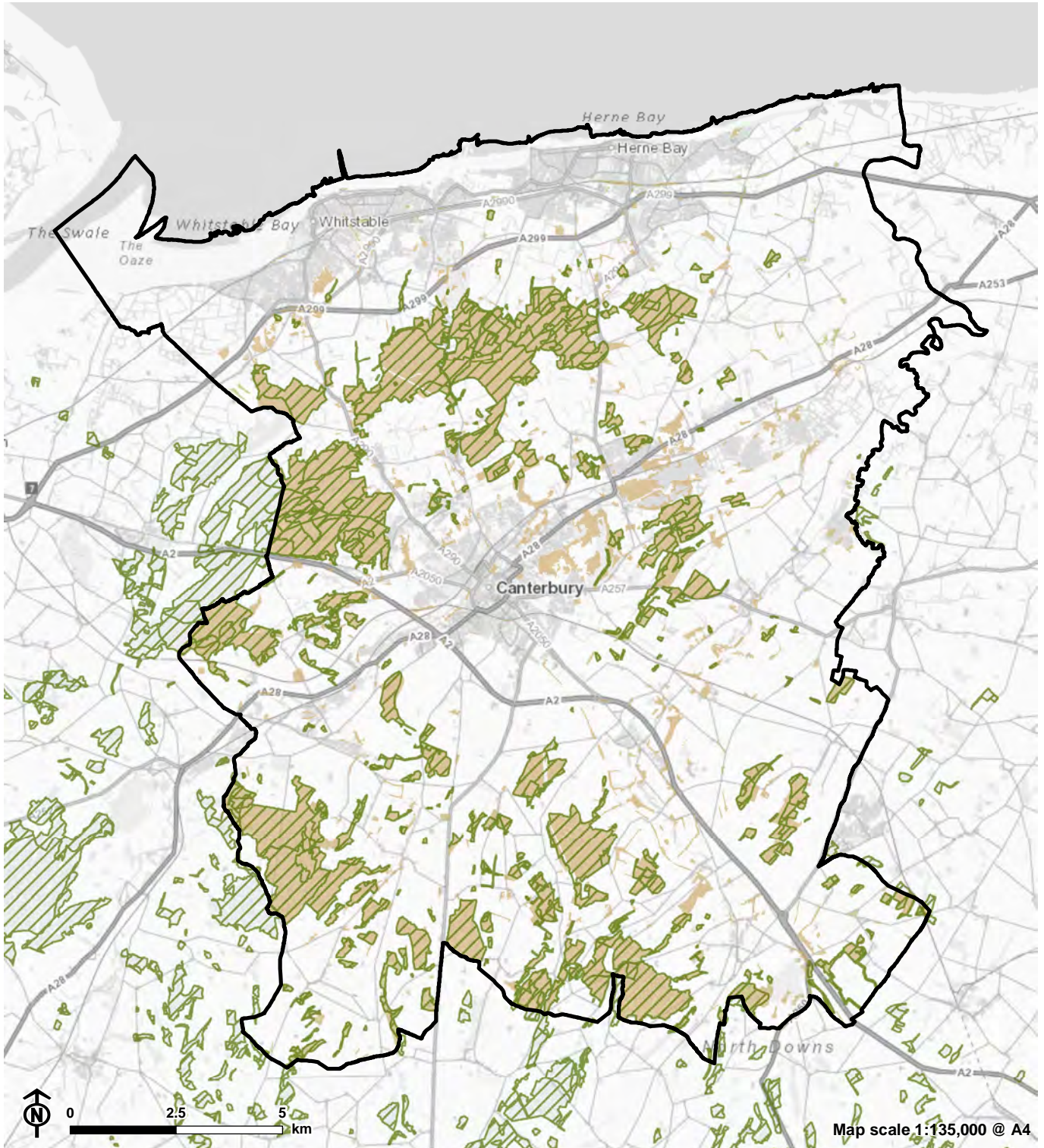


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Source: Natural England, Canterbury City Council

Figure 3.5: Nature Conservation Designations

- Canterbury City Council boundary
- Special Area of Conservation
- Special Protection Area
- Ramsar site
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- National nature reserve
- Ancient woodland
- Local nature reserve
- Local wildlife site
- Roadside nature reserve

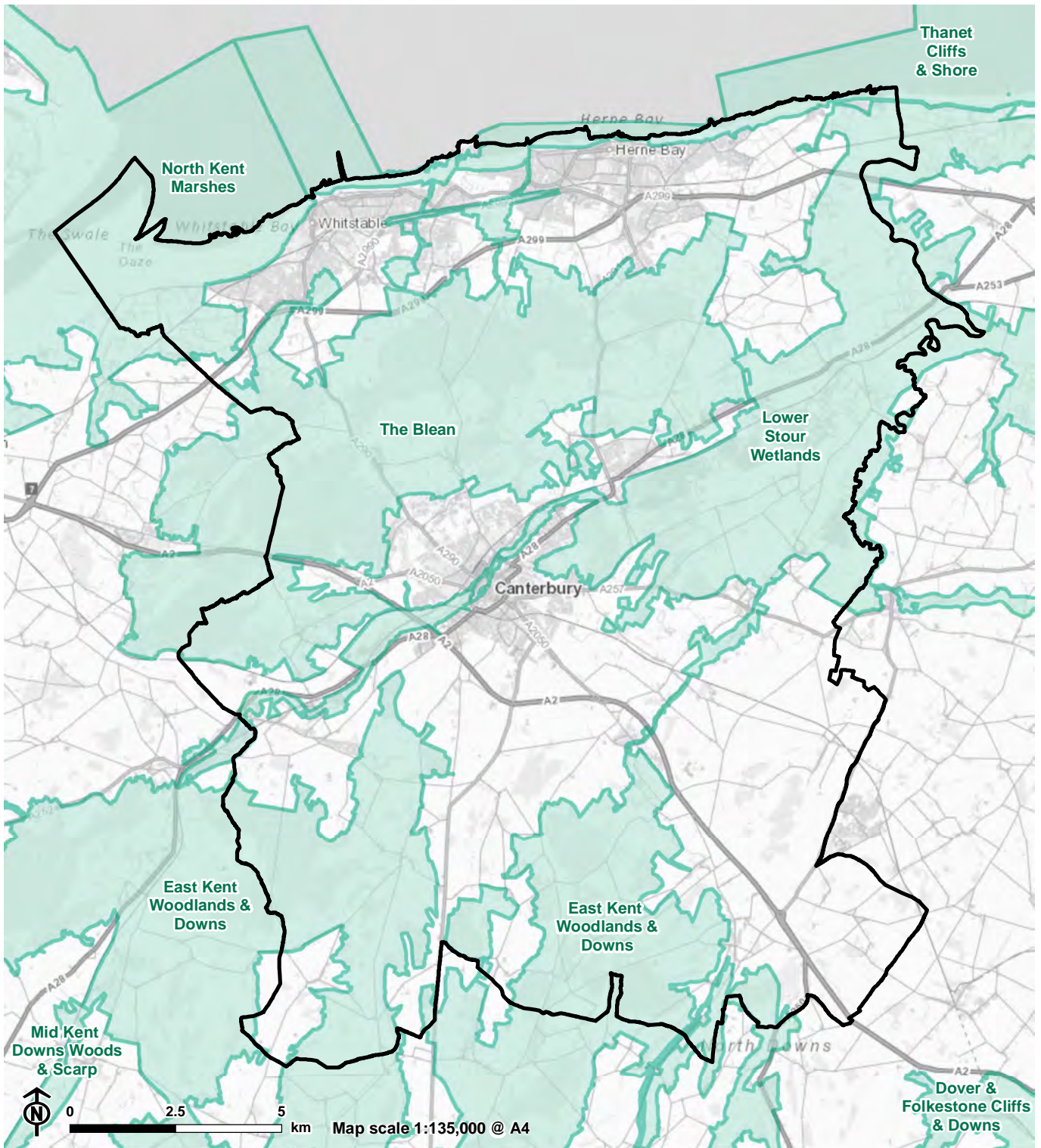


Map scale 1:135,000 @ A4

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Figure 3.6: Woodland

- Canterbury City Council boundary
- Ancient woodland
- National Forest Inventory



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CB:CB EB:Bean_C LUC FIG3_7_10717_BOA_A4P 12/02/2020
Source: Canterbury City Council

Figure 3.7: Biodiversity Opportunity Areas

- Canterbury City Council boundary
- Biodiversity Opportunity Area

Cultural Influences

Kent Historic Landscape Classification

3.35 The historic character of Canterbury District is as diverse as it is beautiful. At the heart of the district is Canterbury City, where the World Heritage Site continues the tradition of pilgrimage that has flourished for centuries. The city preserves a rich archaeological sequence below its modern streets, where colossal foundations of the Roman theatre survive alongside the more elusive shadows of their Anglo-Saxon successors.

3.36 The Great Stour, the lifeblood of Canterbury from its earliest days, bisects the district; flowing northeast to the former Wantsum Channel where now landlocked villages once overlooked the sea. Reculver Fort guarded the Channel from Roman times; its iconic twelfth century towers remain a landmark for passing ships.

3.37 The coastal towns of Whitstable and Herne Bay, while only a few miles apart, have their own unique characters. Both owe their growth to the sea; one from the fishing industry and internationally renowned oyster trade, the other from the Victorian heyday of sea-bathing and holidaying.

3.38 There are 53 Scheduled Monuments covering prehistoric to modern periods. There are almost 1880 listed buildings, over 440 locally listed buildings and 97 conservation areas, predominantly concentrated in Canterbury City, although also covering many of the District's villages and hamlets. There are also 2 Historic Parks and Gardens, on the Historic England Register. These are illustrated on **Figure 3.8**.

3.39 This section has been informed by reference to the Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation (2014) and Heritage Strategy for Canterbury District (2018), as well as drawing on the work completed for the 2014 Draft Canterbury Landscape and Biodiversity Appraisal.

Early Settlement

3.40 The Canterbury area has been continuously occupied since prehistoric times with some of the earliest finds including Palaeolithic (early Stone Age - 10,000 B.C.) and Mesolithic (middle Stone Age - 6,000 B.C.) flint tools.

3.41 The coastal plain and Blean Woods were occupied during the Bronze Age and evidence of fixed settlement is represented by Middle Bronze Age (1,000 BC) pottery finds. Other early settlements around Canterbury included an Iron Age fort (500 BC) at Bigbury Hill and possibly a prehistoric settlement at Fordwich. Iron Age pottery has also been found beneath the church levels at Reculver that implies a farmstead. There is visible evidence of funerary landscapes in some locations including a cluster of barrows along the higher

slopes of the Stour Valley. Bigbury Hill hillfort includes visible earthworks extending out into the surrounding countryside.

3.42 These ancient settlements were linked by routes selected for ease of use along ridgelines and through the dry valleys. Many of these ridgeways or 'harrow ways' have become adopted roads today. The North Downs Way is widely believed to have originated as a prehistoric trackway.

3.43 Prior to Roman occupation the Belgae, a group of tribes originating from northern Gaul, established what is believed to be their tribal capital and one of their largest open settlements in the south-east near Canterbury either side of the Stour in the mid-2nd century BC.

The Roman Landscape 55 BC - 500 AD

3.44 Canterbury was the major focal point for Romano- British settlement and industry. The Romans established Canterbury as a cantonal capital and regional administrative centre, known as Durovernum Cantiacorum, soon after the Claudian invasion in 43 AD. By about 275 AD walls had been built and a grid street pattern had evolved. Roman roads radiated outwards from the city to the coast and westwards to the rest of Britain. This network linking Canterbury to Dover, Richborough, Reculver, Lympne and London is essentially still in use today. Other roads in the area are also believed to be of Roman origin including the road from The Blean to Seasalter shore via Foxes Cross possibly constructed to serve a minor port off the current coast. It is also likely that there was a coastal road that has been lost to erosion.

3.45 There were a significant number of substantial Roman settlements across the district including major ports such as Reculver and Fordwich. There are a few Roman villa buildings such as at Ickham, and the fertile valleys and gentle slopes of the North Downs and the extensive woodland would have been well utilised. However, strikingly few high-status villa estates are known in Canterbury in contrast to most of the other districts of Kent. The Roman landscape contained a mixture of settlement type including farmsteads and roadside plots, indicating an established, formal legal system. Local industries included flour-milling, pottery and tile making and gravel and chalk quarrying in the suburbs of the city, with a port located at Sturry.

3.46 The coastline in Roman times extended some 4-5 km beyond the present coast, and a long tradition of oyster fisheries in the area is recorded, with oysters from 'Rutupaie' (modern Richborough) being consumed in the Roman city of Canterbury and some were even transported back to Rome.

3.47 Inland from the coast little evidence of Roman occupation has been found north of The Blean. At this time the landscape was probably one of heathland with stands of oak, with a substantial number of small settlements. A major stone

fort was built at Reculver in the 3rd century and was probably over a kilometre and a half inland at this time; however, coastal erosion has meant that today a stone apron is all that prevents it from falling into the sea. This fort was a defensive measure against early Saxon raids and represents the first phase of the Saxon Shore Fort system of the south-east coast. This fort guarded the northern mouth of the Wantsum Channel while Richborough guarded the southern end.

The Anglo Saxon and Medieval 500 - 1500

3.48 Canterbury was still occupied by Romanised Britons during the first half of the 5th century who lived side by side with Germanic settlers. During the late 5th and early 6th centuries a population of squatters lived amongst the ruins of the Roman walled city and it is likely that Canterbury survived as a tribal stronghold for some considerable time. However, by the end of the 6th century Canterbury had become the capital of the independent Saxon kings of Kent and was known as Cant-wara-byrig. The Roman roads continued to be used during this period. Additionally, drove roads were created to drive swine and cattle to Blean Woods for autumn foraging. Despite indications of earlier settlement, The Blean is believed to have been heavily wooded since this period.

The influence of Christianity on the development of the area really began in 597 AD when Augustine founded his cathedral on the site of an early church used by Roman Christians. He also founded a monastery outside the city wall now known as the Abbey of St. Augustine. A visual record of the introduction of Christianity to Britain is found in the three elements of the Canterbury World Heritage Site (WHS). St Martin's preserves, in whole or in part, the building in which King Ethelbert and subsequently Augustine and his followers first worshipped. The Cathedral stands on the site where Augustine first established his Cathedral and the ruins of the abbey include the remains of the monastery where his monks lived and worshipped and where the Kentish Kings and first archbishops were buried.

3.49 The period saw the establishment of a number of ecclesiastical and secular estates and land was being farmed under a manorial system of manor houses and related smaller farms and hamlets, with many of the parish boundaries having their origins in the Saxon period. One of the oldest is Stodmarsh which is first mentioned in 678 AD. Its name is derived from the Saxon 'stode' or mare when the area was devoted to the breeding of horses. Wickhambreaux, Littlebourne and Chartham are among other examples. Saxon and Roman artefacts have been found in barrows at both Wickhambreaux and Chartham.

3.50 Minor land holdings north of The Blean are described in Saxon charters as 'bi northanwude' - to the north of the wood. By circa 1050 the great monastic institutions had established a

Parochial system with tiny churches to act as focal points in these thinly occupied lands, and by the time of the Domesday survey in 1086 all the land holdings are attributed to the Archbishop demonstrating the power and influence of the Church during this period.

3.51 In the Medieval period Blean Woods were also acquired by various ecclesiastical establishments in Canterbury who managed the woods for timber and also used them for hunting and grazing. The cover of heath, bush and oak trees provided valuable pannage for 'pigs' and 'herbage' for cattle. Drove roads to the north coast across The Blean were also established by which the animals were herded, and these often survive as trackways or footpaths giving a north-south grain to the landscape. Most notably these include the Radfall, a linear earthwork indicating a ridgeway of great, if uncertain antiquity and early road system. Similarly, Radfall Road marks the line of an early droveway. The name Radfall is from 'Rodfall' referring to 'a rod's clearance (of woodland)'. As a result of the restricted access the use of the drove roads intensified and consequently widened as travellers endeavoured to avoid the muddiest parts. Alternative routes also developed. In places clearings ('dens' or 'cluses') were made in the edge of The Blean such as at Ellenden, Thornden and Clowes. Points of entry to the woodland have names containing 'gate', such as Radfallgate, Bleangate and Broomfield Gate. In the later middle ages the woodland was developed as coppice. Much of it retains this character today.

3.52 To the south of The Blean, the Tyler Hill area has a history of pottery and ceramic manufacture probably dating back to the 9th century. This developed into Kent's most important brick and tile industry in the 14th century. These industries were reliant on clay and charcoal extracted from Blean Woods and probably account for much of the woodland clearance evident today.

3.53 Throughout the middle ages the coastal marshes continued to be an important economic resource for fishing, oyster grounds, salt production and summer grazing. Land reclamation of the Wantsum Channel was partly the result of natural silting and partly due to human activity. It started a piecemeal process as early as the 7th century. Banks were constructed to restrain the creeks from overflowing and to protect livestock from periodic flooding from the Sarre Penn and North Stream.

3.54 A further groyne would be constructed to help trap the silt, followed by the construction of a short stretch of seawall to keep the sea off the land. Cross ditches were cut to carry away surplus water. These groynes and seawalls have been preserved in the present-day landscape in the form of Sarre Wall (now the A28), Rushbourne Seawall (16th century), Gilling, Tipper and Snake Drove. There was a fourth Drove, May Drove, but this was largely destroyed when the marsh

was converted to arable cultivation in the early 1990's. These droves were also used for moving livestock down to summer grazing on the marshes and back to the farms on the higher ground for winter. The marshland landscapes we see today were largely completed by circa 1550 and the northern seawall was eventually closed in 1808 transforming the Wantsum Channel from a sea strait to farmland. For example, evidence of Medieval farming under a manorial system could be seen today through survival of Medieval field boundaries, earthworks and field systems (such as ridge and furrow along the Stour Valley). Medieval monasteries are believed to have led the way on developing vegetable and herb cultivation and 'leisure' gardens along with more complex early water management systems. Landscapes are continuously evolving. Drainage management systems were certainly introduced on a large scale in certain areas of Canterbury during the Medieval era, but the process of reclamation is still on-going and the landscape is still changing as more or fewer drainage mechanisms are needed or ditches fill up or are cleared out. There are certainly some areas where modern development is less intrusive or has made less of a visual impact on landscapes and the historic landscape dimension is easier to see and appreciate but the time depth element of landscapes is an on-going process.

3.55 Seasalter Marshes were reclaimed in a similar manner and the name Graveney is derived from the Saxon 'Grafanea' which means 'stream that feeds a canal' or a 'dug river', suggesting the influence of man during this period.

3.56 Fishing was also important both in the streams and along the coast. Eight fisheries are recorded under Seasalter in the Domesday Book. There is some evidence that Seasalter may have been an important Saxon settlement. It is listed in the Domesday Book as 'a small borough ...which belongs to the Archbishop's own kitchen' and at Seasalter the remains of a vessel have been found on the marsh and it is believed that this was a local landing place in the 9th century. However, by the end of the 11th century coastal changes had brought its trading function to an end.

3.57 Both the Wantsum and Seasalter Marshes were important for salt making. This is shown in Anglo-Saxon charters detailing 'Sealturns' or salt houses and emphasising rights to take wood from The Blean to evaporate the brine. Local salt production is also listed in the Domesday Book and a number of Medieval saltworks are still evident today. In the Wantsum Channel the majority have been reduced by ploughing while others have been razed totally, some still rise to a height of over 3m and in some cases 350m in length. Most can be found in the middle of the channel which must have reached an advanced state of silting when they were formed. Burnt earth and oyster shells occur on all the mounds and fragments of 13th and 14th century pottery was found on some of them.

3.58 By the eve of the Norman Conquest Canterbury was an established town with two major monastic foundations, various churches, water mills and some suburban development. A deer park was established at Trenley Park by Odo of Bayeux around this time and is the oldest documented deer park in Kent. By 1200 the street pattern within the city walls had been established much as it is today and the landscape pattern that we now see was largely developed.

3.59 In 1170 the murder of Thomas Becket in the Cathedral shocked the whole Christian world and pilgrimage to Canterbury to visit his shrine ultimately became regarded as second only in importance to the traditional pilgrimage to Rome. For three and half centuries thousands of pilgrims from both this country and all over Europe visited Canterbury. The pilgrimage was at its most popular in the latter part of the 14th century, at about the time that Geoffrey Chaucer was writing 'The Canterbury Tales'.

1500s – 1800s

3.60 Pilgrimage to Canterbury ended abruptly when the shrine was destroyed in 1538 by Henry VIII during the Reformation and the city's economy started to decline. This was only checked by the arrival of Walloon refugees a few decades later to establish the profitable weaving industry. This industry grew during the 16th and 17th centuries when many hundreds of Walloon and Huguenot refugees were allowed to settle in Kent.

3.61 By circa 1550 the landscape was essentially complete, and the settlement pattern of farms, tracks, roads, set amidst a mosaic of smaller or larger closes laid out at various dates, remained largely unchanged between the 16th century and the late 18th to early 19th centuries. Until the end of the 18th century Canterbury itself was still contained within the bottom of the Stour Valley and at this time the view of Canterbury was of a huddle of rooftops interspersed with trees and church towers. The city largely retained its aspect of a Medieval market town with considerable areas of open space and garden. The Cathedral and particularly Bell Harry Tower and the tall spire on the Lanfranc Tower, which fell in 1704, were dominant features in the landscape.

3.62 The agricultural revolution brought changes in farming practice including the selective breeding of livestock; the removal of common property rights to land; and new systems of cropping, involving turnips and clover. It also brought a change in land management from traditional pasture to arable and added to the draining and reclamation of marshlands and clearing of woodland. Around Canterbury agricultural prosperity was brought to the area by hop growing. Daniel Defoe wrote in 1724 that some 6,000 acres of hops were planted within living memory. The increased prosperity saw the establishment of a number of farm estates and parklands

during the 18th century, including Hales Place to the north of Canterbury and Nackington House to south, within the Nailbourne Valley and Elbridge House at Stodmarsh.

3.63 The Great Stour had been the main commercial artery to Canterbury since Roman times. However, by the 16th century changes to the coastline and the severe silting up of the Stour limited its navigation. By the 18th century Whitstable had replaced Fordwich as the main port for Canterbury with goods being transported at greater expense over land. Significant landings at Whitstable probably date back to Tudor times when there was a rapid growth in both coastal and continental trading.

3.64 As trade gradually increased so did the traffic through The Blean between the coast and Canterbury, and by 1736 the route to the coast had become so important that a Turnpike was established by Act of Parliament. Other roads also developed during this time as many road users sought alternative routes to avoid tolls. The Turnpike continued in operation until 1871 when it was closed by national legislation. The Canterbury to Sandwich road was turnpiked in 1802.

3.65 Increased trade helped the growth of Herne. In particular hops were sent to London and shellfish exported to Holland. In return goods were imported from the Low Countries. The links with Holland are apparent in the 18th century Dutch style buildings; many of which remain a feature in the landscape today. Inland however a more agricultural traditional style remained.

3.66 The 19th century brought further changes to the landscape. In May 1830 a steam operated single track 'rail road' was opened between Whitstable harbour and Canterbury to transport coal to the city and passengers to the coast for the sea air. It was powered by Stephenson's 'Invicta' and was the first railway in the world to operate a regular passenger service operated by steam. The Invicta lasted just six years, thereafter the whole line was operated by cables from fixed engines at spaced intervals and in 1846 it was converted to locomotive operation. It is known locally as the Crab and Winkle Line, partly reinstated as a cycle route. In the early 1800's Herne Bay developed as a seaside town capitalising on the steamer trader to Thanet.

3.67 The railways continued to develop with the London to Ramsgate Line in 1849, the London to Dover Line in 1860 and the Elham Valley Line in 1889. The railway was a major force in the development of Whitstable and, in particular, Herne Bay whose popularity grew as a seaside resort. Several large breweries were established and paper mills, corn mills, mineral water factories and clay pipe factories were all present although there was no intensive industrialisation. Housing developed outside of the city walls on the site of St. Gregory's Priory (between Sturry Road/Northgate and Military Road) and between Wincheap and the New Dover Road.

20th Century

3.68 The 20th century has brought some of the greatest changes to the area. Following the First World War there was a considerable loss or decline of the parklands and the country houses around the city. Metalling of the roads had begun by the beginning of the century with the final rural lanes being metalled at the end of the Second World War. Parts of the historic road network that were not metalled now form other public rights of way such as footpaths and bridleways. The most obvious change in the landscape in the 20th century is the spread of suburban development and village expansion. This is particularly notable in those villages closest to Canterbury and has encroached to varying extents on the landscape.

3.69 Following bomb damage to the city during the Second World War there was a major rebuilding of substantial amounts of the city centre. In addition, there has also been considerable expansion of the suburbs around the city. This suburban growth has in particular included significant areas on the Stour Valley sides at Hales Place and at Rough Common, and to the south at Wincheap and Thanington and in the Barton Estate area. Perhaps the most notable development of the latter half of this century is the University of Kent that was built in the 1960s. The A2 Canterbury Bypass was built in 1977.

3.70 Development within the District has also included some planned settlements including the development of Chestfield. In 1920 the Manor Estate, which at this time still comprised 700 acres of farmland, a central manor with the surrounding farms of Balsar Street, Highgate and Bodkin and unchanged in essence since the middle ages was sold to George Reeves. Reeves set about realising his lifetime's ambition: the planning and building of an 'old world' village of part timbered houses. The estate was laid out on a generous scale with substantial timbered houses in large plots and smaller cottage style houses grouped around greens. In addition to a golf course Reeves also provided a cricket ground, tennis courts and a bowling green. A polo ground was planned but not built, although remembered in Polo Way. There was also a dairy and produce from the allotments and orchards was sold at his shop. Reeves ran virtually every aspect of the community until in 1941 when financial difficulties caused him to sell the estate. From then on it developed in a more conventional manner.

3.71 A further new village was created at Hersden adjacent to Chislet Colliery. The mining of coal began at Chislet Colliery in the early 1900s. The village of Hersden was developed as part of Abercrombie's Regional Plan for East Kent, designed by architect J Skipper. This had a significant impact on the rural landscape. Mining in Kent was short lived with Chislet being the first mine to close in 1969. The pithead buildings were

demolished leaving the capped shafts and areas of black spoil. Today the spoil heaps have vegetated over, and light industrial units are located on the site of the former colliery buildings.

3.72 The valley floor of the Stour has seen some of the most recent and significant development with the growth of out of town shopping. This is particularly evident along the Sturry Road and Broad Oak Road to the north-east, to the south-west at Chartham and even more recently to the south-west at Wincheap. Another obvious change in the landscape in the 20th century is the growth of the towns of Herne Bay and Whitstable, and the spread of suburban development which has encroached to varying extents on the landscape to the south. A catalyst to this development was the construction of the Thanet Way in the 1930s to bring development to the area to relieve unemployment. A more recent change in the landscape has come about by the construction of the A299, a new dual carriageway built to bypass a section of the Thanet Way.

Cultural Heritage Designations

3.73 The rich history of Canterbury City is recognised today by its designation as a World Heritage Site and Area of Archaeological Importance. There are also numerous listed buildings and Conservation Areas within the immediate vicinity of the city and in the rural settlements, as well as a number of Scheduled Monuments. **Figure 3.8** illustrates the cultural heritage designations within the Canterbury district.

Scheduled Monuments

3.74 Historic England identifies nationally important sites, known as Scheduled Monuments, throughout England which are placed on the schedule by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. A number of Scheduled Monuments are located throughout the study area:

- Archbishops Palace, Bekesbourne
- Bigbury Camp, Harbledown
- Bowl Barrows, Clowes Woods
- Bowl Barrow, Iffin Wood
- Dispersed Medieval settlement and Roman buildings, near St Cosmus and St Damiens Church
- Dovecote at Burnt House Farm
- Enclosure of Adisham Woodlands
- Enclosure of Newham Farm, Wickhambreaux
- Gateway to Brook Farm, Hillborough
- Horton Chapel near Chartham
- Medieval settlement and earthworks, Iffin Wood

- Reculver Roman Fort and Towers
- Well Chapel Remains, Bekesbourne

Conservation Areas

3.75 Areas with high concentrations of listed buildings or where the collective built form contributes strongly to the character and heritage of a place are often designated as Conservation Areas. There are Conservation Areas throughout Canterbury District, which are locally designated for their special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Details relating to each of the Conservation Areas throughout the study area are contained within **Appendix D**.

Historic Parks and Gardens

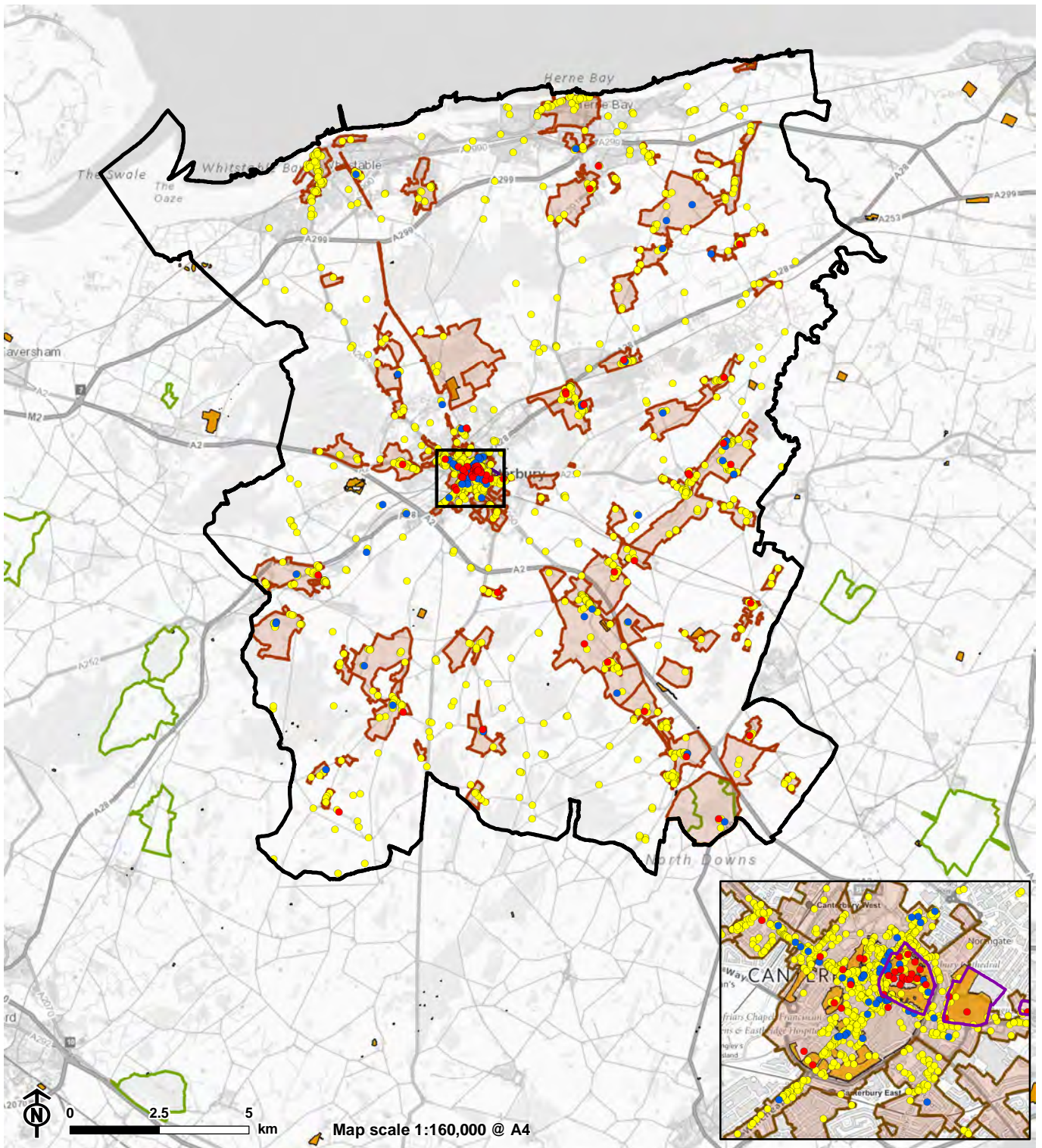
3.76 There are two nationally Registered Parks and Gardens within the study area; Broome Park (Grade II) to the south of Barham in the south-eastern part of the District, and Dane John Gardens (Grade II) within the city centre. There are also a number of parks and gardens listed in the Kent Gardens Compendium (Kent County Council and the Kent Gardens Trust 1996):

- Adisham Woodlands and associated lands
- Cobham Court
- Elbridge House and associated lands
- Harbledown Lodge
- Havisham House
- Howletts
- Mystole House Park
- Strode Park
- The Quaives
- Vernon Holme
- Westfield.

Perceptual landscape

3.77 Away from the settlements and main roads, many parts of the district enjoy high levels of tranquillity. The areas of highest tranquillity are concentrated in the Blean woodlands and marshes in the east and north-west of the district. This is illustrated on **Figure 3.9**.

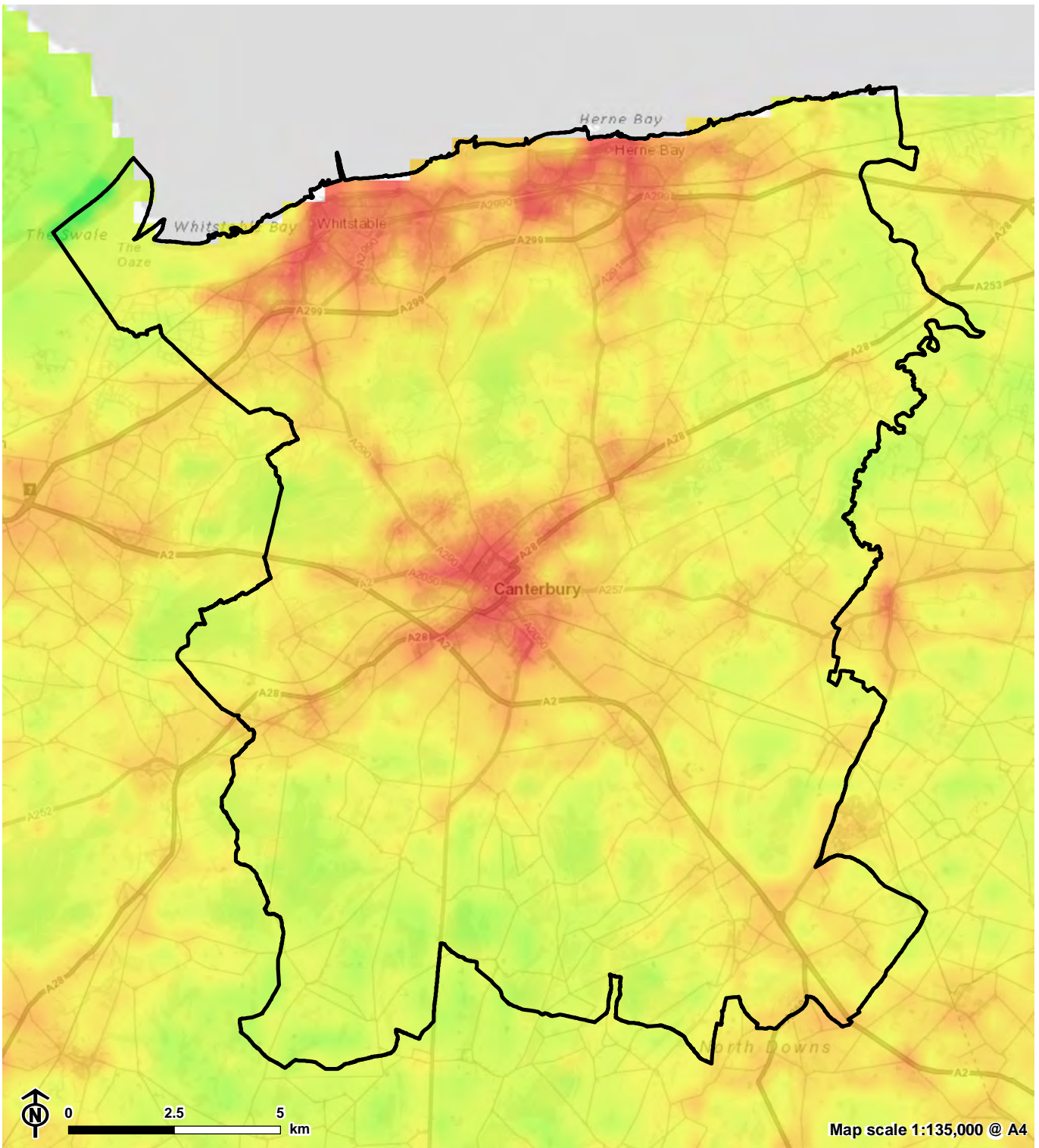
3.78 The levels of light pollution and dark night skies within Canterbury District are illustrated on **Figure 3.10**. Light pollution decreases with distance from the main settlements, however there are only small pockets of dark night skies free from interference from artificial light within the study area, typically in the Blean woodlands and the southern part of the District, south of the City of Canterbury.



CB:CB EB:Bean_C LUC FIG3_9_10717_CulturalHeritage_A4P 12/02/2020
Source: Historic England, Canterbury City Council

Figure 3.8: Cultural Heritage Designations

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Canterbury City Council boundary | Scheduled monument |
| World Heritage Site | Registered parks and gardens |
| Listed building grade I | Conservation area |
| Listed building grade II* | |
| Listed building grade II | |



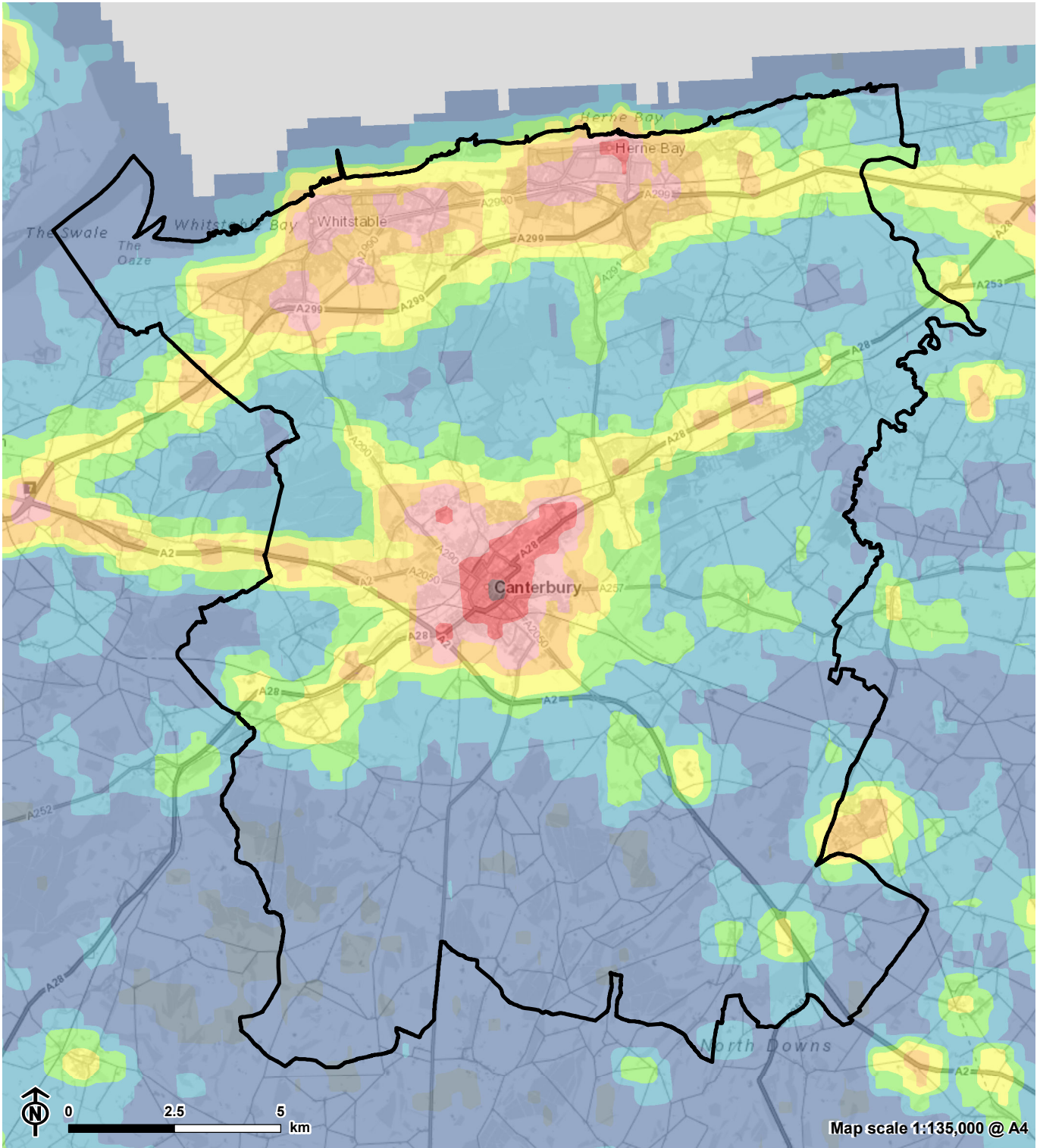
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CB:CB EB:Bean_C LUC FIG3_10_10717_Tranquility_A4P 12/02/2020
Source: Campaign to Protect Rural England, LUC

Figure 3.9: Tranquillity

Canterbury City Council Boundary

Most Least
Level of tranquillity

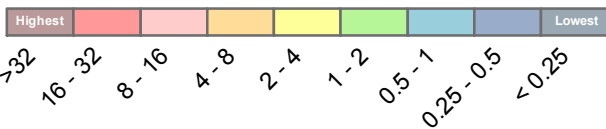


CB:CB EB:Bean_C LUC FIG3_11_10717_Darkskies_A4P 12/02/2020
Source: Campaign to Protect Rural England, LUC

Figure 3.10: Levels of Dark Skies and Light Pollution

Canterbury City Council boundary

Night light (NanoWatts / cm² / sr)



Summary of Landscape Change



Chapter 4

Summary of Landscape Change

4.1 Canterbury's landscape is constantly changing through human activity and natural processes. The cumulative effects of these processes can considerably alter the character of the landscape.

4.2 The main pressures that have potential to influence the landscape character of Canterbury as a whole are set out below.

Climate change

4.3 Climate change is a major pressure on rural landscapes and is likely to result in increasingly unpredictable weather with hotter drier summers, more intense rainfall and longer dry periods resulting in the need for agriculture to adapt to grow different crops and develop more flexible and responsive land management practices. Hotter summers and increases in temperatures could result in increased demands for agricultural irrigation. Responses to climate change may also result in pressure for development of renewable energy.

4.4 Climate change resulting in more extreme weather could alter the species composition of existing species-rich woodlands and hedgerows, favouring species with lower water demand. Increasing incidences of pathogens may change the species mix of woodlands and higher temperatures and prolonged droughts are likely to put woodlands under further stress and increase the risk of wildfires.

4.5 Climate change is also likely to affect other important semi-natural habitats, particularly river and wetland habitats throughout the district. This will include water shortages in summer and increased water flows and flooding in winter, causing potential damage to habitats and species. These changes may manifest themselves within the natural environment through changes in habitats and a decline of flora and fauna which are unable to adapt quickly enough to the changing habitat conditions. Rising water and sea levels may also impact migrant bird habitats of mudflats and salt marshes. Longer drier summers may affect heathland, dry grassland and coastal habitats and increase the risk of fire. The changing seasons may also disturb migrating birds and invertebrates, as there will be an increasing mismatch in timing of the arrival of migratory species and food sources, affecting neutral grassland and woodland as well as intertidal habitats.

4.6 Approximately 15% of the district lies within Flood Zone 3 and is considered to be at high risk of flooding from the sea and/or from watercourses, including river valleys associated with the Great Stour, Little Stour, Wingham, Nailbourne and Sarre Penn. Measures to provide river and coastal flood protection may lead to conflict between defences and wildlife value, particularly along coastlines as sea level rises threaten coastal towns and villages. The Isle of Grain to South Foreland Shoreline Management Plan Review (2010) provides a strategic assessment of the risks associated with coastal evolution and identifies spatial policies to manage the coastal flood and erosion risks. The Shoreline Management Plan provides policies into the 22nd century, based on present day (0-20 years), medium-term (20-50 years) and long-term (50-100 years). Within Canterbury District the present day and medium-term strategies (up to the next 50 years) for the coast from Seasalter to Herne Bay is to maintain the present coastline. At Reculver the strategy is for no active management of the coastline.

4.7 Mitigation and adaptation to climate change, in order to achieve Net Zero is also changing the landscape of the district, not least through the demand for renewable energy including new solar installations, offshore wind and associated grid connections. The Landscape Character Assessment can be used to help ensure such new land uses contribute, rather than detract from character through considering the key landscape sensitivities and guidelines in planning development and mitigation. It provides an evidence base for more detailed site level Landscape and Visual Impact assessment (LVIA) to accompany planning applications.

Agricultural change

4.8 Agriculture is still of considerable significance in terms of the local landscape of Canterbury District, and in 2016 19,029 ha within the district were farmed⁹. However, agricultural changes, particularly related to the viability of traditional small-scale farming, are leading to the diversification of farm-based activities which could lead to a change in traditional field patterns and farming methods.

4.9 Intensification is associated with a loss of pasture for cereal production, providing fodder crops (maize) and straw for bedding, which is in turn resulting in field enlargement and subsequent loss of hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Hedgerows can lose their function in arable landscapes and are often replaced by post and wire fences. There has been a general decline in hedgerow maintenance and condition. Arable cropping has increased in the district, with cereals predominant, at around two-thirds of the arable land area¹⁰.

4.10 More intensive farming practices often result in larger amalgamated farms with new agricultural buildings. These agricultural buildings tend to be large scale and have no local distinction and can be detractors within the landscape.

4.11 Intensification means that farms are generally decreasing in number with many smaller farms diversifying or going out of business and traditional agricultural buildings steadily converted to residential or commercial use, with accompanying changes in lighting and access requirements, noise and roadside signage, further eroding rural character.

4.12 Grassland makes up a quarter of the land use, and livestock has increased since 2007, particularly pigs¹¹. Horse grazing is also popular, resulting in the presence of horse-paddocks, and other non-traditional use of farmland particularly at settlement edges. Increased equine activity is having an impact on the character of the countryside with division of existing fields into individual paddocks defined by post and wire or horse tape, increasing stabling and degradation of pasture due to lack of active grassland management leading to either scrub invasion or over grazing. This could lead to a further decline in the valuable neutral grassland habitat. Loss of sustainable grazing for can also lead to soil erosion.

4.13 The current political situation means there is considerable uncertainty about the future of the agricultural sector. The Agriculture Bill 2017-19 had its first reading in September 2018 and covers issues such as expenditure on agriculture, direct support payments, causes for intervention in agricultural markets and World Trade Organisation regulations. Direct payments to farmers through the Common Agricultural Policy and direct support payments are intended to be phased out from 2021. From 2025 it is proposed that the Countryside Stewardship Scheme will begin to be replaced by a new Environmental Land Management Scheme, based on natural capital benefits¹² and public goods. However, the method and rate of payment has yet to be decided. Having an up to date landscape character assessment can help ensure that local character and distinctiveness can be conserved and enhanced through future land/agricultural management.

Land management

Trees and Woodland

4.14 Trees and woodland make a valuable contribution to the landscape character of Canterbury district. However, pressure for development means there is potential for loss of woodland, including valuable semi-natural woodlands.

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/structure-of-the-agricultural-industry-in-england-and-the-uk-at-june>
¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Natural capital is the world's natural resources (e.g. geology, soil, air) from which we can derive benefits and services.

4.15 The ongoing decline in traditional woodland management practices is leading to under management of farm woodlands and copses resulting in the loss of species diversity. There is pressure on semi-natural woodlands (including ancient woodland) from a lack of management or inappropriate management, as well as from the spread of invasive non-native plants which can prevent regeneration of native woodland.

4.16 Mature hedgerow trees are an integral part of the traditional hedge system and contribute to the wooded context of the district in both the urban and rural areas. The loss of these trees through senescence, development pressure or climate change and associated pests and diseases together with a lack of replacement, is a key challenge to the existing landscape character.

4.17 Agricultural intensification and consequent field enlargement are leading to direct felling and grubbing up of hedgerow trees. Tree loss is also caused by direct or indirect damage from agricultural machinery, leading to early decline or death. Management of the rural tree scape is a key opportunity in future agri-environment schemes.

4.18 Neglect of hedgerows, leading to their degradation to a line of standard trees or the development of gaps within hedgerows, is also an issue. Too frequent or badly timed cutting can also result in gaps in hedgerows or the decline in the variety and age structure of hedgerows and hedgerow trees, and ultimately the loss of hedgerows. The use of fencing, which reduces the agricultural necessity for hedge maintenance, is also hastening the decline of the hedgerow network.

4.19 On a positive note, the district includes many examples of woodlands in active management including coppice, with associated landscape and biodiversity benefits. Targets for woodland planting to achieve net zero provide opportunities to enhance woodland cover and connect existing isolated woodland blocks. The landscape character assessment can provide a baseline to help plan for increased woodland cover to help plant the right tree in the right place.

Waterbodies

4.20 Canterbury District's network of streams and rivers and associated wetlands are vulnerable to agricultural diffuse pollution and are at risk of saline incursion as a result of sea level rise. East Kent is one of the driest parts of the country, and groundwater supplies 80% of the area's drinking water as well as an important base-flow to the river systems. The Stour Catchment is divided into twenty discrete river water bodies, of which 12 are at moderate status, seven as poor and the River

Dour (within Dover district) is classified as 'bad' under the Water Framework Directive¹³. The priority issues within the Stour catchment are the low fish populations due to structures obscuring fish migration and siltation of gravel spawning grounds; high phosphate levels from wastewater treatment works; and diffuse run-off from urban areas and agriculture. The Environment Agency and partners are committed to getting as many water bodies within the Stour Catchment to 'good' status by 2027 as possible. Recent progress has been made in improving water quality.

4.21 Typical invasive species associated with riverine environments include Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed and giant hogweed. All of these species are listed in Part II of Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which means they are subject to strict control and it is an offence to plant or allow these species to grow in the wild. These species pose risk to the environment and human health. They are persistent and resilient to disturbance and are able to spread through contaminated soil.

4.22 Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam can spread rapidly along riverine environments, especially during flood events. Both Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam outcompete native flora and can rapidly dominate localised areas resulting in reduced species diversity. This reduction in species diversity in combination with the annual nature of both species can lead to structural instability of riverbanks which can result in increased erosion. In the case of Japanese knotweed, there is also the potential for it damage structures and hard standing. Giant hogweed can be a risk to the human health as this species is known to cause adverse reactions to skin, causing swelling, pain and blistering which can persist and reoccur for years after exposure.

4.23 A wild Eurasian beaver *Castor fiber* population has been recorded in the Canterbury city limits and beyond. This population is likely to expand in range and abundance resulting in significant changes to the local landscape. This species is regarded as an ecosystem engineer meaning that they alter their environment through their natural behaviours. Characteristic behaviours include tree cutting and the creation of dams and canals. These behaviours can lead to the creation of new wetlands or enhancement of existing habitats. Overall, the impacts of an increasing beaver population are anticipated to be beneficial, with increases in habitat and plant diversity expected.

¹³ <http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/ManagementCatchment/3087/Summary>

Development pressure

Housing and employment

4.24 The presence of large urban areas both within and immediately outside the district boundaries means that pressure for development and accompanying infrastructure, particularly major housing or employment development, remains a challenge to the existing landscape character. The development of the new Canterbury District Plan will require a commitment to new housing and employment delivery over the next plan period up to 2040.

4.25 Infill development or the expansion of existing settlements is likely to lead to the loss of open agricultural land and woodland challenging the rural character of landscapes immediately adjacent to these areas. New or extended development of rural villages needs to be carefully managed to ensure the conservation of the distinctive character of the settlements.

4.26 The requirement for additional public open space from new development may also impact the character of the local landscape by changing land use from agriculture to recreation. The Landscape Character Assessment can help define appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures for new development to help integrate within the rural setting and create urban and rural edge landscapes of distinctive character.

Infrastructure

4.27 Infrastructure works can have a significant influence on landscape character through the upgrading of existing facilities and the provision of new infrastructure to facilitate additional development. Infrastructure works can also be opportunities to provide new landscape character, for example through additional planting, provision of green infrastructure links and wider landscape enhancement.

4.28 Strategic road improvements, including new or re-aligned roads and junctions associated with major developments, are planned to help alleviate the impact of additional traffic, which may have a positive effect on tranquillity, sound and light pollution in the district. Strategic road improvements should be carefully designed and managed to avoid a negative impact on landscape character in terms of fragmentation of the landscape and a loss of tranquillity.

4.29 Narrow rural roads have a rich heritage within the district and are an important feature in the countryside. Rural lanes are vulnerable to heavy traffic which can degrade their rural character, damaging grass verges and hedgerows and lead to the decline of species rich roadside grassland. Where road improvements are necessary for safety, road widening and

wider visibility splays for new development should be avoided where possible, and speed restrictions and restraining traffic should be imposed.

4.30 The upgrading of footpaths/cycleways in rural and coastal locations, which have important sustainability and active travel benefits, require sensitivity in implementation to conserve and enhance rural character.

Recreation and tourism

4.31 Canterbury District offers a wide variety of visitor attractions and wildlife sites which can make a valuable contribution to the rural economy and sustainable rural development. However, increasing visitor pressure also has the potential to affect the character of the area's natural and historical assets, and particularly the area's tranquillity. Development associated with tourism can adversely affect the local landscape by inadvertently damaging the features which attract visitors. Relatively high visitor pressure at certain locations can result in a loss of tranquillity, damage or fragmentation of sensitive habitats or species. Increased recreational activity can also lead to demand for additional facilities at popular locations, resulting in visual intrusion from car parks or visitor centres, increased traffic at 'honey-pot' sites and potential urbanising of rural parts of the district through the provision of more formalised cycle and walking routes. There may also be increased demand for visitor accommodation such as caravan parks, hotels and leisure complexes and for the expansion of golf courses. An increased resident population within the district will add to these pressures. Mitigation measures including dispersing visitors throughout the district; providing sustainable transport routes; and ensuring development is in keeping with the local character, should be sensitively planned and managed using the landscape character assessment as a framework. This is important for the landscapes outside of the AONB which form important recreational landscapes for residents of the city and coastal towns.

Minerals and waste management

4.32 The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan was adopted in July 2016 and sets out the vision and strategy for waste management and mineral provision in the county until 2030.

4.33 There is no current mineral extraction within Canterbury, and no plans to open new sites. There is landfill gas recovery at Shelford on Broad Oak Road.

Renewable energy

4.34 The need to meet the UK's target of cutting emissions by at least 80% of 1990 levels by 2050 requires an increase in renewable energy generation, which could have a significant

impact on the character of the landscape and seascape in the district.

4.35 Large-scale offshore wind turbine developments, including the Kentish Flats off the northern coast of the district are visible from many coastal and inland areas, and can cumulatively affect skylines. Pressure for additional development is likely to continue.

4.36 Solar farms are present across the district on farmland. These can be large-scale developments, and care should be taken to integrate and screen solar farms in open areas. Pasture fields converted to solar farms can still be used for some animal grazing with the correct management in place, and where appropriate this should be encouraged to retain the character of these fields, and avoid any loss of semi-natural grassland habitats. Attention to boundaries- fencing, lighting and security measures is important to main rural character.


4.37 Increased emphasis placed on developers to improve sustainability in new developments with increased requirements for achieving high BREEAM ratings, may affect the appearance of buildings through use of sustainable materials and renewable energy sources. The features and materials used should be appropriate to the local setting.

4.38 Rural diversification and a trend towards green energy from biomass or waste in the future is also likely to have a localised influence on the character of the rural landscape through changes in vegetation patterns such as large-scale single species planting and land management.

Conclusion

4.39 The updated Landscape Character Assessment for Canterbury District will have an important role in helping to manage future change in the district to ensure that it conserves and enhances existing character or helps to guide and create new distinctive character.

4.40 As noted, it is recognised that delivery of many of the guidelines are not the responsibility of Canterbury City Council, particularly those relating to landscape management, and will be implemented by others. This Landscape Character and Biodiversity Assessment has a wider role in providing evidence that can be used in managing change for example the implementation of agri-environment schemes, opportunities for woodland creation and wider mitigation and enhancement opportunities in association with development.



The Landscape Character of Canterbury District

Chapter 5

The Landscape Character of Canterbury

Landscape character types and areas

5.1 The updated landscape classification identifies 9 generic landscape character types (LCTs), each representing a distinct identity and common geology, topography, land use and cultural pattern. These are illustrated on **Figure 5.1**.

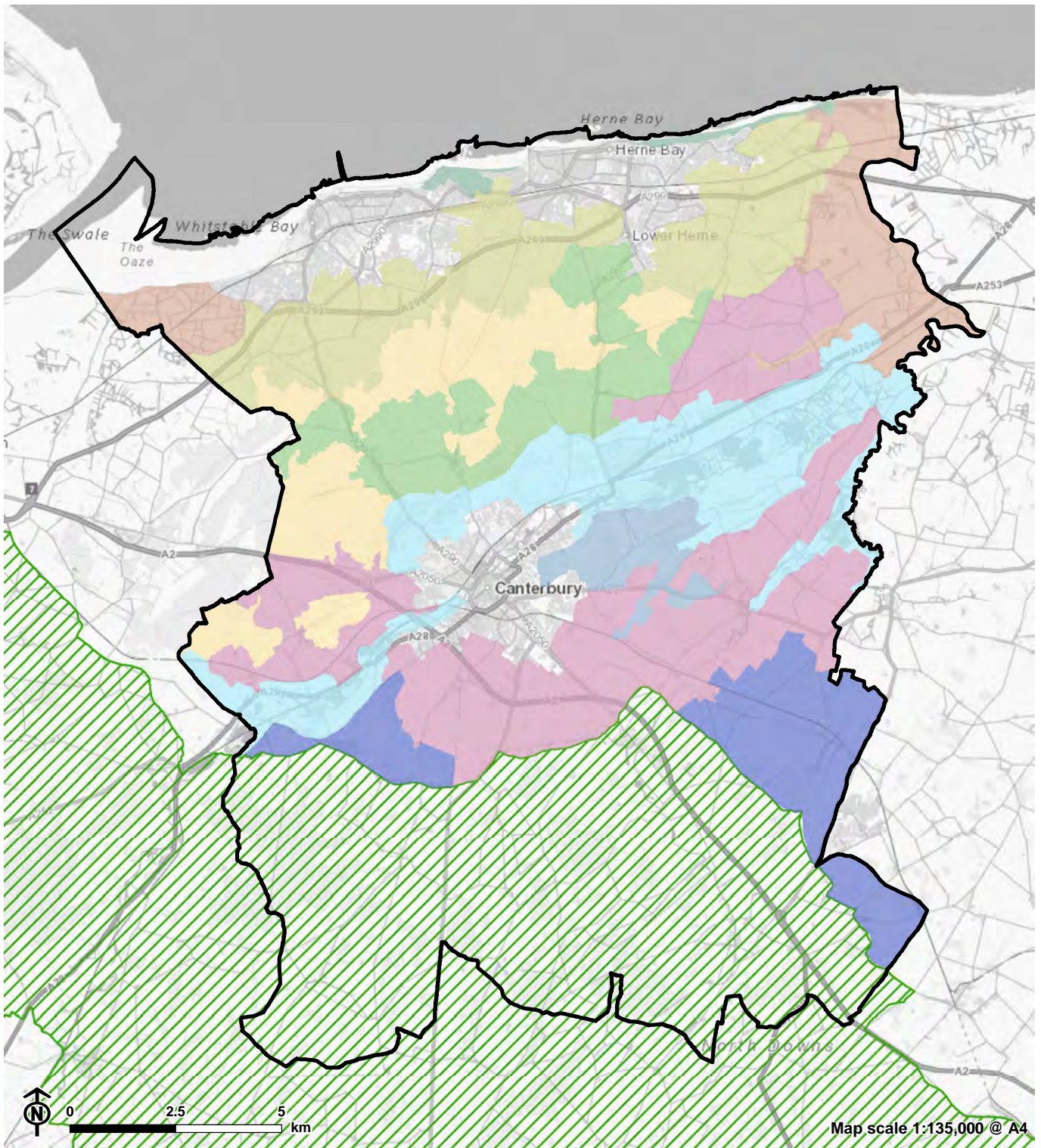
5.2 The LCTs are sub-divided into local landscape character areas (LCAs), which are discrete geographic areas that possess the characteristics described for the landscape type but have a recognisable local identity. The revised classification identifies 42 LCAs. These are listed in **Table 5.1** below and shown on **Figure 5.2**.

5.3 It is important to note that boundaries between one LCT or LCA and the next are transitional and there is rarely a clear-cut change. The precision of boundaries drawn around LCTs and LCAs vary with the scale and level of detail of the assessment. This assessment has been mapped at a scale of 1:25,000 which provides an appropriate level of detail for the landscape character assessment.

Table 5.1: Landscape Character Types and Areas

LCA no.	LCA name
A: Open Coastal Edge	
A1	Beltinge Coast
A2	Swalecliffe Coast
B: Coastal and Inland Marshes	
B1	Chislet Marshes and Snake Drove
B2	Nethergong Sarre Penn Inlet
B3	Seasalter Coastal Marshes
B4	Reculver Coastal Marshes
C: Coastal Hinterland	
C1	Chestfield Gap and Greenhill
C2	Chestfield Farmland
C3	Court Lees and Millstrood Farmlands
C4	Ford and Maypole Mixed Farmlands
C5	Hillborough Arable Farmlands
C6	Wraik Hill
C7	Yorkletts Farmlands
D: The Blean – Woodland	
D1	Harbledown
D2	Thornden
D3	Ellenden and Victory Woods
D4	East Blean
D5	Bigbury Hill
D6	Denstead Woods
E: The Blean – Farmland	
E1	Herne Common
E2	Sarre Penn Valley
E3	Amery Court Farmland
F: River Valleys	
F1	Stour Valley Sides
F2	Stour Valley Slopes

LCA no.	LCA name
F3:	Hersden Ridge
F4	Stodmarsh Ridge
F5	Little Stour Valley
F6	Stour Valley – Sturry and Fordwich
F7	Stour Valley West
F8	Westbere and Stodmarsh Valley
G: Stour Valley Woodlands	
G1	Old Park
G2	Trenley Park Woodlands
H: Central Mixed Farmlands	
H1	Harbledown Fruit Belt
H2	Hoath Farmlands
H3	Ickham Farmlands
H4	Nackington Farmlands
H5	Nailbourne Parklands
H6	Littlebourne Fruit Belt
H7	Wickhambreaux Horticultural Belt
I: Downland	
I1	Adisham Arable Downland
I2	Bramling Downland
I3	Chartham and Shalmsford Downland

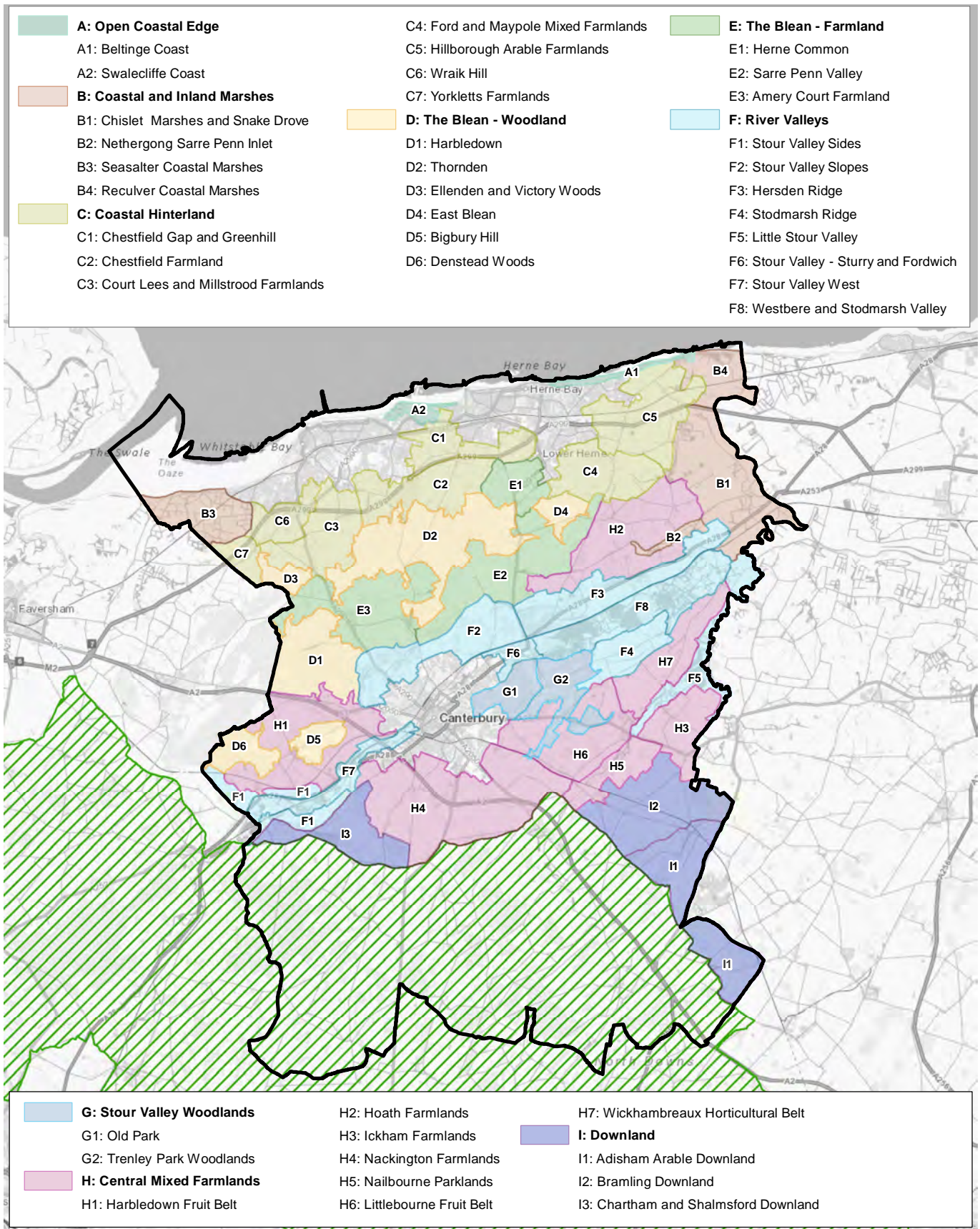


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CB:CB EB:Bean_C LUC FIG5_1_10717_LCT_A4P 24/11/2020
Source: Canterbury City Council, Natural England

Figure 5.1: Landscape Character Types

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Canterbury City Council boundary | Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty | |
| A: Open Coastal Edge | D: The Blean - Woodland | G: Stour Valley Woodlands |
| B: Coastal and Inland Marshes | E: The Blean - Farmland | H: Central Mixed Farmlands |
| C: Coastal Hinterland | F: River Valleys | I: Downland |



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CB:CB EB:Bean_C LUC FIG5_2_10717_LCA_A4P 24/11/2020
 Source: Canterbury City Council, Natural England

Figure 5.2: Landscape Character Areas

Canterbury City Council boundary Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Canterbury District Landscape Character Profiles



Chapter 6

Canterbury Landscape Character Profiles

LCT A: Open Coastal Edge



Description

This LCT is distinguished by the open and undeveloped coastline with a strong relationship with the sea. The areas contain valuable coastal habitats including shingle beach, sand and extensive mudflats which are uncovered at low tide. There is limited development, and land use is generally recreational. There are views along the coast to neighbouring areas and settlements and long coastal and sea views including to offshore windfarms, marine traffic in the estuary and the offshore forts.

Landscape Character Areas

The Open Coastal Edge LCT is subdivided into two LCAs:

- A1: Beltinge Coast
- A2: Swalecliffe Coast

These are closely related to, and should be considered alongside, the marine character assessment MCA 16: Swale, Kentish Flats and Margate Sands¹⁴.

¹⁴ Seascape Character Assessment for the South East Inshore marine plan area, Marine Management Organisation, 2018.

Representative Photographs



Bishopstone Cliffs looking towards Herne Bay



Recreation along the sea wall



Bishopstone Cliffs looking east to Reculver Towers and Isle of Thanet



Reculver Towers



Sea wall looking west to Herne Bay clock tower



Reculver Country Park visitor centre and sea wall looking towards Herne Bay

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Slumped and graded maritime cliffs and slopes underlain by complex geology of clay and sandstone fall to a shingle beach.
- Coastal grassland on the flat cliff top with localised tree filling the distinctive deep valley at Bishopstone Glen.
- Extensive priority habitat mudflats visible at low tide, which supports internationally and nationally important numbers of wintering birds, terrestrial and marine plant species and invertebrates.
- Entirely undeveloped, with the adjacent settlement of Beltinge extending from Herne Bay on the cliff top.
- Roman fort at Reculver, later site of Anglo-Saxon monastery and church on the edge of the Wantsum Channel designated as a Scheduled Monument. Imposing twin towers added to the church in the 12th century forming an important landmark across the land and sea.
- Popular area of public open space managed as the Reculver Country Park with long distance walking and cycling routes along the cliff top.
- Extensive sea views west and north-west to Sheppey and Essex and east along the coast to landmark Reculver Towers.
- Views out to sea include offshore windfarms and historic Maunsell Forts.
- An exposed coastal landscape, with a strong connection to the sea, and associated sense of relative remoteness.

Natural Influences

This LCA forms a narrow strip of open space along the clay cliffs between Beltinge and the coast. It is a simple landscape comprising three main elements - the open cliff top, the sloping slumped clay cliffs and the shingle beach and mudflats.

The landscape is underlain by a complex geology of London Clay, Woolwich and Reading Beds and Thanet Formation. The change in geology from clay to more resistant strata can be clearly seen in the east where the cliffs abruptly steepen and the exposed, sandy, near vertical cliffs start. The exposed Thanet, Woolwich and Reading Beds, Oldhaven and London Clay Formations within the LCA are one of Britain's most important palaeobotanical localities, and the section contains a rich invertebrate and vertebrate fossil fauna. The best of these occur on the foreshore, towards the Spring tide and Low Water mark.

Bishopstone Glen is a short steep-sided valley cut through the clays and sands at the eastern end of the Bishopstone promenade and is the only feature of its kind on the North Kent Coast. The head of the ravine contains the only woodland within the LCA and includes ash, field maple and elm.

The cliff top comprises maintained amenity grassland, and the sloping cliffs themselves support a large area of coastal grassland. The grassland includes species such as spiny restharrow and dyers greenweed, the latter is listed as notable in the Kent Biodiversity Action Plan. The eastern cliffs and cliff tops house priority habitat maritime cliff and slope and are

home to cliff-face nesting sandmartins, rare wasps and other invertebrates.

The priority habitat mudflats and unimproved grassland and scrub along the cliffs support wintering and breeding seabirds and waders, and large numbers of migratory birds use the area. The east of the area is internationally designated for its ecological importance as part of the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Ramsar and SPA, and nationally as the Thanet Coast SSSI.

The coast and sea contain blue mussel beds, peat and clay exposures, ross worm reefs, stalked jellyfish and subtidal chalk and sands, and are designated as the Thanet Coast MCZ.

The whole LCA forms part of the Thanet Cliffs and Shore BOA.

Cultural Influences

The shingle, sands and muds of the foreshore are divided by the regular pattern of distinctive sea-washed timber groynes, built to protect the soft cliffs from wave erosion and long-term coastal change. The remnants of historic groynes can be seen in the mudflats at low tide.

The Isle of Grain to South Foreland Shoreline Management Plan Review 2010 (South East Coastal Group) identifies the future management of the Beltinge Coast for the next 100 years. This identifies that the existing defence line will be maintained to the west of Bishopstone, and that there will be no investment in providing or maintaining defences east of Bishopstone. There is very rapid ongoing erosion of the cliff edge between Bishopstone Glen and Reculver Towers.

Reculver has long been a strategically important site, and there is evidence of a temporary Roman military camp built in the first century AD. A fort was constructed in the third century AD to provide protection against Saxon raiders who began to threaten the south-east coast from the end of the second century. This survives as ruined walls, earthworks and below ground features.

The Anglo-Saxon monastery at Reculver was founded around 669 AD and was built from the existing Roman defences. By the tenth century the church was no longer in monastic use and had become the parish church of St Mary's. The twin towers were constructed in the early 12th century. Coastal erosion diminished the village at Reculver, and the rest of St Mary's church was demolished 1809, although the towers were bought by Trinity House as a navigational aid. It continues to be an imposing landmark across the sea and land. The fort and church are designated as a Scheduled Monument, and Reculver is designated as a Conservation Area.

There is very limited development in this landscape although the linked settlements of Herne Bay/ Beltinge surround the area to the east and south east. The holiday park is a dominant feature at Reculver.

Perceptual Influences

The landscape forms an area of undeveloped coast between Herne Bay and Reculver and to the east an open and undeveloped coastal gap linking to an agricultural hinterland and the Wantsum Channel. Reculver Country Park is a

popular area of open space for informal recreation, with coastal routes for walkers and cyclists.

The Reculver Towers are a distinctive local landmark, visible within the area and from the surrounding area and the sea. There are extensive views out to sea and across to Sheppey and Essex. Sea views encompass maritime shipping, the Maunsell Forts, an important Second World War heritage feature and the offshore wind turbines of the Thanet and Kentish Flats.

The suburban cliff top development at Beltinge is characterised by pre and post War detached and semi-detached seaside villas and bungalows. The pier, promenade and Grade II listed clock tower within the seaside resort of Herne Bay are also visible from this area.

The landscape is popular for recreation. The Saxon Shore Way Long Distance Footpath and Oyster Bay Trail cycle route run along the promenade at the base of the cliffs. The England Coast Path has been approved in this area but is not yet fully established. Water-based activities include sailing, water skiing, kayaking, kite surfing, power boating and wind surfing. Sea angling and bait digging are also common. The Reculver Country Park visitor centre is in the north-west, and provides parking, a play area and refreshments. Reculver Towers is also a popular visitor attraction.

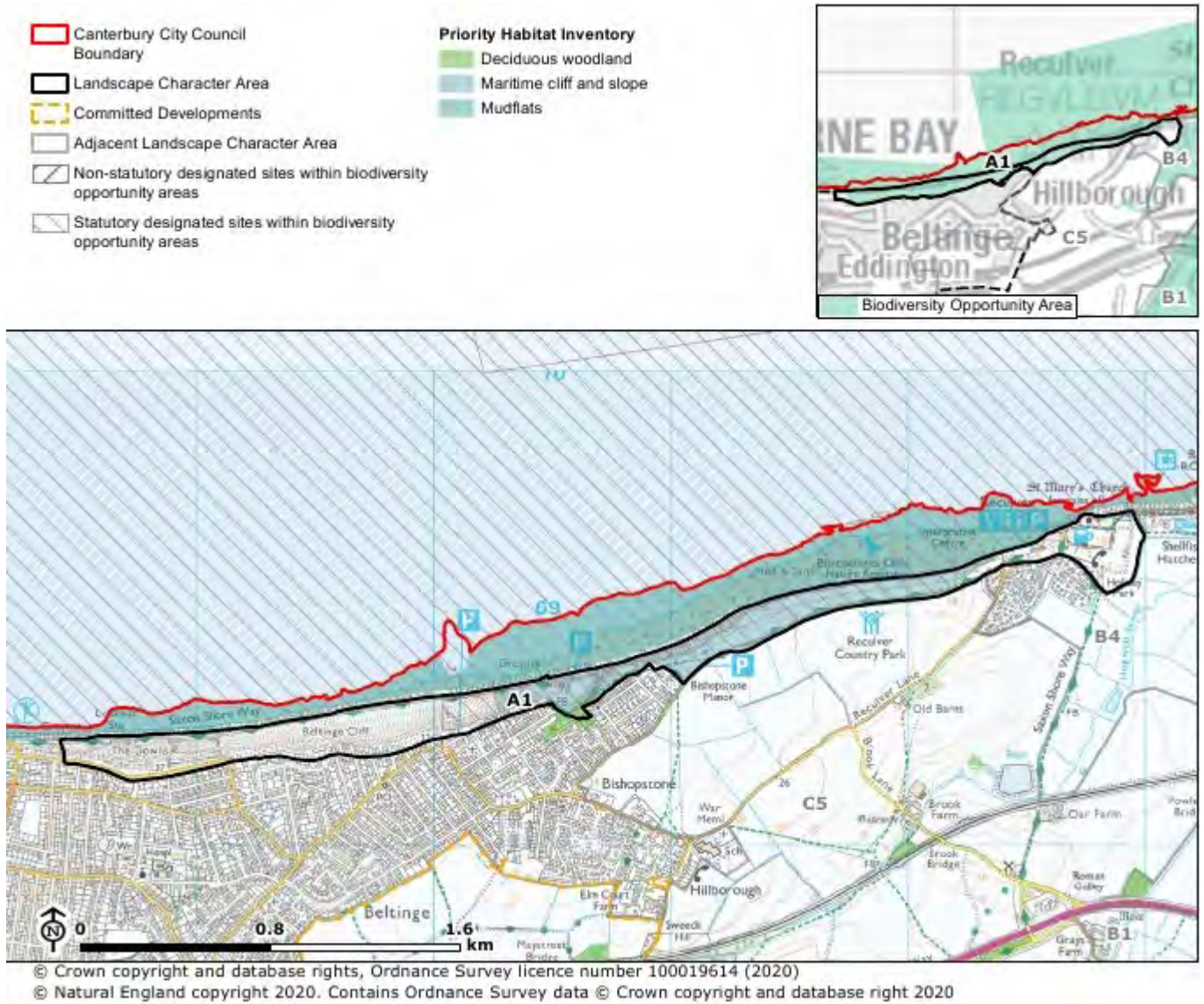
This is a peaceful, undeveloped coastal landscape and despite the proximity to Herne Bay, a remote character persists in places, particularly in the more open landscape 'gap' between Herne Bay and Reculver.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- Maritime cliffs and slopes form a setting to Herne Bay and Reculver and are unique elements of the Canterbury district coastline.
- Internationally designated coastal habitats and nationally designated cliffs and beach, which support ecologically priority habitats and important flora and fauna.
- Historically rich area with strong links to the sea, as indicated by the Saxon Shore Roman fort and Anglo-Saxon Reculver monastery, designated as a Scheduled Monument.
- Valued for recreational use, including the Saxon Shore Way Long Distance Footpath, Oyster Trail cycling route and Reculver Country Park.
- Undeveloped and open coastal cliffs provide separation and an open 'gap' between Herne Bay and Reculver.
- Simple, uncluttered 'semi-wild' landscape character.
- Local landmark Reculver Towers, a Scheduled Monument is highly visible from the surrounding landscape and seascape.
- Long views out to sea including to the Maunsell Forts, shipping traffic and windfarms contribute to the strong sense of place.
- Long views along the coastline west to Sheppey and Essex across the Thames Estuary, and east into Thanet, and to the North Sea.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To conserve, restore and enhance coastal habitats, as part of the wider coast habitat network of the Thanet Cliffs and Shores BOA.

This LCA lies within the Thanet Cliffs and Shore Biodiversity Opportunity Area, which sets out the following key relevant targets:

- Ensure the protection and enhancement of important cliff, intertidal and marine habitats, and to monitor the extent and quality of intertidal and subtidal chalk.
- Maintain and enhance the quality of existing littoral and sub-littoral chalk.
- Restore, improve management of, and extend or create areas of cliff-top grassland.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include littoral sediment, neutral and maritime grassland with smaller areas of broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland and supralittoral sediment. Habitats of key importance within the LCA include maritime cliff and slope, which is listed as a priority habitat.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

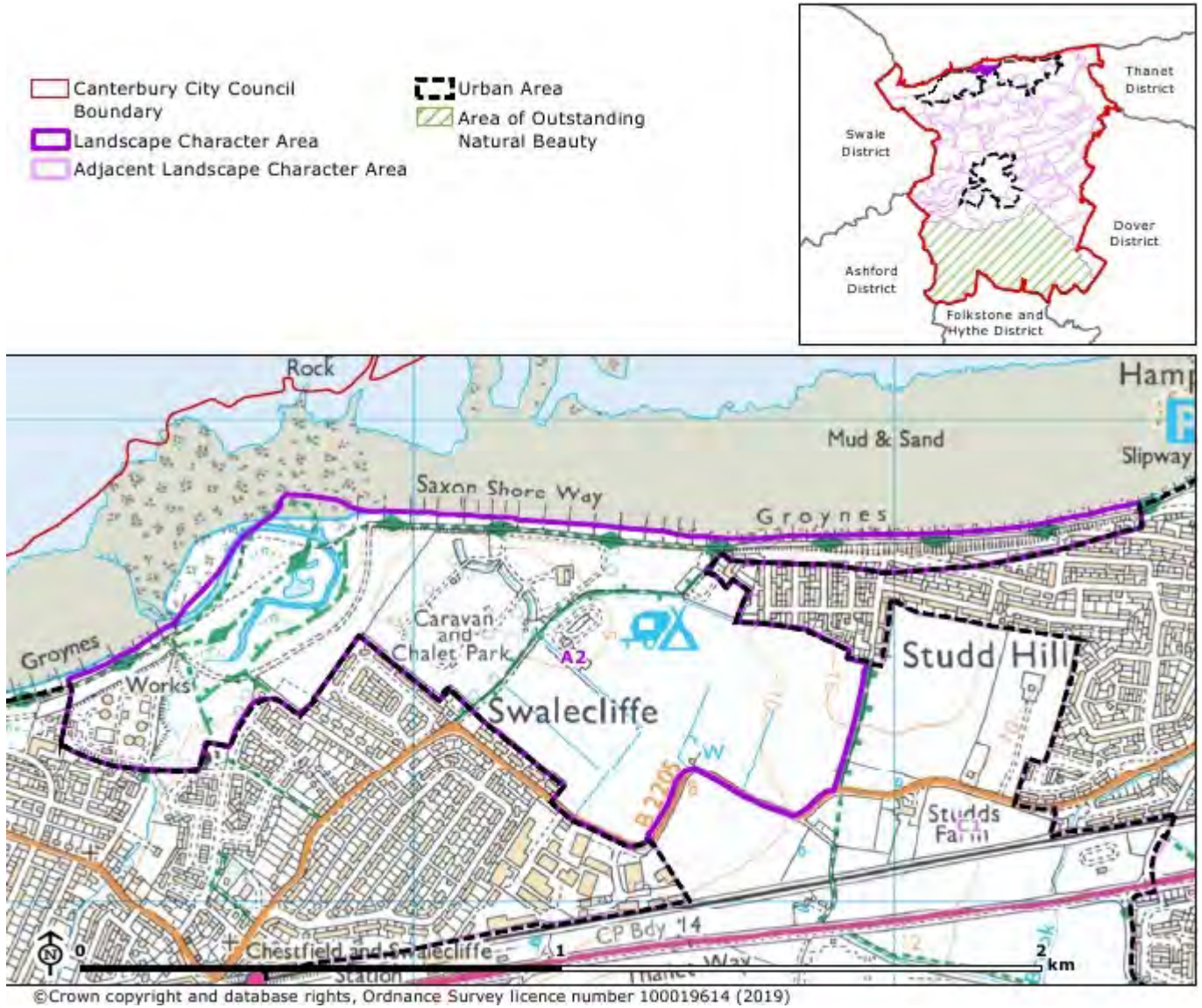
Landscape Management

- Work with natural coastal processes to conserve and enhance the coastal landscape, including the distinctive pattern of maritime cliffs, shingle beach and intertidal mudflats, providing space to avoid coastal squeeze.
- Protect and manage the landscape's valued semi-natural habitats including intertidal mudflats and maritime cliffs, particularly within the Thanet Coast SSSI and seek to enhance and connect habitats.
- Conserve, restore and enhance the grassland habitat at Beltinge Cliff to protect the wildlife potential and reflect the nature conservation designations.
- Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA including the creation of acid grassland and heath, neutral grassland, acid soil and woodland at Bishopstone Glen.
- Support efforts to reduce impacts to wintering turnstone from recreational disturbance in accordance with the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy where appropriate, including through public education and wardening on the coast.

Development Management

- Conserve the open 'wild' undeveloped character landscape and avoid the introduction of both large scale or incongruous elements as well as small scale elements that could create a more managed or cluttered character.
- Seek to conserve and enhance the integration of urban edges and the holiday park, to reduce the impact of development within this open and exposed landscape. Trees will generally not be appropriate within this open and exposed landscape, although scrub planting will be appropriate in some locations.
- Protect the valued recreational use of the landscape, seeking to manage recreation in line with biodiversity priorities.
- Conserve the open and simple landscape by removing signs and fencing where these are not required for safety reasons.
- Carefully manage tourist pressures along the coast and around Reculver Towers. Retain a natural and informal character to existing and new tourist features, including a muted colour scheme for car parks, footpaths and interpretation.
- Any proposals for further development on the cliff top or extension of development eastwards should be carefully designed, consider the landscape setting and character and ensure that the sense of remoteness and gap between Herne Bay and Reculver is retained.
- Conserve the prominence of Reculver Towers and their rural setting, ensuring no other tall structures are erected which would impose on views to this landmark, both within and outside the district.

A2: Swalecliffe Coast



Location and Summary

The Swalecliffe Coast is an area of flat coastal plain located between the towns of Whitstable in the west and Herne Bay in the east. The land provides an open undeveloped gap between the two settlements and includes valuable coastal habitats.

Representative Photographs



Swalecliffe Brook and Shingle Beach at Long Rock



Fencing, aerials and chalets form a stark interface with the coastal landscape



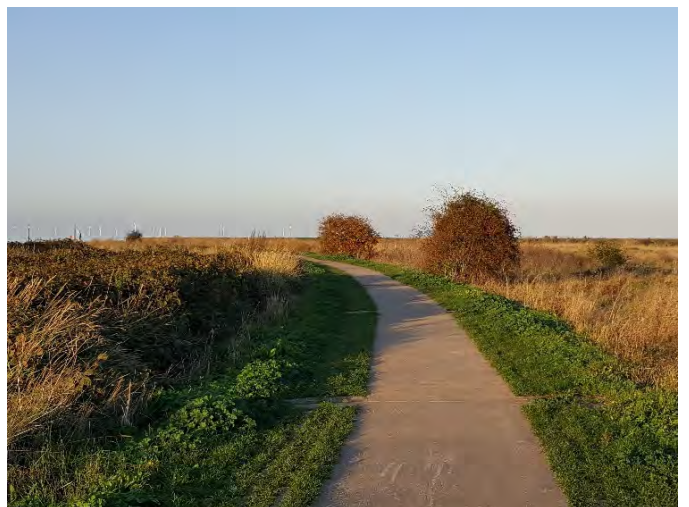
Rough grassland and scrub providing a natural gap along the developed coastline



Recreational access – for cycling, walking and skateboarding



Views to residential development on inland edge



Coastal path and views to the Kentish Flats offshore wind farm

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Low lying area of poorly drained heavy soils over London Clay mainly supporting rough grassland.
- Open coastline with shingle beach and extensive mudflats uncovered at low tide. The shingle spit at Long Rock is a key feature.
- Swalecliffe Brook meanders across the area, flanked in places by mature trees before issuing into the sea at Long Rock.
- Vegetation including pines and poplar screening which visually contains Swalecliffe wastewater treatment works and part of the urban edge.
- Rich coastal biodiversity represented by multiple local, national and international designations particularly noted for its coastal birds, plus its assemblage of marine and terrestrial plant species and notable invertebrates.
- Holiday parks of caravans and chalets enclosed by high fences and conifer screens.
- Few buildings other than a single terrace of coastguard cottages, holiday parks and the sewage treatment plant.
- Recreational access along the coast including the long-distance route of the Saxon Shore Way and Oyster Cycle Trail plus open public recreation land and playing fields.
- Coastal and sea views to Sheppey, Essex, the Kentish Flats Wind Farm and along the coast to Whitstable and Herne Bay.

Natural Influences

The area is situated on low lying London Clay geology, overlain with poorly draining heavy soils. The shingle spit, forming part of the area known as Long Rock, is a distinct feature. Also characteristic of this stretch of the north Kent coast are the shingle beaches and extensive mudflats visible at low tide. Part of the area is designated as a geological SSSI and the Long Rock RIGS site and is one of Britain's most important palaeobotanical localities.

The west of the area is crossed by the Swalecliffe Brook that issues into the sea after winding its way across Long Rock.

The ecological interest is recognised through numerous designations including; the Thanet Coast SSSI (also designated for its geological features), the Outer Thames Estuary SPA, the Tankerton Slopes and Swalecliffe Marine SAC, the Thanet Coast & Sandwich Bay Ramsar Site Wetland of International Importance and the Tankerton Slopes LWS. The coast is particularly noted for its coastal birds, plus its assemblage of marine and terrestrial plant species. There are also some notable invertebrates here including the only population of a nationally rare woodlouse found in mainland Britain. Tankerton Slopes LWS is locally designated for its population of hog's fennel, a nationally rare plant confined to a few coastal localities in south east England and providing the food plant for the notable Fisher's Estuarine Moth. The shingle and shell beaches support a distinctive flora with species such as yellow-horned poppy, sea kale, sea holly and sea clover being characteristic. Historically these beaches supported

breeding populations of terns and ringed plovers, which still attempt to breed at Long Rock, which includes an area of saltmarsh. Priority habitat coastal grazing marsh and maritime cliff and slope are also found within the landscape.

There is limited agricultural use and inland the majority of land is used for caravan parks and playing fields.

The Isle of Grain to South Foreland Shoreline Management Plan Review 2010 (South East Coastal Group) identifies the future management of the Swalecliffe Coast for the next 100 years. as 'hold the line' (where the existing defence line will be maintained).

Cultural Influences

There are very few buildings within the landscape itself, but there is considerable influence on character from the adjacent urban form. A simple row of terraced coastguard cottages is sited on the coast to the north and lines of bungalows and modern houses face onto the coastal open space to the east. The large caravan sites and associated fencing has an urbanising influence.

Swalecliffe Wastewater Treatment Works lies to the west and is visually enclosed by a mix of conifer and native screen planting. Other built features include the series of groynes along the coastline, the colourful beach huts extending to the Tankerton slopes and recreational furniture and signage.

Perceptual Influences

On a clear day views extend along the coastline and out to sea to the Isle of Sheppey and Essex, where the turbines of the Kentish Flats wind farm are a visible and a striking feature on the skyline. Views inland are contained by the urban edge, fencing and conifer screens, while along the coast there are views to the developed slopes at Hampton to the east and the open coastal slopes and rows of colourful beach huts on Tankerton to the west.

This is a popular area for coastal walks with the Saxon Shore Way long distance path along the coastline, Oyster Bay cycle route and local footpaths into Swalecliffe. The England Coast Path has been approved in this area but is not yet fully

established. The area also contains the Plough Lane park and playing fields which provide recreational facilities. The LCA is a key part of the undeveloped coastline and provides an open gap and visual break between the settlements of Whitstable and Herne Bay and access to the sights and sounds of the sea, including the important birdlife.

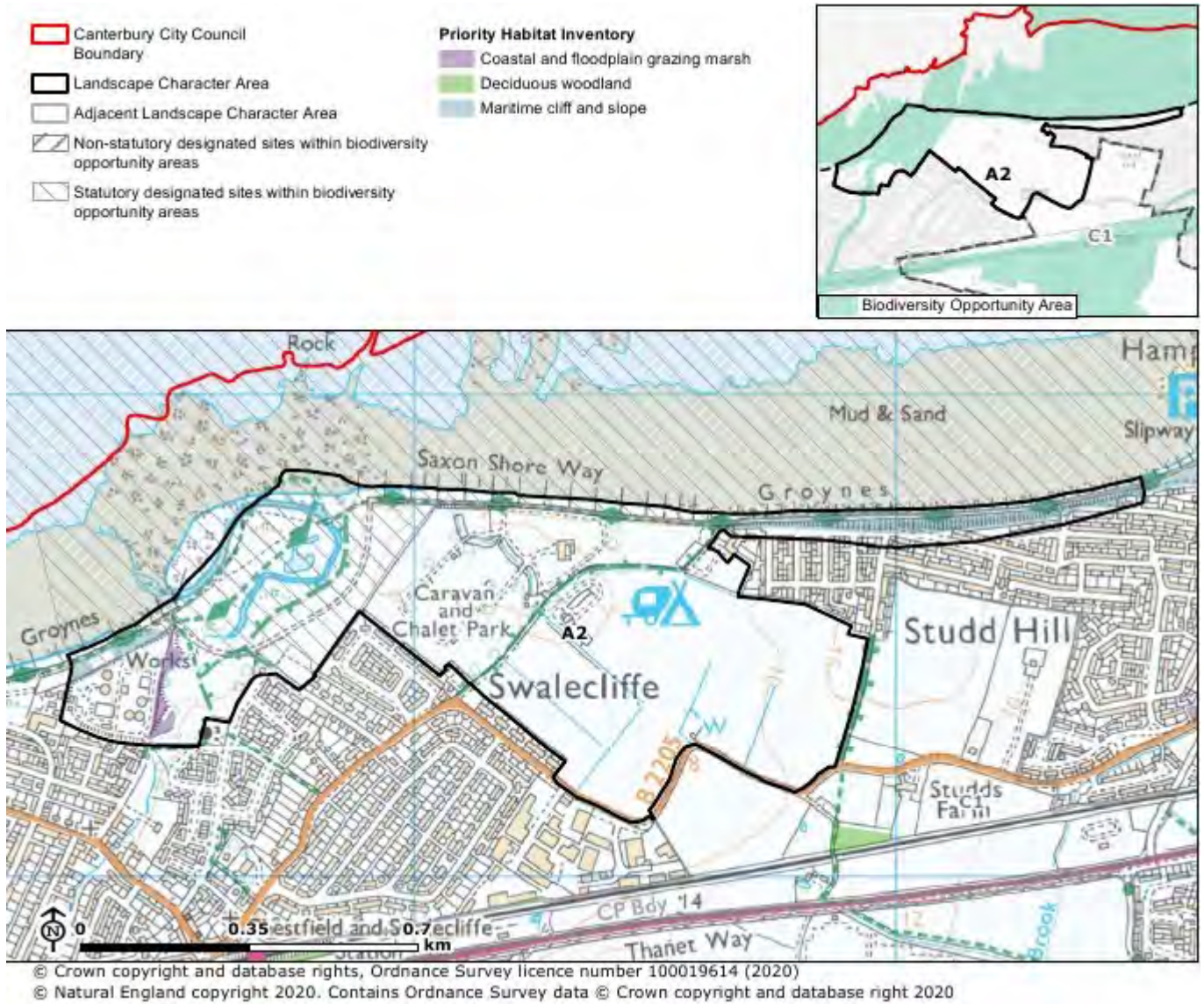
The natural coastal landscape has been fragmented by a number of different land uses and is influenced by the neighbouring urban areas, holiday parks, and the wastewater treatment works which are enclosed by visually intrusive fencing and conifer screens. The narrow coastal strip contains cluttered signs and barriers without any apparent consistency in design.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- Strategic importance as a buffer of undeveloped coastal land between the towns of Whitstable and Herne Bay, helping retain their separate identities and preventing coalescence.
- International, national and local ecological importance designated (SSSI, SPA, SAC, Ramsar), noted for its coastal birds including terns and ringed plovers, and overwintering waders plus marine/terrestrial plant assemblages and invertebrates.
- Open undeveloped coastal character with general absence of built development (other than the sewage works and caravan/chalet park).
- Relatively narrow open strip of land vulnerable to visual encroachment of more urbanising influences, adjacent to existing urban edges and intensification of holiday park development.
- Protection of the coast (hold the line) but also need to consider long term coastal retreat in this area of undeveloped coast and opportunities for coastal habitat creation inland.
- High visibility along the open shoreline and out to sea vulnerable to further offshore development and changes within adjacent urban areas.
- The natural coastal character is sensitive to cluttering with recreational facilities/furniture and urbanising elements, such as fencing and lighting.
- Opportunities for public recreation, including public rights of way such as the Saxon Shore way/Oyster Trail and England Coast Path providing access to coastal wildlife/birds which are vulnerable to disturbance.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To protect, restore and enhance coastal habitats as part of the coastal habitat network of the Thanet Cliffs and Shores BOA.

This LCA lies within the Thanet Cliffs and Shore BOA, which sets out the following key targets, noting that not all are relevant to this area:

- Ensure the protection and enhancement of important cliff, intertidal and marine habitats, and monitor the extent and quality of intertidal and subtidal chalk;
- Maintain and enhance the quality of existing littoral and sub-littoral chalk; and

- Restore, improve management of, and extend or create areas of cliff-top grassland.

Broad habitat types present include improved grassland, neutral grassland, littoral sediment and supralittoral sediment with smaller areas of broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland and built up areas. As part of this, the LCA supports fixed dunes with herbaceous vegetation, which is a priority habitat.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

Landscape Management

- Protect and enhance intertidal and coastal grassland habitats seeking opportunities to restore and create semi-improved grassland habitat.
- Encourage preparation of an improvement strategy for this popular area for recreation and important area for wildlife to explore ways of reconciling conflicting land use pressures and provide a co-ordinated approach to management This would need to involve a partnership approach of land owners, City Council, representatives of national agencies (responsible for recreation and wildlife) and the local communities, thorough production of an agreed management plan and responsibilities.
- Improve the biodiversity and visual qualities of the Swalecliffe Brook corridor and associated riparian vegetation.
- Consider opportunities to relax management of playing field edges and boundaries to integrate within the coastal habitat framework.

Development Management

- Respect and strengthen the function as a green gap/buffer between Herne Bay and Whitstable, avoiding any further urbanising development and improving the overall visual quality. Maintain sense of openness and views out to sea and along the coast.
- Encourage the use of sympathetic fencing, screening and planting in association with recreational sites and holiday parks. Avoid over development/intensification of development/permanent buildings on holiday park sites maintaining low rise, temporary character of buildings and coastal character.

LCT B: Coastal and Inland Marshes



Description

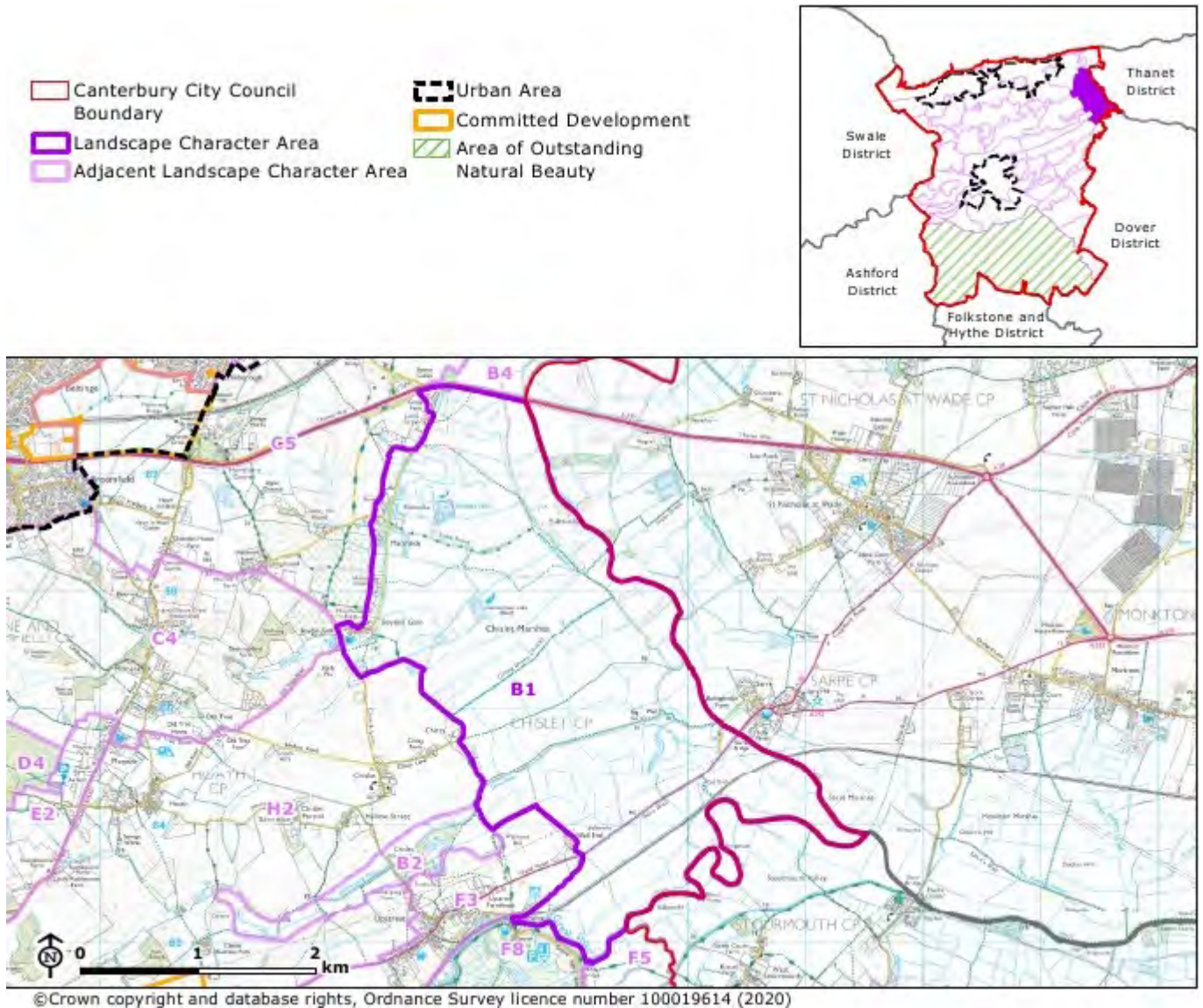
This LCT is distinguished by flat open grazing marsh with water and reed-filled drainage ditches providing important habitats, especially for overwintering and breeding birds. The landscape is flat and low-lying with an expansive character and long views with often dramatic skies. It is undeveloped contributing to its remote character, although there is recreational access across the marsh and former marshland.

Landscape Character Areas

The Coastal and Inland Marshes LCT is subdivided into four LCAs:

- B1: Chislet Marshes and Snake Drove
- B2: Nethergong Sarre Penn Inlet
- B3: Seasalter Coastal Marshes
- B4: Reculver Coastal Marshes

B1: Chislet Marshes and Snake Drove



Location and Summary

Chislet Marshes and Snake Drove LCA is located on the low lying Wantsum Channel on the north-eastern edge of the district. The eastern and southern boundaries follow the district boundary with Thanet, the western boundary is roughly on the 2m contour line and follows public rights of way and field boundaries. The northern boundary is formed by the A299 Thanet Way. This is a large flat and low-lying area of arable and pasture grazing. It is reclaimed grazing marsh and retains marshland qualities including drainage ditches and flat, open expansive character.

Representative Photographs



Drainage ditch east of Boyden Gate



Brick bridge crossing North Stream north of Marshside



Vast arable field on former marsh and pylons south-east of Gilling Drove



Open arable fields north of Snake Drove



Grazing sheep and backdrop of trees north of Gilling Drove



Scroggins Lake north of Snake Drove

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Flat low-lying former marshland around 2 – 4m AOD underlain by Thanet Sand Formation with alluvium deposits.
- Network of linear water-filled drainage ditches separate large arable and pasture fields.
- Tree and shrub vegetation limited to linear belts along droves and surrounding housing.
- Reclaimed marshland designated as Chislet Marshes, Sarre Penn and Preston Marshes LWS.
- Part of the former Wantsum Channel - a sea channel separating mainland Kent from the Isle of Thanet. The reclaimed marshland is crossed by historic droves. There is evidence of salterns in the east.
- Largely undeveloped. Historic settlements of Boyden Gate, Marshside and Grade II listed farmsteads lie on the marsh edge.
- PRoW cross the marshes along historic drove routes, including part of the Saxon Shore Way Long Distance Footpath.
- Roads through the hamlets are small and rural, in contrast with the A28 Island Road, A299 Thanet Way and London – Ramsgate railway.
- Open, visually exposed landscape with long views across the flat marshland to St Nicholas at Wade on a small hill to the east, and to woodland and orchards to the north-west.

Natural Influences

The marshland landform is flat and low lying, between 2 and 4m AOD, on alluvium. Today, these soils are intensively cultivated for arable cropping.

The landscape is characterised by the large, flat, open fields segregated by linear drainage ditches, with pockets of sheep grazing marsh in the south. The ditches are reinforced by post and wire fencing and tape where grazing occurs. In many places the drainage ditches support excessive algae growth, resulting from eutrophication. However, many ditches are still rich in marginal and emergent water plants and provide an important habitat for birds.

Tree cover is limited, with fragmented clumps of vegetation along the drainage ditches and fishing ponds. The landscape around the edge of the marsh tends to have greater tree cover, usually around the farmsteads and villages. The droves which stretch out across the former channel retain a varied grassland flora, enhanced by recent planting.

The majority of the landscape is designated as the Chislet Marshes LWS. The area is part of the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA.

Cultural Influences

This is an area which has undergone dramatic change from the Wantsum Channel, which separated the Isle of Thanet from the rest of Kent, to the arable landscape today. A combination of natural siltation, the formation of mudbanks and human intervention has reclaimed the marshland from the seventh century. Groynes and seawalls were constructed to

restrain the sea, and these are still evident at the Sarre Wall, Gilling Drove and Snake Drove, and were used to move livestock to and from the marshes for summer grazing. The Sarre Wall is a broad causeway averaging 14m in width and 1m in height with drainage ditches on either side. It was used as a road under an act of 1485 when the Wantsum Channel had silted up to such an extent that the area between Thanet and the mainland was only covered with water at high tides, rendering the ferry between the areas unnecessary. The Sarre Wall now carries the A28 connecting Thanet to Canterbury City.

The Wantsum Channel was important for salt production and there are a number of Medieval salterns (or saltworks) in the LCA, particularly concentrated in the east. The Domesday Book records the Archbishop of St Augustine's, Canterbury as owning 47 salt pans at Chislet.

A series of brick bridges cross the North Stream at Marshside, providing access to the droves and fields. Some date back to 1793, and are a mix of round, pointed and elliptical arches. A restored redbrick sheep wash in a field at Boyden Gate reflects the former use of the marsh for grazing sheep

The 20th century saw more intensive drainage and ploughing of the grazing marsh for cereal production, and the amalgamation of fields.

The Isle of Grain to South Foreland Shoreline Management Plan Review 2010 (South East Coastal Group) states that the Swalecliffe Coast to the north will be allowed to change over the next century, with management to control or limit movement.

The marsh itself is uninhabited, with settlement confined to the edges along North Stream, including the small linear settlements of Marshside and Boyden Gate and enlarged farmsteads. These are all located at the foot of the slopes of the former channel. Marshside and Boyden Gate contain traditional properties, with a vernacular of weather boarding and distinctive large timber framed barns. Many of the buildings and outlying farmhouses are Grade II listed, and both settlements are Conservation Areas. There has been some infill development, but this is largely in keeping with the vernacular. The farm buildings are largely screened from the road by willow or hawthorn and are not intrusive.

North Stream and Chitty Lane in the west are the only roads which provide access to and through the landscape. They are rural lanes lined by drainage ditches. North Stream is enclosed by willow and hawthorn hedgerows, often bordering houses. Chitty Lane has very little vegetation and an exposed character.

The A299 Thanet Way and A28 Island Road are much busier roads and have little relationship with the landscape. The London - Ramsgate railway also runs in the south. The major transport routes have greater vegetation cover than the rest of the area.

PRoWs follow the droves, and the Saxon Shore Way Long Distance Footpath runs along the western boundary. Recreational angling is available at Homersham Lake and Scroggins Lake.

Perceptual Influences

This is an open and exposed landscape, enhanced by the absence of built development on the marsh and flat topography. There are pockets of enclosure along North Stream where views to the west are limited by housing and greater vegetation cover.

There are long views to the settlements of St Nicholas-at-Wade and Manston to the east. Herne Windmill is visible to the north-west, and there are long views to woodland and orchards to the north-east.

Detracting features include post and wire fencing and horse tape dividing fields, the overhead electricity wires and pylons, and the intrusion of A299 Thanet Way and A28 Island Road.

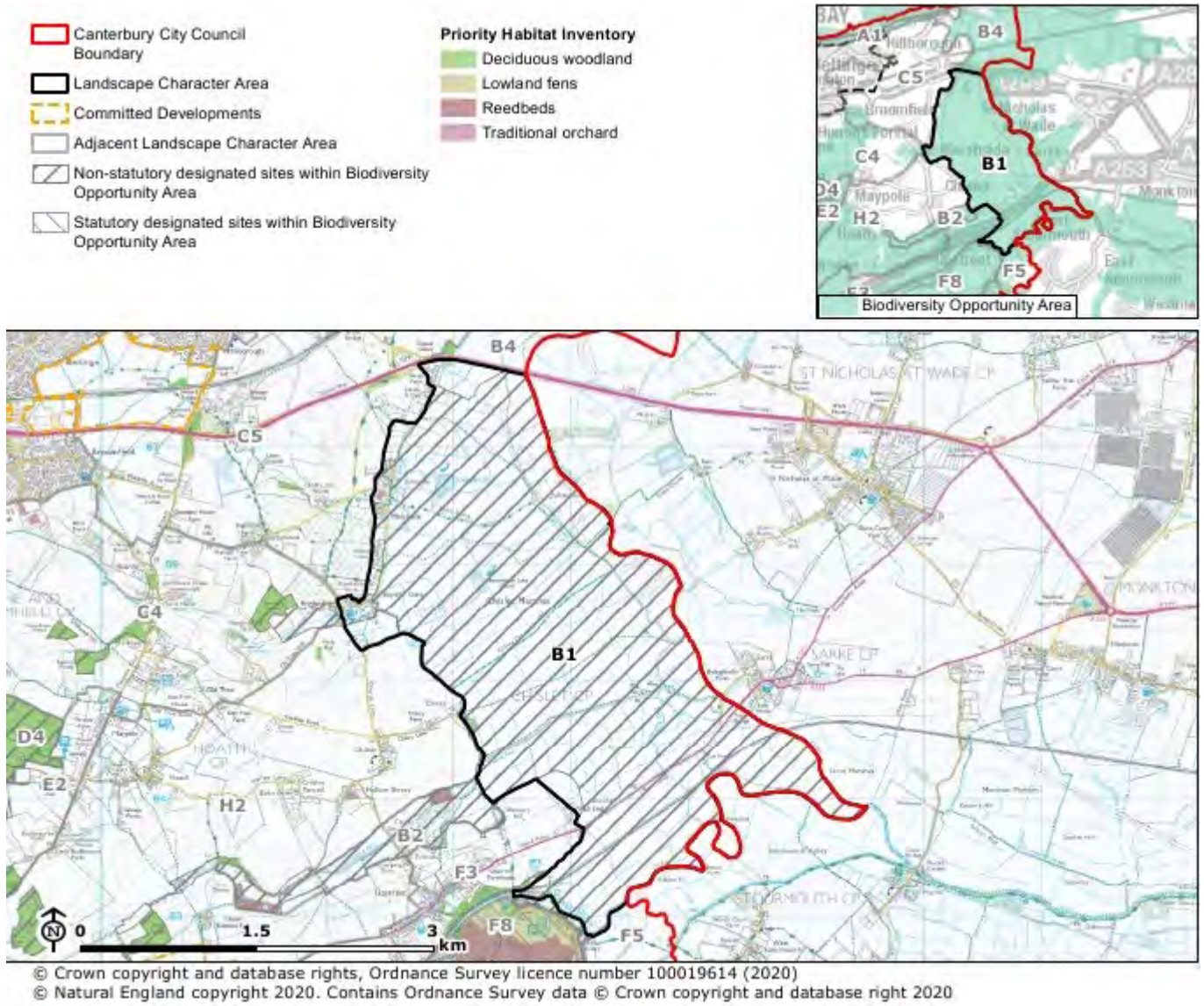
There is a good experience of dark skies within the marshes, although this is reduced in the north around the A299 Thanet Way and in the east towards Sarre. This is a largely tranquil and peaceful even remote landscape, with some audible intrusion from the transport corridors in the north and south.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- Flat low lying and open reclaimed marshland with a strong sense of place and openness.
- Historic references to the former Wantsum Channel separating mainland Kent from the Isle of Thanet.
- Areas of floodplain grazing marsh remain within the wider arable context.
- Ecologically important linear drainage ditches, designated as Chislet Marshes, Sarre Penn and Preston Marshes LWS.
- Absence of settlement and development across the marshes. Historic linear settlements on the edge of the marshland provide time depth and enclosure to the west.
- Small rural roads in the west connect settlements and provide views across the marshland.
- Recreational value from PRoW, which provide access across the marshes.
- Expansive, uninterrupted, long-distance views across the marshes to St Nicholas-at-Wade and Manston in the east and to rising woodland and orchards to the north-west.
- A tranquil and rural area, with an open and exposed remote character and large skies.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To restore and recreate a freshwater wetland complex, which forms part of the wetland and coastal habitats of the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA.

This LCA lies within Lower Stour Wetlands BOA, which sets out the following key relevant targets:

- Protect and enhance existing priority habitats and designated sites.
- To restore and/or recreate intertidal habitats, grazing marsh, fen and reedbed as part of a matrix of natural wetland and coastal habitats.
- To establish a new, landscape-scale, freshwater wetland complex, including fen, reedbed and grazing marsh.

- To enhance species-rich grassland to priority habitat quality.
- To create acid grassland and heathland from other existing or new semi-natural habitat.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include arable and horticulture with smaller areas of improved grassland, standing water and canals, and built-up areas.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

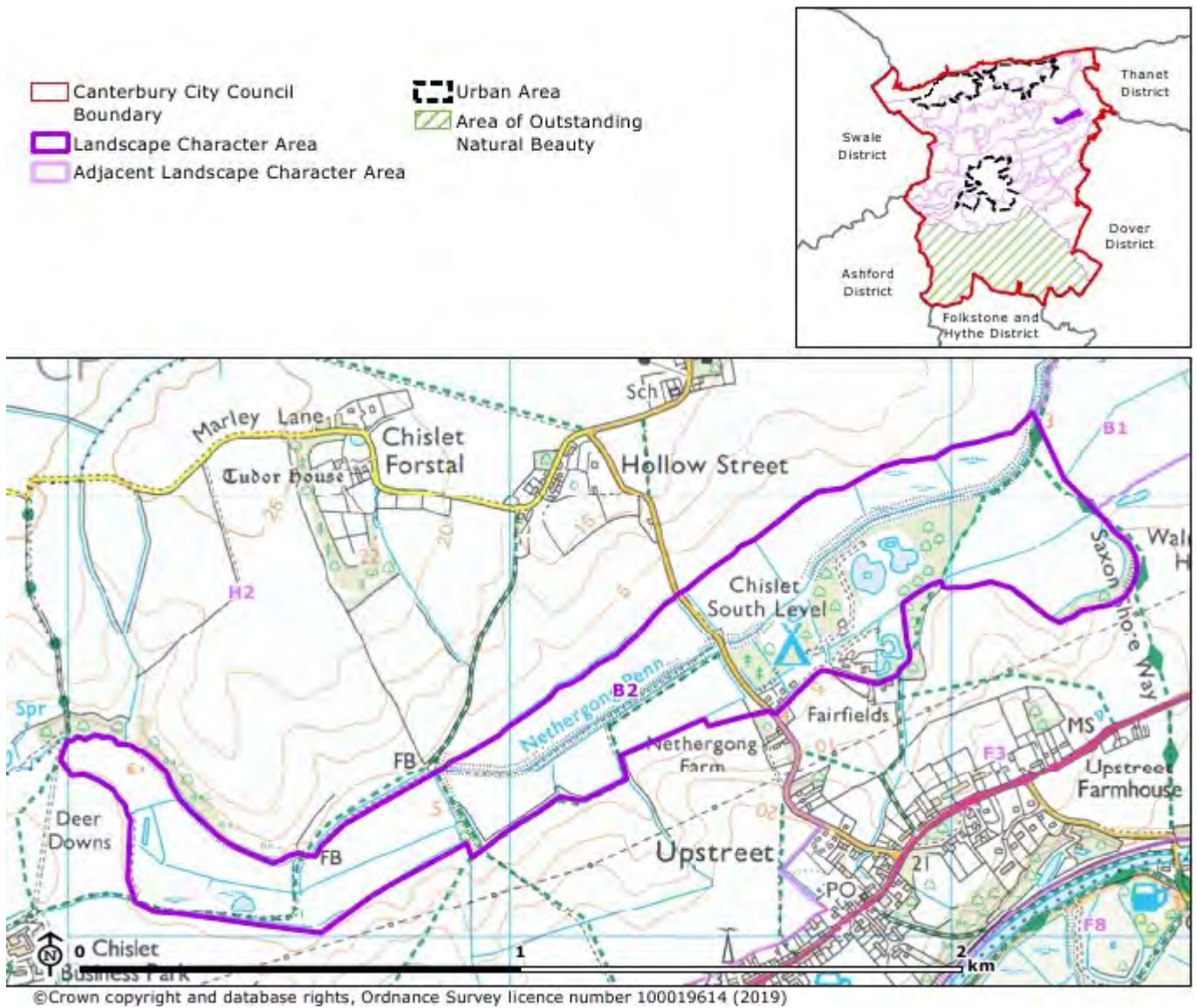
Landscape Management

- Manage and enhance the wildlife interest of agricultural fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins, management of drainage ditches and other wildlife-friendly farming methods.
- Restore and recreate former grazing marsh, fen and reedbed habitat, as part of the wider wetland network in Lower Stour catchment.
- Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA including the creation of neutral grassland, wetland, wet woodland and grazing marshland, plus enhancement of improved grassland.
- Long-term managed realignment, where the shoreline is allowed to change with management to control or limit movement, including allowing a planned breach or removal of defences to allow the coastline to move inshore, is proposed along the Swalecliffe Coast to the north. This may provide opportunities for large-scale habitat creation/enhancement.
- Create and implement a long term management plan for invasive species across the river catchment. Excavation and removal techniques should be favoured, where this is not possible an appropriate herbicide treatment is recommended.

Development Management

- Conserve the strong vernacular of historic buildings and their rural setting, particularly within the Marshside and Boyden Gate Conservation Areas.
- Conserve the sparse linear settlement pattern concentrated along North Stream. Ensure any new development is sympathetic to the vernacular, scale, design and siting.
- The open character of most marshland landscapes accentuates the visual impact of many proposals over a wide distance as compared with more enclosed landscape types. Avoid proposals that can result in the interruption of views of large open skies or horizons or impinge on the remote undeveloped quality of marshland and its shoreline. This is also relevant to development in the surrounding landscapes, including within Thanet.
- Encourage the highway authority to minimise the impact of lighting on the A299 Thanet Way. Seek to enhance the marshland setting alongside the main roads to reinforce the sense of transition across the channel and between Canterbury and Thanet Districts.
- Protect the valued recreation use of the landscape, maintaining the historic droveways and seeking opportunities to further enhance opportunities for access and enjoyment.
- Conserve the expansive views across the open landscape including those to and from the adjacent district (Thanet), and avoid the introduction of large scale, vertical or incongruous elements.
- Any proposals for any development on the low-lying marsh and its associated slopes should consider landscape setting and character and ensure that the sense of remoteness and tranquillity is retained.

B2: Nethergong Sarre Penn Inlet



Location and Summary

The Nethergong Sarre Penn Inlet LCA is a wide, flat former inlet of the Wantsum Channel (once separating the Isle of Thanet from the rest of Kent). It is characterised by the Nethergong Penn; a stream which flows through the middle of the LCA (forming a small section of the Sarre Penn). The Sarre Penn originates near Dunkirk and flows across the District north of Canterbury City, to join the River Wantsum near Sarre.

The area joins the former Wantsum Channel to the west and is part of the dramatic open landscape of ditches and fields that have been reclaimed from the sea.

Representative Photographs



Nethergong Penn with artificial banks



Poplar plantation providing some visual enclosure within a landscape that is predominantly open



Marshland forming part of the Chislet Marshes LWS



Small rectangular fields with limited tree cover



Pylons cross the LCA and form visual detractors



Marginal land in the west used for grazing

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Enclosed, flat linear inlet with water channels known locally as pennis – the Sarre Penn flows eastwards to join the former Wantsum Channel.
- Rectangular fields comprising mainly pasture with some arable farmland – former grazing marsh now more intensively managed.
- Wetland habitat within ditches and streams providing biodiversity interest to the area and designated locally as the Chislet Marshes LWS.
- Predominantly open landscape with limited tree cover comprising occasional wooded areas on valley slopes marking the former cliff line of the Wantsum Channel.
- Historic field pattern defined by watercourses and derived from the drying up of the Wantsum Channel.
- An open landscape with an absence of buildings and only a single road (Sandpit Hill) crossing the area.

Natural and Cultural Influences

The solid geology of the LCA comprises Thanet Beds in the east, merging to Woolwich Beds and Blackheath and Oldhaven Beds in the west. The bedrock is overlain with alluvium drift deposits from the Great Stour River. The Nethergong Penn and other smaller feeder drains define the field pattern of the landscape. Fields are small and rectangular, situated on low-lying flat ground, with a tendency to flood (given their proximity to the Nethergong Penn), which has resulted in the construction of banks. In the west, fields consist as marginal land and are mainly used for grazing.

To the east the inlet widens where it merges with the main channel and this area forms a more enclosed part of the wider and expansive marshland landscape. Fields are larger along the eastern edge of the LCA and are in arable use. Some equestrian related use is also evident from the presence of wooden fencing, stables and an outdoor arena to the east of Sandpit Hill.

The majority of the Nethergong Sarre Penn Inlet is included within a small section of the Chislet Marshes LWS. This former grazing marsh has been converted to arable use in the east but retains wetland interest within the ditches and streams, which feature riparian planting. There are two extensive areas of priority habitat reedbeds to the south-east and north-west, which are associated with local shooting rights. Woodland also exists on the valley slopes, particularly on the southern side of the valley near Upstreet, associated with the former cliff line of the Wantsum Channel.

Perceptual Influences

The LCA is occupied by a campsite located in proximity to Upstreet and accessed off Sandpit Hill which crosses the Nethergong Penn through the central part of the LCA. The campsite features two large ponds, a small collection of buildings, facilities for rustic glamping and a polytunnel. Caravans and equestrian related uses feature on an adjacent and separate landholding, south-east of the campsite. Despite these features, the area as a whole has a sense of remoteness. Although the overall landscape is predominantly open with limited tree cover, a poplar plantation located along the eastern edge of Sandpit Hill provides a pocket of enclosure.

The openness of the area is relatively localised as valley slopes to the north and south contain the landscape and restrict intervisibility with the wider landscape, including from along several PRoW that cross the area. Long distance views are however afforded from the Saxon Shore Way Long Distance Footpath (abutting the eastern edge of the LCA) that look across the flat open landscape of the former Wantsum Channel to the east.

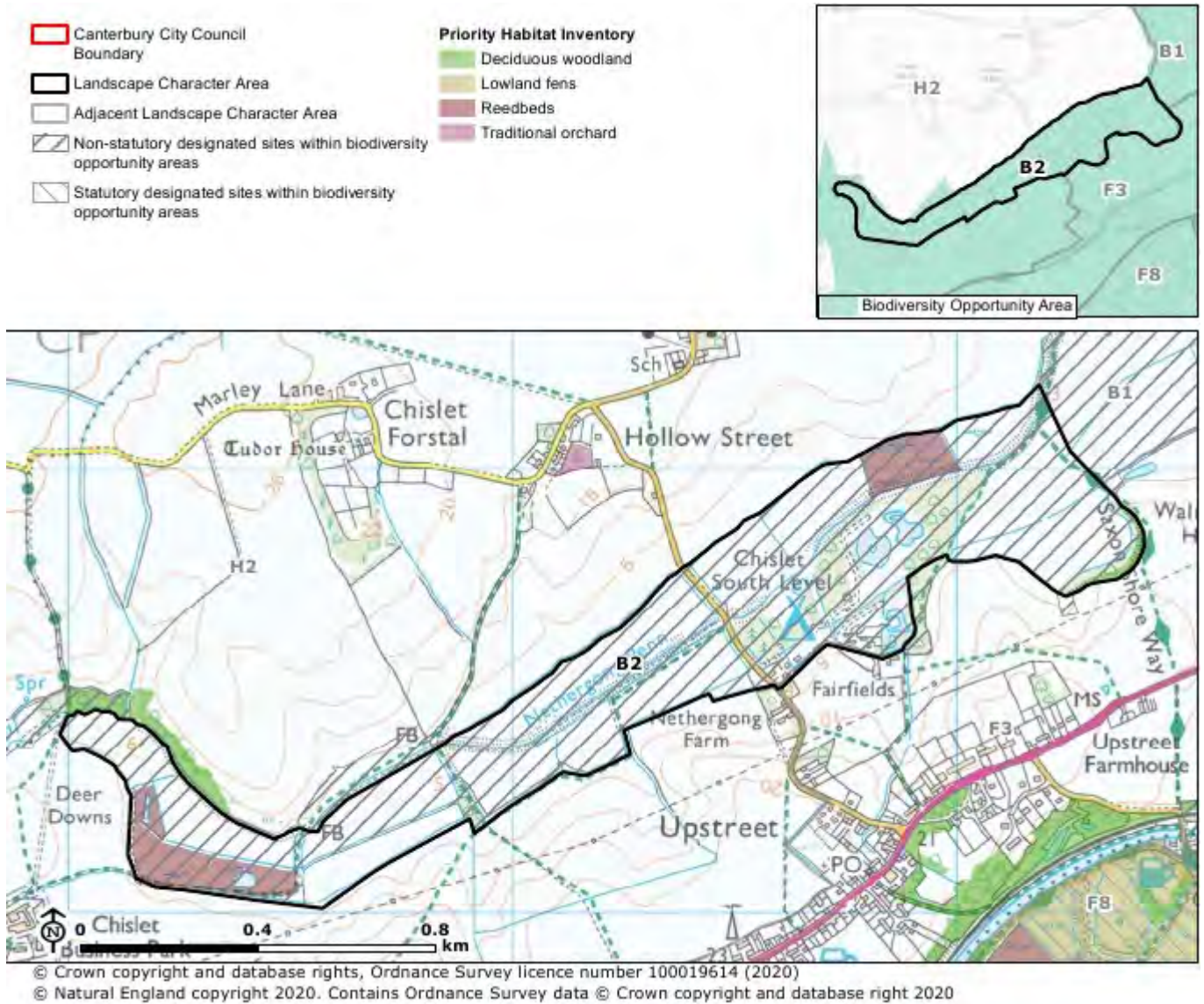
Overhead cables run along the northern boundary, crossing it in places and with several pylons located within the LCA. Another line of pylons is situated to the south, positioned on elevated ground and visually prominent on the skyline. There is an overall sense of being surrounded by pylons which form visual detractors and a perception of discord within the landscape.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- Ditches and streams provide biodiversity interest through riparian planting and wetland habitats.
- Priority habitat reedbeds increase the biodiversity interest within the LCA.
- Woodland provides a semi-natural habitat and historic associations marking the former cliff line of the Wantsum Channel.
- The field pattern of the landscape provides cultural value as it is defined by the watercourses relating to the history of the Wantsum Channel.
- A rural and historic setting is afforded for users of the Saxon Way Long Distance Footpath with long distance views across the landscape of the former Wantsum Channel.
- Sense of relative remoteness that persists across this secluded historic landscape.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To conserve, restore and enhance wetland habitat, which form part of the wetland and coastal habitats of the Lower Stour Wetlands Biodiversity Opportunity Area.

This LCA lies within Lower Stour Wetlands BOA, which sets out the following key relevant targets:

- Protect and enhance existing priority habitats and designated sites.
- To restore and/or recreate intertidal habitats, grazing marsh, fen and reedbed as part of a matrix of natural wetland and coastal habitats.
- To establish a new, landscape-scale, freshwater wetland complex, including fen, reedbed and grazing marsh.

- To enhance species-rich grassland to priority habitat quality.
- To create acid grassland and heathland from other existing or new semi-natural habitat.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA included fen, marsh and swamp, improved grassland, neutral grassland, standing open water and canals and broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland. Habitats of key importance within the LCA included reedbeds, which are a priority habitat.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

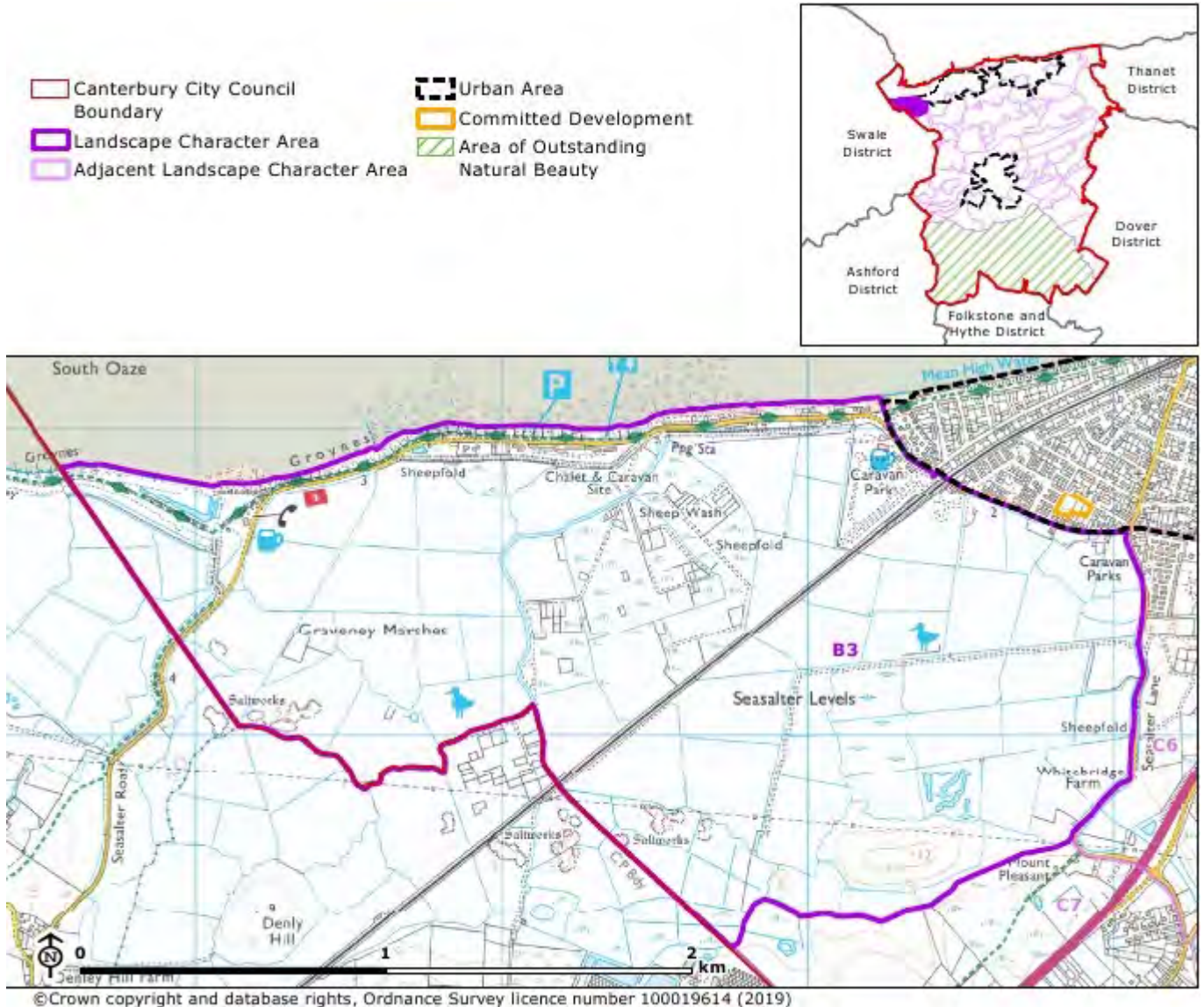
Landscape Management

- Conserve and enhance the biodiversity interest from the priority habitat reedbeds and other wetland habitats of the Nethergong Sarre Penn (which form part of the wider wetland network in the Lower Stour catchment) by managing scrub encroachment.
- Protect the landscape's valued semi-natural habitats including the limited areas of woodland and preserving their historic associations with the former cliff line of the Wantsum Channel.
- Explore opportunities for acid grassland/heath creation on drier land south of the Nethergong Penn to increase habitats of biodiversity interest.
- Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA including the creation of acid grassland and heath, neutral grassland, wetland, wet woodland and fertile soil woodland. Enhance and upgrade areas of grassland to species-rich neutral grassland, bringing it up to priority habitat quality.
- Manage and enhance the wildlife interest of arable fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins, wet and other wildlife-friendly farming methods.
- Create and implement a long term management plan for invasive species across the river catchment. Excavation and removal techniques should be favoured, where this is not possible an appropriate herbicide treatment is recommended.

Development Management

- Conserve the historic field pattern of the landscape by avoiding unsympathetic culverting of water courses.
- Consider opportunities for enhancing recreational access along the watercourse.
- Conserve the open and undeveloped 'remote' undeveloped character of the landscape, avoiding the further introduction of large scale or incongruous elements.

B3: Seasalter Coastal Marshes



Location and Summary

The Seasalter Levels and Graveney Marshes are located in the north west of the district on the Thames Estuary and form part of the much larger North Kent Marshes which extend westwards along the Thames through Swale and Medway and into London. They form a distinctive flat open landscape of largely freshwater grazing marsh cut by water and reed filled ditches.

They are bounded by Faversham Road and the sea wall to the north, and continue through the district boundary with Swale to the west, and meet the urban edge of Whitstable/Seasalter to the north east and the rising land to the south at Yorkletts (LCA C7) and Wraik Hill (LCA C6).

Representative Photographs



Dramatic seascape views from the sea wall across the mudflats of the Thames Estuary



Distinctive disordered development along Faversham Road



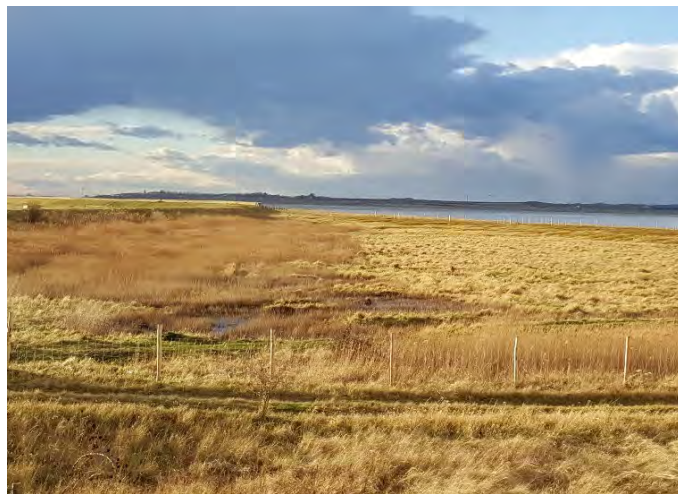
The flat marshes are contained by rising development at Whitstable – highly visible in this open landscape



Grazed marshes at Vikings Estate, against the backdrop of The Blean



Distinctive line of beach huts at Graveney Marshes



Graveney Marshes, the Swale and Sheppey

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Flat open grazing marsh and alluvial marshland underlain by marine alluvial deposits and small raised outcrop of London Clay.
- Open expansive marshlands in various degrees of management – some grazed by livestock, including sheep and cattle, with some undergrazed suffering from encroaching scrub.
- Vegetation consists of grass, wetland plants, reed filled ditches and scattered scrub.
- Strong ecological interest - extensive freshwater grazing marsh, mudflats, saltmarsh, and drainage ditches, notable for wildfowl and waders and international, national and local designation as SSSI, SPA, Ramsar site and LNR.
- Transportation corridors include the railway and Faversham Road. A line of pylons also crosses the landscape from Cleve Hill substation.
- Indications of a Medieval (or earlier) salt making industry on the marshes evidenced by hummocks in the flat topography and designated as a Scheduled Monument.
- Defensive coastline, notably associations with WWII, including anti-tank structures on the low-lying marshes and site of the Battle of Graveney.
- Distinctive cultural associations and references – relating to the makeshift plotland landscape at Whitstable Bay estate and Vikings Estate.
- Atmospheric and tranquil, semi remote landscape with large open and often dramatic skies.
- Recreational access along the seawall as part of the Saxon Shore Way Long Distance Footpath providing open views across the marshes.

Natural Influences

The marshes at Seasalter are located on land reclaimed from the sea. Marine alluvial deposits have created distinctive flat marshland topography relief, with a strong sense of openness and long views. The marshes are located at the point where the channel of The Swale opens out to the Thames Estuary.

The landscape consists of various distinctively managed areas of grazing marsh which change in nature depending on the extent of grazing and livestock: from overgrazed and relatively dry fields to seasonally wet freshwater and semi-saline fields with a longer grass sward due to a less intensive grazing treatment, to fields featuring large areas of encroaching, unmanaged scrub. Fields are large across the open ground, segregated by straight and sinuous drainage ditches.

Landscape features are generally limited to scattered mature scrub and small clumps of trees at field margins, and local undulations in the topography

Almost all of this character area falls within the eastern extent of the Swale SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site. This internationally important biodiversity site comprises extensive freshwater grazing marsh, mudflats, saltmarsh, and drainage ditches. It is particularly notable for the important numbers of wildfowl and waders including wintering populations of redshank and dunlin and is rich in invertebrates and plants. Environmental

management is undertaken according to Natural England recommendations for grazing marsh. The eastern part of this area is also designated as the Seasalter Levels LNR and is the subject of a management plan prepared by the RSPB.

The Isle of Grain to South Foreland Shoreline Management Plan Review 2010 (South East Coastal Group) identifies the future management of the coast for the next 100 years as 'hold the line' (where the existing defence line will be maintained) from the western extent of Seasalter eastwards. However west of Seasalter, although the future management is defined as hold the line from the present day, 'managed realignment' is proposed in the medium to long term (where the shoreline is allowed to change with management to control or limit movement).

Cultural Influences

Medieval (or earlier) salt workings are present across the marshes and can be discerned as small hummocks in the flat topography. One of these, near Monkshill Farm, is designated as a Scheduled Monument.

The Kent HLC records almost the entire area as small rectilinear enclosures, with more irregular enclosures along the southern edges and boundaries with Swale. The boundaries are formed by ditches.

In World War II, the Battle of Graveney Marsh was the last ground engagement involving a foreign force to take place on the mainland of Great Britain. The fighting took place between the crew of a shot-down German bomber and a detachment of soldiers from the 1st Battalion London Irish Rifles based in Seasalter.

Seasalter Marshes hold evidence of the makeshift plotland landscapes that developed in the early 20th century. The informal plots, boundary vegetation, are a visible legacy of this movement. The social history of the Seasalter plotlands has been recorded in an essay and drawing by Dennis Hardy and Colin Ward, *Arcadia for all - The legacy of a makeshift landscape* (2008), which records the associations and memories of the plot holders. The marshes also provided the site for the infamous 'Seasalter Free Festival' in 1976.

The only buildings are the Seasalter sailing club on the coastal edge, with the vertical masts visible, the Sportsman public house to the west and caravan sites and small amount of associated development, plus ad hoc, haphazard development along Faversham Road in front of the sea wall, and a distinctive line of beach huts.

Transport infrastructure includes the Chatham mainline railway which passes across the marshes, and the Faversham/Seasalter road lined with small ad hoc developments, and with verges managed for bees. The A299 Thanet Way is prominent as a backdrop to the south.

Perceptual Influences

The large skies provoke a sense of remoteness and tranquillity and there are long uninterrupted views to the north and to the south, including backdrop views of The Blean and the coast. There is a distinct absence of built development, although the urban edge of Seasalter with a large peripheral caravan park is visible to the north, plus the haphazard informal development along Faversham Road.

There is recreational access along the seawall as part of the Saxon Shore Way Long Distance Footpath, which provides open views across the marshes. The England Coast Path has been approved in this area but is not yet fully established.

This area is not truly remote as it contains a number of transport links, with visual and aural influences of the rail line and A299. Nevertheless, it is tranquil, undisturbed and has a traditional character retaining a sense of remoteness.

Visual detractors include pylons to the south, extending from the Cleve Hill Substation, and the linear railway line. The urban edge of Seasalter, and, in particular the holiday parks, are highly visible across the flat landscape. Large scale developments on the adjacent ridge tops are also highly prominent.

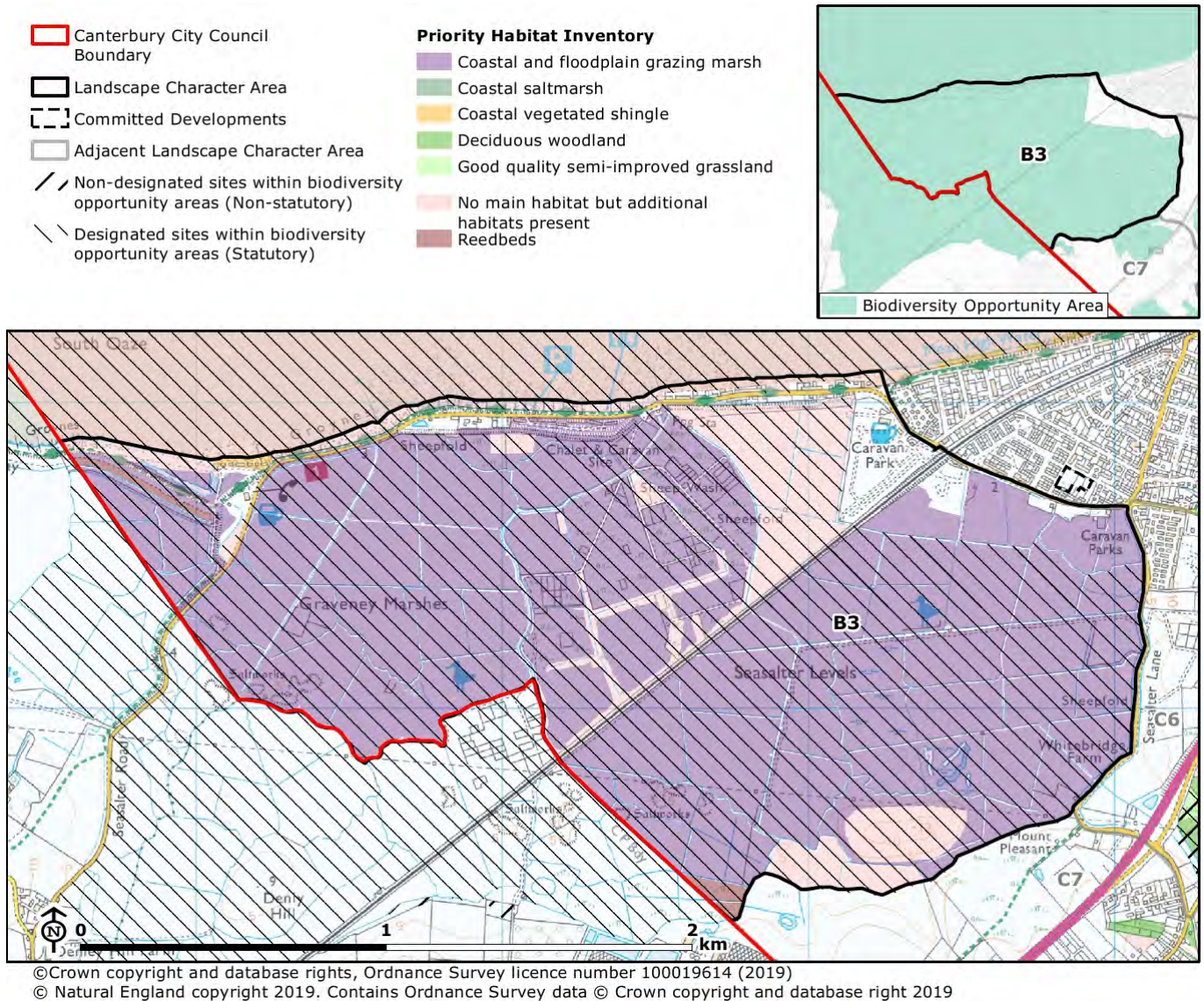
Under grazing and remnants of the makeshift landscape associated with the plotlands, means that this area is currently not perceived as 'natural' as some other parts of the North Kent Marshes.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- The flat open landscape, long views dramatic skies and visual sensitivity to any form of development or tall structures within and adjacent to the marshes.
- Long views to The Blean woodlands and, from the sea wall, across the mudflats of the Thames Estuary and to Sheppey and the relationship of the marshes to the sea.
- Strong ecological interest for freshwater grazing marsh and drainage ditches supporting numbers of wildfowl and waders (SSSI, SPA, Ramsar and LNR).
- General absence of development/settlement across the area contributing to the sense of openness and remote qualities.
- Historic interest including early saltworks and World War II Battle of Graveney.
- Cultural references, memories and associations with the plotlands development, recognising impact on ecology, landscape and character.
- Overall tranquil and semi-remote character.
- Value for recreation including the Saxon Shore Way Long Distance Footpath (England Coastal Path) along the sea wall and the sense of space and open break that this area provides in proximity to the urban area of Whitstable.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: Protect, restore and enhance coastal habitats, as part of the coastal habitat network of the North Kent BOA.

The LCA lies within North Kent BOA, which sets out the following key relevant targets:

- To protect and enhance existing important marine and terrestrial habitats.
- To deliver more, bigger, better and connected habitats as part of a functioning ecological network which supports more resilient and diverse populations of important wildlife.
- To restore grazing marsh on improved grassland in order to extend and connect existing habitats.

- To conserve and enhance important intertidal and marine habitats.
- To implement a sustainable access strategy, including the creation of alternative natural greenspace, to mitigate recreational impacts including monitoring the impact of new development and coastal access.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include improved grassland, neutral grassland and standing water and canals. Habitats of key importance within the LCA include coastal and floodplain grazing marsh and reedbed, which are priority habitats.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

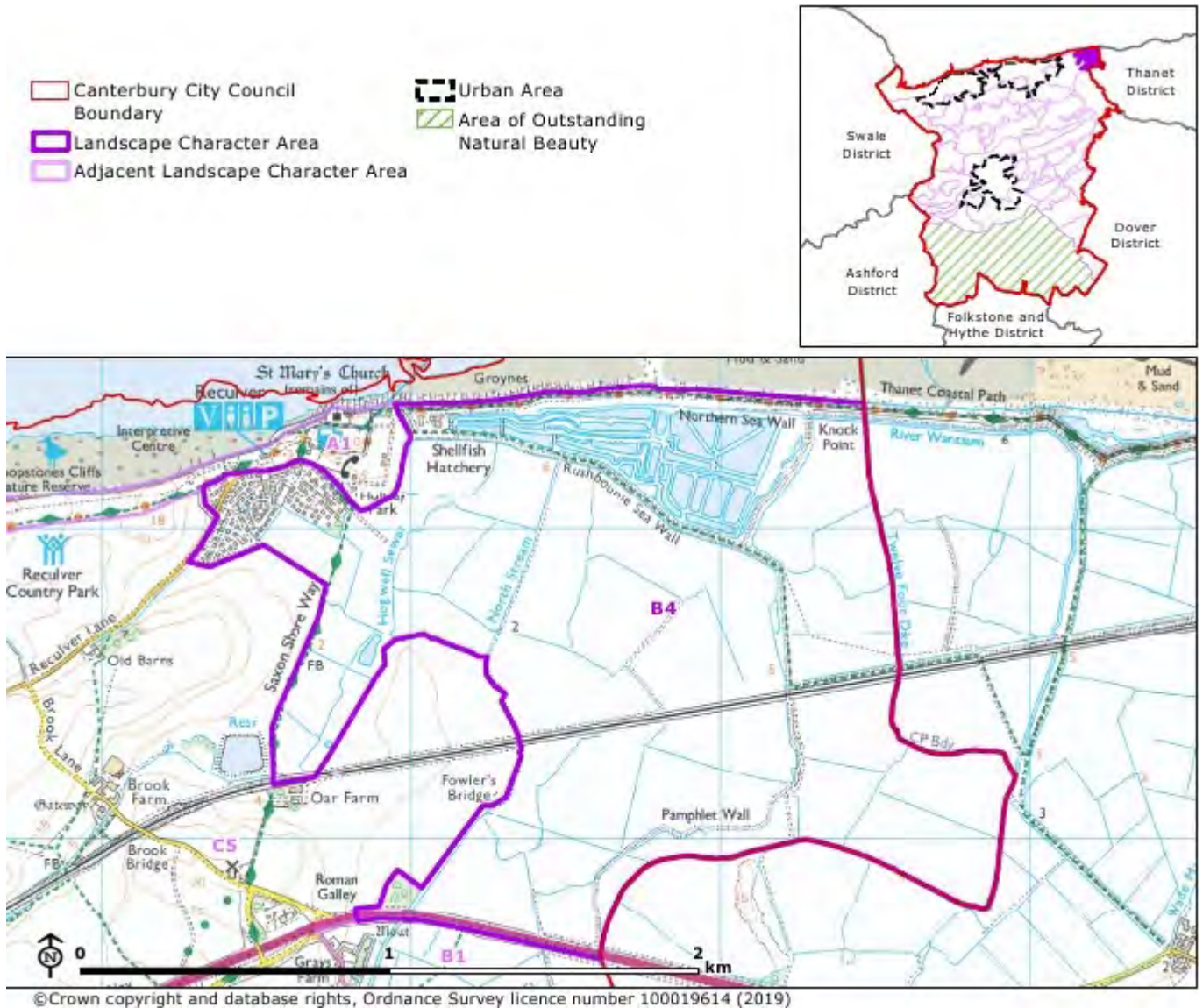
Landscape Management

- Support appropriate proposals to enable the management, conservation and enhancement of traditional grazing and saltmarsh to maximise both landscape and biodiversity benefits, as part of the existing RSPB and CCC partnership.
- Improve the condition of designated sites within the LCA, through active grazing and ditch management.
- Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA including the restoration and creation of neutral grassland, wetland, grazing marsh and saltmarsh.
- Support efforts to reduce impacts to birds from recreational disturbance in accordance with the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy where appropriate, including through public education and wardening on the coast.
- Create and implement a long term management plan for invasive species across the river catchment. Excavation and removal techniques should be favoured, where this is not possible an appropriate herbicide treatment is recommended.

Development Management

- Encourage the retention and reinstatement of traditional timber wing fencing and gates, together with smaller sporadic features like sheepfolds, washes, footbridges etc.
- The open character of most marshland landscapes accentuates the visual impact of many proposals over a wide distance as compared with more enclosed landscape types. Avoid proposals that can result in the interruption of views of large open skies or horizons or impinge on the remote undeveloped quality of marshland and its shoreline.
- Consider the impact of tall or bulky development in adjacent areas/ ridgetops which are prominent in this low-lying open landscape. Mitigation in the form of planting and appropriate cladding or choice of muted non reflective colours is recommended.
- Maintain the informal ad hoc nature of development along Faversham Road, while the sea wall holds, resisting proposals for developments of greater height or bulk which would interrupt the relationship of the marshes with the sea. Ensure development boundaries do not 'creep' and enclose adjacent areas of coastal marsh or beach (a registered Village Green).
- Where the urban fringe and holiday parks, road and rail corridors have significantly reduced the quality and rural character of the fringes area, the landscape would benefit from softening using appropriate wetland species (i.e. reeds) and wetland trees (avoiding planting on areas of existing biodiversity interest).
- Manage recreational use to conserve the biodiversity interest of the marshlands while considering opportunities to provide further low-key footpath access along existing permissive routes.

B4: Reculver Coastal Marshes



Location and Summary

The Reculver Coastal Marshes LCA is a wide expanse of low-lying former grazing marsh and coast, which lies in the north-east of the district. The eastern boundary is formed by the district boundary, although the landscape character extends into Thanet District. The A299 Thanet Way marks the southern boundary, and the western boundary is formed by the change in topography rising up from the flat marshland.

Representative Photographs



Contrast between shingle beach, sea wall and marshland



View south-east from Rushbourne Sea Wall



Shingle beach looking east to Isle of Thanet Shellfish hatchery, pylons and Reculver Towers



Shellfish hatchery, pylons and Reculver Towers



Flat open arable landscape



Coastal defences and submerged groyne looking out to sea

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Flat low-lying former grazing marsh between 2 and 5m AOD. The land rises to 10m AOD at Reculver before dropping to the shingle shoreline.
- Extensive internationally and nationally designated priority habitat intertidal mudflats along the coast and priority habitat reedbed inland.
- Inland, arable fields are separated by reed-lined drainage ditches. A commercial shellfish farm in the north-east contains a number of ponds.
- Former grazing marsh, with a regular field pattern formed by reclamation.
- Development confined to bungalows and mobile homes/holiday park at Reculver.
- Reculver Lane provides the only access connection to the area. The London to Ramsgate railway and the A229 Thanet Way cut through the landscape.
- PRoW along the coastline and through the marshes including Saxon Shore Way Long Distance Footpath.
- Extensive views across marshland and to St Nicholas at Wade and the Isle of Thanet to the east.
- Reculver Towers dominate the local landscape and form a highly visible landmark.
- A remote and isolated landscape.

Natural Influences

A low lying and flat landscape between 2-5m AOD, which rises to 10m AOD at Reculver in the north-west, marking the start of the Beltinge coastal cliffs. The area is underlain by Thanet Sand Formation with alluvium deposits in the south.

There are a number of drainage ditches throughout the LCA, relating to the reclaimed marshland. The shoreline is also an important component of the landscape.

There is limited tree cover, confined to around the housing at Reculver and occasional trees lining the railway line in the centre of the landscape.

The shoreline is a shingle area with extensive priority habitat mud flats visible at low tide. The Thanet coast is particularly noted for its coastal birds and is internationally designated as the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA and Ramsar, and nationally as the Thanet Coast SSSI. The inland seawall is made of chalk and as a result contains plants that would normally be found in a chalk downland landscape. It also supports an isolated population of the small blue chalkland butterfly.

Inland, this is a largely arable landscape, with small pockets of grazing marsh. Fields are mostly enclosed by reed lined drainage ditches, and there is priority habitat reed bed recorded north and east of Rushbourne Sea Wall. Although there are no noted priority habitats in the rest of the LCA the drainage ditches are part of the wider wetland marsh to the south. The area also supports overwintering coastal birds.

The Thanet Cliffs and Shore BOA runs along the coast, and the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA covers the majority of the rest of the landscape.

Cultural Influences

The land represents the northern extremity of the former Wantsum Channel which separated the Isle of Thanet from the rest of Kent and flowed to the sea which was around 1.5km to the north during the Roman period.

Reculver has long been a strategically important site, and the remains of a third century AD Saxon Shore fort survives as ruined walls, earthworks and below ground features.

The Anglo-Saxon monastery at Reculver was founded around 669 AD and was built from existing Roman defences. The twin towers were constructed in the early 12th century. Coastal erosion diminished the village at Reculver, and the rest of St Mary's church was demolished 1809, although the towers were bought by Trinity House as a navigational aid. There is more detail on Reculver in LCA A1: Beltinge Coast.

South of Reculver the Kent HLC shows the LCA is formed of small rectilinear enclosures. The fields were reclaimed from the marshland through a combination of natural siltation, the formation of mudbanks and human intervention centuries ago, including the Rushbourne Sea Wall, Twelve Foot Dike and Pamphlet Wall which are still evident today.

Development is limited to the small settlement of Reculver, formed of a series of mobile home and caravan sites and holiday homes. There is a small pumping station and shellfish

hatchery east of Reculver, which is formed by large areas of ponds and long low sheds. The sea wall which stretches along this coastline is also a prominent feature.

Reculver Lane is the only road within the LCA and connects Reculver to the rest of the district. Reculver Lane is very rural and contained by fencing and walls on either side.

Further south the LCA is bisected by the London to Ramsgate railway, which forms a straight route across the marsh. The A299 Thanet Way follows the southern boundary.

The Isle of Grain to South Foreland Shoreline Management Plan 2008 (South East Coastal Group) identifies the future management of the Swalecliffe Coast for the next 100 years. The future management plan is to maintain the existing defence line, although in the long-term managed realignment, where the shoreline is allowed to change with management to control or limit movement, is proposed. The maximum area of retreat inland is considered to be the existing railway line.

PRoW throughout the LCA provide recreational access, including along the Thanet Coastal Path along the shoreline, the Saxon Shore Way Long Distance Footpath and along the Rushbourne Sea Wall. The England Coast Path has been approved in this area but is not yet fully established. There is no public access south of the railway line.

Perceptual Influences

There are extensive views to the east across the marshland to the Isle of Thanet and St Nicholas at Wade. Herne Bay and the Beltinge cliffs are visible to the west, with views across the estuary to the Isle of Sheppey and Essex beyond. The views out to sea encompass the Maunsell forts and windfarms. To the south views are also across the marshland, with trains highly visible where the railway crosses the marsh. Views south are terminated by woodland which lines the A299 Thanet Way.

The Reculver Towers are a distinctive local landmark, visible within the area and from the surrounding area and the sea.

The largely rectangular arable fields give a sense of visual unity. The mobile homes and caravan parks within Reculver and sheds associated with the mollusc farm are detracting features in an otherwise rural landscape. There are also a number of telegraph poles and associated wires which are visually detracting vertical features in the flat landscape. These also obstruct views of the Reculver Towers from the south and east.

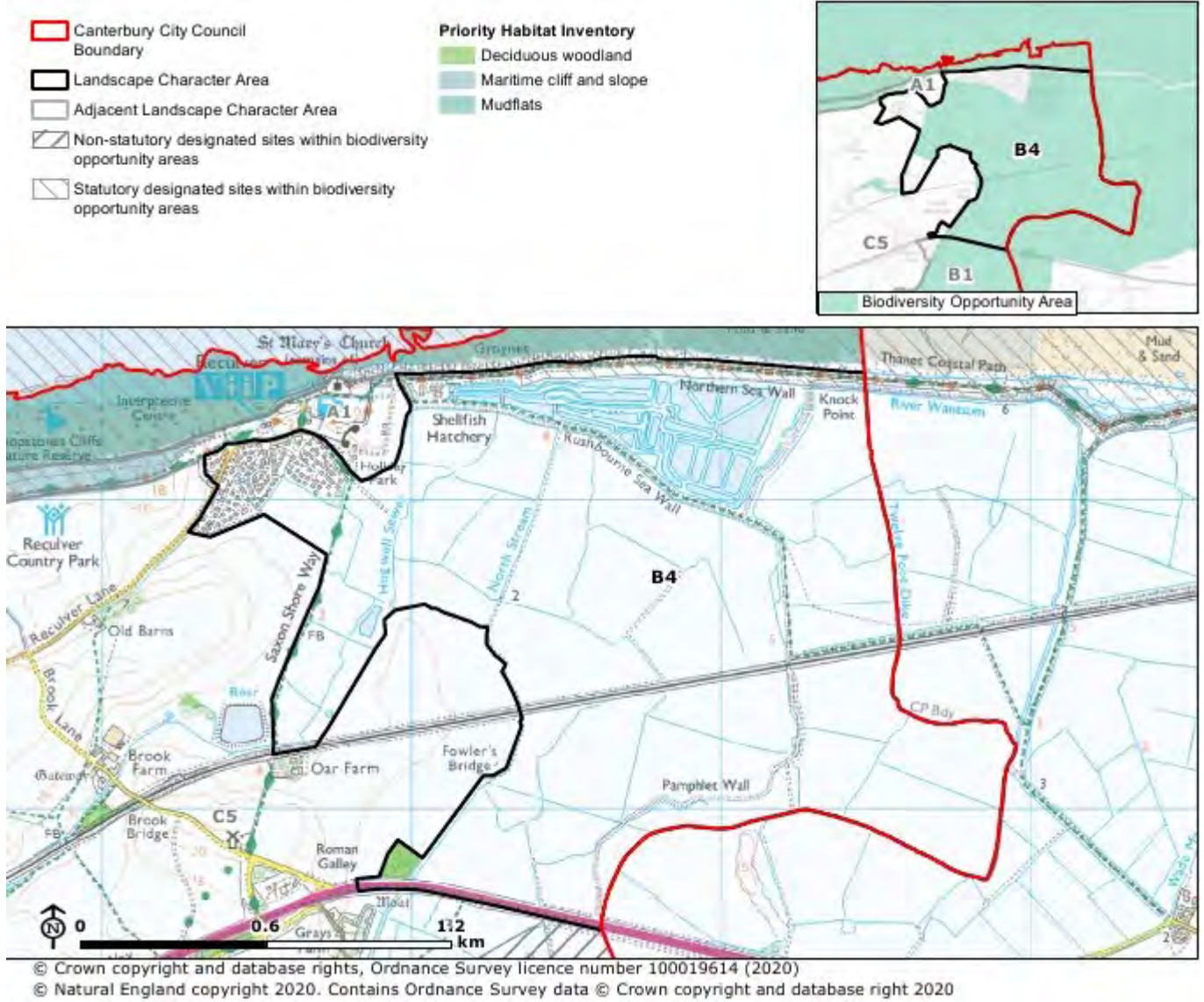
Sounds tend to be related to the sea and associated wildlife, although the transport corridors bring noise and light pollution locally to the landscape. Overall, the marsh retains a strong element of remoteness and isolation.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- Contrast between flat low-lying former grazing marsh, higher ground at Reculver and slope to the shingle shoreline.
- Ecologically valued priority habitats including reed bed and internationally valued intertidal mudflats.
- Rectangular historic field pattern separated by drainage ditches lined with priority habitat reedbed.
- Recreational value associated with the shoreline, PRoW, Saxon Shore Way and Reculver Country Park.
- Extensive open views and 'big skies' across marshland and the Isle of Thanet to the east, and of seascape horizons to the north.
- Local landmark Reculver Towers provides a sense of place and is highly visible from the surrounding landscape and seascape.
- An open, expansive landscape, with a strong sense of isolation and remoteness.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To restore and recreate wetland habitat, as part of the wider wetland and coastal habitat network of the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA.

The LCA lies within the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA, which sets out the following relevant key targets:

- Protect and enhance existing priority habitats and designated sites.
- Restore and/or recreate intertidal habitats, grazing marsh, fen and reedbed as part of a matrix of natural wetland and coastal habitats.
- Establish a new, landscape-scale, freshwater wetland complex, including fen, reedbed and grazing marsh.

- Enhance species-rich grassland to priority habitat quality.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include arable and horticulture, improved grassland, neutral grassland and standing open water and canal. Habitats of key importance within the LCA include deciduous woodland, which is listed as a priority habitat.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

Landscape Management

- Work with natural coastal processes to conserve and enhance the coastal landscape, including the distinctive pattern of shingle beach and intertidal mudflats.
- Manage and enhance the wildlife interest of agricultural fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins, management of drainage ditches, and other wildlife-friendly farming methods.
- Restore areas to encourage the traditional farming practice of extensive grazing and recreate former grazing marsh habitat, as part of the wider wetland network in Lower Stour catchment.
- Enhance grassland to species-rich neutral grassland to bring it to priority habitat quality.
- Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA including the creation of neutral grassland, wetland, wet woodland and grazing marsh habitat.
- Create and implement a long term management plan for invasive species across the river catchment. Excavation and removal techniques should be favoured, where this is not possible an appropriate herbicide treatment is recommended.

Development Management

- The open character of most marshland landscapes accentuates the visual impact of many proposals over a wide distance as compared with more enclosed landscape types. Avoid proposals that can result in the interruption of views of large open skies, long-distance views across the marshland including to adjacent Thanet District, and views out to sea. Avoid proposals that introduce vertical or incongruous elements to the horizons or impinge on the remote undeveloped quality of marshland and its shoreline.
- Conserve the undeveloped character of the landscape ensuring that it continues to play a role in the separation of Herne Bay and settlement in Thanet e.g. St Nicholas at Wade.
- Any highway upgrading should retain the rural character of Reculver Lane and its high hedgerows.
- Encourage the highway authority to minimise the impact of lighting on the A229 Thanet Way by installing light columns, in line with best practice. Seek to enhance the marshland setting alongside the roads to reinforce the sense of transition across the channel.
- Protect the valued recreational use of the landscape, seeking opportunities to further enhance opportunities for access and enjoyment.
- Carefully manage tourist pressures along the coast and marshes. Retain a natural and informal character to existing and new tourist features, including a muted colour scheme for car parks, footpaths and interpretation.
- Any development on the low-lying areas should ensure that the sense of heritage, remoteness and tranquillity is retained.
- Seek to better integrate the mobile home and caravan sites and holiday homes in Reculver with the marshland landscape, with appropriate planting.
- Conserve the prominence of Reculver Towers and their rural setting, ensuring no other tall structures are erected which would impose on views to this landmark, both within and outside the district.

LCT C: Coastal Hinterland



Description

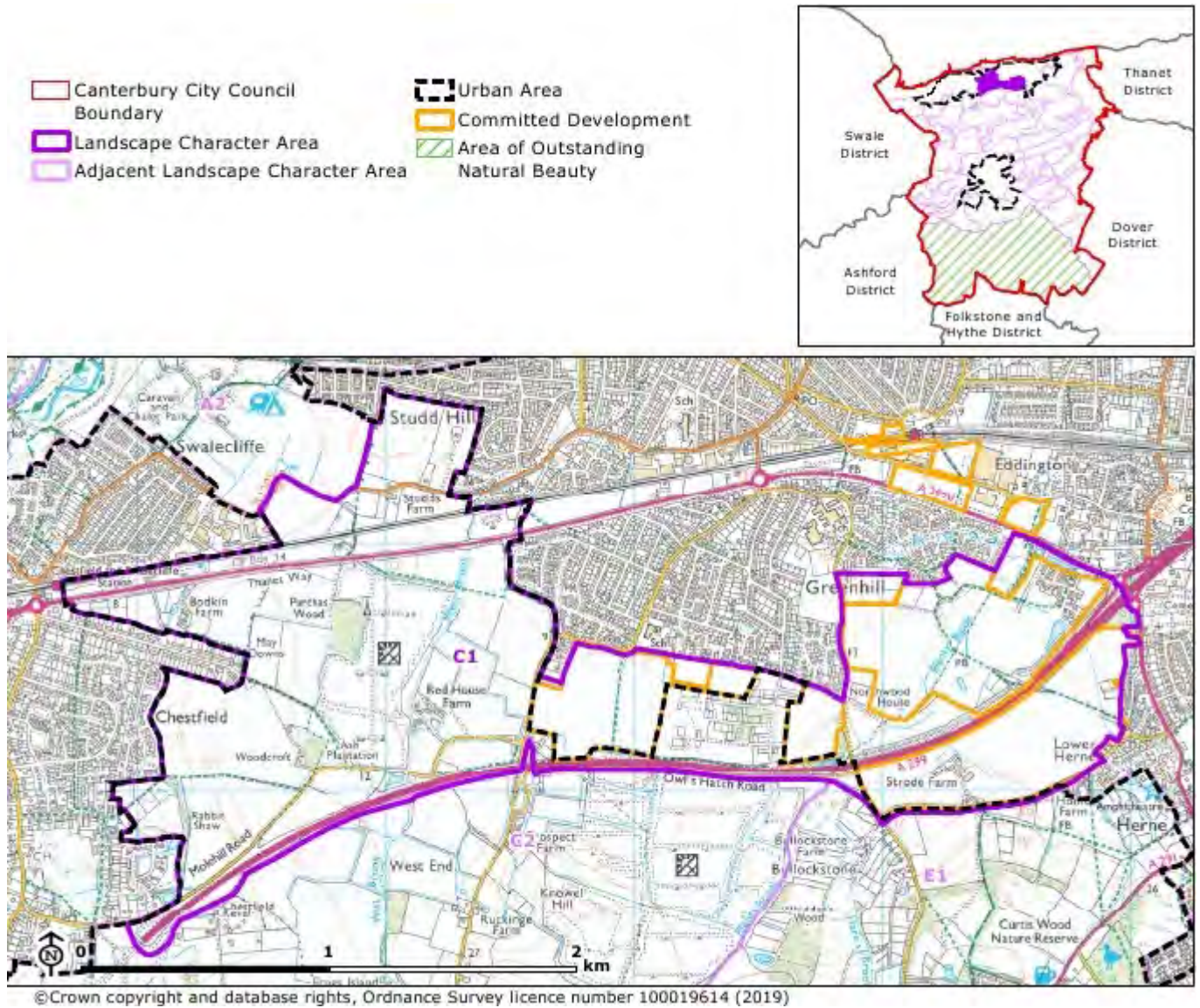
This LCT is distinguished by undulating mixed agricultural land between the Blean woodlands and the coast. Land use is predominantly arable with smaller pasture fields on slopes. There are also small isolated areas of orchard and woodland. Wooded streams and water channels pass through the landscape. The area contains limited settlement, although there are a number of Committed Developments within this LCT forming extensions to the existing coastal settlements. There is good recreational access linking the coastal towns and the adjacent Blean. The linear corridor of the A299 is the dominant infrastructure across the area.

Landscape Character Areas

The Coastal Hinterland LCT is subdivided into seven LCAs:

- C1: Chestfield Gap and Greenhill
- C2: Chestfield Farmland
- C3: Court Lees and Millstrood Farmlands
- C4: Ford and Maypole Mixed Farmlands
- C5: Hillborough Arable Farmlands
- C6: Wraik Hill
- C7: Yorkletts Farmlands

C1: Chestfield Gap and Greenhill



Location and Summary

The Chestfield Gap and Greenhill LCA lies in the north of the district. It is an agricultural landscape of predominantly arable fields with some pasture. It provides an important gap between the settlements of Chestfield and Greenhill, which form the eastern and western boundaries. It is crossed by the A2990 and the A299 forms the southern boundary. There are three Strategic Allocations within this site – Herne Bay Golf Course, Strode Farm and Land at Greenhill.

Representative Photographs



Solar Farm and woodland from Molehill Road, with rising slopes at Herne Bay beyond



Local Rights of Way link into urban areas although crossings of the A299 are poor limiting access to the wider landscape



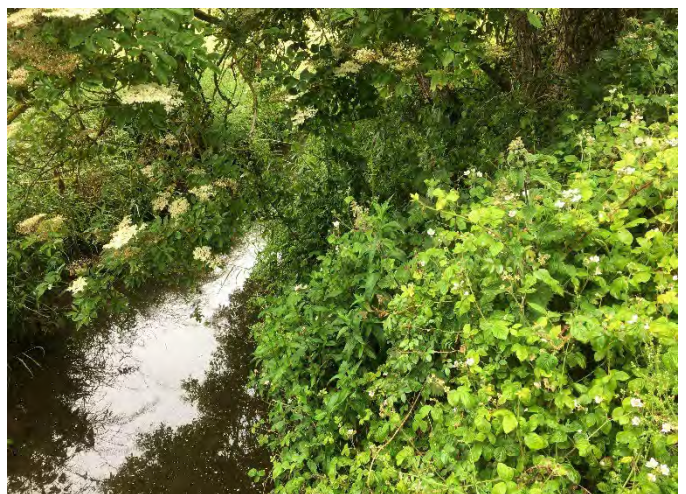
Flat open neutral grassland pastures at Red House Farm



Abrupt urban edges onto farmland



A number of solar farms can be seen against the wooded backdrop of The Blean



Small streams including the West Brook and Plenty Brook cross this area running from The Blean to the coast

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- A low-lying gently undulating landscape underlain by London Clay with brickearth deposits and poorly drained heavy soils.
- Plenty Brook and West Brook flow from the Blean ridge to the sea.
- Small blocks of priority habitat deciduous woodland, including ancient woodland at Purchas Wood.
- Large fields used for arable farming with smaller plots managed as pasture, including areas of semi improved hay meadow at Red House Farm Pasture LWS.
- Limited settlement of scattered farmsteads, some Grade II listed, and the Abbotswood Estate in the east, set out as plotlands in the early 20th century.
- Open rural landscape separating the settlements of Whitstable and Herne Bay between the edges of Swalecliffe, Chestfield, Studd Hill and Greenhill.
- Crossed and subdivided east-west by transport corridors of London to Ramsgate railway, A2990, A229 Thanet Way creating a fragmented landscape.
- Large solar farm at Red House Farm.
- Occasional busy rural roads/lanes at Molehill and The Bends, which are lined by gappy hedgerows.
- Good PRoW, which provide access to the surrounding settlements of Chestfield, Greenhill and Herne.

Natural Influences

A low-lying landform, which gently undulates between 10m and 20m AOD. The area is underlain by London Clay overlain by brickearth deposits which form poorly drained heavy soils.

Plenty Brook and West Brook emerge from the Blean and flow north-eastwards across the area, creating noticeable landscape features. A series of flood alleviation lagoons associated with Plenty Brook are located along the A2990 Old Thanet Way in the north. The wetter conditions along the brooks support a more diverse vegetation.

There are occasional small blocks of woodland or plantation, some of which are priority habitat deciduous woodland, with Purchas Wood identified as ancient woodland. These are supplemented by mature trees associated with the former golf course and the remnants of hedgerows that indicate field boundaries. Elm scrub within the hedgerows suggests that this may have been a more vegetated landscape prior to the outbreak of Dutch Elm disease in the 1970s. The loss of elm coupled with a decline in hedgerow management with farm intensification has created an open landscape.

There is one locally designated site known as Red House Farm Pasture, Chestfield LWS. This is an area of semi-improved pasture managed as hay meadow and surrounded by substantial hedgerows. However, it is isolated, being surrounded by arable land.

The centre of the area is part of the Blean BOA.

Cultural Influences

The Kent HLC identifies the majority of the LCA as valley bottom paddocks and pastures, associated with the brooks.

The landscape has limited settlement, although it is bordered by modern housing developments. There are three areas of Committed Development: Herne Bay Golf Course, Strode Farm and Land at Greenhill forming inland extensions to Herne Bay.

Scattered farms exist across the area with Studds Farmhouse and Colewood Farmhouse are both Grade II listed.

Abbotswood Estate in the west was set out as plotlands in the early 20th century. Plotlands were small individual areas of land bought by families, often from London's East End, as holiday homes. Although these were intended as holiday homes, the Second World War resulted in their permanent occupation as Londoner's sought the relative safety of the countryside. There is a thriving temporary community within the plotlands today with caravans and temporary houses.

To the north there is a small estate of industrial and warehouse buildings, and a large solar farm at Red House Farm.

The A2990 old Thanet Way and the London to Ramsgate railway separate Studd Hill and the area surrounding the industrial estate from the bulk of the area to the south. The railway in particular forms a physical and visual barrier between the north and south. The A229 Thanet Way runs in the south, and forms dominant road corridor, although lies in

cutting in the east. Busy roads connect the surrounding settlements and are edged by fragmented hedgerows.

There are a number of PRow which allow access to the local landscape as well as connecting the settlements of Chestfield, Greenhill and Herne.

Perceptual Influences

Views out of the area to the north are contained by the urban edge. There are views south to Herne Common and Knowel Hill and the wooded Blean ridge beyond. The fragmented and often lost hedgerows result in an open and expansive landscape. This is particularly the case where the settlement edge is hard against the rural landscape, from the south-west of Greenhill and the western edge of Herne. This is accentuated by the intensively farmed agricultural land.

The scrub and overgrown plotlands at Abbotswood are a distinctive visual feature in contrast to the agricultural landscapes although are not accessible. The A229 Thanet Way increases noise and light pollution, even when in cutting in the east. Small scale industrial developments and solar farms occur along the road corridors creating the sense of more fragmented urban fringe landscape in places. The solar

farm at Red House Farm and a transmitter tower are noticeable features in the landscape, and there is also a prominent line of electricity pylons which run across the south-west corner of the area and continue to the south.

The LCA provides an open landscape separating the expanded towns of Whitstable and Herne Bay, although dissected by the transport corridors and the enclosure pattern is incoherent. In the south the hedgerows and boundaries have largely been lost and in the north those that remain are fragmented and poorly maintained. Most of the land is farmed intensively, however there are areas no longer cultivated that are becoming dominated by coarse grasses; some is used for horse grazing. This is most common in the north.

There are wide views across the open landscape with the exception of where the few hedgerows and large elements such as the railway and the industrial units within the adjacent urban area block and enclose some views.

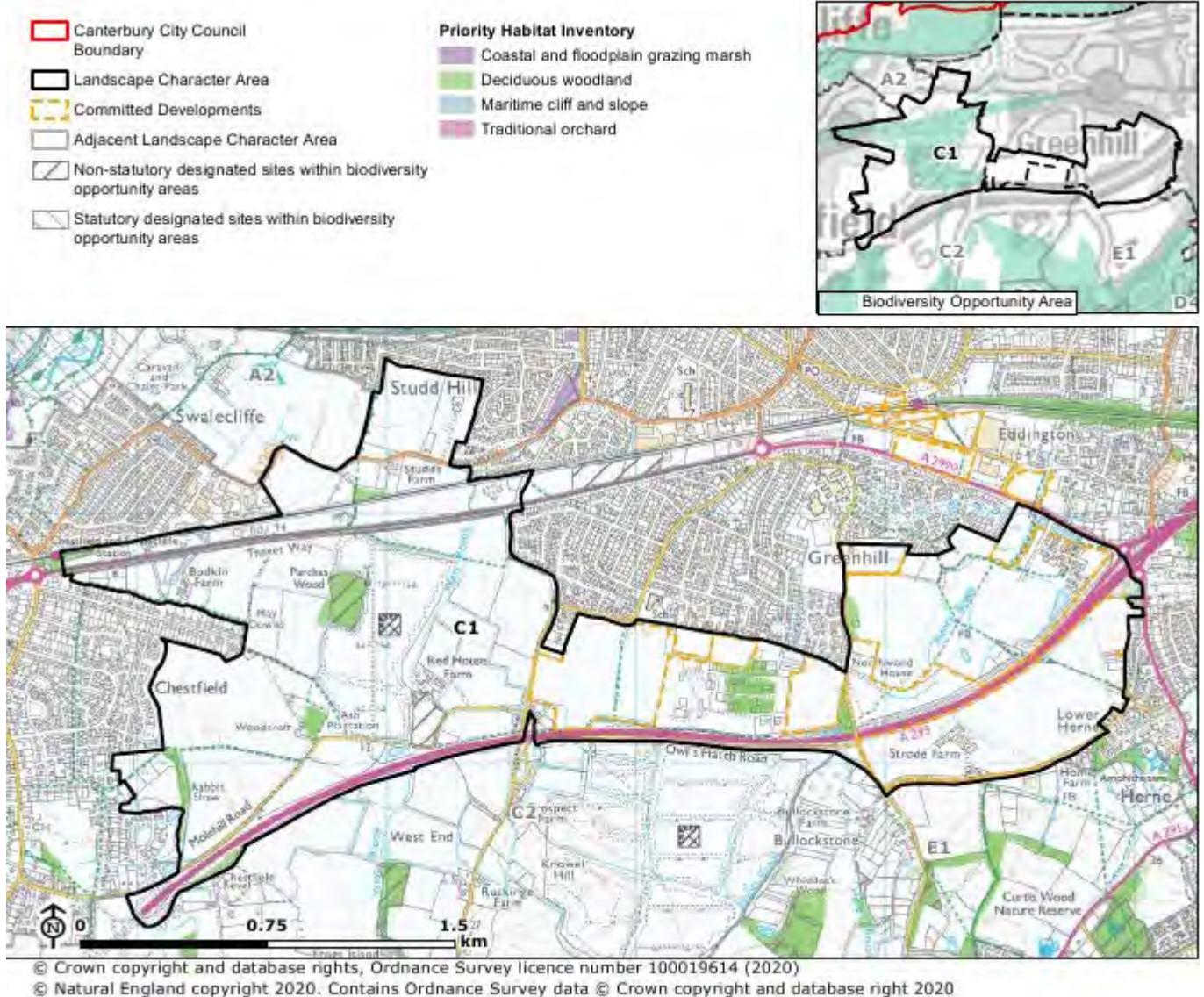
The housing adjoining the area is indistinct and often sits uncomfortably against the more rural landscape. The large industrial units in the northern part of the area intrude into the landscape.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- An open agricultural landscape providing contrast to surrounding densely developed urban areas forming a valuable gap between Whitstable and Herne Bay.
- Plenty Brook and West Brook provide the potential for ecologically valuable important habitats and form important corridors within the agricultural landscape.
- Ecologically important small blocks of priority habitat deciduous woodland provide interest and enclosure, and remnants of semi improved neutral grassland.
- Historic plotlands landscape at Abbotswood Estate.
- Recreational value associated with PRow network linking into the settlements.
- Open landscape with views south to the wooded ridgeline of the Blean.
- Green corridor and setting of the old and new Thanet Way.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: Enhance and create woodland habitat complex, as part of the woodland habitat network of the Blean BOA.

The LCA partly lies within the Blean BOA, which sets out the following relevant targets:

- No loss of ancient semi-natural woodland and its mosaic of associated habitats.
- Enhance and reconnect woodland to create a very extensive block of habitat, particularly through the maintenance and restoration of coppice management.

- Restore and enhance heath and acid grassland (including grazed wooded heath), as part of the woodland matrix.
- Create and enhance species-rich neutral grassland and bring it to priority habitat lowland meadow quality.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include improved and neutral grassland, arable and horticulture, broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland and built up areas. Habitats of key importance include ancient woodland and priority habitat deciduous woodland.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

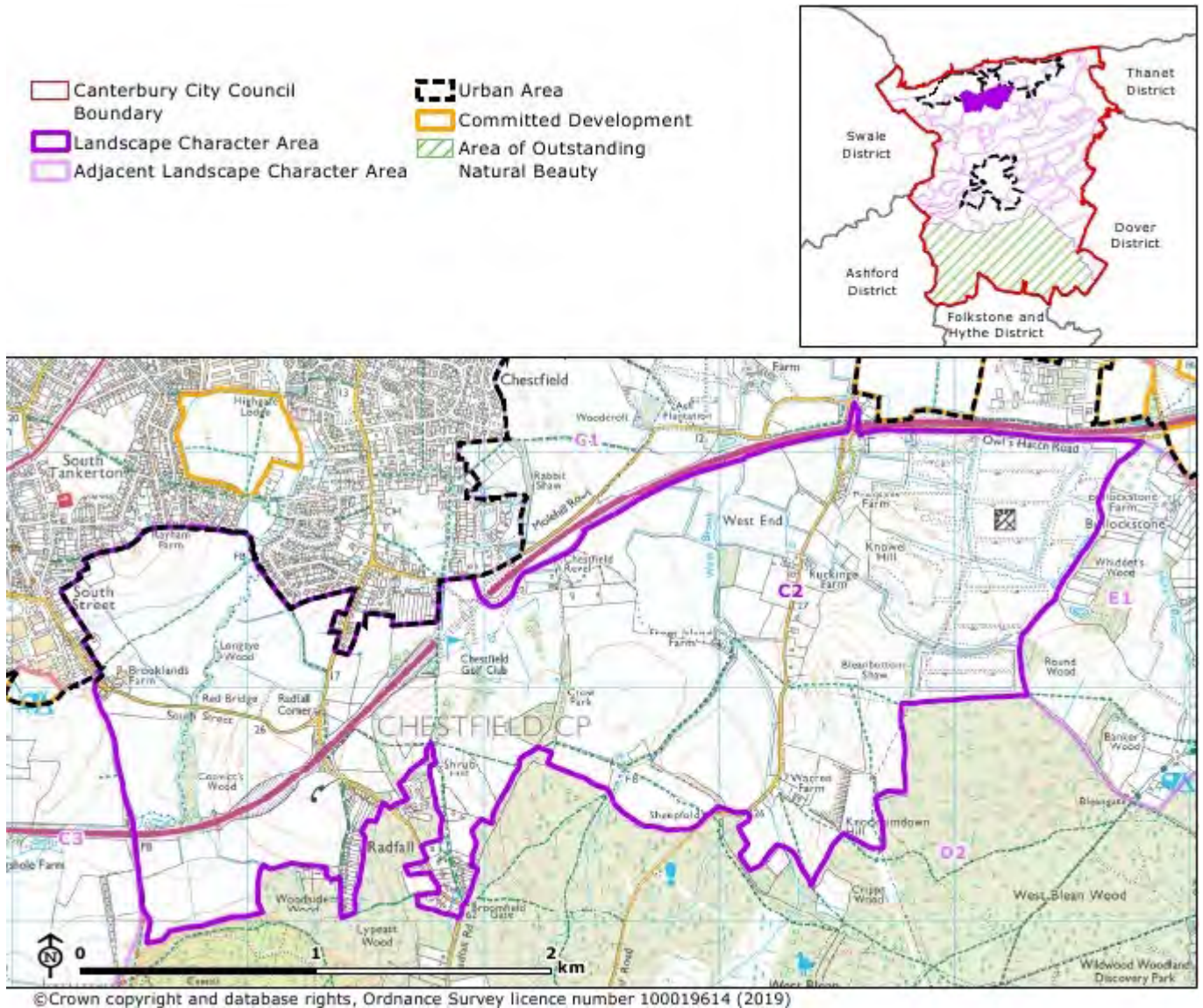
Landscape Management

- Improve and enhance the visual and nature conservation interest of the West Brook and Plenty Brook. In particular restore and enhance Plenty Brook as key green infrastructure through the strategic development area, north of Strode Farm.
- Protect ancient woodland. Restore and create a woodland and hedgerow habitat to increase connectivity across the existing woodland networking, including around Purchas Wood and integrating urban edges.
- Conserve and enhance areas of neutral grassland, seeking to restore and extend this habitat and enhance areas of improved grassland to bring it to priority habitat quality. A key opportunity is to manage and extend meadow habitat at Red House Farm Pasture LWS.
- Enhance declining hedgerows with sustainable native species including a new population of hedgerow trees. There is a key opportunity for hedgerow planting and management along the transport corridors.

Development Management

- Seek to develop an improvement strategy to create a positive image to the area itself, whilst separating and creating distinctive identities to the neighbouring urban areas of Chestfield, Greenhill and Studd Hill and role as green buffer between Herne Bay and Whitstable. This would require a partnership approach of landowners and CCC.
- Seek to soften and manage boundaries of solar farms and other utility land uses encouraging use of appropriate fencing and security measures that suit the rural location.
- Assess new building proposals within and adjacent to the area to ensure that attractive and integrated edges are formed, and appropriate green infrastructure/rights of way links are created. Manage heights of development on the urban edge and provide for buffer tree and woodland planting.
- Opportunities for green infrastructure links associated with new development include safe access across the Old Thanet Way and into Herne Bay as well as enhancing rights of way access the across the A299 and potentially linkages to The Blean.
- Review the settlement boundary within this area to encompass new areas of development, with the aim of providing a defensible and well-integrated urban edge with the surrounding rural landscape.
- Improve the appearance of the transport corridors of the old Thanet Way, A299 and London to Ramsgate Railway. Maintain the sense of a green corridor along the old Thanet Way with wide grass verges, cycle access, and hedge and tree boundaries. Seek to improve biodiversity through appropriate management of verges and tree planting.
- Resist pressures for further linear development along the transport corridors to help reinforce the open rural setting between Herne Bay and Whitstable.

C2: Chestfield Farmland



Location and Summary

A gently undulating area of open farmland on the northern footslopes of The Blean extending to the southern edge of the coastal towns of Whitstable and Herne Bay. The extensive woodland cover on the slopes to the south forms a distinctive backdrop, with the settlement edge and A299 New Thanet Way forming the northern boundary. The western boundary is formed by the Crab and Winkle cycle path.

Representative Photographs



Minor streams flow from the higher land of The Blean to the coast as at Longtye



A2990 Thanet Way in cutting with views across to the wooded backdrop of The Blean



Arable farmland with Chestfield golf club on rising slopes



Brooklands Farm and the Crab and Winkle Way on the west boundary



Cattle graze at Thorndon Pastures



A mix of pastures and woodland in the foreground to The Blean near Frog Island Farm

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- A gently undulating landscape of small hills and valleys between 15m and 45m AOD, underlain by London Clay dipping to the coast.
- Minor wooded streams and water channels cut through the landscape in a north south direction from the slopes of the Blean ridge towards the coast.
- Small scattered blocks of priority habitat deciduous woodland, including ancient woodland, many are locally designated as LWS. A small part of the West Blean and Thornden Woods SSSI including an area of priority habitat lowland meadow adjoining the woodland.
- Predominantly mixed productive farmland of arable and some pasture within small to medium fields.
- Historic late-Medieval enclosure field pattern in the west with more modern Parliamentary type fields and paddocks in the east. A golf course dominates the slopes at Shrub Hill, with a large solar farm is present in the east of the area.
- Settlement within the area limited to occasional isolated farm buildings/cottages – some Grade II Listed and displaying local vernacular, plus occasional development along Thornden Wood Road and properties set within woodland at Radfall.
- Crossed by major corridor of the A299, which is generally well integrated within the landform although with local visual and aural influence.
- PRoW provide recreational access and the Crab and Winkle Way is a major recreational connection between the coast, Blean and Canterbury City along the western boundary.
- Retains relatively strong rural character despite proximity to the urban edge. The urban edge of Whitstable/Chestfield varies from open and exposed on higher land to well contained by mature trees.

Natural Influences

A gently undulating landscape which varies from 15m AOD along the valleys, for example, the stream at Convict's Wood in the west to 45m AOD at Knowel Hill in the east. The area is underlain by London Clay, with a small deposit of brickearth in the north-east. The soils as a result are heavy and poorly drained.

There are a number of small streams and watercourses which generally run north-south. These include the distinctive wooded stream corridors of Swalecliffe Brook and West Brook, and Plenty Brook which runs along the eastern boundary. These create pattern and variation in the more open agricultural landscape.

Native vegetation belts, hedgerows and deciduous woodland blocks are scattered across the mixed farmland, limiting views across the landscape in places. Oak is a frequent species found throughout the area within woodland, tree belts and hedgerows.

There are three designated biodiversity sites within this area. The northern edges of West Blean and Thornden Woods SSSI extends into the south-central part of this area incorporating an area of acid/neutral grassland on the edge of the larger ancient woodland complex. Thornden Pasture and Crow Park

LWS is made up of two sites which complement the interest of Thornden Woods. Thornden Pasture to the south east is a series of damp pastures cut out from the original ancient woodland and contains a wide variety of grasses and herbs. Steep west-facing cliffs of rough pasture and scrub crossed by a series of landslips are also present. Crow Park is an old green lane with boundary hedgerows adjoining the golf course. Convict's Wood LWS, to the west, is a strip of ancient woodland habitat along a minor stream.

The field pattern is irregular, with a smaller scale traditional pattern of enclosed pasture around Thornden Wood Road, with some larger field patterns associated with arable farming, for example around South Street. Native tree belts and hedgerows enclose fields, with some post and wire fencing segregating parcels of land in places.

Cultural Influences

There is a more historic field pattern in the west, where the Kent HLC identifies rectilinear enclosure with wavy boundaries, from the late-Medieval to 17th/18th centuries. The east is recorded as having medium-sized fields with regular, straight-edged Parliamentary type enclosure and valley bottom paddocks and pasture.

There is limited settlement within the area apart from the pocket of housing within the woodland at Radfall. Occasional traditional properties and farmsteads are scattered throughout the area, many are Grade II listed.

Modern land use includes the Chestfield Golf Club and a large solar farm in the east. A green bridge provides a crossing linking the golf course across the Thanet Way.

There are a number of PRow, including the popular Crab and Winkle Way in the west which follows the route of the disused railway. Many of the footpaths connect to the Blean Woods in the south.

Perceptual Influences

The landscape varies from enclosed within the stream valleys to more open views across arable farmland at South Street or long views south towards The Blean ridge, where Thornden

Wood forms a containing wooded boundary. The Thanet Way (A299) severs the landscape with local visual and audible impacts although these are minimised by the road being in cutting. Pylons, occasional modern housing, golf course, large solar farm and some commercial buildings on the urban edge interrupt the traditional landscape pattern. Hedgerow field boundaries have been lost to fencing in places, although remnant oaks are important features.

Despite development influences, this remains a relatively rural landscape. Unusually there is little intermittent suburban land use, and the boundary between the urban edge and arable land is mostly crisp and clearly defined.

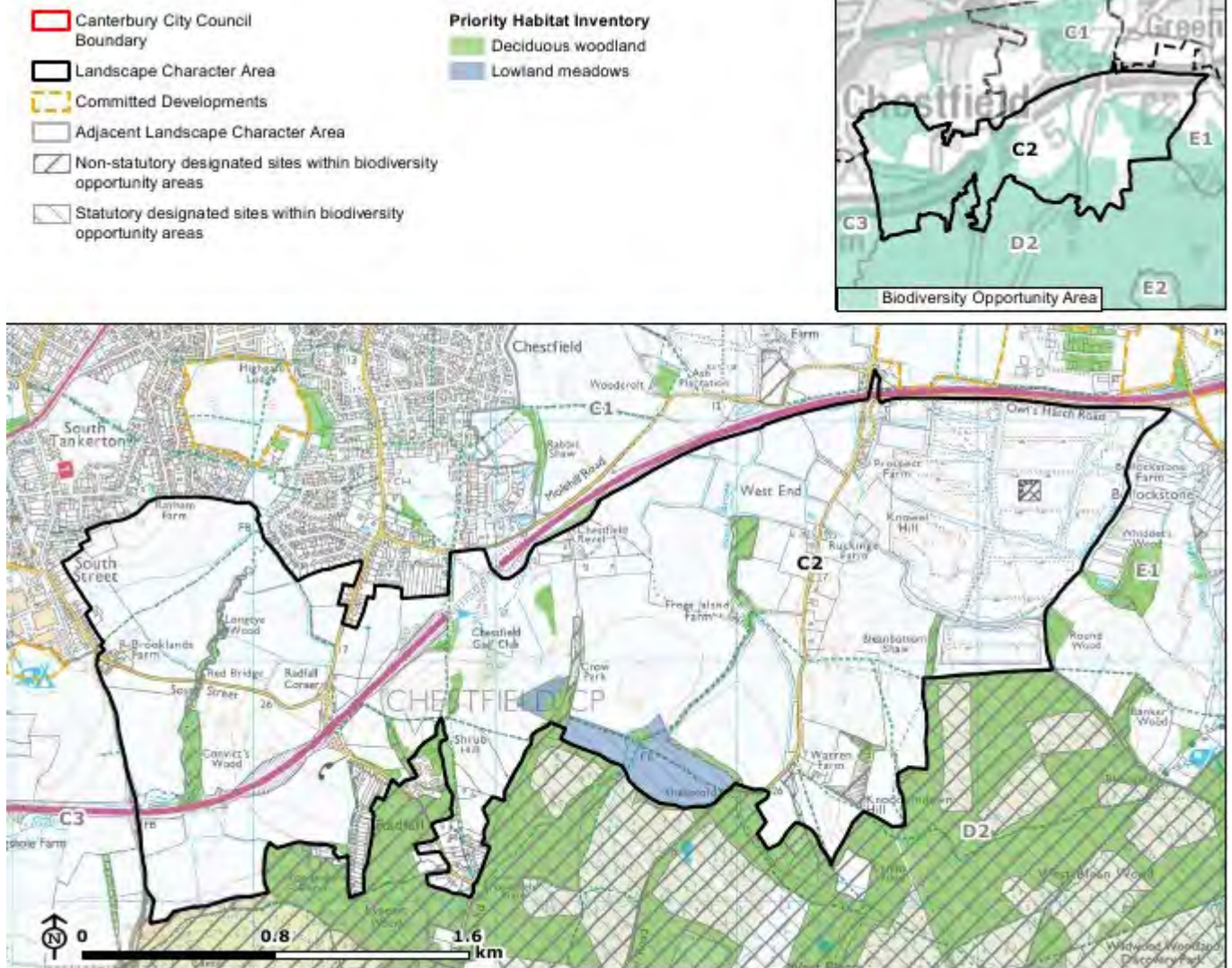
The area provides an important recreational link between the coastal towns and the Blean across the A299 including the Crab and Winkle Way and footpaths across the green bridge at the golf course.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- Land sloping up to the Blean highly visible as rural setting along A299 and to the coastal settlements.
- Ecologically important areas including priority habitat deciduous woodland, ancient woodland and priority habitat lowland meadow, designated nationally as part of West Blean and Thornden Wood SSSI and LWS.
- Wooded meandering stream channels are distinctive features and provide contrast and diversity within the agricultural landscape.
- Scattered traditional style historic farmsteads and properties, often Grade II listed, provide local distinctiveness and time depth.
- Good network of PRow including the Crab and Winkle Way and valued for recreation and access from settlements to wider countryside and The Blean including key crossing points across the A299.
- Views to the wooded backdrop of the Blean to the south providing containment and some longer views to the wind turbines at Kentish Flats in the Thames estuary to the north.
- Strong rural character pervades despite proximity to the urban area and route of the A299. A crisp well-defined urban edge abuts well managed agricultural land providing a rural farmed setting to the adjacent coastal settlements.

Biodiversity Appraisal



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Aim: To enhance and create woodland habitat complex, as part of the woodland habitat network of the Blean BOA.

The LCA partially lies within the Blean BOA, which sets out the following relevant targets:

- No loss of ancient semi-natural woodland and its mosaic of associated habitats.
- Enhance and reconnect woodland to create a very extensive block of habitat, particularly through the maintenance and restoration of coppice management.
- Restore and enhance heath and acid grassland (including grazed wooded heath), as part of the woodland matrix.

- Create and enhance species-rich neutral grassland and to bring it to priority habitat lowland meadow quality.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include arable and horticulture, improved grassland, neutral grassland, broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland, rivers and streams and built up areas. Key habitats of importance include ancient woodland, and priority habitat deciduous woodland and lowland meadow.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

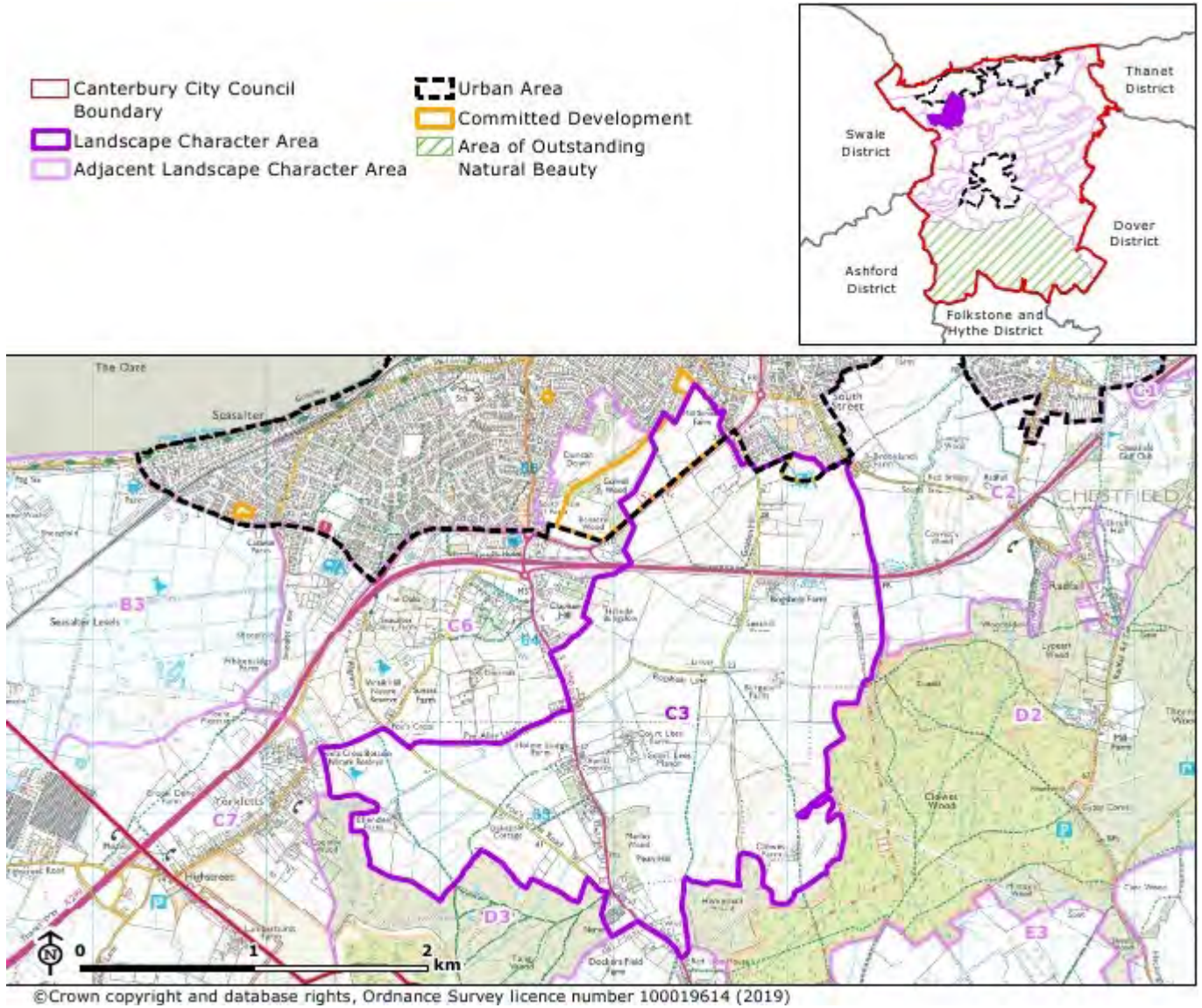
Landscape Management

- Conserve and manage the wooded stream networks which form important biodiversity corridors through farmland.
- Restore and create woodland and hedgerow habitat in the form of hedgerows and shelterbelts that increase connectivity to the existing woodland network in the south at The Blean.
- Create acid grassland and heath habitat to form part of the woodland complex, where appropriate.
- Conserve and enhance existing neutral grassland in and to the west of Chestfield golf course, upgrading improved grassland to neutral grassland and creating priority acid grassland/heathland habitat quality where opportunities arise.
- Conserve and restore the remaining hedgerows and encourage hedgerow reinstatement where fencing has replaced former hedgerow boundaries. Reinforce use of oak within hedgerows and manage to allow development of hedgerow trees.

Development Management

- Continue to conserve the open rural setting of the A299 resisting pressures for unsympathetic linear development along the corridor to help reinforce the open rural setting south of Chestfield and Whitstable.
- Conserve and enhance the lanes at South Street, Moleshill Road and Ruckinge, maintaining rural character of grass verges, and hedgerow boundaries and seek to manage heavy traffic use.
- Conserve and enhance recreational linkages including opportunities for new connections along green lanes and stream corridors, whilst allowing suitable margins for wildlife.
- Seek to soften and manage boundaries of solar farms and other utility land uses encouraging use of appropriate fencing and security measures that suit the rural location.
- Conserve and enhance a well- integrated edge and sharp division between town and countryside. Avoid large scale or tall buildings on this edge which are highly visible and intrusive in rural views.

C3: Court Lees and Millstrood Farmlands



Location and Summary

A gently undulating landscape on London clay extending from the edge of the large woodland block of Clowes Wood and Ellenden Wood, part of The Blean to Wraik Hill, Duncan Down and Clapham Hill in the north. It is an intermediate agricultural landscape extending to the edge of Whitstable and incorporating large areas of committed development at Millstrood Farm (North of Thanet Way strategic allocation).

Representative Photographs



Crossed by the A299, New Thanet Way



Exposed development along skylines at the edge of Whitstable to the north



Long views to The Blean woodlands



Large arable fields with wooded back drop, and A299



Rural lanes at Bogshole Lane, Pye Alley Lane and Golden Hill



Crab and Winkle Way, part of the National Cycle Network linking Canterbury City to the coast

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- A gently undulating landscape of small hills and valleys underlain by London Clay with a distinct landscape sloping to a minor valley at Bogshole, rising to Whitstable to the north and The Blean to the south
- Ancient woodland remnant at Marley Wood, part of The Blean, with intact hedgerow network remaining in places.
- Predominantly mixed productive farmland of arable and some pasture, with medium and large fields. A well-managed intact agricultural landscape exists on the edge of Whitstable.
- Mixed enclosure pattern including Parliamentary type field to the west (regular straight-edged enclosures) and Medieval enclosures (rectilinear with wavy boundaries) to the east.
- Settlement within the area forming linear development along A290 Pean Hill, plus occasional farm buildings/cottages – some Grade II Listed and displaying local vernacular as well as large scale farm buildings. Courts Lee Manor is a Conservation Area
- Crossed by main road corridors of the Old Thanet Way and New Thanet Way (A299), which are generally well integrated within the landform although with local visual and aural influence.
- PRoW provide recreational access and the Crab and Winkle Way is a major recreational connection between the coast, Blean and Canterbury City along the eastern boundary.
- Retains relatively strong rural character despite proximity to the urban edge. The urban edge of Whitstable is exposed at South Street with industrial commercial buildings visible on the crest of the hill.

Natural Influences

The Court Lees and Millstrood Farmlands are a gently undulating agricultural landscape on London Clay, with distinct south facing slopes in the north that descend towards a minor valley and rise up to the Blean in the north. The poorly drained heavy soils support a mixture of pasture and arable farming, with cereals being the dominant crop.

In the south of the area, Marley Wood is an ancient woodland which forms part of the larger Clowes Wood and Marley Wood LWS. It is a relic of the Blean Woods complex consisting mostly of oak, hornbeam and hazel coppice.

Hedgerows are characteristic in this area, particularly where associated with pasture, although hedgerow loss is evident along roads and post and wire fencing forms field boundaries in such locations, with remnant oak and ash forming important features. The boundary network is generally quite strong to the south where it links to the Blean, although more fragmented to the north. The tree cover and hedgerows are in variable condition and tend to be mature in age structure. In places the hedgerows are becoming fragmented and are in decline, particularly along roads and where arable farming is dominant.

Cultural Influences

This is an agricultural landscape with a mixed enclosure pattern including Parliamentary type field to the west (medium regular straight-edged enclosures) and Medieval enclosures (rectilinear with wavy boundaries) to the east. The field pattern

is still apparent, and the hedgerow network is reasonably coherent

There are a number of Grade II Listed farms within the area including Court Lees Farm, signalled by white gate piers on Pean Hill. Linear modern settlement follows the A290 Canterbury from Clapham Hill, creating an almost continuous line of development to Blean village. This route is an important connection between the coast and Canterbury City.

The landscape is crossed by both the A2990 Old Thanet Way and the A299 New Thanet Way dual carriageway which subdivides and fragments the area. Minor rural lanes at Bogshole Lane, Fox Cross Road and Golden Hill are sunk into the landscape.

The area has a good rights of way network connecting Whitstable to The Blean. The Crab and Winkle Way along the eastern boundary, and Golden Hill provide important access links across the A299.

Perceptual Influences

To the south and west views are contained by the high ground of the Blean ridge and Wraik Hill. Views within the area are occasionally enclosed by hedgerows. Pylons and overhead cables cross the landscape, and large agricultural barns and some equestrian grazing with a variety of boundaries are visually detracting features.

To the north, residential and light industrial units on the urban edge of Whitstable are exposed on the skyline at South Street and form a harsh interface with the rural landscape. The road

corridors divide this part of the area and impose their own highway character onto the landscape. Although their impacts are significant, they are local and, for the most part, they are not apparent in the landscape until viewed at close range.

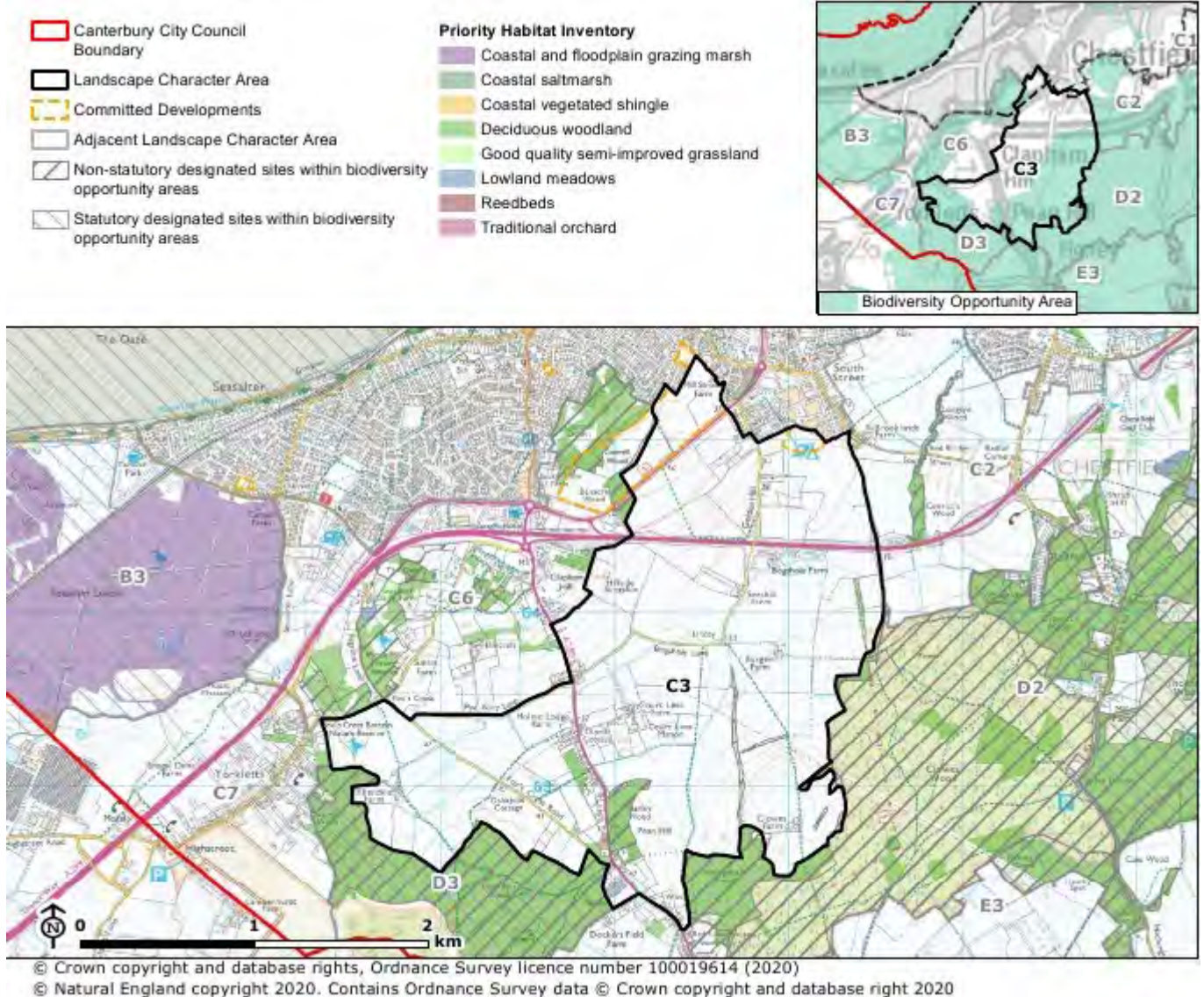
The area retains a distinctly rural character, although the northern most part of this area is heavily influenced by the urban edge of Whitstable and linear development extending along Clapham Hill and Pean Hill.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- The pattern of fields, hedgerows and occasional small woodlands, including ancient woodland at Marley Woods, is characteristic of the agricultural landscapes that abut the northern edge of The Blean Woodland complex.
- Distinct undulating topography and south facing slopes forming the setting of The Blean south of Whitstable and provide long rural views across to the wooded horizons.
- Distinct and coherent field pattern including remnant Medieval enclosures. Series of Grade II Listed farmhouses within the wider landscape.
- Green corridors and rural setting of the Old Thanet Way and New Thanet Way that cross through the landscape.
- Good network of PRow including the Crab and Winkle Way and valued for recreation and access from settlements to wider countryside and The Blean (Clowes Wood and Ellenden Wood) including key crossing points of the A299.
- Strong rural character which pervades despite proximity to the urban area and route of the A299. Well managed agricultural land provides a rural farmed setting to Whitstable.
- Rural character of the minor lanes that cross the landscape at Fox's Cross and Bogshole.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To enhance and create woodland habitat complex, as part of the woodland habitat network of the Blean BOA.

Part of the LCA lies within the Blean BOA, which sets out the following relevant targets:

- No loss of ancient semi-natural woodland and its mosaic of associated habitats.
- Enhance and reconnect woodland to create a very extensive block of habitat, particularly through the maintenance and restoration of coppice management.
- Restore and enhance heath and acid grassland (including grazed wooded heath), as part of the woodland matrix.

- Create and enhance species-rich neutral grassland and to bring it to priority habitat lowland meadow quality.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include arable and horticulture, improved grassland, neutral grassland, broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland and built up areas. Key habitats of importance include ancient woodland and priority habitat deciduous woodland identified at Marley Wood LWS.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

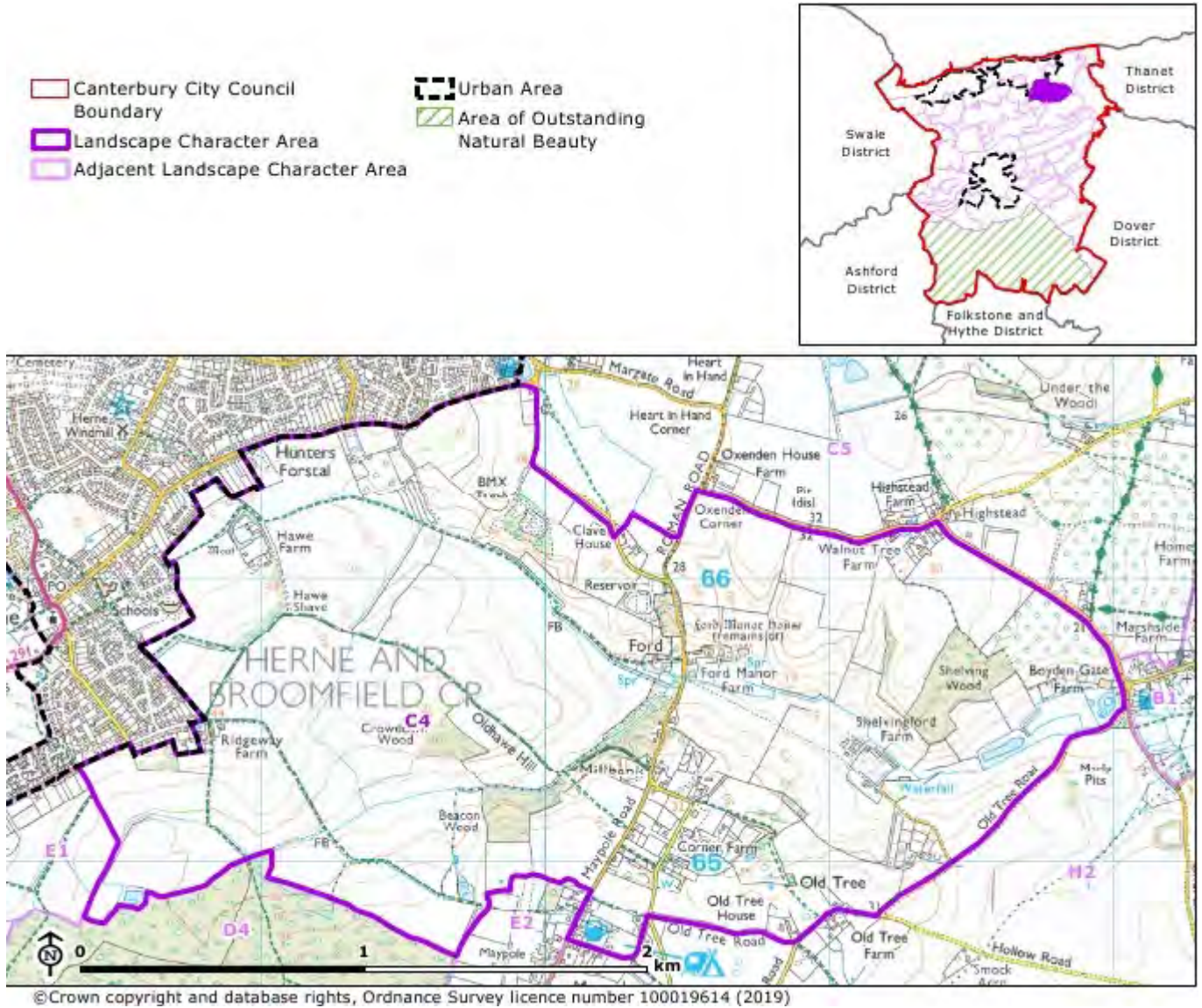
Landscape Management

- Protect ancient woodland. Restore and create a woodland and hedgerow habitat to increase connectivity across the existing woodland network, notably around Marley Wood and buffer planting to help integrate exposed urban edges.
- In the south and south east of the area, where appropriate adjacent to The Blean, seek to create acid grassland and heath habitat, which form part of the woodland complex. Enhance areas of improved grassland to bring it to priority habitat quality.
- Enhance declining hedgerows with sustainable native species including a new population of hedgerow trees. There is a key opportunity for hedgerow planting and management along the transport corridors of main roads and along rural lanes.
- Continue to actively manage the agricultural land as productive arable and pasture farmland so that it forms a managed agricultural landscape on the edge of Whitstable, avoiding field fragmentation and creation of paddocks. Seek opportunities for management of arable fields for biodiversity including retaining uncultivated margins.
- Encourage suitable planting around visually prominent farm buildings (particularly large, modern sheds) to soften their visual impact.

Development Management

- Review the settlement boundary within this area to encompass new areas of development, with the aim of providing a defensible and well-integrated urban edge with the surrounding rural landscape. Manage heights of development on the urban edge and provide for buffer tree and woodland planting. Limit further expansion of development on the south facing slopes which extend away from the coastal towns and form part of the rural setting of The Blean.
- Avoid further infilling/backland development along the A290 Canterbury Road. Maintain single line of houses and avoid development which would create the impression of a more continuous urban edge extending between Whitstable and Canterbury.
- Consider opportunities for green infrastructure links associated with new development including maintaining access to the recreational resource and green lung at Duncan Downs (in adjacent LCA) by creating a linking east – west green corridor towards the Crab and Winkle and any opportunities associated with the Gorrell Stream.
- Improve the appearance of the transport corridors of the Old Thanet Way and A299 New Thanet Way. Conserve the open rural setting along corridors, resisting any unsympathetic linear development along corridors to help reinforce the open rural setting. Manage roadside verges and hedges to enhance the rural character and biodiversity.

C4: Ford and Maypole Mixed Farmlands



Location and Summary

The Ford and Maypole Mixed Farmlands is a distinctly convoluted undulating agricultural landscape on an area of complex geology with rolling hills descending towards the Wantsum Channel to the east. It is located in the north-east of the district, to the south of Herne, Hunters Forstal and Broomfield and to the west of Boyden Gate.

Representative Photographs



Wet meadows with drainage ditches looking towards Shelving Wood



Grade II listed Ford Manor Farmhouse



Undulating arable fields with parkland character to east and Grade I listed Herne windmill in background



Grazing cattle with post and wire fencing along road



Undulating arable fields looking towards urban edge of Hunters Forstal



Orchards north of Boyden Gate

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Distinctive folded landform underlain by complex geology with rolling hills descending from 44m to 5m AOD at the Wantsum Channel and cut by a minor valley.
- Springs, small streams and ponds throughout the area, with a distinctive minor valley in the east at Boyden Gate.
- Mature tree belts, parkland trees and small woodlands and copses often contain ancient woodland and priority habitat deciduous woodland.
- Mixed farming with large arable fields on flatter ground and smaller pasture fields on steeper slopes, enclosed by ditches and intermittent hedgerows.
- Remnant areas of traditional orchard on the edge of settlements.
- Small areas of local parkland around Medieval moated sites at Hawe Farm and Ford Manor.
- Limited settlement focussed at Maypole and in scattered historic farmsteads. The settlement edges of Herne and Broomfield are prominent to the north and west.
- Good PRoW network links the settlements and to the Blean Woods to the south.
- Views from the north-west towards the rising slopes of Herne including Herne Windmill and out to sea. Elsewhere views are terminated by the undulating topography and woodland, both within the area and the Blean Woods to the south.
- Increasingly tranquil to the south and east, away from edge of Herne and Broomfield.

Natural Influences

The Ford and Maypole Mixed Farmlands LCA lies on an area of complex geology consisting of Thanet, Woolwich and Reading sandstones and London Clay, partially overlain with sand and gravels and brickearth.

These deposits have eroded to create a distinctive forked valley feature with rolling hills descending from 44m AOD to 5m AOD at the former Wantsum Channel. This feature was probably formed by the melt waters from the edge of an ice field late in the last glaciation.

There are a number of springs and streams throughout the landscape, often lined by willow. In the east there is a distinctive valley with ditches enclosing fields, related to the reclaimed marshland and provide wetland interest. Ponds associated with raising game birds have been created in the east. South and east of Shelving Wood is part of the Chislet Marshes, Sarre Penn and Preston Marshes LWS, which extends into the Chislet Marshes to the east.

The undulating landscape contains a number of woodland blocks, some of which follow the springs e.g. Hawe Shave and Beacon Wood. These woodlands contain priority habitat deciduous woodland, and a number are designated ancient woodlands. There are remnant areas of orchard on the edge of Herne, Boyden Gate and Hunters Forstal, some of which is priority habitat traditional orchard.

The area is agricultural, with a mix of pasture and arable fields in a variety of sizes. The steeper slopes tend to support grazed pasture, with larger arable fields are on more level ground. Field boundaries are formed by ditches, tree belts and hedgerows, some gappy. There is some post and wire fencing around pasture fields, along roads and around farmsteads.

Cultural Influences

The Kent HLC indicates the majority of the fields to the west of Maypole Road are rectilinear with wavy boundaries. There are irregular fields with straight boundaries in the north and 19th century enclosure fields with extensive boundary loss in the centre, east of Maypole Road.

The valley feature in the east historically formed a sheltered inlet to the Wantsum Channel. The valley was greatly valued during the Medieval period when two important residences were established. Hawe Farm was built in 1494 for Sir John Fineux, the Chief Justice of the King's Bench in the reign of Henry VII. The red brick building and moat remain and are Grade II listed, and there are parkland trees and features surrounding the area.

Shelvingford Farmhouse was built in the late 15th or early 16th century by the Hawte family and was later owned by the Archbishops of Canterbury. It is an attractive timber-framed continuous jettied house, now listed at Grade II*.

The Manor House at Ford was built in the 15th century on an earlier moated site for Archbishop Morton and was a palace for the Archbishops of Canterbury. It was an important residence in its time and Henry VIII was entertained there in 1544. The majority of the manor was demolished in 1658, although the gatehouse, barn and part of the manor house survive and are all Grade II listed. The manor was surrounded by a deer park including vineyards, which survived until the 19th century. Today the park is evident as a large area of pasture together with Shelving Wood. There is also a parkland character around Hawe Farm, with an avenue of trees leading to the farm and in-field trees.

There are remnant orchards around Hawe Farm and Boyden Gate Farm and oasthouses at Shelvingford and Maypole which show the historic fruit and hop growing of the landscape.

The main settlement is the hamlet of Maypole which developed along the Roman Road between Reculver and Canterbury City. It is very open with groups or individual houses sited within large plots. There are a number of traditional farmsteads with large barns, many of which are Grade II listed. Maypole Thatch is the only other Grade II* building in this LCA and is a rare example of a 14th century

two bay hall-house. Ford, Maypole and Oldtree, Highstead, and Hawe Farm are all designated as Conservation Areas.

There are a few rural roads through the area, and these are bounded by intermittent fragmented hedgerows, which have been reinforced by post and wire fencing in places, or sometimes removed entirely.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW) link the farmsteads and provide access to the Blean Woods to the south, although public access is limited east of Maypole Road.

Perceptual Influences

The mature tree belts, hedgerows, small woodlands and the undulating topography generally contain views and create an intimate character, particularly in the east.

In the north the settlement edges of Herne and Broomfield are prominent in views, with the Grade I listed Herne Windmill a skyline feature in views from the west. There are also occasional glimpses beyond Herne to the sea.

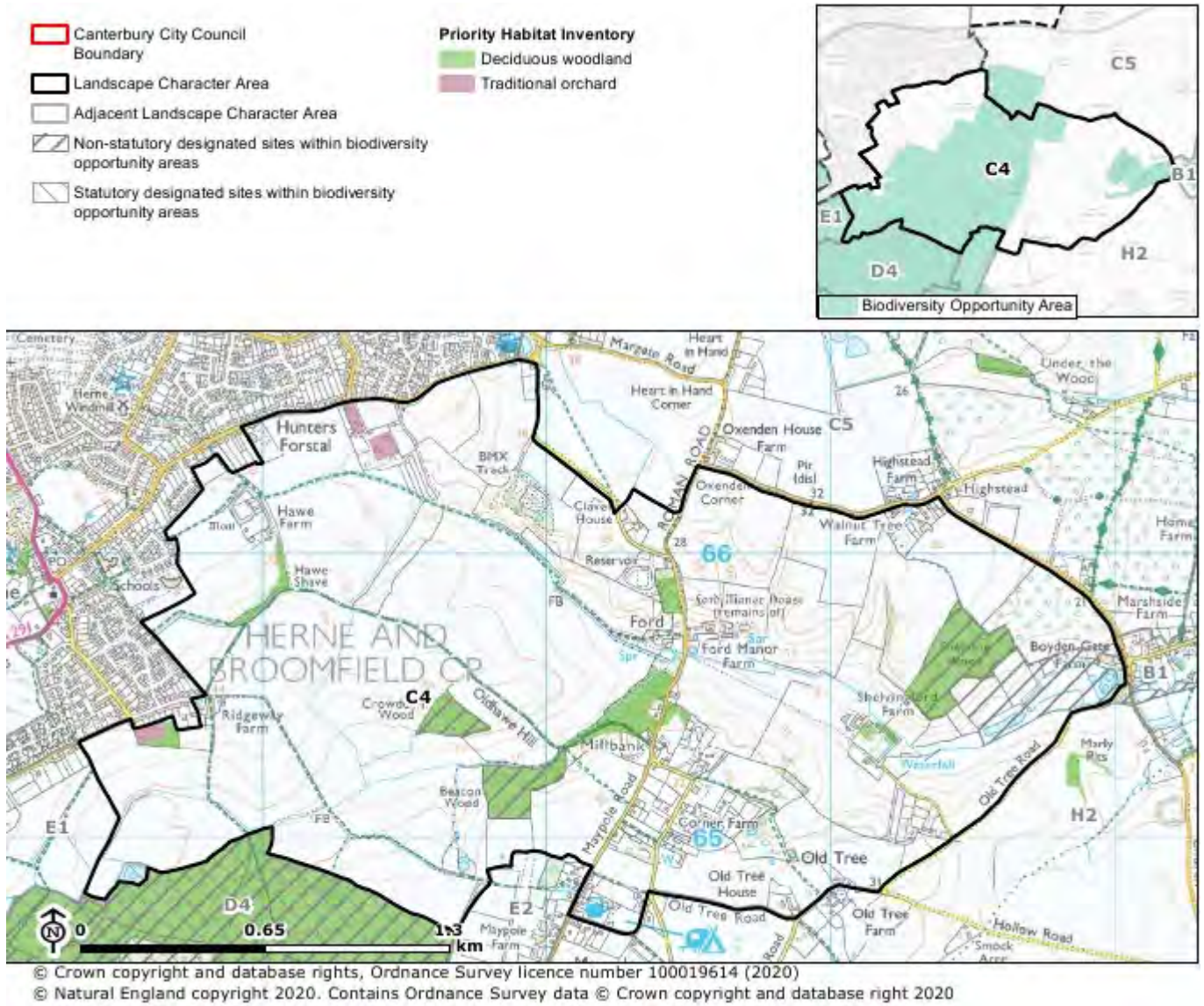
The centre and east of the area have a good experience of dark skies and tranquillity, although this decreases with proximity to Herne and Broomfield. Some local suburbanisation of properties and small holdings are out of character with the rural agricultural landscape.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- Distinctive undulating landform cut by minor valley provides visual interest and a contrast with surrounding flatter marshland and development on higher slopes at Herne.
- Ecologically valued priority habitat deciduous woodland in mature tree belts, small woodlands and copses, plus wetland habitats and neutral grassland relating to the historic Wantsum Channel and adjacent marshland, which are locally designated.
- Remnant Medieval landscape structure including areas of parkland around Medieval moated sites at Hawe Farm and Ford Manor.
- Occasional areas of traditional orchard provide visual interest and time depth.
- Strong rural character with settlement confined to Maypole and isolated traditional hamlets/farmsteads. The distinctive linear open settlement pattern of Maypole/Ford.
- Recreational value with a good PRoW network, linking farmsteads and the Blean Woods.
- Contrast of internal views truncated by woodland and topography with expansive views north to Herne Bay and the sea, and south to the wooded Blean complex.
- A tranquil rural area with a strong sense of place created by the folded landform.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To enhance and create woodland habitat complex as part of the woodland habitat network of the Blean BOA.

The LCA partially lies within the Blean BOA, which sets out the following relevant targets:

- No loss of ancient semi-natural woodland and its mosaic of associated habitats.
- Enhance and reconnect woodland to create an extensive block of habitat, particularly through the maintenance and restoration of coppice management.
- Restore and enhance heath and acid grassland (including grazed wooded heath), as part of the woodland matrix.

- Create and enhance species-rich neutral grassland and to bring it to priority habitat lowland meadow quality.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include arable and horticulture, improved grassland, neutral grassland, broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland and built up areas. Key habitats of importance include ancient woodland, deciduous woodland and traditional orchard, which are priority habitats recorded at Beacon Wood and to the west of Ridgeway Farm.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

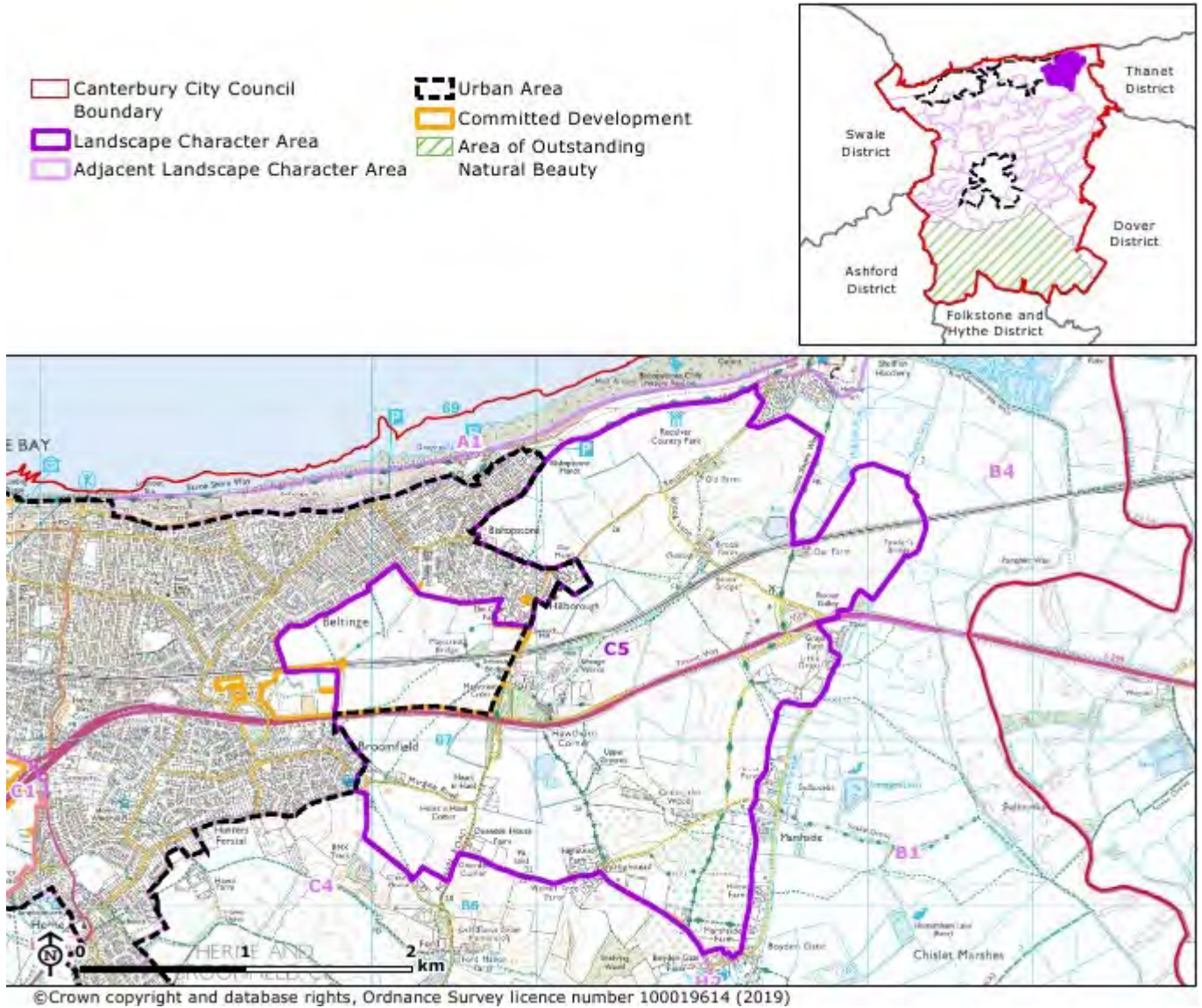
Landscape Management

- Conserve and enhance the biodiversity interest from streams and wetland habitats, particularly in the Shelvingwood Inlet and Chislet Marshes, Sarre Penn and Preston Marshes LWS, by managing scrub encroachment.
- Restore and create woodland and hedgerow habitats that increase connectivity to the existing woodland network in the south. Create areas of acid grassland and heath habitat, which form part of the woodland complex.
- Enhance areas of improved grassland. Conserve and extend areas of neutral grassland as an important and scarce habitat.
- Conserve and enhance the wooded character of the area through appropriate woodland management and seek to conserve and manage remnant orchards.
- Manage and enhance the wildlife interest of agricultural fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins and other wildlife-friendly farming methods.
- Conserve and improve the traditional landscape pattern and structure, as well as increasing biodiversity interest through the establishment and maintenance of hedgerows along historic field boundaries.
- Enhance and augment fragmented field boundary hedgerows with native species, replacing post and wire fencing where possible.
- Promote enhanced management of horse paddocks and smallholdings ensuring they are sympathetically integrated into the landscape with appropriate hedgerows and woodland planting.
- Conserve and reinforce the parkland character around Hawe Farm and Ford Manor putting in place a programme of new parkland tree planting where appropriate.

Development Management

- Conserve the strong vernacular of historic buildings and their rural setting, particularly within the Boyden Gate and Ford, Maypole and Oldtree Conservation Areas. Maintain the open settlement character of Maypole avoiding denser settlement and infill.
- Seek to enhance the existing settlement edge at Hunter's Forstal resisting further development/extension into this distinctive rural landscape.
- Ensure sympathetic conversion of traditional barns and oast houses, to retain their rural character.
- Any proposals for highway upgrading should retain the rural character of the roads
- Protect the valued recreational use of the landscape, seeking opportunities to further enhance opportunities for access and enjoyment.

C5: Hillborough Arable Farmlands



Location and Summary

Hillborough Arable Farmlands LCA is an undulating agricultural landscape with isolated areas of orchard and woodland. It lies to the east of Herne Bay and Beltinge, contrasting with the lower lying Chislet Marsh and Snake Drove to the east and coastal landscape to the north.

Representative Photographs



Undulating arable field looking over the Chislet marshes to the east



Gateway to Brook Farm (Grade II listed building and Scheduled Monument)



Rural lane with historic farmstead and modern agricultural barn



Railway bridge looking south to tree lined A229 Thanet Way



Reculver Towers on the coast viewed across undulating arable fields



Orchards at Highstead

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- An undulating landscape underlain by mixed clay, silt, sand and gravel geology, with deposits of sand and gravel, brickearth and landslip.
- Seasonal drainage ditches and springs drain to the marshes to the east.
- Largely an open agricultural landscape with local variations including a minor dray valley with woodland at Under the Wood.
- Small blocks of priority habitat deciduous woodland occur around farmsteads and lining the roads and railway, overall an open agricultural landscape.
- Large open field pattern with few hedgerows dominated by cereal production. There is horse grazing along transport corridors, and commercial orchards around Highstead.
- Scattered historic farmsteads and isolated cottages, connected by rural lanes.
- Good network of PRoW including the Saxon Shore Way Long Distance Footpath.
- A229 Thanet Way and railway line cut east west across the landscape forming distinct linear corridors.
- Extensive views to the east across the Chislet Marshes contrast with limited views across the rolling farmland.

Natural Influences

An undulating landform, between 37m and 5m AOD, which drops to the east towards the Chislet Marshes. The LCA is underlain by a mixed geology of Thanet Sand Formation, Lambeth Group and Thames Group, overlain in the west by sand and gravel, brickearth and landslip. The soils are poorly drained loams, and there are a number of seasonally wet drainage ditches and small water bodies throughout the landscape.

There are small areas of woodland blocks, many of which contain priority habitat deciduous woodland, predominantly along roads or around farmsteads. The railway line is also well screened by vegetation.

Agriculture dominates, with large fields used for intensive arable production, mainly of cereals. The land is cultivated tight to the roadside with very narrow verges and depleted, gappy or lost hedgerows adding to the sense of openness. There are smaller areas of horse grazing in areas divided by the transport network and around farmsteads, where there has been some subdivision of fields to create paddocks of horse tape and post and wire fencing.

The field boundaries and small water bodies are the only features which may contain ecological interest. The Thanet Coast SSSI, SPA and Ramsar lie to the north, and this farmland area is likely to provide further habitats for farmland and coastal birds.

Cultural Influences

Historically this area would have formed a headland that dominated the northern approaches to the Wantsum sea channel. The strategic importance of this headland is suggested from archaeological evidence indicating near continuous settlement since Neolithic times. Reculver to the north-east was linked to Canterbury City by a Roman Road that followed the approximate line of the Sweechbridge Road and Hoath Road.

Today this is a sparsely settled landscape with scattered farmsteads and isolated cottages. The farmsteads are often Grade II listed and were once much grander residences. Brook Farm has a redbrick Elizabethan gateway which dates from 1580. It is a Scheduled Monument and a Grade II listed building. At Gray's Farm there is still evidence of a former homestead moat which was recorded on the Tithe Map of Chislet in 1838. There are a number of Conservation Areas centred around the farmsteads and small clusters of buildings: Broomfield; Highstead; Under the Wood; Boyden Gate and Marshside.

There are small areas of commercial orchard around Highstead, which echo the tradition of fruit and hop growing throughout Kent. Past sand and gravel extraction is evidenced by a restored pit in the south.

There is some modern development, with large agricultural barns and modern bungalows along roads. The suburban settlement edges of Beltinge, Broomfield and Reculver are also visible on the northern edges, although these do not dominate the area.

The roads within the area are largely rural, often with no hedgerow or boundary into the adjacent fields.

PRoW run throughout the LCA, connecting the farmsteads and settlement edges. This includes the Saxon Shore Way Long Distance Footpath which runs along the coast and then turns inland and runs south to Boyden Gate and the Chislet Marshes.

There are some modern discordant features within the landscape including the A229 Thanet Way which runs east-west, a sewage works and telecommunications towers at Hawthorn Corner. The London to Ramsgate railway also runs east-west through the LCA however it is lined by trees, largely screening it from the wider landscape.

Perceptual Influences

The falling topography in the east affords open views across the Chislet Marshes towards the Isle of Thanet, with the distinctive Reculver Towers in the foreground. There are also occasional views out to sea, with the offshore windfarms prominent.

Views to the west are largely contained by topography, although the settlement edges of Broomfield and Beltinge can be seen from the PRoW network.

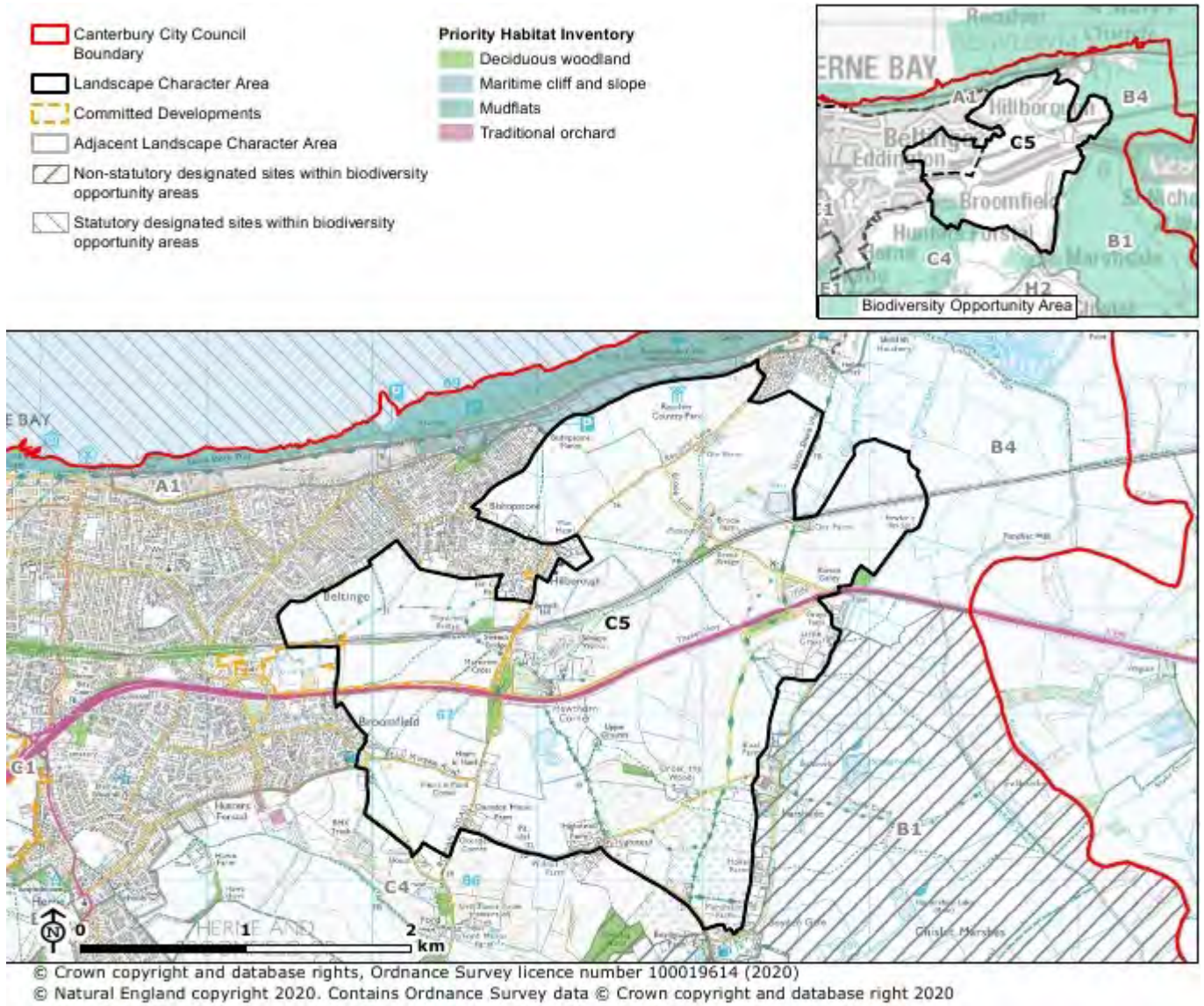
The A229 is a discordant feature which cuts through the LCA and is audibly intrusive, especially around the Hawthorn Corner junction, where the overbridge rises out of the otherwise uniform topography.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- An undulating rural agricultural landscape providing contrast to surrounding coastline and marshes. A strong sense of openness with long views.
- Ecologically important small blocks of priority habitat deciduous woodland provide interest and enclosure.
- Pockets of commercial orchards provide contrast and points of interest.
- Traditional buildings with strong local vernacular including several Grade II listed farmhouses and Scheduled Monument.
- The Conservation Areas reflect the historic importance of the farming communities.
- Recreational value associated with the extensive PRoW network.
- Extensive views to the east across the Chislet Marshes contrast with limited views across the rolling farmland.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To protect, restore and create woodland and wetland habitat, as part of the wider woodland, wetland and coastal habitat network of the Blean and Lower Stour Wetlands BOA.

Small areas of this LCA lie within the Blean BOA in the south and the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA in the east. The targets associated with these BOAs should be considered in relation to the adjacent Thanet Coast SSSI (which is part of the Reculver Country Park), Thanet Coast & Sandwich Bay SPA and Ramsar and Bishopstone Cliffs LNR in the north, and Chislet Marshes, Sarre Penn and Preston Marshes LWS in the east, which offer important strategic habitat within the district.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA included arable and horticulture, improved grassland, open standing water and canals and built up areas. Habitats of key importance within the LCA included deciduous woodland, which is listed as a priority habitat.

Given the extent of the strategic habitat network and proposals to include development in the north-west of the LCA, there are limited habitat opportunities within this LCA. Key habitat opportunities are detailed below.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

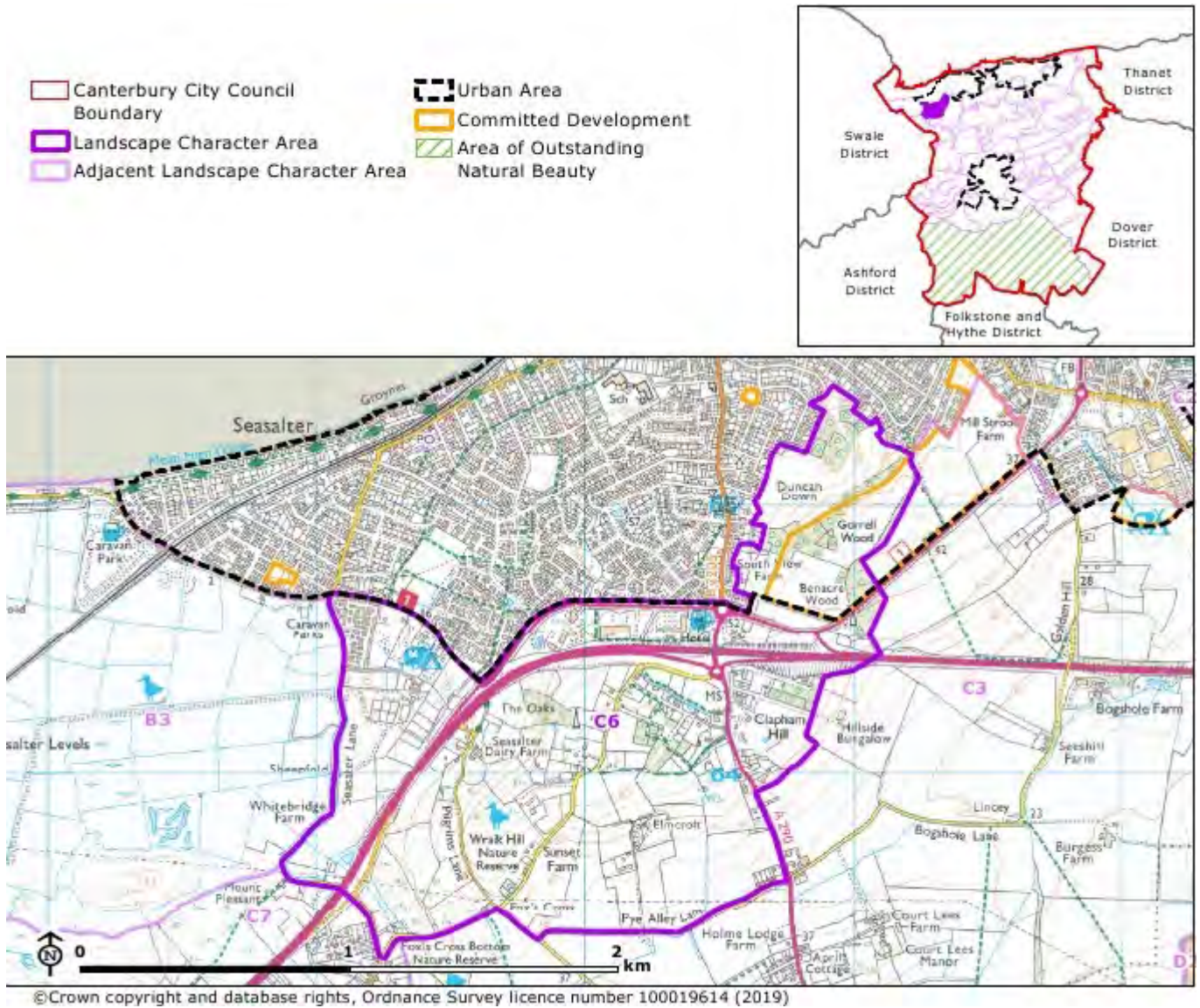
Landscape Management

- Protect and enhance existing priority habitats, including strengthening habitat connectivity between habitat within the BOA and in the wider area by restoring hedgerows and woodland corridors.
- Restore and create acid grassland and heath in the south-west near Broomfield.
- Enhance and upgrade improved grassland to good quality semi-improved grassland, bringing it up to priority habitat quality.
- Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA for habitat creation of neutral grassland, wet woodland, wetland and grazing marsh around the reservoir near Brook Farm in the east and creation of acid grassland and heath and neutral grassland habitat in the south-west near Broomfield.
- Manage and enhance the wildlife interest of agricultural fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins and other wildlife-friendly farming methods enhancing the value of the area in relation to the coastal habitats.
- Conserve and improve the traditional landscape pattern and structure through the establishment and maintenance of hedgerows.
- Enhance and augment fragmented field boundary hedgerows with native species, replacing post and wire fencing and horse tape where possible.
- Promote enhanced management of horse paddocks, ensuring they are sympathetically integrated into the landscape, and that any stables or manèges are carefully sited.

Development Management

- Conserve the local distinctiveness and strong vernacular of historic buildings and their rural setting, particularly within and the setting of the Broomfield; Highstead; Under the Wood; and Marshside Conservation Areas.
- Conserve and respect the character of historic built form and their association with traditional farming practices by resisting further agricultural intensification.
- Encourage the sympathetic conversion of traditional barns and oast houses, to retain their rural character.
- Encourage the use of traditional/in keeping materials, such as flint, Kent peg tiles and timber frames.
- Monitor any large scale, tall or bulky developments and their impact on longer views from the marshes and the coast. Tree screening, muted colours, varied rooflines, cladding and non-reflective surfaces will help provide mitigation and integration.
- Assess new building proposals within adjacent suburban areas of Broomfield, Beltinge and Hillborough, to ensure that an attractive and integrated edge is formed with the adjacent rural and open recreational landscapes. This is important for existing edges as well as proposed new strategic allocation at Hillborough. Consider native wooded boundaries and mature trees (oak and ash) to provide visual screening and reduce the impact of built development.
- Monitor development along the transport corridors. These are currently reasonably integrated, but large developments alongside would be very visible in this open landscape. Seek to manage an attractive landscape setting along the corridors avoiding creation of unused land and paddocks.
- Any proposals for highway upgrading should retain the rural character of the roads.
- Encourage the highway authority to minimise the impact of lighting on the A229 Thanet Way by installing less light polluting columns, in line with best practice.
- Protect the valued recreational usage of the landscape. Seek opportunities to maintain, further enhance and create new PRoW and opportunities for access and enjoyment, concentrating on connections into adjacent existing and new urban areas.

C6: Wraik Hill



Location and Summary

Wraik Hill, including Clapham Hill and Duncan Down, is an extension of the London Clay ridge of The Blean, forming an elevated area rising above the Seasalter Coastal Marshes to the north east. To the north, the area adjoins the settlement edge of Whitstable with the open space and woodlands of Duncan Down extending into the urban area. To the south the area joins the more traditional open farmed landscape of Court Lees and Millstrood Farmlands contained by the wooded ridge and backdrop of The Blean, with the boundary along Pye Alley Lane.

Representative Photographs



Grazed pasture on the southern slopes with the wooded backdrop of The Blean



Informal horse and pony paddocks within a wooded framework



Panoramic views to the north and west across the marshes, coast, the Swale and Thames Estuary



Areas of unimproved pasture and scrub



Neutral/semi improved grassland and scrub at Wraik Hill



View from Duncan Down over Whitstable and the estuary

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Outlying hill of the Blean ridge on London Clay hill capped with Head Gravel.
- Poorly drained heavy soils supporting a mosaic of pasture including neutral grassland and fragmented blocks of woodland and scrub.
- Scattered dwellings along roads and unmade tracks of mostly recent (20th century) origin, either secluded in woodland or sited to take advantage of views.
- Pasture contained by hedgerows on lower, less steep slopes, plus numerous small plots for horse grazing often within a wooded framework.
- Woodland and scrub areas traditionally unfenced although housing and horse grazing have introduced a mixture of fencing styles.
- Key designations are Wraik Hill and Foxes Cross LNR and LWS, valued for their rough semi improved pasture, neutral grassland, scrub, woodland habitats.
- Duncan Down registered as a Village Green provides an important natural recreational space for Whitstable. A connected informal footpath network extends across Wraik Hill.
- Extensive views particularly to the north and west over Seasalter Marshes to the coast, Swale and Thames Estuaries, as well as to the south across to the wooded backdrop of The Blean.
- Potential site of Iron Age settlement in this strategic hilltop location, with associated archaeological interest.
- An informal secluded rural quality persists, although the Thanet Way in cutting is an audible influence over much of the area.

Natural Influences

Wraik Hill, including Clapham Hill and Duncan Down, is an extension of the London Clay ridge of The Blean. In common with many of the hilltops of the Blean ridge it is capped with Head Gravel and shares the characteristic poorly drained heavy soils. Its elevated position is emphasised by the low lying Seasalter Levels to the north west and there are extensive views over the marshes and Whitstable town to the coast.

This LCA contains two LWS. To the south, Seasalter Dairy Farm LWS (which includes Wraik Hill and Foxes Cross LNR) comprises rough semi-improved pasture, neutral grassland and wet meadow, plus thorn scrub and small woodlands of oak and ash. The scrub is managed as habitat for nightingales. Duncan Down LWS, to the north of the area, is a mix of rough grassland, scrub woodland, a stream and marshy grassland. It is registered as a Village Green.

Elsewhere there are significant areas of undesignated priority habitat deciduous woodland and scrub. There are areas of regenerating scrub over many of the lower pastures, and in places the woodland trees remain but the understorey has been cleared or grazed creating a fragmented, mixed landscape pattern. The hill is for the most part not

commercially farmed and contains a mosaic of fragmented oak and ash woodland, hawthorn scrub and pasture. Hedgerows of hawthorn, field maple and blackthorn enclose areas of pasture and scrub on the lower, less steep slopes. Smaller plots are used for horse grazing and there are larger areas of more productive pasture to the south where the gradient is shallower.

Cultural Influences

Archaeological investigations have shown that a substantial Iron Age settlement occupied the London Clay promontory which supported numerous smaller agricultural communities within a well-populated coastal area. Settlement persisted into the early Roman period leading to the subsequent growth of Canterbury City as the Roman cantonal capital of Kent. The absence of later Roman activity suggests either rapid abandonment or a shift to the northwest. The name Wraik dates from the 14th century meaning 'path' or 'track'.

The HLC records the area as a mix of scattered settlement with paddocks and fields with irregular straight boundaries.

Today, housing is scattered throughout the area and is generally recent in origin, often taking advantage of the extensive views towards the coast to the north and the

countryside to the south, as well as along secluded tracks within areas of woodland. Narrow winding lanes run around the perimeter whilst the main A290 route between Whitstable and Canterbury City crosses the ridge. The A299 Thanet Way cuts through the hill on its northern side with a dominant audible influence. To the north a large-scale business park and retail development has been sandwiched between the Old and New Thanet Way and this area is now essentially part of the urban area.

Perceptual Influences

Wraik Hill is a fragmented landscape with a number of detracting features. These include some major elements such as the A299 cutting, pylons and overhead cables. In addition, there is the cumulative effect of pony paddocks with a variety of fencing types and sheds, often dilapidated. Unsympathetic or poorly sited housing, typically with suburban details and

enclosures, sit uncomfortably in woodland landscape. The two narrow lanes that cross the area are busy. Unlike other areas characteristic of The Blean there is no distinct division between woodland and pasture. The various stages of woodland clearance and scrub regeneration creates a mosaic landscape, although this has biodiversity benefits where carefully managed. Despite the various detractors, the area retains an unusual, secluded rural quality which contrasts with the expansive views out from the edges over the Swale and Thames Estuaries and across to The Blean.

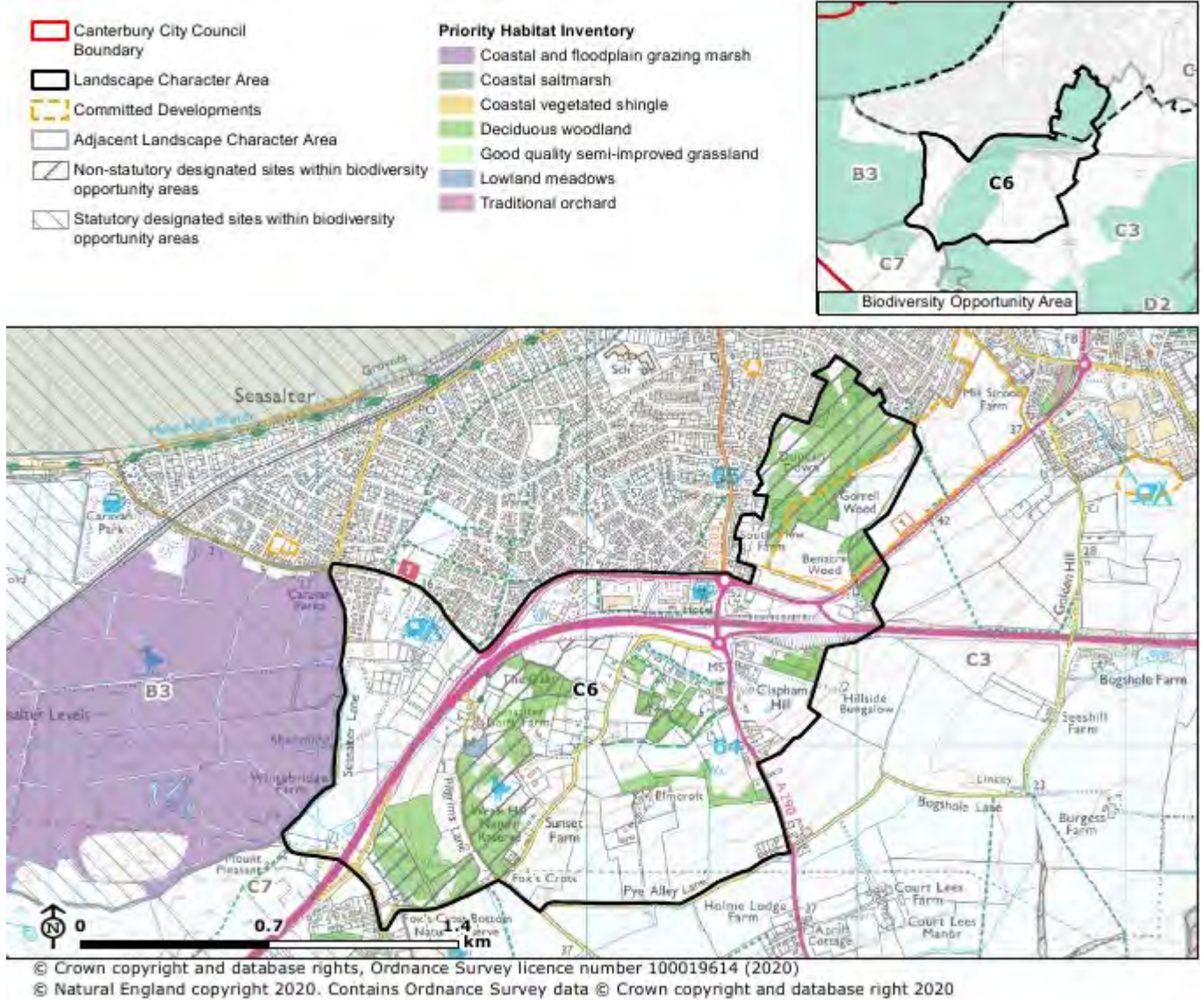
Duncan Down (Village Green status) provides open access to a mix of common land, woodland, wetland linked to the Gorrell stream - it is an important recreational resource for Whitstable. Wraik Hill in comparison has a connected informal footpath network.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- The dominant landform is a strong feature, and with the filtered tree cover creates a highly visible landscape which is sensitive to change development in views.
- The north west face where the hill rises above the Seasalter Levels, the visibility is very high and more sensitive requiring care in the siting and design of buildings on this edge.
- Extensive panoramic views out to the marshes, coast and estuary and south to the Blean.
- The informal secluded settlement pattern along narrow lanes and tracks within the wider rural area on Clapham Hill, contained by woodland.
- Areas of biodiversity interest notably the semi natural acidic grassland and deciduous woodland (LNR/LWS).
- Importance of Duncan Down and Gorrell valley as rural informal recreational resource for Whitstable plus connected informal rights of way network at Wraik Hill.
- Sense of a green corridor – with cycle track and wide grass verges and hedges along the Old Thanet Way (see also C1, C3)
- Archaeological interest associated with potential Iron Age settlement in this strategic hilltop location.
- Secluded rural qualities that persist across the area despite infrastructure and urban influences.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To conserve, restore and enhance acid grassland, neutral grassland and woodland as part of the wider woodland and grassland habitat network of the Blean.

This LCA lies within the Blean BOA which sets out the following key relevant targets:

- No loss of ancient semi-natural woodland and its mosaic of associated habitats.
- Enhance and reconnect woodland to create a very extensive block of habitat, particularly through the maintenance and restoration of coppice management.
- To restore and enhance heath and acid grassland (including grazed wooded heath), as part of the woodland matrix.

- To create and enhance species-rich neutral grassland and to bring it to priority habitat lowland meadow quality.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include improved grassland, arable and horticulture, broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland and built-up areas. Habitats of key importance within the LCA include deciduous woodland, ancient woodland and good quality semi-improved grassland, which are listed as a priority habitat.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

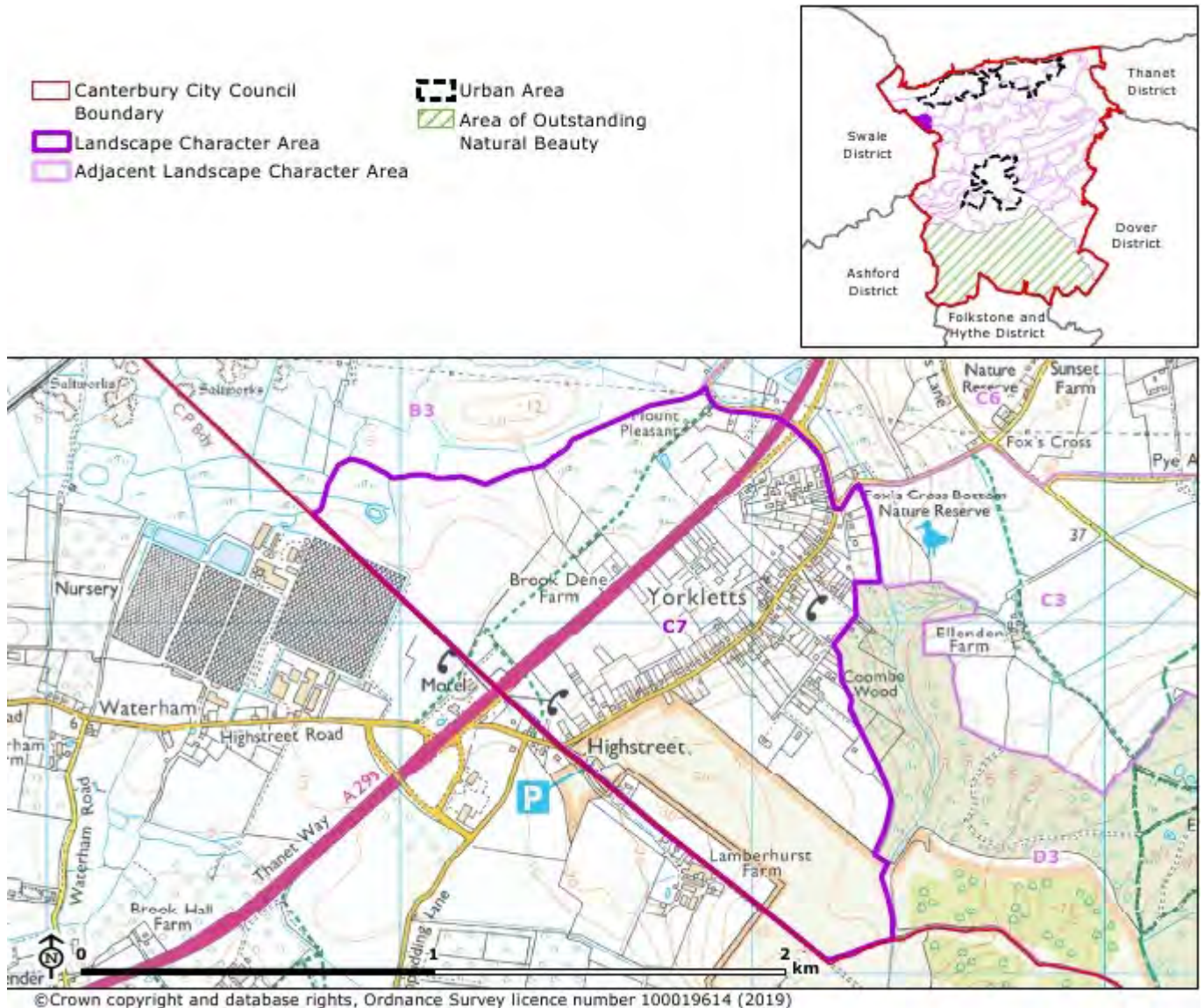
Landscape Management

- Manage and enhance neutral grassland habitats for biodiversity around Seasalter Dairy Farm LWS and Duncan Down, and other areas of paddocks/pasture, including the restoration and enhancement of the species-rich grassland network in line with the Wraik Hill and Foxes Cross LNR Management Plan.
- Extend grazing marsh habitat on the edge of Seasalter Marshes to enhance the network and buffer the Swale SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site. Manage the interface with the marsh setting along Seasalter Lane/Church Lane.
- Restore and manage existing semi natural woodland and create linkages to larger woodland blocks including Ellenden Wood part of The Blean, maintaining a balance of woodland scrub and grassland habitats.
- Woodland creation and management to enhance and reconnect areas of semi-natural woodland and to form an extensive block of habitat adjacent to the urban area.
- On the lower lying area to the north of the A299 Thanet Way adjoining Seasalter Levels consider opportunities for habitat creation to create a wetland marshland character along Seasalter Lane to help integrate developments and create an appropriate buffer to the marshes.
- Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA including the creation of heath, acid and neutral grassland, and acid and woodland.
- Restore the hedgerow network to recreate traditional enclosure pattern.

Development Management

- Maintain the secluded rural character by resisting proposals for new development within the wider area at Clapham Hill/Wraik Hill. Use woodland to frame existing buildings, soften hard edges and provide an appropriate setting to properties. Avoid loss of woodland and mature trees associated with any (re)development.
- Continue to manage Duncan Down to continue to provide a recreational resource of rural character of amenity grass, woodland and wetland. Maintain existing informal recreational access and connections into the adjacent existing and new urban areas by providing green corridors for people and wildlife through new development (Millstrood Farm), including linking existing residential areas to community facilities.
- Assess new development proposals extending from the urban area to ensure that an attractive and integrated edge is formed with the adjacent rural and open recreational landscapes. This is important for existing edges as well as proposed new strategic allocations north of the Thanet Way at Millstrood Farm. Use the existing landscape as a template to include hawthorn/blackthorn hedges with oak and ash standards, and areas of woodland scup and copse planting.
- Manage the interface with the marshes along Seasalter Lane/Church Lane, ensuring the existing low-key recreation development here does not impinge on the marshes, using appropriate planting (including willows and reeds) to screen and integrate.
- Monitor large scale, tall or bulky developments (retail/business parks) on the northern slopes of Wraik Hill and consider impact on longer views from the marshes and the coast. Tree screening, muted colours, varied rooflines, cladding and non-reflective surfaces will help provide mitigation and integration.
- Review the urban boundary with this character area to take into account recent business park/retail development between the old and new Thanet Way (A299).
- Conserve and enhance the rights of way network, including better way marking to provide connected routes linking to the urban areas.
- Maintain the sense of a green corridor along the old Thanet Way with wide grass verges, cycle access, and hedge and tree boundaries. Seek to improve biodiversity through appropriate management of verges and tree planting, including areas now encapsulated within development.
- Encourage the highway authority to minimise the impact of lighting on the A229 Thanet Way by installing less light polluting columns, in line with best practice.

C7: Yorkletts Farmlands



Location and Summary

The Yorkletts Farmlands forms a small character area at the western edge of Canterbury District and is similar in character to the adjacent area in Swale. It is distinguished as a separate distinct area on the land rising from the marshes at Seasalter to the north to the woodland of the Blean to the south. It is dominated by the linear village of Yorkletts and the A299, with much of the former arable land on the slopes to the south being restored by the Woodland Trust as part of the Blean woodland complex.

Representative Photographs



Linear settlement of Yorkletts



Paddocks south of Yorkletts and views across the marshes to the Thames Estuary



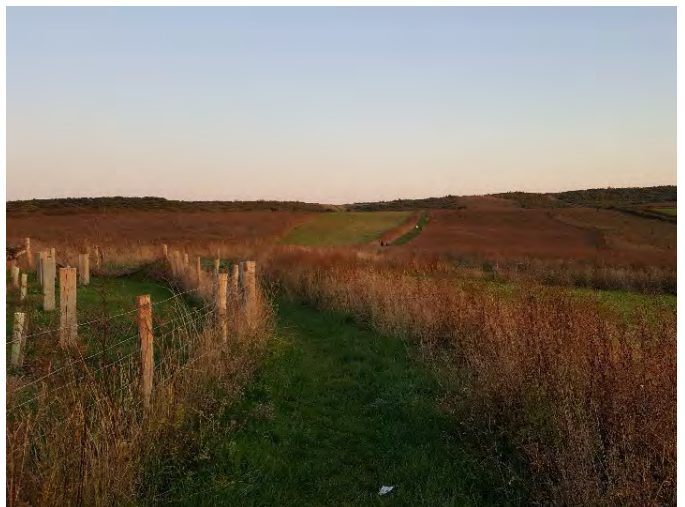
Open grassland slopes with specimen trees as foreground to Victory Wood



Recreational access at Lamberhurst Farm – Woodland Trust site



Long views north from elevated slopes



Backdrop of Ellenden Wood part of The Blean on upper slopes

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- London clay with poorly drained soils forming rising gently inland – an intermediate between the Seasalter Marshes and The Blean.
- Former agricultural land, much of which is now converted as acid grassland/heathland and woodland as part of the Woodland Trust's Victory Woods initiative connecting to The Blean.
- Smaller plots of land to the north support rough pasture and horse paddocks.
- Yorkletts, an informal linear settlement on Dargate Road runs parallel to the Thanet Way (A299).
- Long views from the rising slopes across the marshes, Swale and Thames Estuary – creating sense of elevation and exposure.
- Informal character associated with settlement and paddocks.

Natural influences

The geology of the Yorkletts Farmlands is London Clay overlain with base rich poorly drained heavy clay soils. The land gently rises from the A299 forming the lower slopes of The Blean. There are views across the Seasalter Levels and the Thames Estuary to the north, whilst views to the south and east are contained by the Blean ridge and Ellenden Woods.

There is currently relatively limited habitat interest and mature woodland within the area, although Ellenden Woods (SSSI) are immediately adjacent and influence the character and setting of the landscape.

The agricultural land is classified as Grade 3. Extensive tree planting has been undertaken on the higher land at Lamberhurst Farm, owned by the Woodland Trust, linking Ellenden Wood to the east with Blean Wood to the south creating greater woodland connectivity (see LCA D3). The lower slopes, within this area, formerly arable fields are now managed as open acid/heathy grassland with occasional mature specimen tree planting in a formation to represent Nelson's victory at Trafalgar, which can be viewed from the upper slopes. Smaller plots around Yorkletts and the A299 contain rough pastures and horse paddocks.

Cultural Influences

This area was cleared of woodland for agriculture and the HLC identifies the area as having medium regular fields with straight enclosures of Parliamentary origin. The habitat restoration by the Woodland Trust will restore a more historic land cover pattern and character.

Yorkletts is a linear settlement along the Dargate Road running parallel to the Thanet Way. It has a mixture of building styles and associated enclosures that give it the appearance of being unplanned. The area immediately around the village contributes to this haphazard character with a series of paddocks and small holdings.

Perceptual Influences

The elevated landform offers extensive views north, out over the lower lying marshes to the Swale, Sheppey and the Thames Estuary seascape. The area also forms a backdrop to these views from lower lying land and from the A299. To the south the area will become more enclosed as new planting matures.

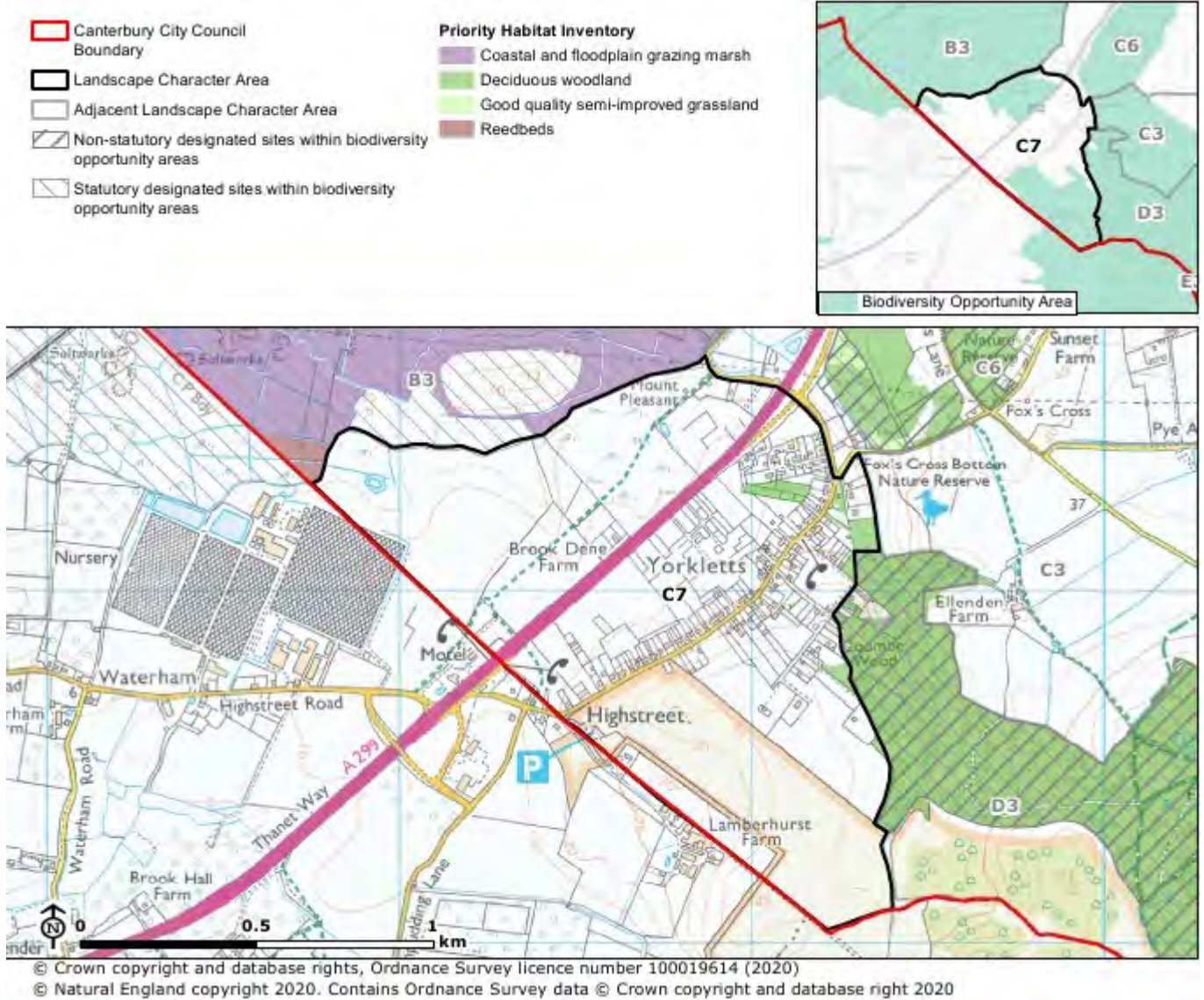
The A299 dominates the north of the area both visually and aurally and small pasture plots between the A299 and the rear of the houses are cluttered by a variety of sheds, stables and fences, many in a dilapidated condition. Overall, much of the area has an appearance of an unplanned informal character.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- The informal settlement character of Yorkletts which would be changed by overdevelopment and infilling.
- The restored connected grassland, heathland and woodland habitats at the Woodland Trust's Victory Woods site, planted in 2008 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Britain's victory at the battle of Trafalgar.
- Long views to the north across the marshes and Thames Estuary and role of this area as the backdrop in views from lower lying land and the A299.
- Open access recreational opportunities established by the Woodland Trust proving connecting routes into The Blean.
- Openness, sense of elevation, long views and exposure.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To conserve, restore and enhance wetland, woodland and grassland habitat within and bordering the LCA which form part of the wetland habitats of the North Kent Marshes and the woodland and grassland habitats in the Blean BOA.

Parts of this LCA lie within the North Kent Marshes and the Blean BOAs, which set out the following key relevant targets:

North Kent Marshes BOA:

- Deliver more, bigger, better and connected habitats as part of a functioning ecological network which supports more resilient and diverse populations of important wildlife.

- Restore grazing marsh on improved grassland in order to extend and connect existing habitats.
- Maintain and enhance important ecological features within new development and create ecological networks within the built environment.
- Implement a sustainable access strategy, including the creation of alternative natural greenspace, to mitigate recreational impacts including monitoring the impact of new development and coastal access.

The Blean BOA:

- No loss of ancient semi-natural woodland and its mosaic of associated habitats.
- Enhance and reconnect woodland to create a very extensive block of habitat, particularly through the maintenance and restoration of coppice management.
- Restore and enhance heath and acid grassland (including grazed wooded heath) as part of the woodland matrix.

- Create species-rich neutral grassland and bring it to priority habitat lowland meadow quality.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include improved and neutral grassland, built-up areas and small areas of broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland. Habitats of key importance within the LCA included priority habitat deciduous woodland.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

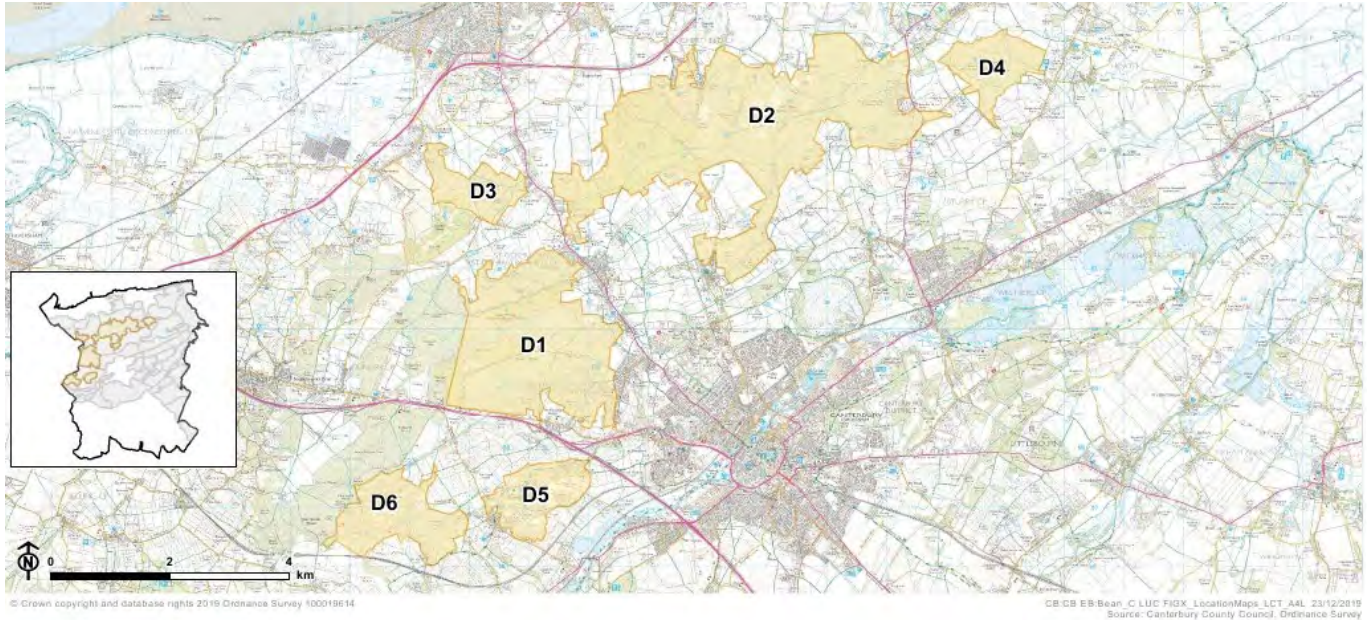
Landscape Management

- Continue existing management by Woodland Trust to create connecting woodland habitats on this former agricultural land, balancing management for landscape, wildlife and recreation,
- Enhance grassland to species-rich neutral/acid grassland of priority habitat lowland meadow quality. There are particular opportunities to buffer the grazing marsh habitats of Seasalter Marshes by creating species-rich grassland to the north of the A299.
- Seek to manage small holdings, paddock and horse pastures by encouraging hedgerow management and restoration.

Development Management

- Investigate ways to reduce the visual dominance of the A299 on Yorkletts, while maintaining open views to the marshes and Swale/Thames Estuary and consider opportunities to contain the northern edge of the village.
- Encourage the highway authority to minimise the impact of A299 lighting/noise on the adjacent marshes.
- Maintain the informal, linear low-key character of Yorkletts avoiding intensification, infilling and development of taller buildings which would interrupt views.
- Avoid inappropriate large-scale agricultural and commercial buildings or other obtrusive elements, particularly to the north and associated with the A299, which would damage views from higher ground over the Seasalter Marshes towards the Thames Estuary.
- Assess any new building proposals to ensure these are integrated with the surrounding landscape with appropriate boundaries and planting.
- Continue to manage Victory Wood for low key informal recreational use, including taking recreational pressures of adjacent established and more sensitive habitats.

LCT D: The Blean – Woodlands



Description

This LCT is distinguished by a ridge of higher ground underlain by London Clay, with gentle valleys running east-west. The area is covered by extensive ancient woodland, part of the largest contiguous areas of ancient deciduous woodland in southern Britain. The woodland is designated internationally, nationally and locally. There is a comprehensive Public Rights of Way network. Views are generally contained by woodland, with clearings and rides creating openings.

Landscape Character Areas

The Blean - Woodland LCT is subdivided into six LCAs:

- D1: Harbledown
- D2: Thornden
- D3: Ellenden and Victory Woods
- D4: East Blean
- D5: Bigbury Hill
- D6: Denstead Woods

D: The Blean - Woodlands

Key Characteristics of the Landscape Character Type

- Ridge of higher ground of London Clay extending between Canterbury City and the coast.
- Heavy clay seasonally waterlogged soils retain woodland cover.
- Gentle valleys run west- east, with narrow meandering watercourses and small pools of water at low points.
- Extensive, ancient woodland, part of the largest contiguous area of ancient deciduous woodland in southern Britain. Internationally designated as Blean Complex SAC, nationally designated as Church Woods, Blean SSSI, East Blean Woods SSSI, Ellenden Wood SSSI, West Blean & Thornden Woods SSSI and Blean Woods NNR, and locally designated as Blean Woods LWS, Blean Woods South LWS, Clowes Wood and Marley Wood LWS and No Mans Orchard LNR.
- Includes commercial forestry and coniferous plantations mixed with areas of managed sweet chestnut and hornbeam coppice and extensive oak and beech woodland plus smaller areas of acid grassland and heathland in clearings and rides.
- The woods support a good range of woodland birds, including breeding populations scarce in East Kent, such as woodcock, nightjar and nightingale. Woodland clearings with heathland and grassland habitats, support the nationally rare heath fritillary butterfly and brindled white spot moth among other invertebrates.
- A historic Medieval landscape -woods historically used for pannage for pigs and herbage for cattle belonging to Canterbury Cathedral.
- Historic entry points to The Blean marked by place names including Radfallgate, Bleangate, Broomfield Gate.
- Absence of development, with few roads through the woodland mainly limited to north-south routes based on former droveways and saltways linking Canterbury City to the coast.
- Network of formal and informal paths and PRoW, many of which originated as droveways, through the woodland and connecting to the wider landscape provide recreational access for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.
- Views are generally contained by woodland, with some longer views from the woodland edge. Clearings and rides within the woodland create a mosaic of open and enclosed areas.
- Strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity, with absence of development allowing views of dark night skies from more open areas.

Individual characteristics of each LCA are described below.

Representative Photographs



D1: Oak and coppice within Church Wood



D2: Oak woodland and forestry plantations at Thornden Woods



D3: Minor streams cut east west through the woodland



D4: Hicks Forstal Road surrounded by woodland

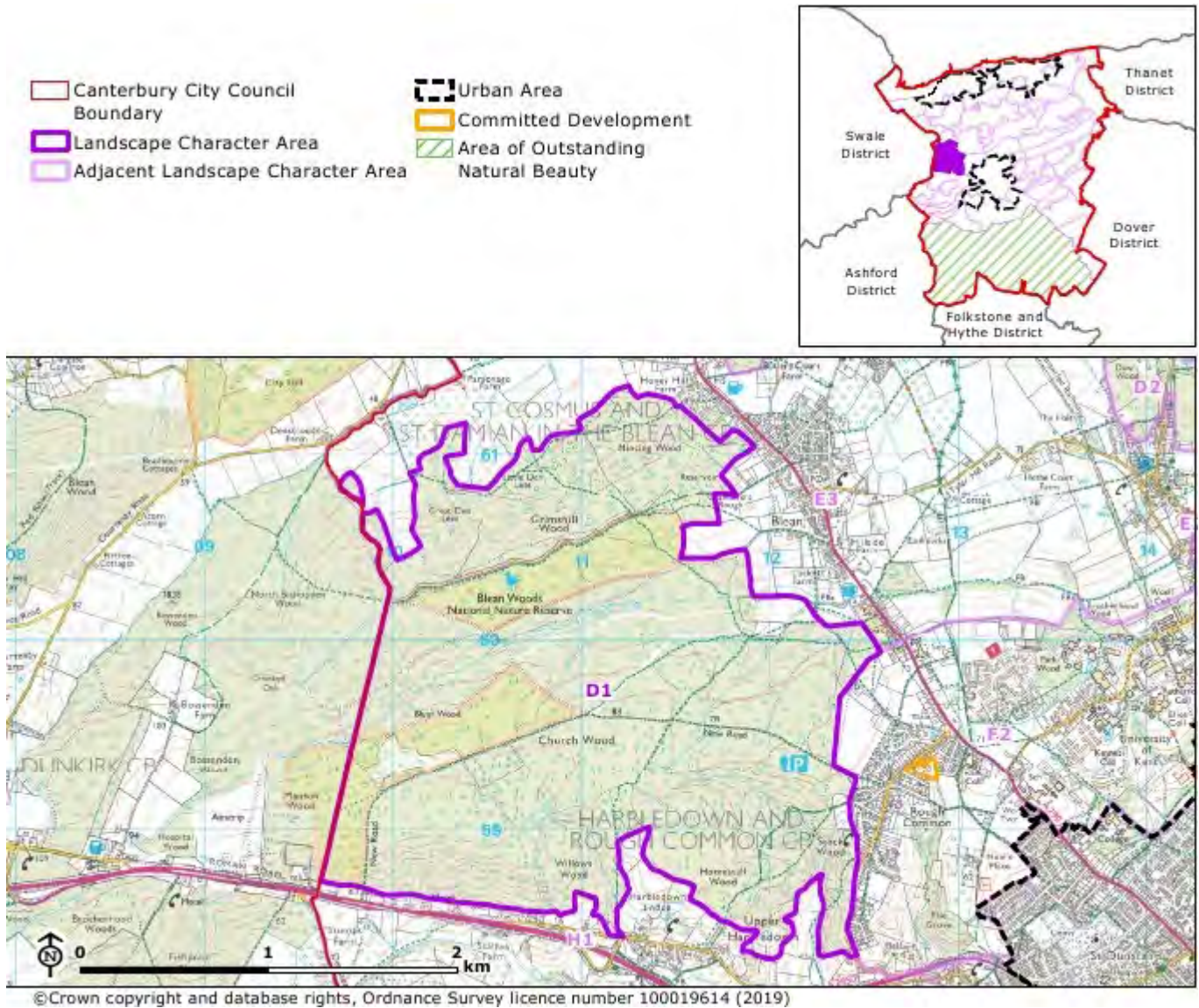


D5: Views of Canterbury Cathedral from Pilgrims Way, Bigbury Hill



D6: Denstead Wood – a distinctive ridgetop woodland surrounded by orchards

D1: Harbledown



Landscape Description

Harbledown LCA defines the parts of The Blean Woods in the western part of the district located north of Harbledown and the A2 corridor. The boundaries are defined by the edge of the woodland blocks. The area includes a number of named woods including Church Wood, Willows Wood, Stock Wood, Grimshill Wood and Mincing Wood, which are contiguous with wider areas of woodland extending into Swale District.

The woodland comprises mainly oak, with hornbeam and chestnut coppice, plus areas of birch scrub and some conifer plantation. Small clearings and rides contain areas of lowland heathland, and semi-improved grassland. North of New Road is designated as part of the Blean Complex SAC and the

Church Woods, Blean SSSI. South of New Road is designated locally as the Blean Woods, Harbledown to Dunkirk LWS.

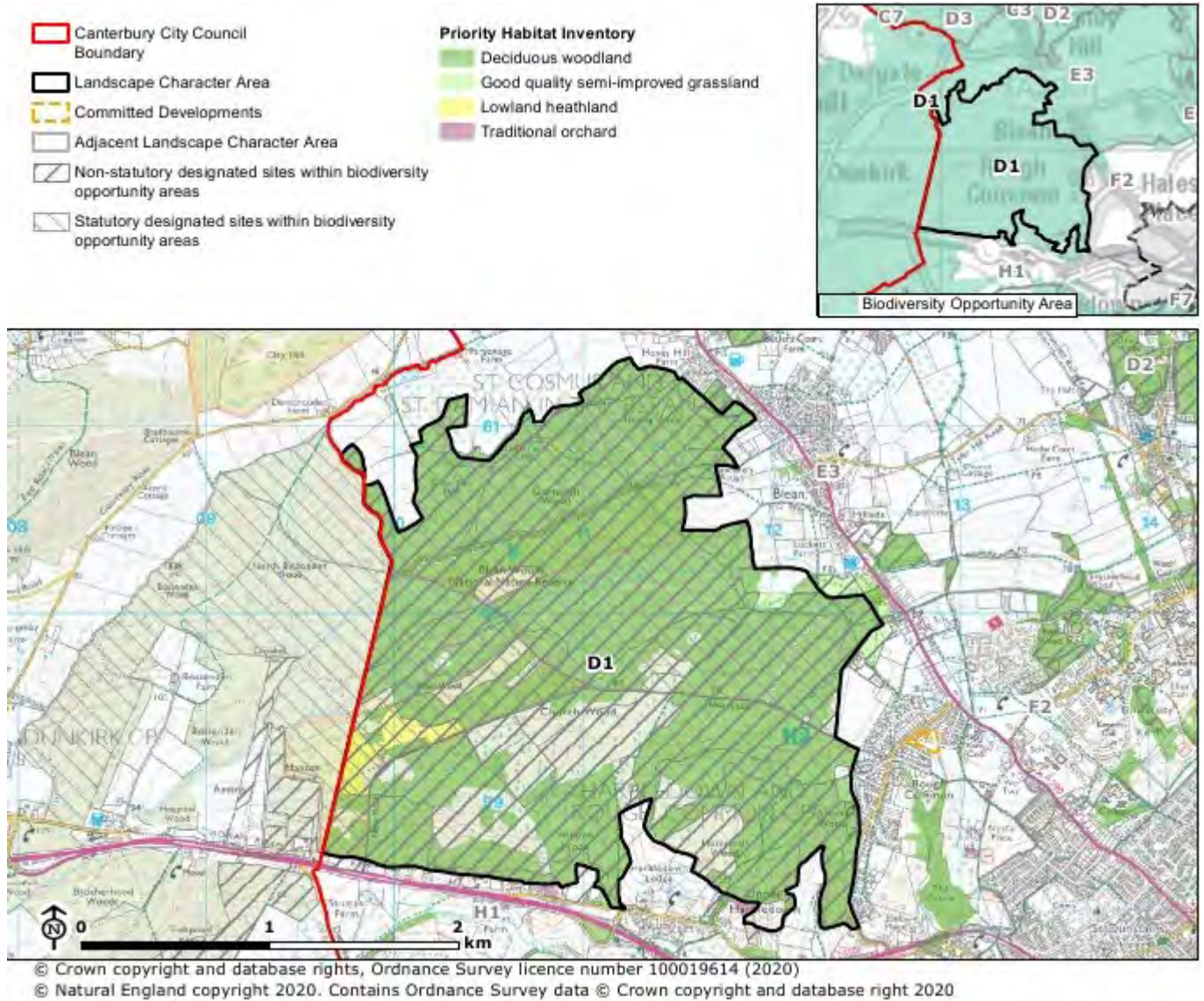
The area is part of the Blean Woods NNR and is an RSPB Bird Reserve, notable for the range of common and rare woodland birds including nightjar, nightingale, woodcock and woodpecker. A small car park at Rough Common provides access to an extensive network of tracks and trails.

A strong sense of remoteness prevails within this extensive area of woodland, with a high level of tranquillity and good experience of dark skies.

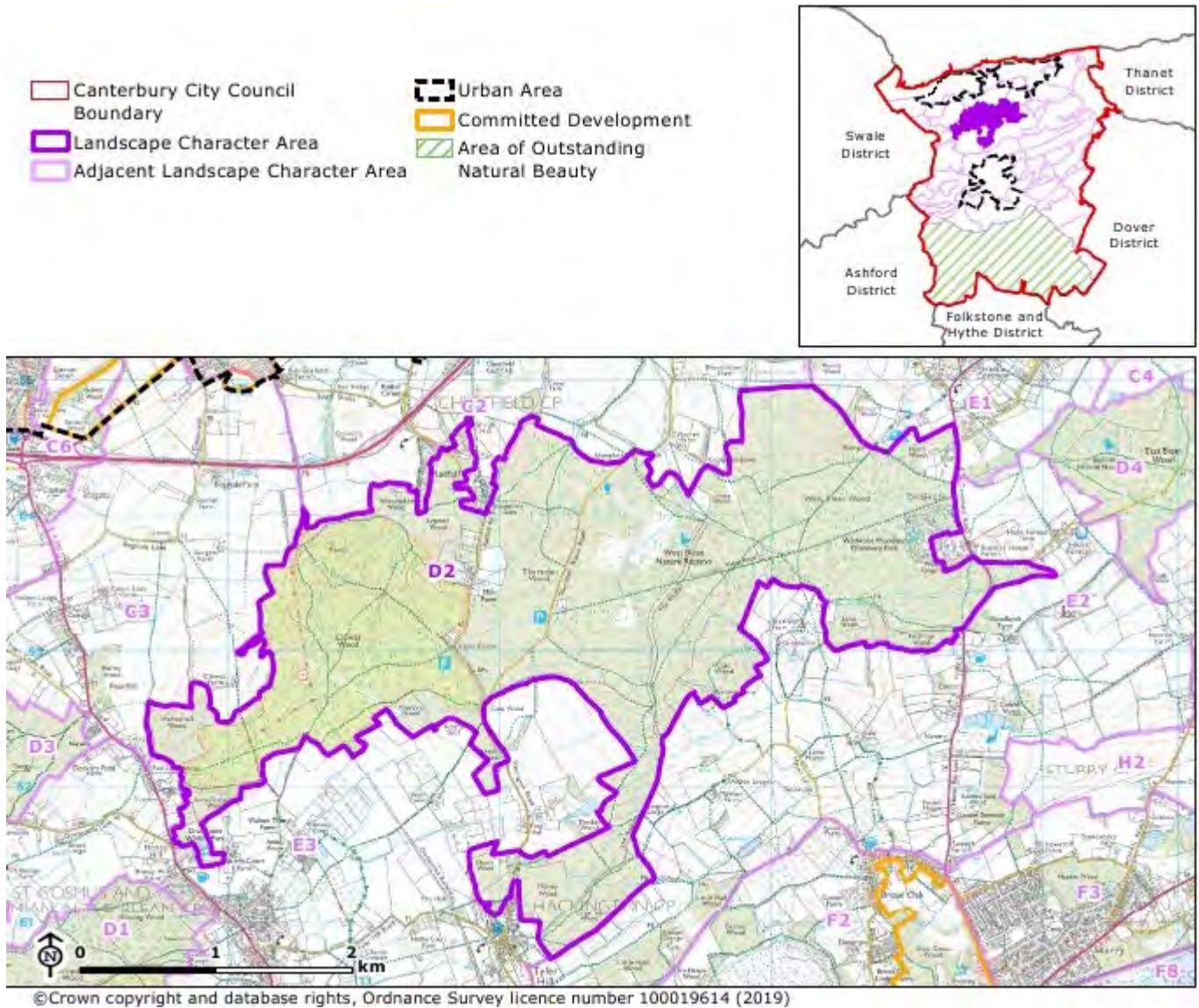
An intact continuous area of woodland with an absence of development or incongruous features. Small areas of pastures

and paddocks adjoin the woodland to the east on the edge of Blean village. The wood provides a setting to the linear development extending along the A290 with frequent views to the wooded edge between houses.

Biodiversity Appraisal



D2: Thornden



Landscape Description

The LCA covers an extensive area of the central Blean area and includes an amalgamation of a number of named woods including Thornden Wood, Clowes Wood, Cripps Wood, Cole Wood, Honey Wood, and West Blean Wood.

The woodland east of Radfall Road is designated as part of the West Blean and Thornden Woods SSSI, and supports an important local population of hazel dormouse. The area to the west of Radfall Road is locally designated as the Clowes Wood and Marley Wood LWS.

Much of the woodland is commercial forestry plantation owned by the Forestry Commission/Forestry England; Thornden

Woods and West Blean are now managed by the Kent Wildlife Trust and are being restored to native woodland cover.

A pair of bowl barrows within Clowes Wood are late-Neolithic to late-Bronze Age funerary monuments, designated as a Scheduled Monument, and provide evidence of early human activity in the area. The linear earthwork 'The Radfall' is part of old droveway used to herd pigs and cattle that were raised in the woodland.

There are pockets of development within this area, including farms and isolated houses along Radfall Road and New Road; the Dogs Trust rehoming centre with kennels and small buildings; and Wildwood Animal Centre plus low-key

commercial development associated with Wealden Forest Park.

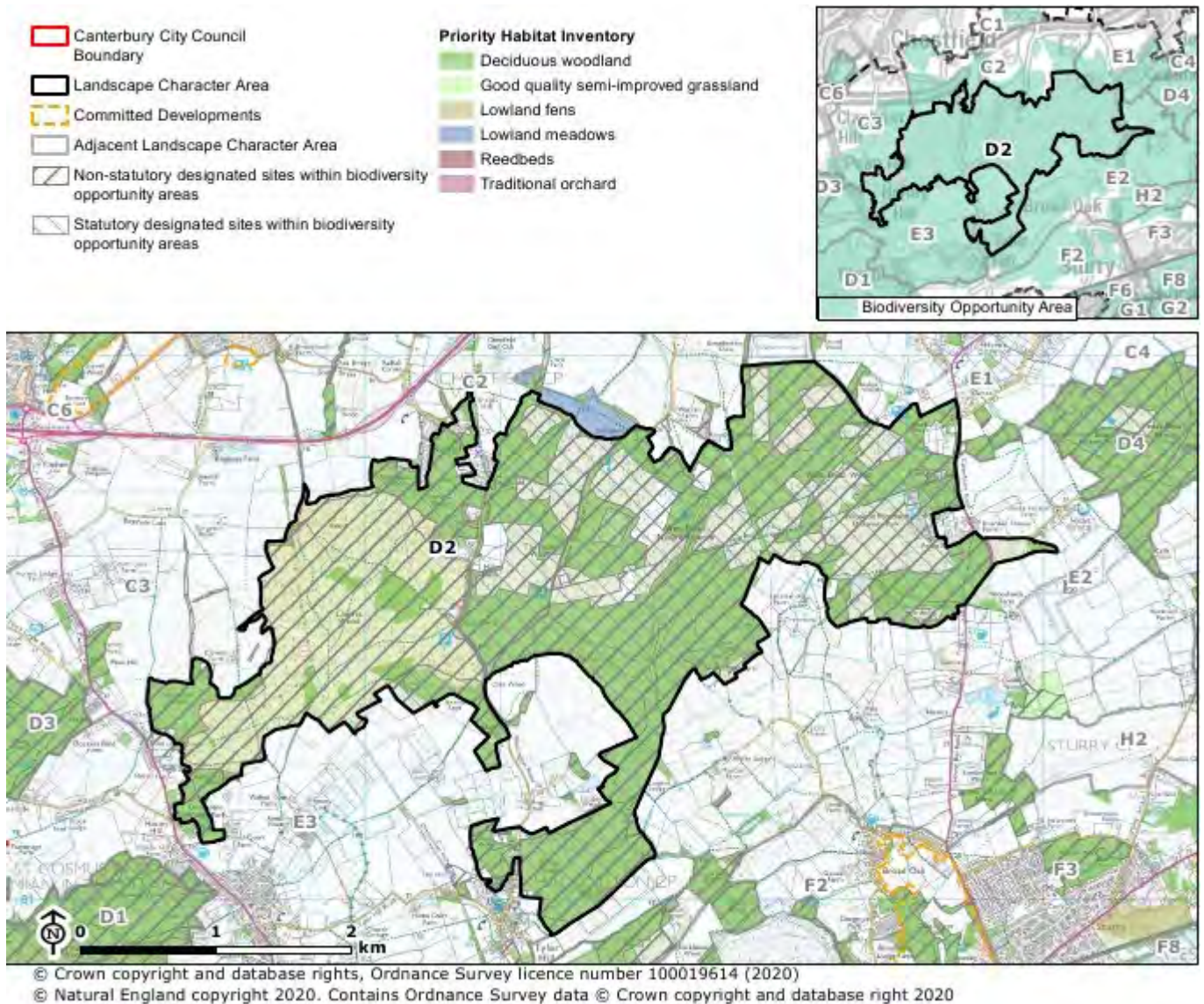
A series of roads (Radfall Road, Thornden Wood Road and A291 Canterbury Road) run north south between Canterbury City and the coast, along former drove routes and providing access into the woodlands. There are two car parks, providing access for people using the extensive tracks and trails within the woods.

Part of the track of the Canterbury and Whitstable Railway, the first passenger steam railway in the world, is now used as the Crab and Winkle Way cycle route and is designated as the

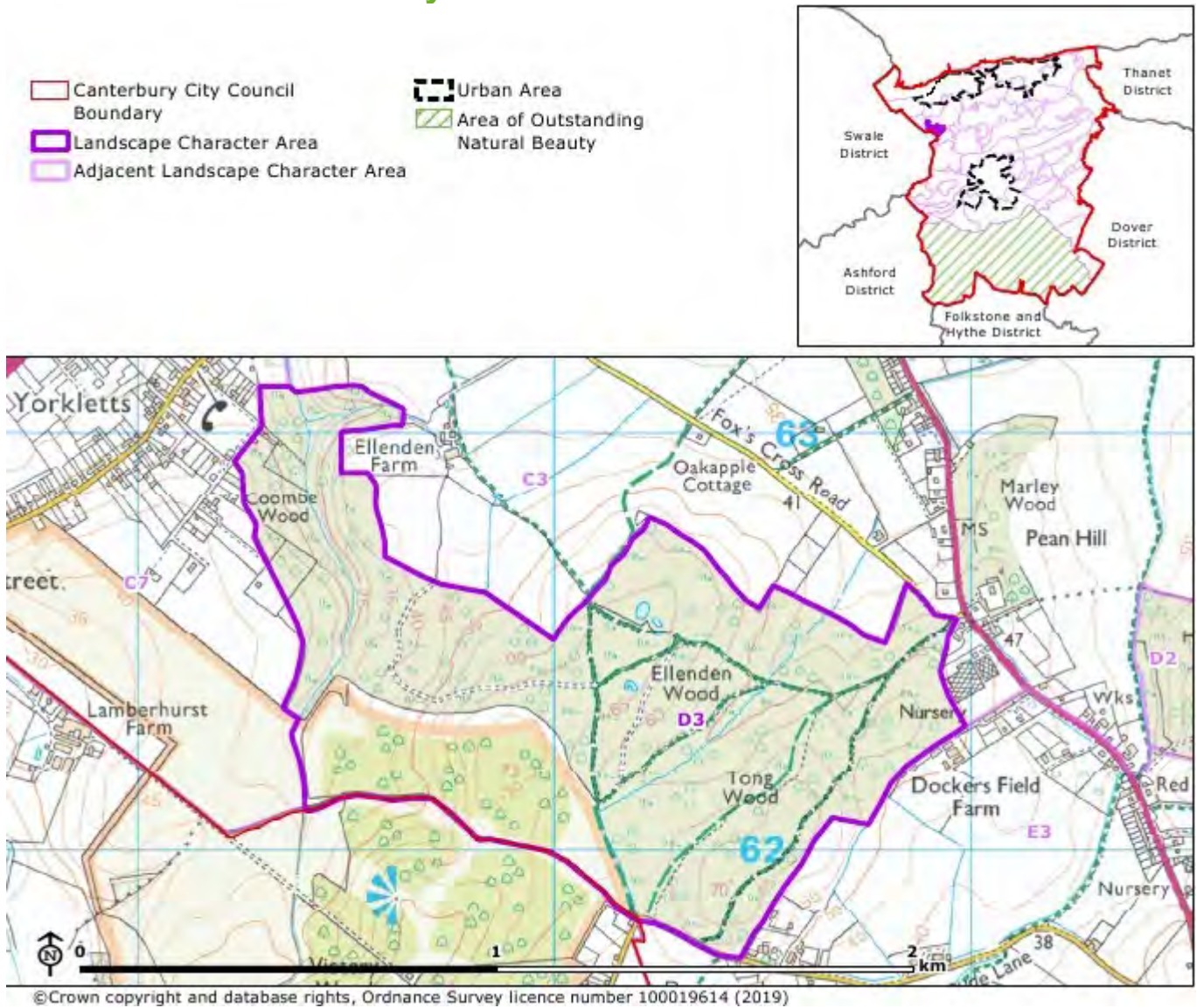
Canterbury and Whitstable Railway: Hackington and Blean Conservation Area.

A pylon line cuts through Clowes Wood and although it is largely well integrated within the woodland, is a detracting feature where it climbs the slopes. Overall, there is a strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity within this area away from the roads and small areas of development. The woods provide a containing wooded setting to the small linear settlement at Tyler Hill and occasional areas of roadside development.

Biodiversity Appraisal



D3: Ellenden and Victory Woods



Landscape Description

Ellenden and Victory Woods LCA is a small area located in the western part of the district, south of Yorkletts. The boundaries are defined by the edge of the woodland and the district boundary in the south-west. The woodland character continues into Swale Borough. It is part of the Blean ridge and cut by minor stream valleys.

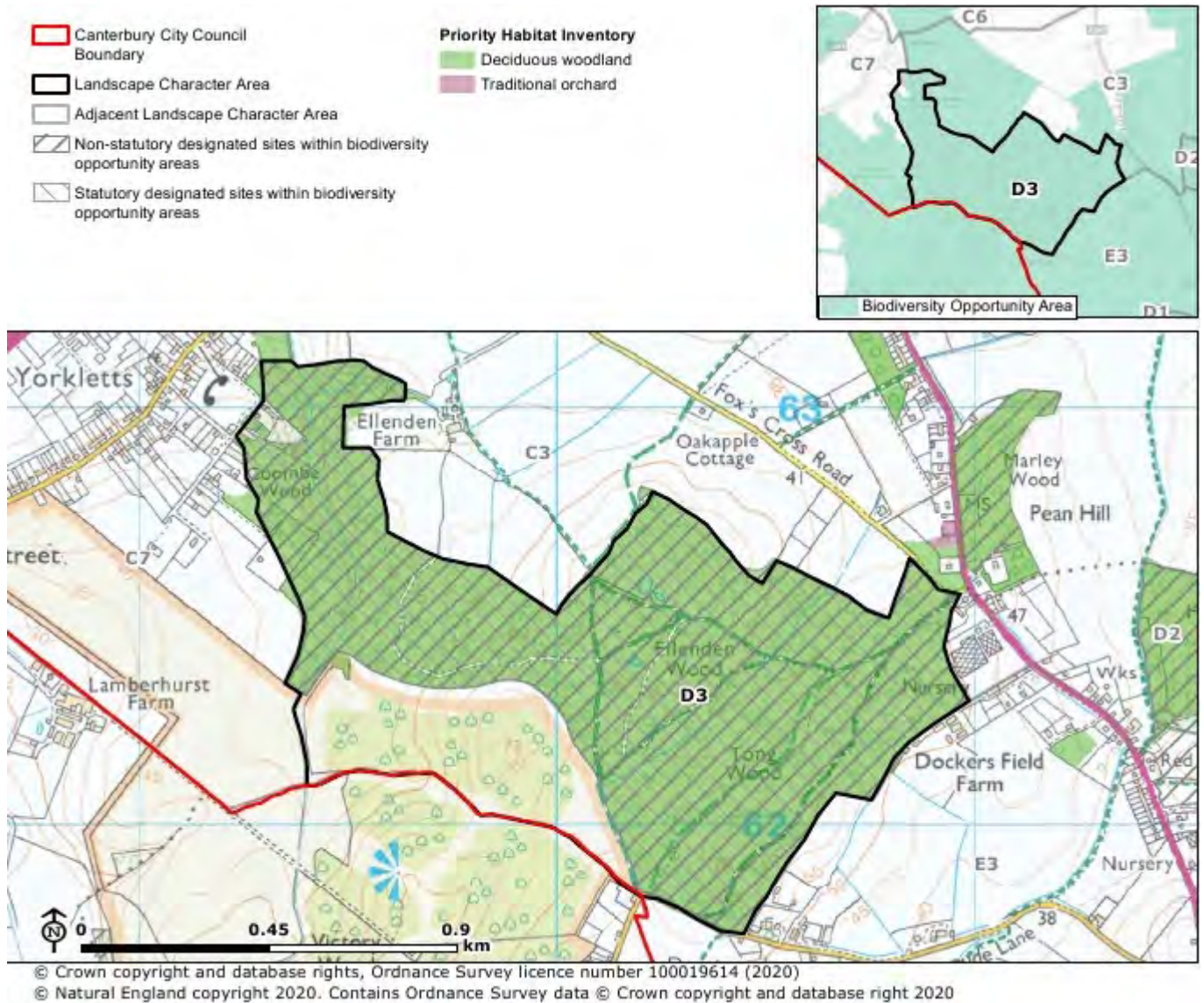
The landscape is an amalgamation of named woods including Coombe Wood, Ellenden Wood and Tong Wood. Clay Hill in the south-west was cleared in the late 20th century for agriculture although it has since been purchased and planted as Victory Wood by the Woodland Trust to recreate and link woodlands across this part of The Blean.

The area, with the exception of Clay Hill, is designated internationally as part of the Blean Complex SAC and nationally as the Ellenden Wood SSSI. Some areas have been promoted to high forest to diversify the woodland structure, particularly on the valley sides. The recently planted Victory Wood aims to bridge the gap between the main Blean complex and Ellenden Wood.

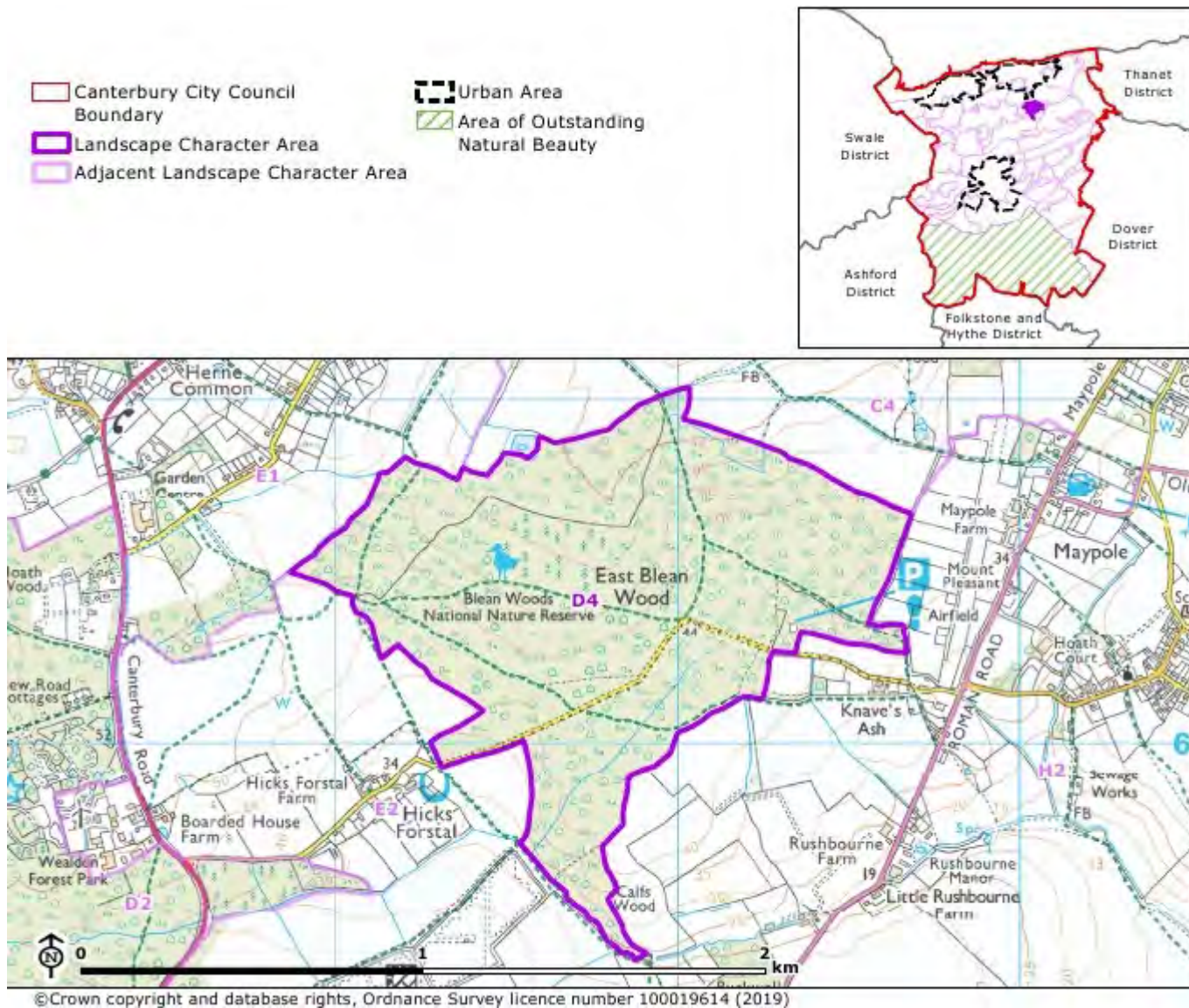
There is no development or roads within the area, although a number of tracks and rights of way provide recreational routes from Pean Hill to the east and link to the open access land at Victory Woods. From the edge of the area there are distinctive views over the Seasalter Levels and out to the Thames

Estuary. There is a sense of remoteness and strong seclusion within this densely wooded, undeveloped area, and a good experience of dark skies.

Biodiversity Appraisal



D4: East Blean



Landscape Description

East Blean LCA is a smaller discrete area of woodland in the north-east of the district, south of Herne and west of Maypole. The boundaries of the LCA are defined by the edge of the woodland. It is owned and managed by the Kent Wildlife Trust.

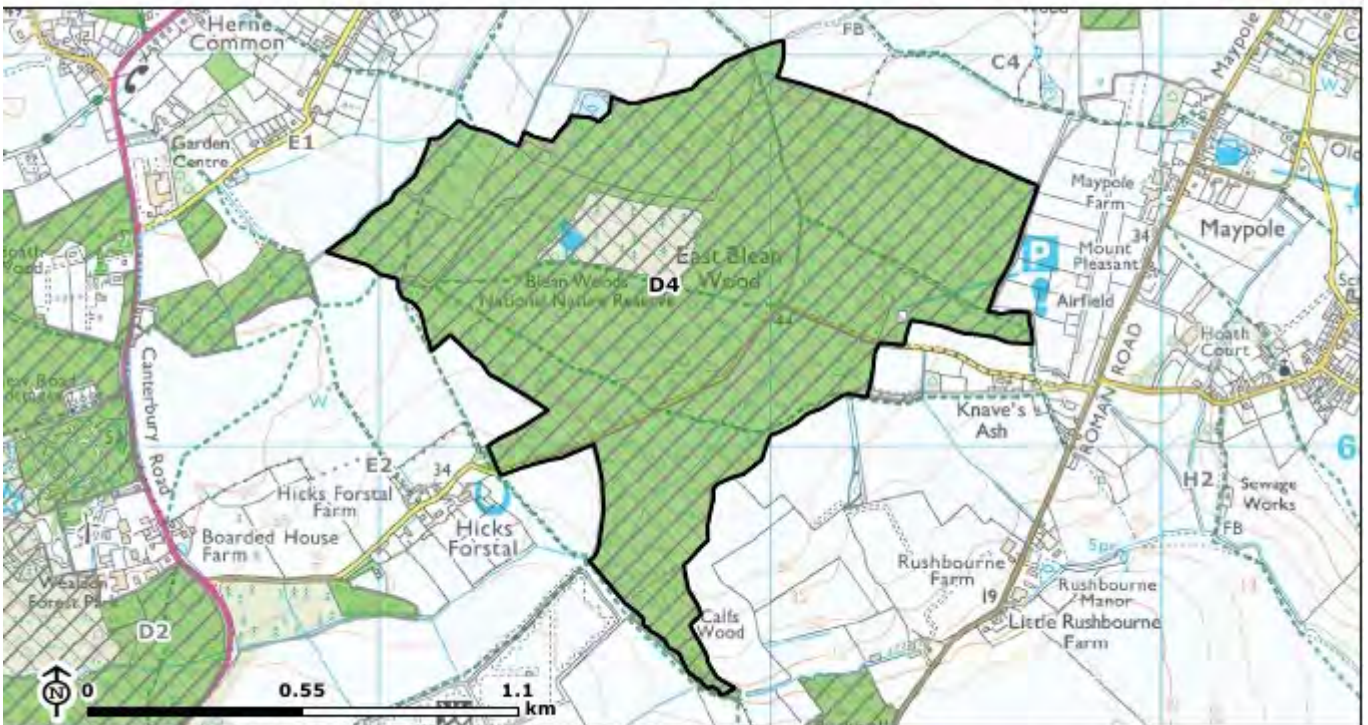
The whole area is designated internationally as part of the Blean Complex SAC, and nationally as the East Blean Woods SSSI. It is part of the Blean Woods NNR. East Blean Wood is one of the best remaining examples of primary deciduous woodland in the Blean Woods complex and comprises mixed coppice with oak standards, sweet chestnut coppice and a small plantation of Scots pine. Woodland management has created small clearings and rides containing heathland/acid

grassland, which is important habitat for the heath fritillary butterfly.

Hicks Forstal Road provides the only access through the area; it is narrow and enclosed by woodland creating a distinctly remote character. There is no development, although a small woodland car park allows for recreational access. Overall, this is an enclosed secluded woodland area with an absence of development/detractors and high levels of tranquillity. There are limited views at the edge of the woodland to the settlements of Maypole and Hicks Forstal.

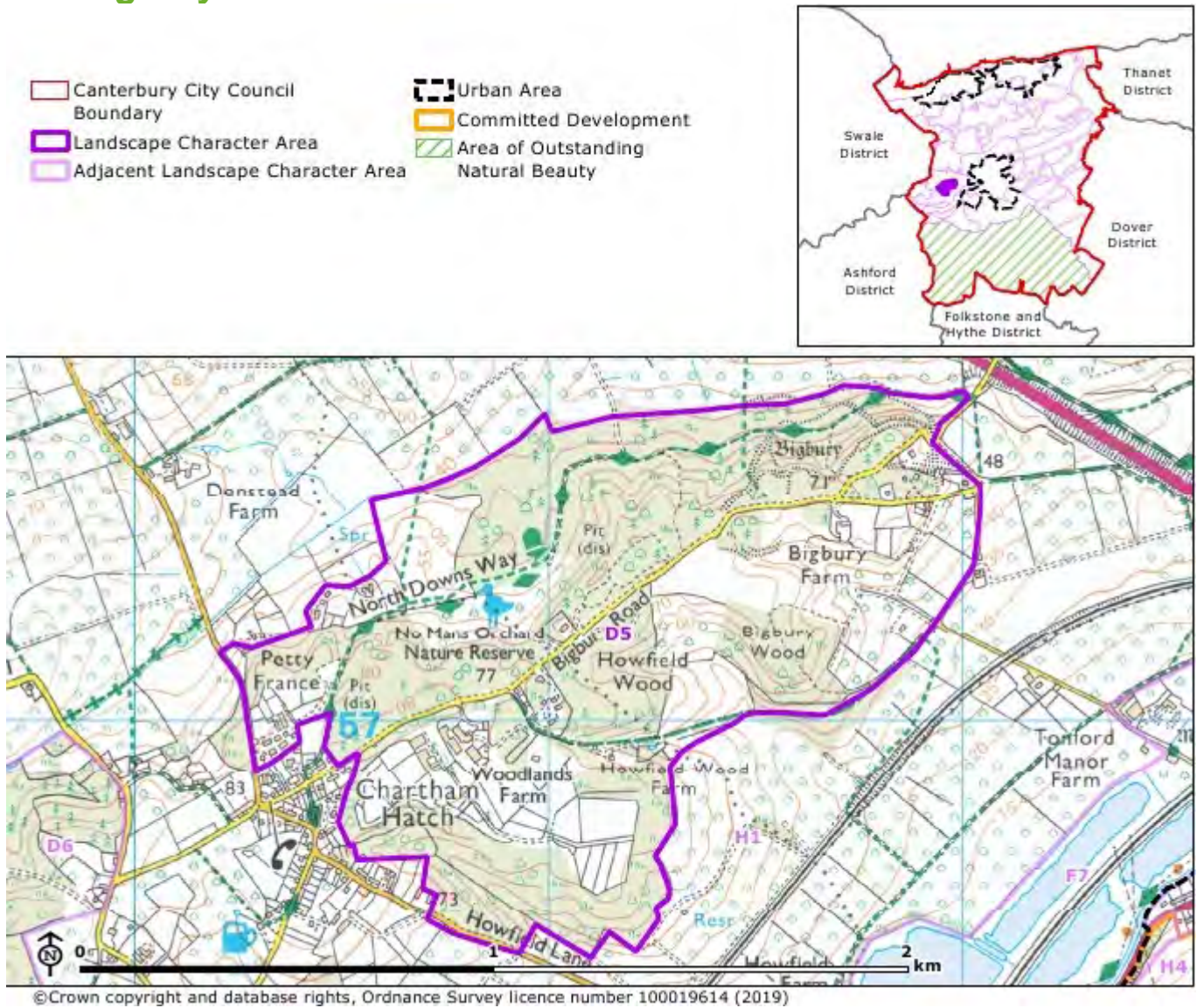
Biodiversity Appraisal

- Canterbury City Council Boundary
 - Landscape Character Area
 - Adjacent Landscape Character Area
 - Non-statutory designated sites within biodiversity opportunity areas
 - Statutory designated sites within biodiversity opportunity areas
-
- Priority Habitat Inventory**
 - Deciduous woodland



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D5: Bigbury Hill



Landscape Description

Bigbury Hill LCA is a distinctive ridge with a plateau top to the west of Canterbury City. The boundaries are defined by the edge of the woodland.

The woodland is locally designated as part of the Blean Woods South LWS. It is less extensive than other parts of The Blean woods and includes a number of cleared areas in use as arable and pasture fields, including horse grazing. There is a small area of priority habitat traditional orchard at No Mans Orchard LNR.

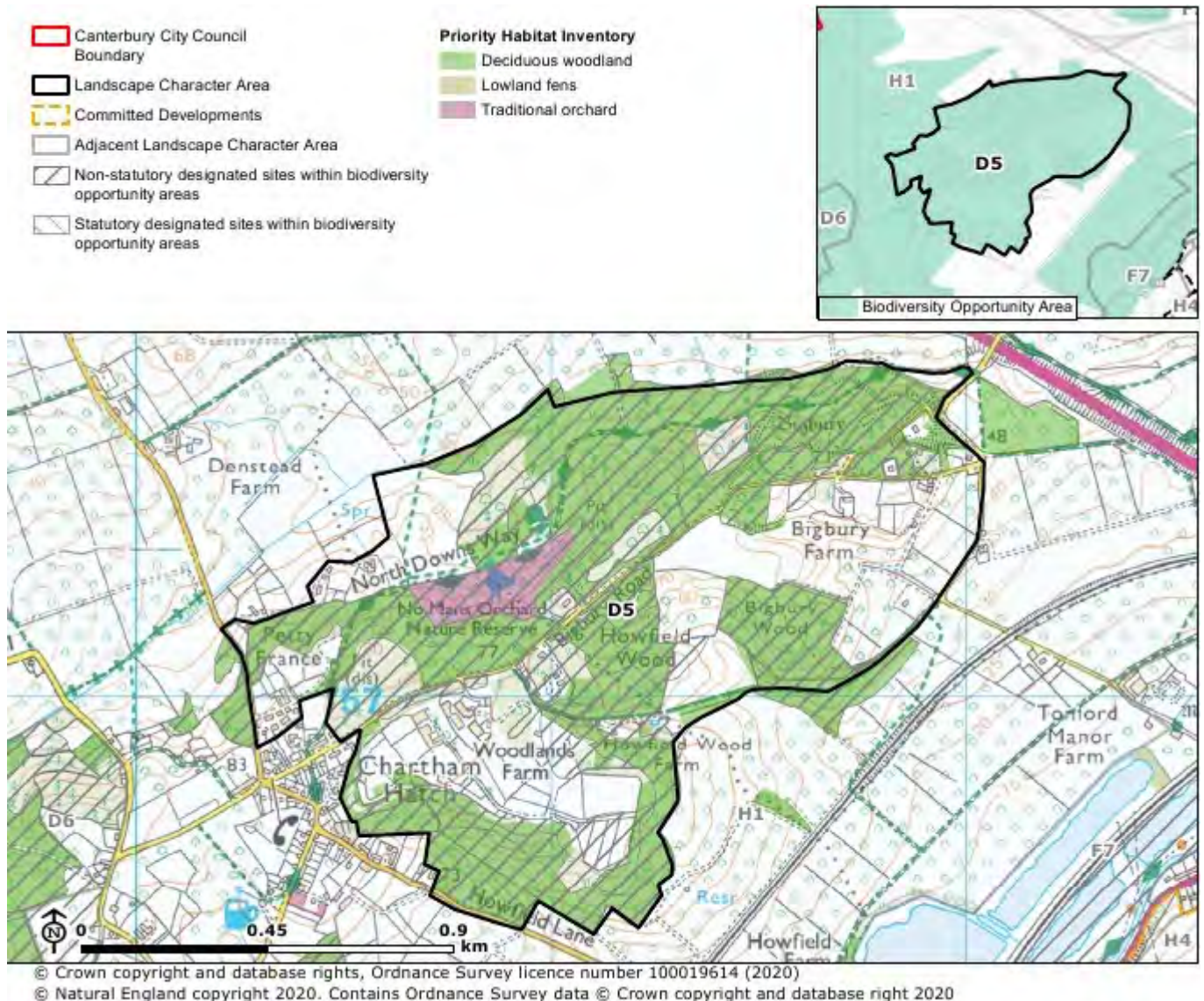
The Iron Age Bigbury Camp hillfort is strategically located on the ridgetop. It is a large univallate hillfort with a northern annexe added later with bivallate defences. This is a rare

example of a large hillfort, and is of national value, designated as a Scheduled Monument.

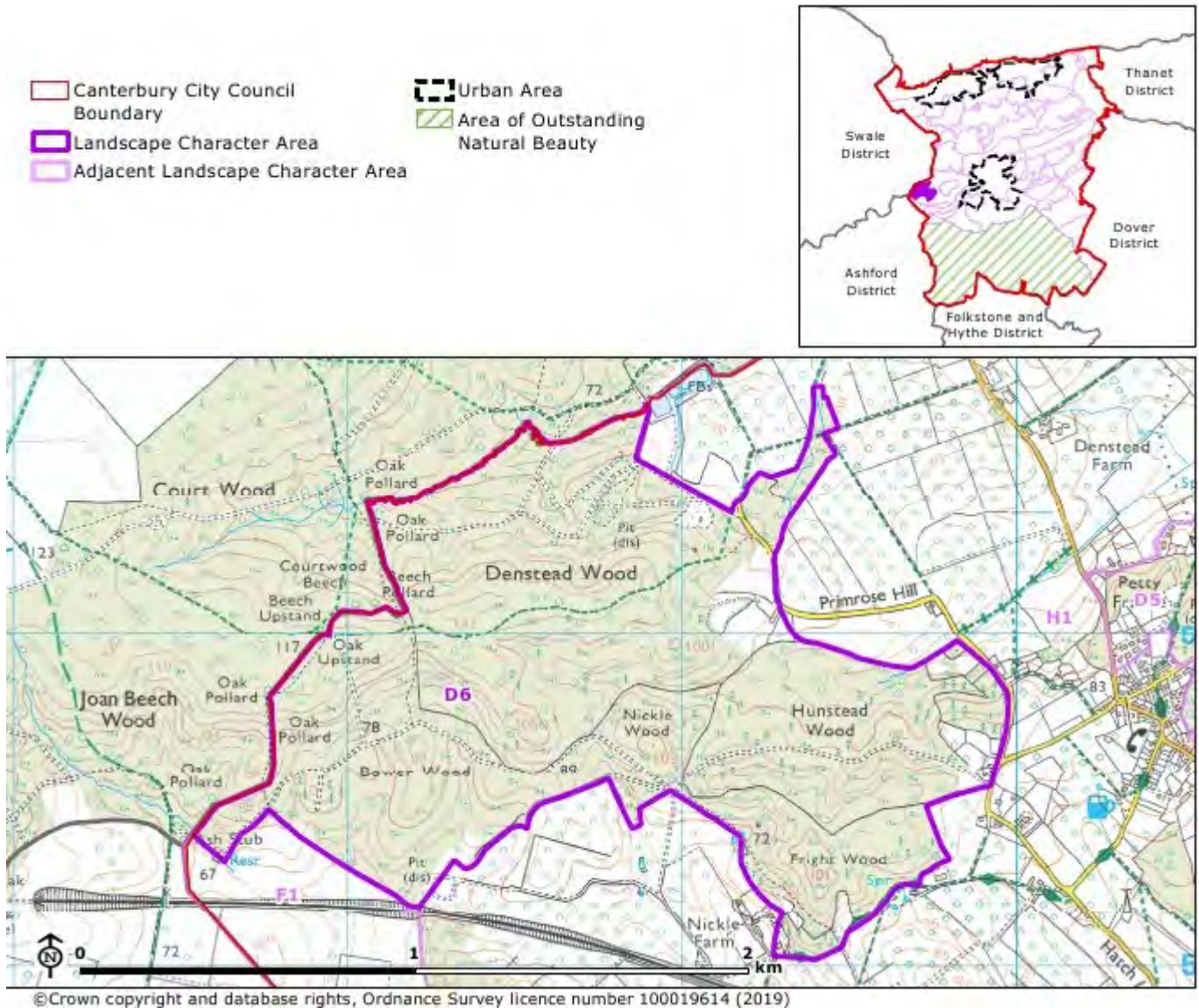
Bigbury Hill remained sparsely settled until the 20th century. Today, there are a few detached modern homes cut into the woodland and along the roads. Bigbury Road, the main route through the area, is a narrow rural lane with woodland very tight to the edge. The North Downs/Pilgrims Way crosses the ridge, marking what is widely believed to be a historic trackway, originating as the pilgrimage route between Winchester and Canterbury City. Tonford Lane and Faulkners Lane are small sunken winding lanes with trees growing from steep sandy banks.

There are views out over Canterbury City and the Cathedral is visible from parts of the North Downs Way on Bigbury Hill. This vantage point also allows extensive views of the Stour Valley and over the agricultural/orchard landscape to the south east, and the wooded hill also has a role as part of the setting to and views from Canterbury City. There is a sense of seclusion and remoteness within this elevated woodland area, although the woodland here is less extensive than other parts of The Blean, mixed with areas of open farmland and orchard.

Biodiversity Appraisal



D6: Denstead Woods



Landscape Description

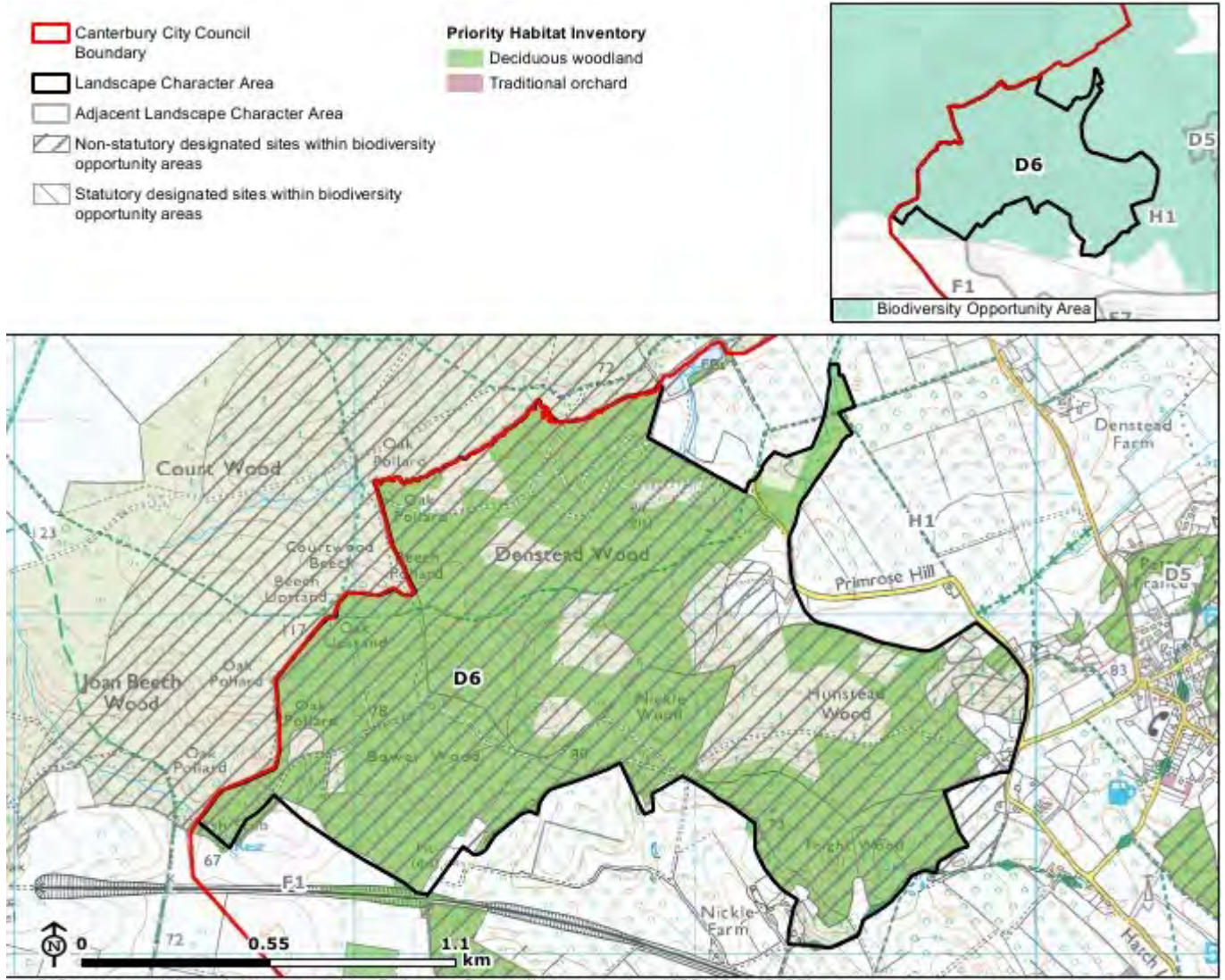
Denstead Woods is an outcrop of high ground in the west of the district. The LCA boundaries are defined by the edge of the woodland, and the western boundary by the district boundary (the woodland continues into Swale Borough).

The woodland is locally designated as part of the Blean Woods South LWS. Much of the area is commercially managed chestnut coppice with oak standards, and some conifer plantation. Local areas of heathland and bog reflect the varied geology and provide habitat diversity. A series of oak pollards mark the boundary between Canterbury District and Swale District.

A small number of cottages and houses are located along the eastern edge of the woods, at Primrose Hill, including the Grade II listed Mount Cottage and Pilgrim's Cottage. Otherwise the area is entirely undeveloped and there are no roads. Occasional small areas of clearance on the edge of the woodlands are now used for grazing, with the main woodland block contrasting with the adjacent intensively managed orchard landscapes.

A number of narrow tracks allow restricted access to vehicles working in the woodland, supplementing the public rights of way network.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Biodiversity Appraisal: The Blean - Woodlands

Aim: To maintain, restore, enhance and create woodland and grassland habitat, as part of the woodland and grassland habitat network of the Blean BOA.

The Blean Woods are all covered by the Blean BOA, which sets out the following relevant key targets:

- No loss of ancient semi-natural woodland and its mosaic of associated habitats.
- Enhance and reconnect woodland to create a very extensive block of habitat, particularly through the maintenance and restoration of coppice management.
- Restore conifer plantations on ancient woodland sites to suitable, deciduous wooded habitat.
- Restore and enhance heath and acid grassland (including grazed wooded heath) as part of the woodland matrix.

- Create species-rich neutral grassland and to bring it to priority habitat lowland meadow quality.

The broad habitat types present within the Blean Woods include coniferous, broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland, improved grassland, neutral grassland, acid grassland and European dry heaths, arable and horticulture, traditional orchard, built up areas and bracken. Habitats of key importance include ancient woodland and deciduous woodland, lowland heath and good quality semi-improved grassland, which are listed as priority habitats.

Evaluation

Landscape Sensitivities and Values

- Extensive and connected area of ancient semi-natural and ancient replanted woodland area across the northern part of the district.
- Value for wildlife as reflected through international and national designation (SAC, SSSI, LWS, LNR), range of woodland habitats and the diverse species supported.
- Open areas of acid grassland and heathland clearing, rides and glades within woodland provide important habitat (e.g. for rare heath fritillary butterfly) and contrasting open landscape within woodland.
- Views to The Blean within its rural setting and wooded horizons created by the woodland blocks across elevated land – distinctive across the northern part of Canterbury District.
- Role of Bigbury Hill as wooded setting and backdrop to Canterbury City, route of Pilgrims Way with views to the Cathedral, plus role as containing wooded backdrop to linear settlements at Tyler Hill and Blean.
- Evidence of Medieval cultural and woodland management practices in the form of earthbanks, coppice, pollards, droveways. Historic ownership and links to Abbey and Cathedral in Canterbury
- Range of archaeological sites, preserved within woodland including Bronze Age barrows, Iron Age hillfort at Bigbury, sites of tile kilns and claypits.
- Remote character and strong sense of tranquillity within extensive uninterrupted woodland blocks, absence of development, few roads or detracting features.
- Major recreational resource with extensive network of linked trails used for cycling, walking and riding. Low key informal recreation facilities (promoted trails and car park) provided by RSPB, Kent Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust and Forestry England. Linked recreational routes to the coastal towns and Canterbury City.
- Strong 'Blean' sense of place linking all the woodlands – forming highly distinctive and unique area between Canterbury City and the coast.

Guidance for The Blean - Woodlands

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

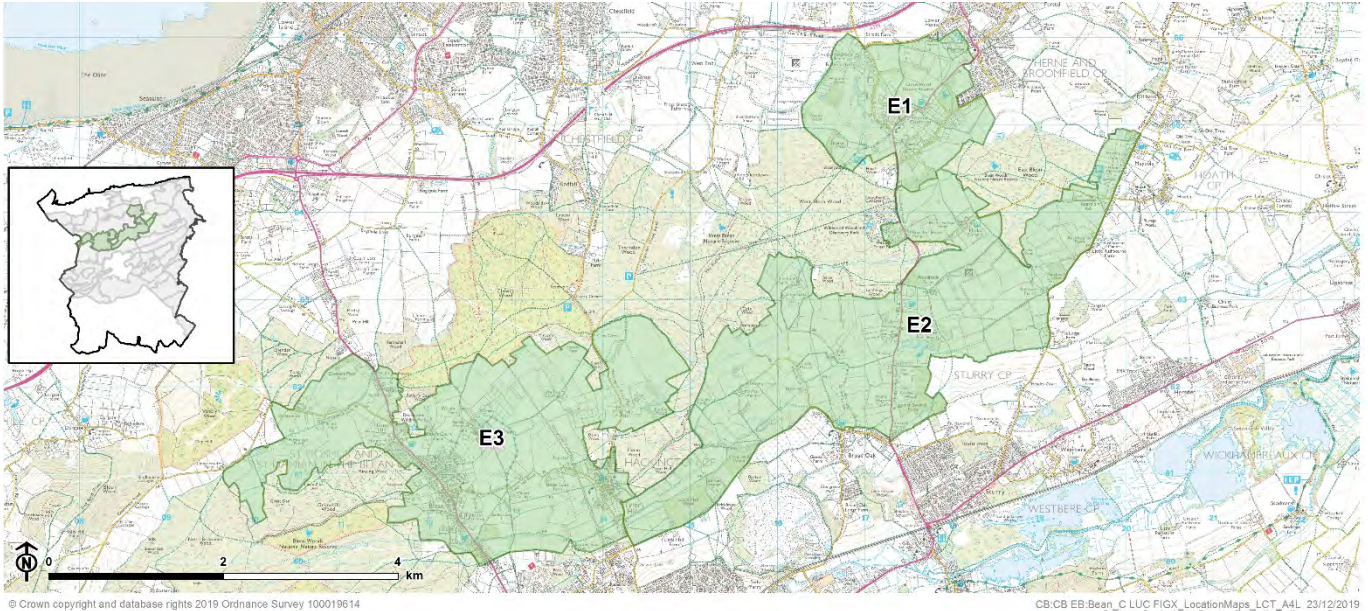
Landscape Management

- Protect, conserve and enhance ancient woodland and existing woodland priority habitat. This should include strengthening of habitat connectivity by restoring hedgerows and woodland corridors especially between and within surrounding LCAs with similar priority habitat.
- Continue to restore conifer plantations to deciduous woodland to include areas of open glades and early successional stages.
- Restore, enhance and create acid grassland and heath and neutral grassland where this does not conflict with the maintenance of existing woodland habitat.
- Encourage an integrated approach to land management among the various woodland owners (including Kent Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust, RSPB, Forestry England) to promote biodiversity, heritage and recreation, as promoted through The Blean initiative and individual management plans.
- Continue to provide for low key informal recreation via a range of PRoW, tracks and trails, including maintaining and promoting PRoW links to the coastal towns and Canterbury City.
- Conserve the distinct and tranquil landscape character of the ancient semi-natural woodland complex, including the mix of heath, ditches, streams and ponds.
- Conserve and manage the range of archaeological sites contained within the woodland, and evidence of past woodland management practices.

Development Management

- Improve style of existing and any new barriers which restrict vehicular access. Where fencing is necessary encourage the use of local materials and styles, where possible. Ensure recreational infrastructure is sympathetic to the natural character of the woods.
- Avoid any development within Blean Woods, any changes should be of local scale and character and relate to existing settlements only. There should be no loss of woodland as a result of new development.
- Maintain the existing narrow single line of development associated with Blean and Tyler Hill villages avoiding backland encroaching towards the woods and maintaining views through gaps in development to the woodland edge.
- Conserve the role of Bigbury Hill, and the ridge as a whole as part of the setting of Canterbury City including views to the Cathedral and role as wooded backdrop to the city.
- Conserve the rural character of the roads that cross through woodland, maintaining wooded edges and soft verges, resisting highways upgrades that are more urban in character including kerbing and lighting.
- Monitor development on the edges/buffer of existing woodland blocks – maintaining the rural setting of The Blean and avoiding any development, including solar farms that creates a hard or urban edge abutting woodland. Promote creation of a wooded buffer in relation to any development in surrounding farmland LCAs.
- Maintain uninterrupted rural views to the wooded Blean ridgeline, avoiding tall developments such as pylons which interrupt and breach the continuous wooded skyline

LCT E: The Blean – Farmland



Description

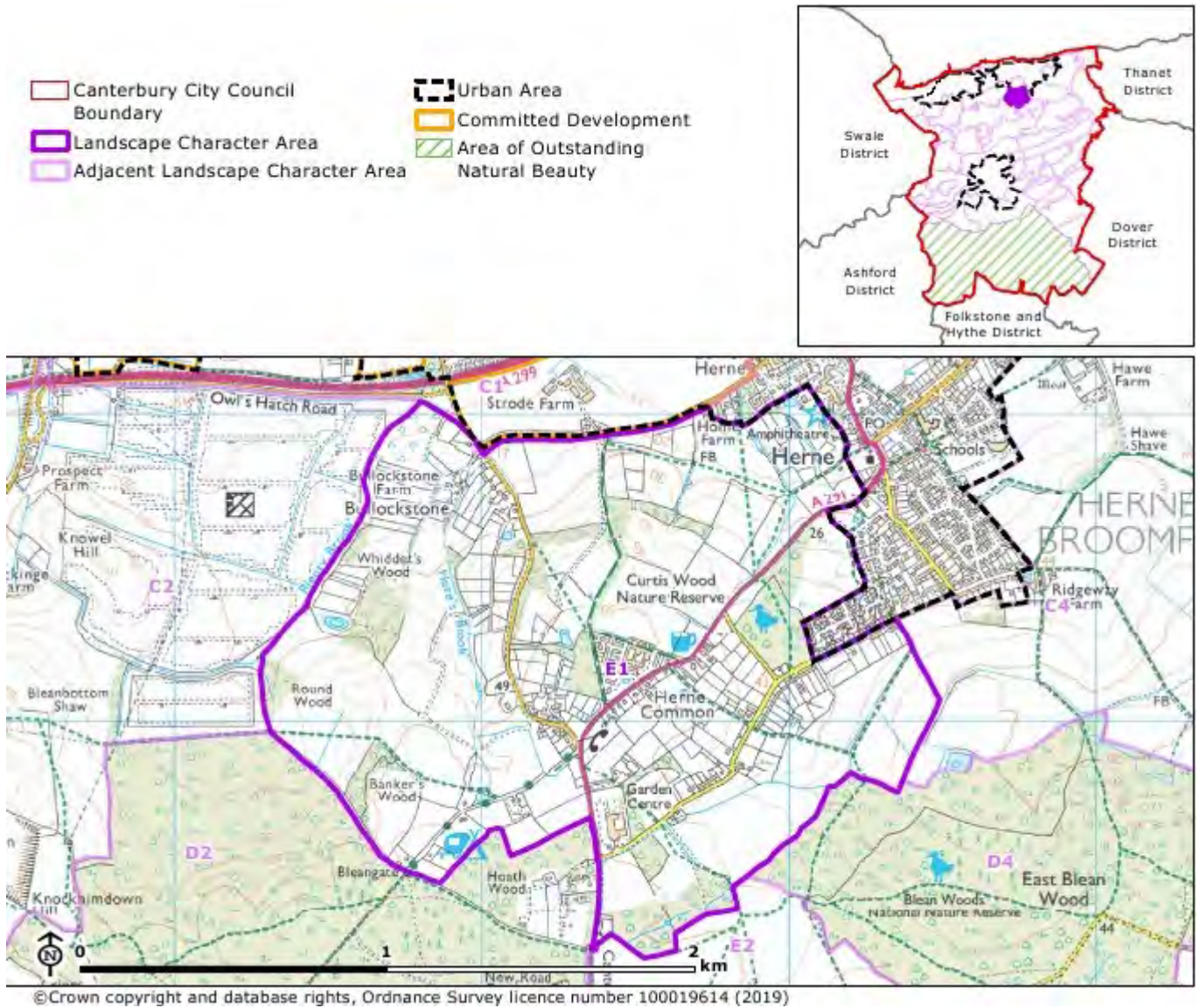
This LCT is distinguished by agricultural land on the London Clay Blean ridge, connected to the Blean complex. Minor streams and drainage channels cut through the ridge, creating long valleys. Land use is a mix of arable and pasture, with some small areas of woodland which are remnants of the Blean. There is an extensive Public Rights of Way network, and strong rural character with small ridge top settlements.

Landscape Character Areas

The Blean - Farmland LCT is subdivided into three LCAs:

- E1: Herne Common
- E2: Sarre Penn Valley
- E3: Amery Court Farmland

E1: Herne Common



Location and Summary

The small Herne Common LCA forms part of the London Clay Blean ridge in the north east of the district. It is a largely pastoral landscape, with areas of woodland connected to the Blean complex to the south. It encompasses the settlement of Herne Common, with Herne adjacent to the eastern boundary.

Representative Photographs



Parkland character, with Herne windmill in the background



Redeveloped former workhouse along A291 Canterbury Road



Views across pasture fields to woodland, Herne Bay and the sea



Horse chestnuts and estate style railings at entrance to Herne



Pasture fields with Herne Bay and offshore wind turbines in the background



Arable field with woodland containing views

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Part of the Blean ridge formed of London Clay with brickearth deposits at Bullockstone, rising from 15m AOD in the north to 55m AOD in the centre and south.
- Small streams, including Hare's Brook and Plenty Brook, and ponds indicate the poor draining heavy clay soils.
- An agricultural landscape largely managed as pasture, with areas on the edge of Herne subdivided by tape and post and wire fencing used for horse grazing.
- Wooded character created through small woodland blocks, tree belts and hedgerows, linked to the Blean Woods complex to the south.
- Residential development concentrated at Herne Common, with linear development along Busheyfields Road. Otherwise largely undeveloped.
- Parkland character of estate fencing and mature in-field trees around Herne and Strode Park in the north-east.
- Rural roads connect Herne Common with Herne, Greenhill and the south.
- PRoW cross the area, linking to the Blean wood complex in the south and to Herne to the east.
- Views are often contained or framed by woodland. In the north Herne Bay, the sea and offshore wind turbines can be seen above the woodland.
- The A291 disturbs tranquillity, however in general tranquillity and sense of ruralness increases to the south towards the Blean Woods.

Natural Influences

Herne Common is situated on the undulating London Clay Blean ridge, with brickearth deposits at Bullockstone. The land rises to the centre and south, from 15m AOD to 55m AOD at Hoath Wood.

Small streams run from south to north, including Plenty Brook and Hare's Brook in the west. There are also small ponds, which indicate the poor draining heavy clay soils.

The abundance of tree belts, hedgerows and small woodland blocks are a reminder of the wooded origins of the landscape and the area links to the much larger East Blean and West Blean and Thornden Woods, which lie to the south-east and south-west. These are both notified SSSI for their primary deciduous woodland and mosaic of ancient woodland and are important habitats for invertebrates and breeding birds.

There is a high density of small areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland, with areas of ancient woodland at Whiddet's Wood, Curtis Wood and Banker's Wood. Oak and ash are the dominant woodland species and hawthorn is common in the hedgerows and as regenerating scrub in some pastures.

Part of the Blean Woods NNR lies east of A291, and Curtis Wood is an LNR.

Cultural Influences

The Kent HLC notes the area is predominately formed of rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries and small regular fields with straight boundaries.

This is a mainly pastoral landscape used for sheep, cows and horse grazing, although there are some arable fields. Fields vary in size and shape, providing a mosaic which is segregated by the wooded blocks. Larger areas of pasture are found on the north side of the ridge. Along the ridgeline fields are contained by hedgerows and tree belts. There has been some fragmentation of hedgerows and subdivision of fields by horse tape and post and wire fencing.

Settlement is focused around Herne Common in the centre of the landscape. Herne Common contains three Grade II listed cottages and farmhouses and is part of the Herne Conservation Area. Herne Common also includes the modern redevelopment of the former workhouse. Although this is denser development than in the rest of the area, it is well screened by wooded boundaries and the brick vernacular fits well into the landscape.

There has been considerable ribbon development along Busheyfields Road and Bullockstone Road. However, as these are bungalows and two-storey detached houses with hedged boundaries they are not intrusive within the landscape.

Other development within the area includes a caravan park in the south-west, and a garden centre south of Herne Common.

There is a parkland character around Herne and Strode Park in the north-east. Strode Park has a number of mature in-field trees, and Strode House is now used as a base for the Strode Park Foundation.

This estate character is echoed on the approach to Herne along the A291 Canterbury Road, which is lined by an avenue of horse chestnuts and estate style railings, although the railings are often broken and twisted.

Perceptual Influences

The woodland and tree belts provide enclosure, which contain views in and out of the area, particularly to the west and south-west. From east of Bullockstone Road there are far reaching views over woodland towards Herne Bay, the sea and offshore windfarm. North of the A291 there are good views of Herne on the rising slope, including the Grade I listed Herne Windmill. From Busheyfields Road in the south-east

there are views across undulating farmland to East Blean Wood.

To the south and west the area retains a strong rural character and high tranquillity associated with the Blean Woods complex.

Fragmented hedgerows, subdivision of fields by horse tape and post and wire fencing, and broken estate style railings form a slightly neglected appearance to parts of the landscape. Over mature trees are common in many views and many specimen trees have been lost from the parkland. Hawthorn scrub and bramble are beginning to colonise some of the pastures which are no longer grazed.

Roads are generally rural in nature, with high hedgerows and mature trees. The A291 Canterbury Road is busier, with lighting columns and pavements through Herne Common forming visual detractors.

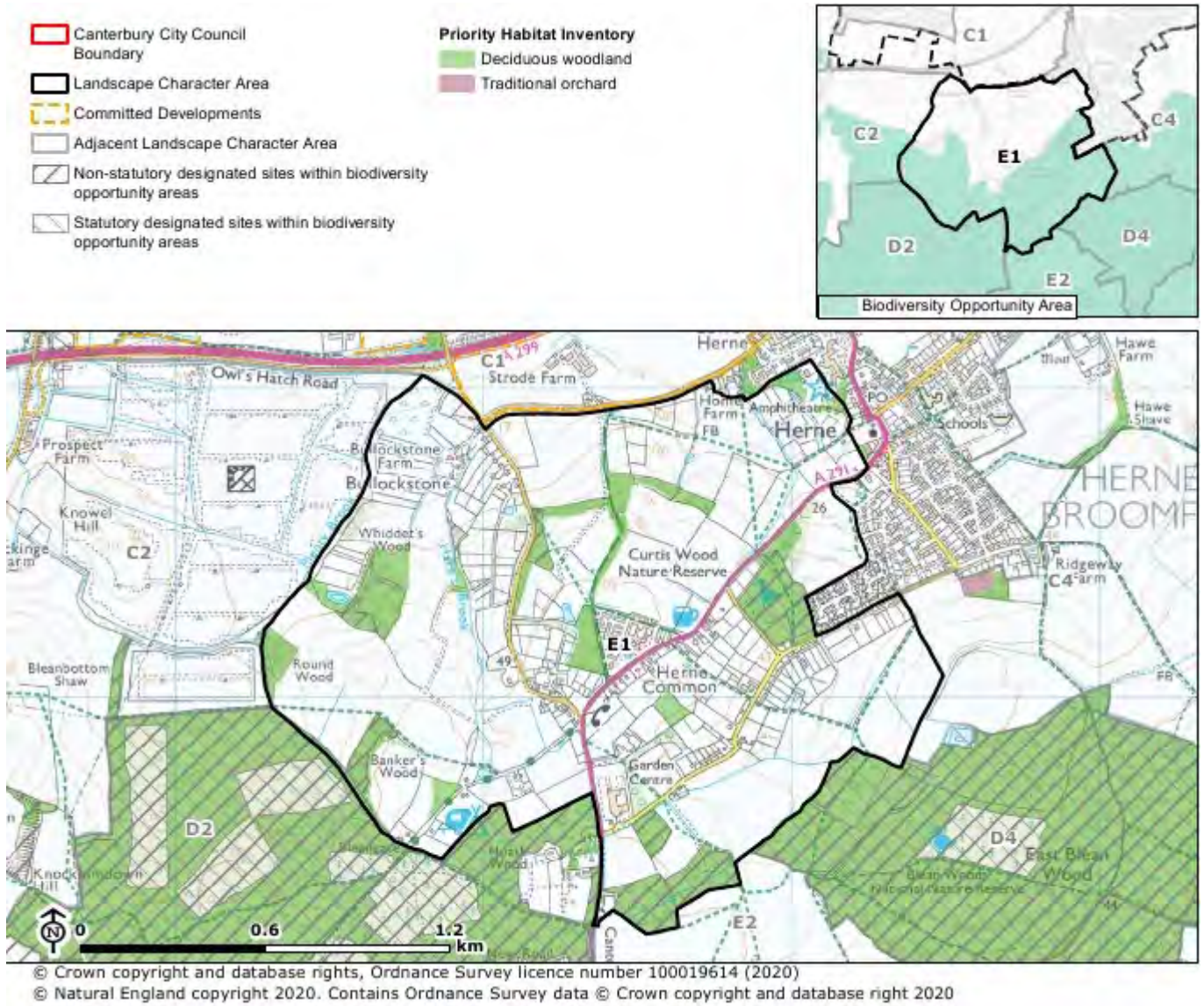
There are a number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) linking to Herne, Herne Common and south to the Blean Woods complex.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- An undulating wooded ridgeline, part of the Blean Woods complex.
- Small brooks and streams provide potential ecologically important habitats and are contrasting features within the landscape.
- Ecologically important blocks of priority habitat deciduous woodland and ancient woodland, including SSSI areas, provide interest and enclosure.
- Heavily wooded character provides enclosure and containment, particularly linking to the Blean Woods complex to the south.
- Parkland character on the approach to Herne provides time depth and a sense of place.
- Recreational value associated with a good PRoW network.
- Largely undeveloped, and strong rural character across much of the area.
- Contrast between views contained by woodland and topography, and expansive views north to Herne Bay, Herne Windmill and south-east to East Blean Woods.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To protect ancient and existing woodland priority habitat and to enhance woodland connectivity.

Part of this LCA lies within the Blean BOA, which sets out the following relevant key targets:

- No loss of ancient semi-natural woodland and its mosaic of associated habitats.
- Enhance and reconnect woodland to create a very extensive block of habitat, particularly through the maintenance and restoration of coppice management.

- Restore and enhance heath and acid grassland (including grazed wooded heath) as part of the woodland matrix.
- Create species-rich neutral grassland and to bring it to priority habitat lowland meadow quality.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include arable and horticulture, improved grassland, broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland and built up areas. Habitats of key importance within the LCA include priority habitat deciduous woodland.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

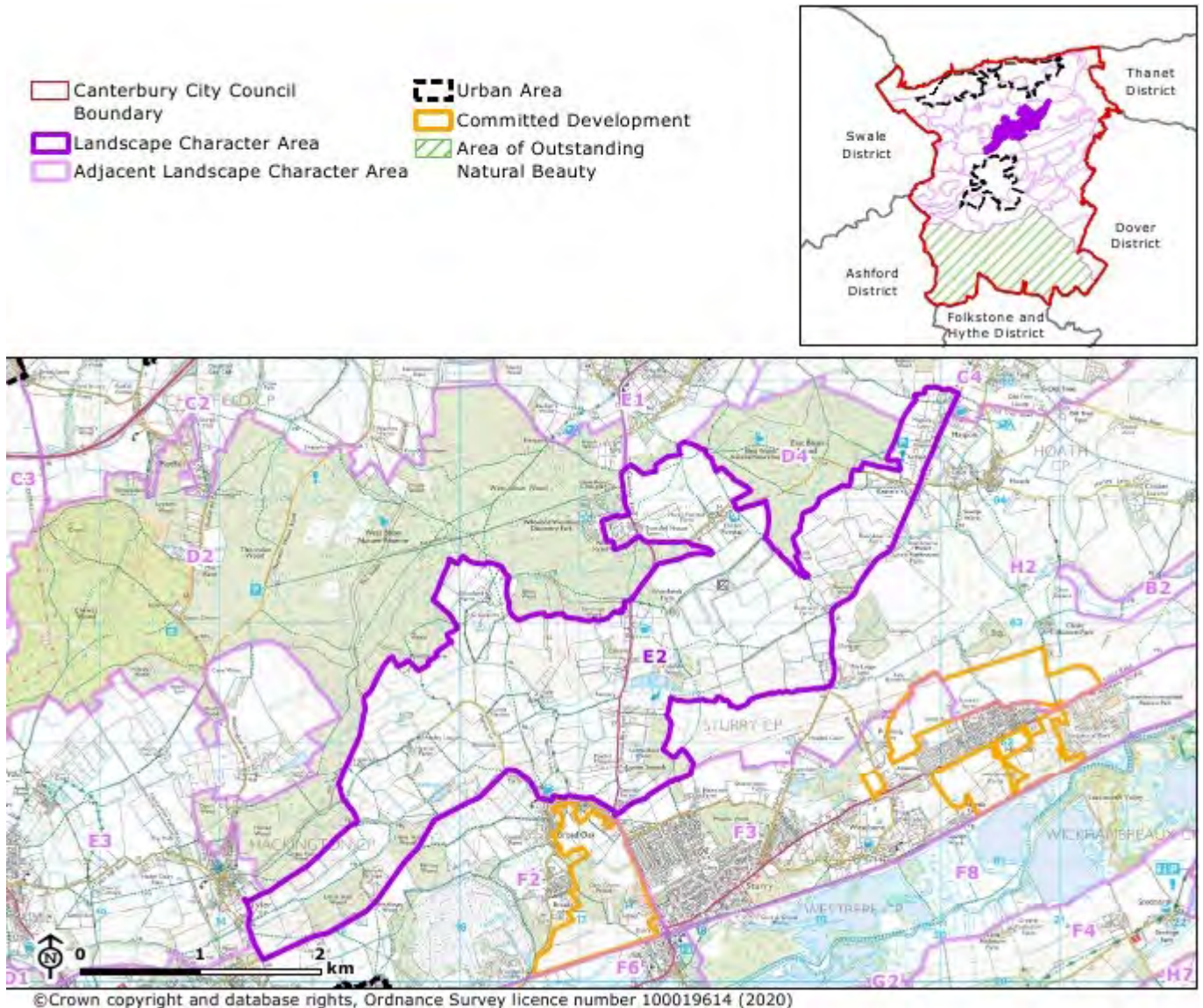
Landscape Management

- Conserve and enhance the biodiversity interest from the small streams and ponds including Plenty Brook by managing scrub encroachment.
- Protect and conserve ancient woodland and existing woodland priority habitat, including ancient woodland and deciduous woodland within the West Blean and Thornden Woods SSSI and East Blean Woods SSSI. This should include strengthening of habitat connectivity by restoring hedgerows and woodland corridors.
- Restore, enhance and where possible extend the mosaic of heath and acid grassland and areas of species-rich neutral grassland linking to the Blean.
- Conserve and improve the traditional landscape pattern and structure, through the establishment and maintenance of hedgerows along roads and field boundaries including augmenting fragmented field boundary hedgerows with native species, replacing horse tape and post and wire fencing where possible.
- Promote enhanced management of horse paddocks, ensuring they are sympathetically integrated into the landscape, and that any stables or manèges are carefully sited.

Development Management

- Conserve the local distinctiveness of historic buildings and their rural wooded setting, particularly within the Herne Conservation Area.
- Conserve and reinforce the parkland character around Herne and Strode Park, putting in place a programme of new parkland tree planting where appropriate. Seek to repair or replace the traditional estate-style fencing.
- Assess new building proposals within Herne to ensure that an attractive and integrated edge is formed with the adjacent rural and open recreational landscapes. This is important for existing edges as well as proposed new strategic allocations at Strode Farm to the north of the area. Woodland planting is a key opportunity associated with development in this area.
- Avoid visually intrusive development on the ridgeline in order to conserve the distinctive character of undeveloped skylines.
- Retain the rural character of the minor roads and sparsely settled character outside Herne Common and Bullockstone Road. Avoid further intensification of linear development along minor roads.
- Protect the valued recreational use of the landscape. Seek opportunities to maintain, further enhance and create new PRoW and opportunities for access and enjoyment, concentrating on connections to the Blean and into adjacent existing and new urban areas.

E2: Sarre Penn Valley



Location and Summary

The Sarre Penn Valley is situated in the north of the district. It forms an intermediate valley to the south of the main blocks of Blean Woods and is situated to the north of the Stour Valley. Slopes are cut west to east by minor streams including the Sarre Penn. The northern boundary is formed by the edge of the woodland, and the eastern boundary follows Hoath Road and field boundaries. The southern boundary roughly forms the ridge top of the Stour Valley slopes, while the short western boundary is formed by Canterbury Hill.

Representative Photographs



Large grazing field at Hicks Forstal looking south to solar farm



Arable field at Tyler Hill looking towards Little Hall Wood



Orchards north of Broad Oak with Blean in background and pylon route



Large pasture field with pylons in the foreground and Blean in the background



Detached residential properties along Barnet's Lane



Arable field with wooded backdrop along Hoath Road

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Rolling landscape underlain by London Clay, ranging from 15m to 60m AOD.
- A series of long valleys; narrow streams cut west to east, including the Sarre Penn.
- Woodland character with blocks of priority habitat deciduous woodland along the southern valley slope and linking to the Blean to the north. There is priority habitat good quality semi-improved grassland east of Cadehill Wood.
- Varied field pattern of small to medium scale pasture and arable fields, bound by a strong hedgerow network. There are small areas of orchard and a solar farm.
- Scattered residential properties and development along the main roads (A291 Herne Bay Road and Canterbury Hill to the west), elsewhere there are isolated Grade II listed farmhouses.
- Roads run north south linking the coast and Canterbury - the A291 Herne Bay Road cuts through the centre, with Hackington Road and Canterbury Hill to the west and east respectively. Elsewhere road access is limited to a few rural roads with strong hedgerow boundaries.
- Good network of PRoW, which connect the woodland to surrounding valleys and settlements.
- Blean Woods to the north provides containment and a wooded ridgeline.
- Long views to east and south from higher ground across distant farmland.

Natural Influences

The landscape of rolling slopes is underlain by London Clay. Narrow streams cut west to east, dividing the landscape into a series of long valleys, the most notable of which is the Sarre Penn.

A number of small blocks of priority habitat deciduous woodland are scattered through the LCA, related to the Blean Woods which lie to the north. The majority of these are also ancient and semi-natural woodlands. Little Hall Wood and Alcroft Grange are part of the West Blean and Thornden Woods SSSI, and Buckwell Wood is part of the East Blean Woods SSSI.

Much of the woodland is designated as part of the Little Hall and Kemberland Woods and Pasture LWS. There is an area of priority habitat good quality semi-improved grassland east and south of Cadehill Wood.

Land use is predominately arable agriculture, with areas of pasture around Tyler Hill and Hicks Forstal, with occasional isolated areas of traditional and modern orchards north of Broad Oak and along the A291 Herne Bay Road. A solar farm is present south of Hicks Forstal.

The field pattern is varied, with generally smaller pasture fields and larger arable fields, although there are large pasture fields around Hicks Forstal. There is a strong hedgerow network across the landscape, although in places this has been replaced or reinforced by post and wire and post and rail fencing.

Cultural Influences

The Kent HLC shows the centre of the LCA is formed of fields with irregular straight boundaries. There is Parliamentary type small/medium regular fields with straight boundaries around Tyler Hill in the west, and small rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries in the east.

Settlement is limited within the LCA. Residential and commercial development is located along the A291 Herne Bay Road, with some more isolated farmsteads accessed by tracks. Many of these farmhouses are Grade II listed and constructed of red brick with black weather-boarded barns. There is a prominent oasthouse at Buckwell Farm. The east of the LCA is part of the Hoath, Rushbourne and Tile Lodge Conservation Area, and the west is part of the Tyler Hill Conservation Area, with the landscape forming a rural agricultural setting.

Perceptual Influences

There is a strong sense of enclosure due to the dense mature woodland corridors, rolling topography and the edge of the Blean Woods to the north. Views are therefore restricted by these, although there are long views to the east and south from higher points over adjacent farmland.

Electricity pylons crossing the valleys and ridgelines of the LCA are detracting features in an otherwise rural landscape. The solar farm in the east is enclosed by hedgerows and is not prominent. There has been some hedgerow fragmentation and replacement by post and wire/post and rail fencing,

however this does not interrupt the overall character of the LCA.

There are few roads within the LCA - the A291 Herne Bay Road provides access between the coast and Canterbury and is busy, resulting in aural intrusion, however it is lined by hedgerows and generally well-integrated with the landscape. Hoath Road/Maypole Road, Mayton Lane and Canterbury Hill are more rural in character.

There is a good network of Public Rights of Way (PRoW), which provide connections north to the Blean, between isolated farmsteads and between the small settlements on the edge of the LCA. Other recreational activities are the fishery south of Calcott and Maypole Airfield in the north-east.

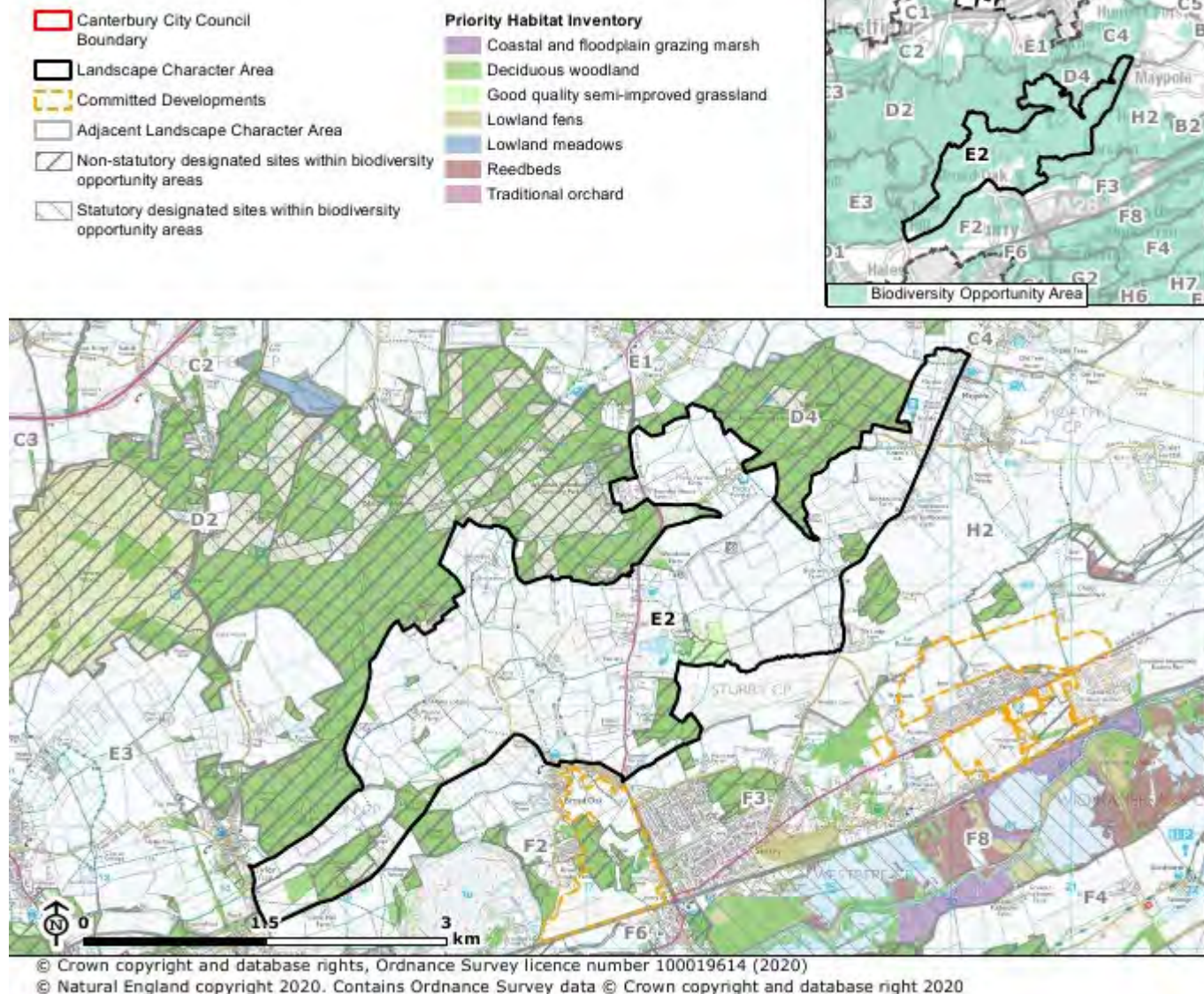
Away from the A291 Herne Bay Road and settlements, this is a tranquil landscape, retaining a strong sense of rural character.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- Rolling topography and narrow valleys provide visual interest.
- Nationally and locally valued deciduous woodland blocks, part of which are connected to the Blean Woods.
- Historic farmsteads provide a sense of place and time depth.
- Recreational value through a network of PRoW and tracks linking into The Blean.
- A quiet and peaceful rural area, retaining a strong rural character which is vulnerable to development.
- Ridgelines particularly to the south which are important in providing the rural setting valley crest of the Stour Valley.
- Vulnerabilities of main north-south roads – traffic and pressures for development.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To enhance and create neutral and acid grassland as part of the county-wide targets and protect fragmented areas of woodland within the Blean BOA.

The LCA lies within the Blean BOA which sets out the following key relevant targets:

- No loss of ancient semi-natural woodland and its mosaic of associated habitats.
- Enhance and reconnect woodland to create a very extensive block of habitat, particularly through the maintenance and restoration of coppice management.
- Restore and enhance heath and acid grassland (including grazed wooded heath) as part of the woodland matrix.

- Create species-rich neutral grassland and to bring it to priority habitat lowland meadow quality.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include arable and horticulture, improved grassland, broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland and built up areas. The central section of the south of the LCA contains habitat of key importance in the form of deciduous ancient woodland and good quality semi-improved grassland, both of which are listed as a priority habitat.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

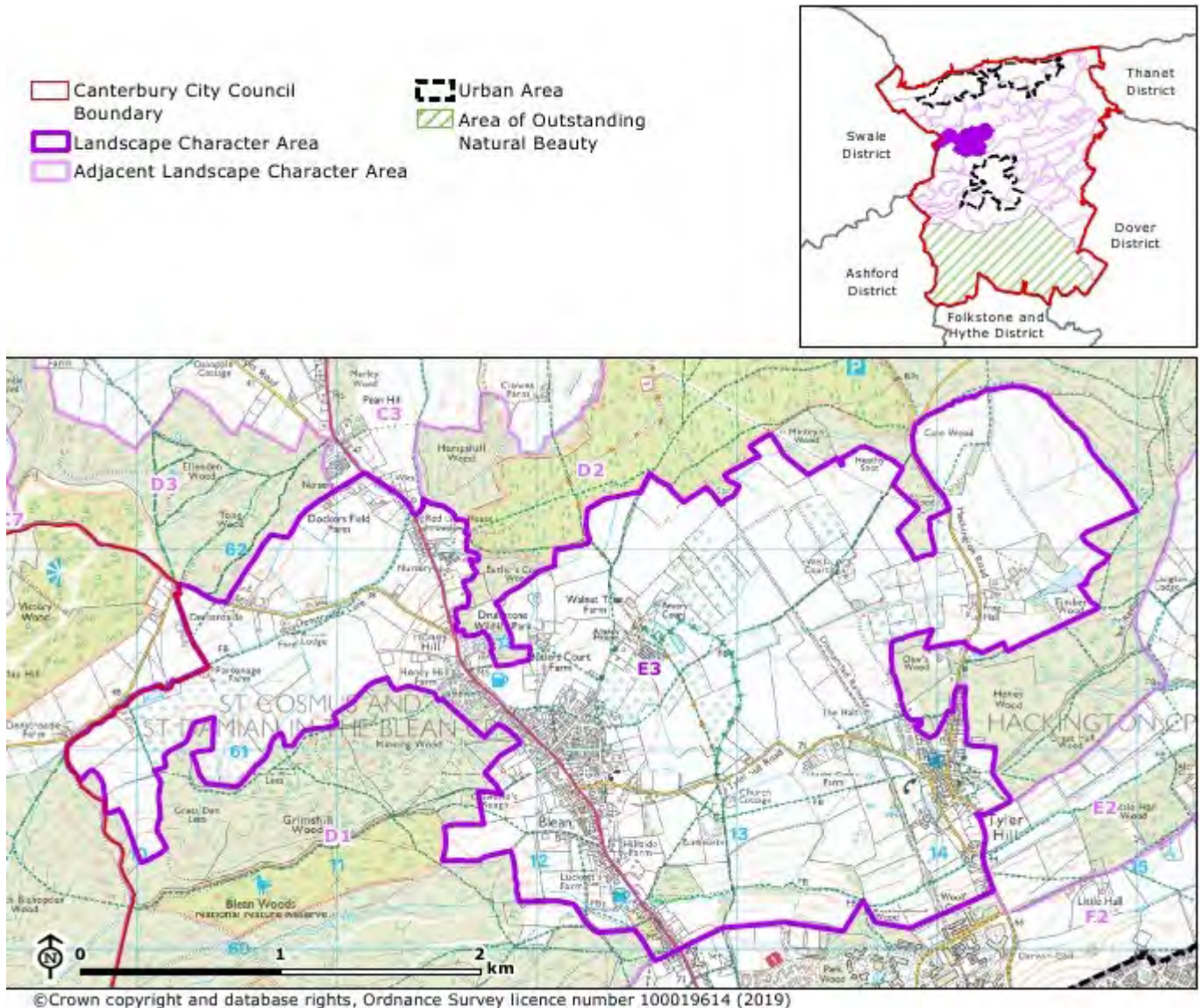
Landscape Management

- Conserve and enhance the biodiversity interest of watercourses including the Sarre Penn by managing scrub encroachment. Explore opportunities for wetland habitat creation along the Sarre Penn corridor.
- Conserve, enhance and restore areas of woodland, including those part of the West Blean and Thornden Woods SSSI and East Blean Woods SSSI, and seek to establish stronger ecological connections with other woodlands in the surrounding area. This is particularly important due to the fragmented nature of the woodland in this LCA.
- Protect areas of species rich grassland and seek to enhance and create further neutral grassland, heath and acid grassland, which cover a substantial area of this LCA as part of the county-wide and BOA targets.
- Manage and enhance the wildlife interest of arable fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins and other wildlife-friendly farming methods.
- Enhance and augment fragmented field boundary hedgerows with native species, replacing post and wire and post and rail fencing where possible.
- Conserve, enhance and restore the wooded character of the area through continued and improved coppice management.

Development Management

- Conserve the strong vernacular of historic farmsteads and buildings and their rural setting, particularly within the Hoath, Rushbourne and Tile Lodge and Tyler Hill Conservation Areas.
- Ensure the sympathetic conversion of traditional farm building to retain their rural character.
- Conserve the traditional pattern and structure of the landscape by improving the continuity of hedgerow and shelterbelt features to enhance the small-scale irregular field pattern.
- Conserve the open landscape and avoid the further introduction of large scale or incongruous elements, particularly where they are visible over ridgelines and from the Sour valley to the south.
- Maintain the limited vehicular access to retain rural character and resist proposals for upgrading of tracks and lanes within the area.
- Maintain the essentially undeveloped character of the area limited to occasional farm buildings. Monitor pressures for development along the main roads (A291) and the Stour Valley ridgeline (Broad Oak).
- Protect the valued recreational use of the landscape, seeking opportunities to further enhance opportunities for access and enjoyment including routes to avoid pressures on more sensitive adjacent habitats.

E3: Amery Court Farmland



Location and Summary

Amery Court Farmland LCA is located on the clay forming part of The Blean landscape between Canterbury City and the coast. It is an undulating landscape consisting of a network of arable and fruit fields enclosed by the Blean Woods to the north, east and south and extending to the district boundary with Swale to the west. The LCA includes the small settlements of Tyler Hill and Blean located on the north south roads linking the city and coast.

Representative Photographs



Crab and Winkle Way, part of the National Cycle Network linking Canterbury City and the coast



University of Kent buildings visible on Stour Valley skyline



Large arable fields are bounded by woodland – footpath forms part of the Canterbury Ring



Former line of the Crab and Winkle railway is visible as a linear wooded feature



Earthworks associated with Roman villa and medieval settlement at Blean



The Crab and Winkle provides a key cycle and walking connection between Canterbury and Whitstable – here on the route of a former saltway and elsewhere on the former rail line

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating farmland from 38m to 85m AOD, underlain by London Clay forming part of an elevated ridge between Canterbury City and the coast.
- Small drainage channels and streams, including the Sarre Penn and Denstroude Brook forming distinct east west valleys.
- Remnant woodlands and belts related to the Blean located at field edges.
- Small to medium scale arable fields and numerous orchards divided by hedgerows and mature shelterbelts.
- Historic field pattern part of the Medieval Blean landscape, evidence of Roman and Medieval settlement.
- Linear ridge top settlement at Blean and Tyler Hill, with a number of Grade II listed cottages and farmhouses.
- Former drove roads and saltways linking the coast and city, and former woodland clearances now forming important PRoW network.
- The Crab and Winkle Way, part of the national cycle network, is the tree lined route of the dismantled historic Crab and Winkle railway, including associated engineering structures.
- Strong rural character persists in close proximity to Canterbury City.
- An enclosed and contained landscape with views limited by woodland and topography.

Natural Influences

The Amery Court Farmland LCA is underlain by London Clay, with an area of brickearth deposits in the centre at Blean village. The landscape is generally around 70m AOD, forming part of an elevated area between the coast to the north and Stour Valley to the south.

Small streams and drainage channels cut through the area creating a number of small valleys. The largest of these streams is the Sarre Penn which flows in the south and is sometimes referred to as the Fishbourne in this area.

The farmland is enclosed by the designated woodland habitats of the Blean, which lend a wooded character to the landscape. However, within this LCA there are only occasional woodland blocks, related to the surrounding Blean. These are priority habitat deciduous woodland, with some ancient woodland. Small areas of Church Woods, Blean SSSI, Blean Complex SAC and West Blean & Thornden Woods SSSI extend into the area around Honey Hill Farm, and Hackington Road respectively. Part of the Clowes Wood and Marley Wood LWS extends into the area north of Honey Hill.

Areas of unimproved pasture persists and are locally designated as the Blean Pastures LWS and Tyler Hill LWS. Blean Pastures consists of a series of damp meadows sloping down to the Sarre Penn, while Tyler Hill comprises a series of small unimproved pastures and meadow, with winter wet ponds, scrub and woodland. The Tyler Hill Meadow is an LNR.

Cultural Influences

The Blean Forest was gradually cleared of woodland from the Medieval period initially creating areas of arable land and pastures within the woodland. Over time these pastures have been more extensively opened up to form a large open agricultural landscape.

Today, the landscape supports a network of commercial orchards, as well as larger arable fields and intensive fruit production under polythene. There is a strong but irregular field pattern created by windbreaks, small areas of remnant woodland and a relatively good network of mature hedgerows. The HLC indicates the field pattern today to be primarily one of orchards and small-medium Parliamentary type enclosures with straight boundaries.

Evidence of the Medieval landscape is revealed by the pattern of roads and droves. A Medieval settlement was located on the site of a Roman Villa at Blean, south of Tyler Hill Road. The site includes the remains of a Roman building likely to have been in use during the 1st to 3rd centuries AD, and the remains of a dispersed Medieval settlement, which was in existence by the 11th century and had fallen into disuse by the early 15th century. The only remaining extant building from this early settlement is the distinctive isolated Church of St Cosmus and Damian (Grade II*), rebuilt before 1233. The earthworks are designated as a Scheduled Monument.

Settlement is largely restricted to the linear and extended villages of Blean and Tyler Hill on the ridge top located along the main north south routes and linked by the former drove

route of Tyler Hill Road along the ridge. There are smaller hamlets at Denstroude and Honey Hill and scattered isolated farmsteads, many of which are Grade II listed. Despite the parish being of some antiquity the village of Blean itself is mostly of recent origin - an area of Common was enclosed in the 19th century and housing development followed in the early 20th century. Tyler Hill also comprises mostly modern development, which is generally well integrated and absorbed into the surrounding wooded setting. Conservation Areas are designated at Amery Court, Blean, Tyler Hill and the historic Canterbury to Whitstable Railway.

Amery Court in the centre of the area developed as a clearing in the forest and retains some of its original Medieval field pattern of meadows and hedges, and a surviving moat, with a present house of 15th and 16th century origin.

There are a number of PRoW, often on the routes of former salt tracks and droves, which connect into the surrounding woodlands and settlements of The Blean. Part of the disused Canterbury to Whitstable railway runs in the east and is visible as a tree lined embankment crossing the Sarre Penn Valley west and south of Tyler Hill, with associated structures and engineering features including the Tyler Hill Engine House. The railway, opening in 1830, was the first in Great Britain to regularly carry fare paying passengers in trains hauled by steam. It is now designated as a Conservation Area. Part of

the route has been developed as the Crab and Winkle Way cycle route, although within this LCA the cycle routes runs off the line of the railway to the west.

Perceptual Influences

Views within the Blean Farmlands are generally restricted by surrounding woodland and hedgerows and this is contained, relatively enclosed landscape, and settlements are well integrated.

It is a rural area with a woodland backdrop and some experience of tranquillity and dark skies away from the settlements. It has a strong association with the surrounding Blean woodlands and is experienced as part of this wider landscape by people accessing the area for recreation along the Crab and Winkle Route or promoted Blean walks along the Sarre Penn Valley.

There is limited road access into the centre of the area with the main transport routes running north south linking the coast and city, which further emphasises the rural, relatively isolated character.

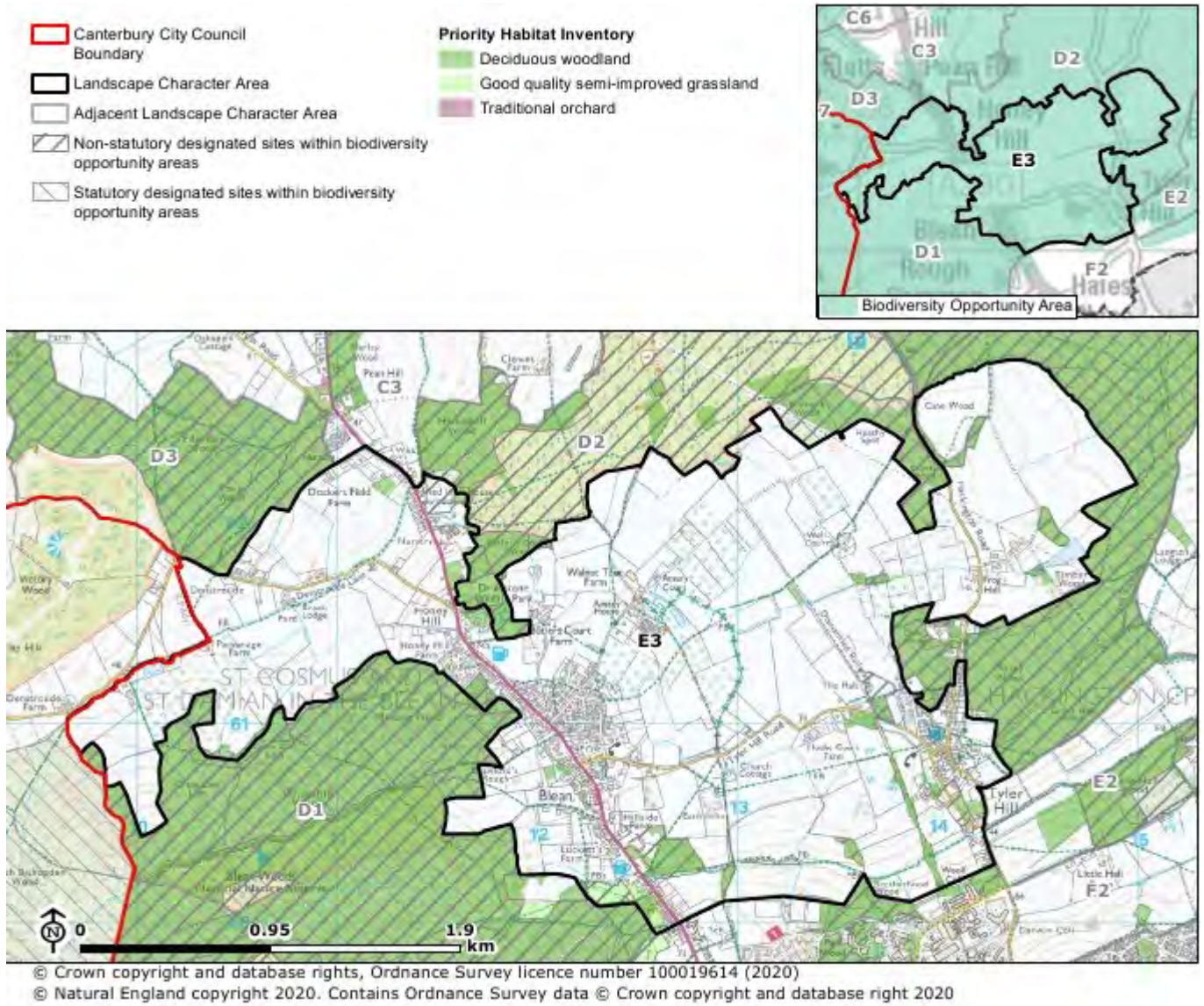
The use of polytunnels within some farmland is a distracting more modern feature in the landscape, as is the pylon route which runs through the north-east.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- Farmland landscape forming part of the wider Blean – a rural area with views contained by woodland with a strong sense of containment and enclosure.
- Mosaic of land uses including woodland, orchards and shelterbelts provide visual interest.
- The Sarre Penn and importance of this valley in defining the rural area and separation from the University of Kent on the adjacent Stour Valley slopes to the south.
- Ecologically important nationally and locally designated deciduous woodland and neutral/acidic grasslands.
- Remnants of the Medieval landscape of The Blean including historic field patterns, drove roads and evidence of Medieval settlement around St Cosmus and St Damian and Amery Court provides time depth and a sense of place.
- Route of dismantled Crab and Winkle Railway (now a Conservation Area) including the visible line of the route on tree covered embankment crossing the Sarre Penn, plus associated engineering features.
- Strong rural character present in close proximity to Canterbury City and integral part of the wider Blean landscape between Canterbury City and the coast.
- The ridge top settlement pattern along the roads (Blean and Tyler Hill), generally linear in form and well contained by the surrounding wooded/rural landscape.
- The open gaps and views into the rural landscape from the main north south road routes.
- General absence of roads within the wider landscape, with extensive PRoW network often on former drove and saltways providing access and linking to the surrounding woodlands, including the Crab and Winkle Way (NCN1).

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To enhance neutral grassland as part of the county-wide targets and protect fragmented areas of woodland within the Blean BOA.

The LCA lies within the Blean BOA, key relevant targets identified in relation to the BOA, include:

- No loss of ancient semi-natural woodland and its mosaic of associated habitats.
- Enhance and reconnect woodland to create a very extensive block of habitat, particularly through the maintenance and restoration of coppice management.

- Restore and enhance heath and acid grassland (including grazed wooded heath) as part of the woodland matrix.
- Create species-rich neutral grassland and to bring it to priority habitat lowland meadow quality.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include arable and horticulture, improved grassland and built up areas. There are some small fragments of deciduous ancient woodland within the LCA which is listed as a priority habitat.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

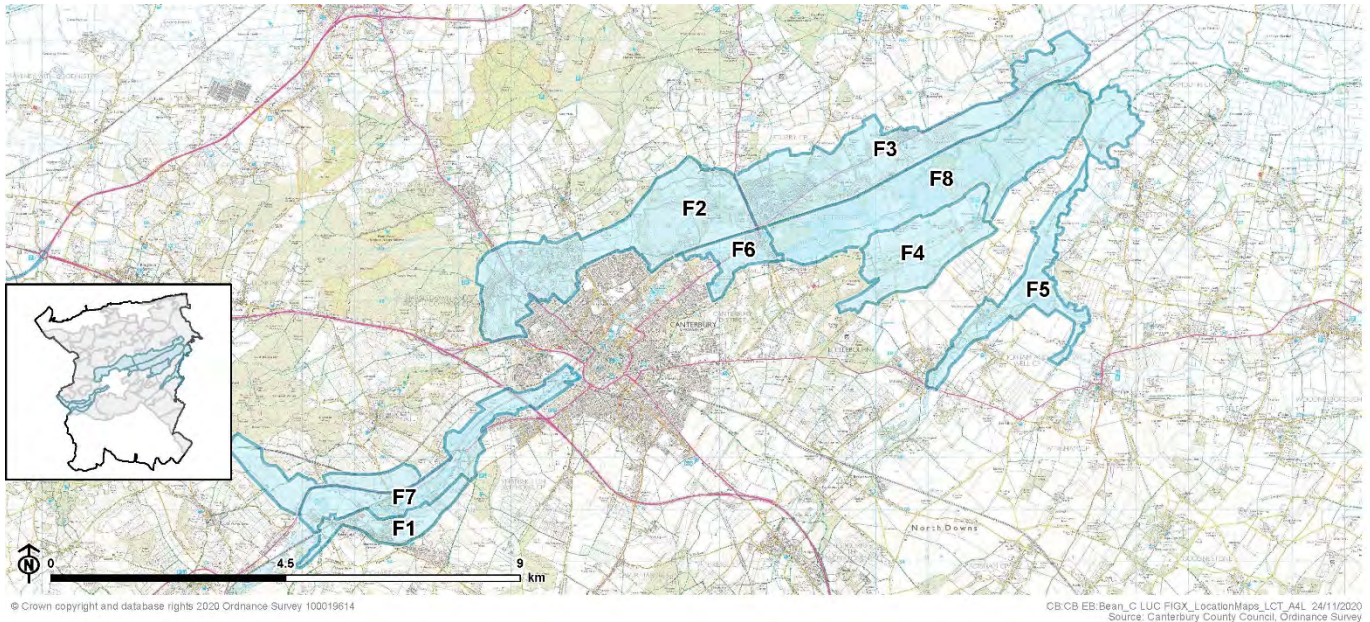
Landscape Management

- Conserve and enhance the biodiversity interest from watercourses and wetland habitats of the minor streams that cross the area including the Sarre Penn and Denstroude Brook.
- Enhance small, fragmented areas of deciduous woodland within this LCA to maintain and enhance the connection with other areas in the wider Blean area prevent further fragmentation and loss of connectivity.
- Increase the extent of native deciduous woodland, using locally occurring native species in order to link to existing woodland. Seek to avoid the introduction of coniferous boundaries or shelterbelts.
- Conserve, enhance and create neutral and acid grassland, which covers a substantial area of this LCA as part of the county-wide targets.
- Habitat opportunity mapping identified key opportunities within the BOA for habitat creation of fertile soils woodland, neutral grassland and a small section of acid grassland and heath.
- Manage and enhance the arable fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins and other wildlife-friendly farming methods.
- Conserve and improve the traditional/Medieval landscape pattern and structure, as well as increasing biodiversity interest through the maintenance of hedgerows along roadsides and along historic field boundaries.
- Conserve and enhance historic field patterns and features including the earthworks at St Cosmus and Damian church (Scheduled Monument) and other isolated boundaries and features representing the Medieval landscape pattern including the drove roads, saltways and meadows and hedgerows.

Development Management

- Conserve the local distinctiveness of historic buildings and their rural setting, particularly within the Amery Court, Blean and Tyler Hill Conservation Areas. Traditional local building materials are red stock brick and clay tiles although a modern 20th century vernacular predominates.
- Maintain the essentially linear pattern of Blean and Tyler Hill villages avoiding further infilling or extensions that would create a greater urban extent. Maintain the open rural gaps along the main north south road routes allowing views into the wider rural landscape and woodland, maintaining separation between built areas.
- Conserve and enhance the integration of urban edges, through native wooded boundaries and mature trees to provide visual screening and reduce the impact of built development and integrate settlements within their wooded setting.
- Conserve the rural character of the landscape ensuring that it continues to play a role in the separation of Blean and Tyler Hill with Rough Common and the University of Kent to the south, and particularly the role of the Sarre Penn Valley in defining the southern edge of development in relation to the Stour Valley slopes.
- Seek to avoid high rise and tall development/infrastructure on the crest of the Stour Valley slopes to the south of this area.
- Maintain the limited road access within the area away from the main north-south routes and maintain the rural character of the few lanes that cross the area.
- Protect the valued recreation access opportunities represented by the numerous PRoW and locally promoted routes linking Canterbury City, the Blean woodlands and the coast.

LCT F: River Valleys



Description

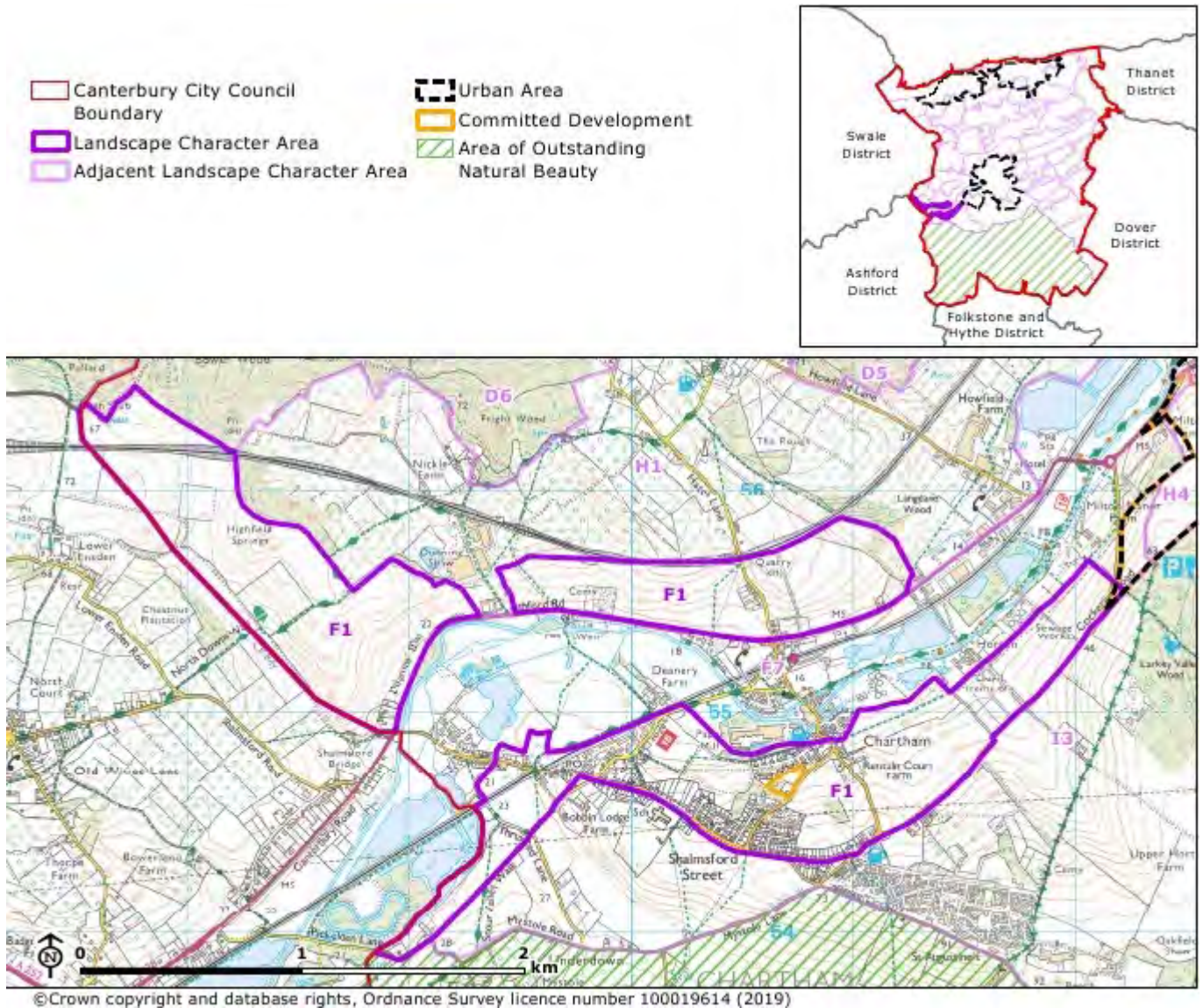
This LCT is distinguished by the Great Stour River and Little Stour River valleys, comprising the flat floodplain and rising slopes above the course of the rivers. There are a variety of land uses including floodplain grazing, pasture, arable, and orchards. There are small villages on the higher ground, and some modern development close to Canterbury.

Landscape Character Areas

The River Valleys LCT is subdivided into eight LCAs:

- F1: Stour Valley Sides
- F2: Stour Valley Slopes
- F3: Hersden Ridge
- F4: Stodmarsh Ridge
- F5: Little Stour Valley
- F6: Stour Valley - Sturry and Fordwich
- F7: Stour Valley West
- F8: Westbere and Stodmarsh Valley

F1: Stour Valley Sides



Location and Summary

The Stour Valley Sides LCA is in the west of the district and divided into three sections; each forming part of the steeply sloping chalk valley sides of the Great Stour Valley and including the villages of Shalmsford Street and Chartham. The landscape comprises large scale dramatically undulating arable fields, bound by mature tree hedgerows.

Representative Photographs



Views across sloping arable field to other side of Stour valley, with paper mill visible and Blean woods in background.



Sloping arable field with conifers surrounding cemetery



Historic buildings and telephone pylons in Chartham village, with paper mill chimney in the background



Open arable field with wooded ridgeline



Open arable field with wooded ridgeline



Sloping pasture fields with wooded ridgeline and pylon

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Steeply undulating chalk slopes with well drained chalky loam soils with narrow seams of silty deposits.
- Large-scale open arable fields, with occasional areas of grazing pasture.
- Mature hedgerows and small blocks of mature trees help to maintain a sense of the field structure.
- Settlement confined to Chartham and Shalmsford Street, including Grade II listed buildings.
- Narrow winding lanes enclosed by mature hedgerows.
- Some PRow linking to the Stour Valley.
- Modern development prominent on the Shalmsford Street ridge.
- Long views across the Stour Valley to the Blean Woods to the north and North Kent Downs to the south.

Natural Character

This LCA is divided into three parts, on the steep chalk slopes, either side of the Stour Valley, north and south of Chartham. The northern slopes rise from 20 to 80m AOD and from 15 to 50m AOD in the south.

The distinct chalk slopes provide well-drained, chalky loam soils, with narrow seams of silty drift deposits in the dry valley depressions. These good quality soils support cereals and grassland in rotation. Biodiversity interest is relatively limited and includes the southern portion of Langdane Wood and a small ancient woodland site which falls within the wider Blean Woods South LWS and contains priority habitat deciduous woodland. Other ancient woodlands are located to the north of Shalmsford Street. There is also an area of priority habitat good quality semi-improved grassland in the west.

The landscape contains mature hedgerows and occasional small blocks of undesignated woodland. There is some scrub land and wet woodland within Chartham which relates to the adjacent Great Stour River and often floods.

Cultural influence

The Kent HLC identifies these fields to be prairie fields with extensive boundary loss as a result of 19th century expansion on the east and medium scale Parliamentary type enclosure in the west with straight boundaries. There is also some possible late Medieval 17th/18th century enclosure identified by the HLC in the south-east.

The village of Shalmsford Street in the south is built along the ridge line. This village has expanded east along Shalmsford Street during the 20th century with small residential estates of standardised housing. There is a no clear pattern in either building material or style, with red brick, stone and rendered properties all present. There are two Grade II listed buildings

within Shalmsford Street as well as telephone pylons and large modern mixed function buildings.

The south of the village of Chartham lies in the southernmost section of the LCA. There are a number of Grade II listed buildings constructed of red brick or timber-framing fronting the road. These contrast with 20th century bungalows in the west of the village. The Chartham Conservation Area covers the listed buildings within Chartham and Shalmsford Street and the open fields between the settlements.

Large agricultural silos are a distinctive feature when entering the village from the south. The chimney of the paper mill in Chartham (although to the north of the LCA) is also a prominent landmark on skylines.

Elsewhere scattered farmsteads and older cottages are hidden along rural lanes. A small cemetery extends up the northern slopes from the A28 forming a prominent feature in the local landscape, although the Chartham Conservation Area appraisal indicates that the cemetery retains a special sense of place.

Perceptual qualities

The landscape is open and expansive with large rolling fields, which often provide panoramic views across the Stour Valley to the rural landscape beyond. There is a strong seasonal variation, associated with ploughed fields, spring growth and harvesting. However, in places the undulating topography and mature hedgerows, particularly along the narrow winding lanes, contains views and provides enclosure. Where internal field boundaries have been removed for agricultural intensification, the landscape is more open.

Despite the presence of settlement, the landscape has a largely rural and removed character. The road network is comprised of a mixture of narrow hedge-lined lanes, open lanes and suburban style streets associated with settlements.

The A28 runs along the edge of part of the character area, whilst the railway line runs along part of the northern boundary.

Detracting features include the noise associated with the A28 and railway line, and visual disruption from pylon routes crossing through the south of the area. The residential development in Shalmsford Street is often poorly sited along the valley sides and ridges and makes no reference to local vernacular. The paper mill in Chartham is also a dominant detracting feature in the landscape.

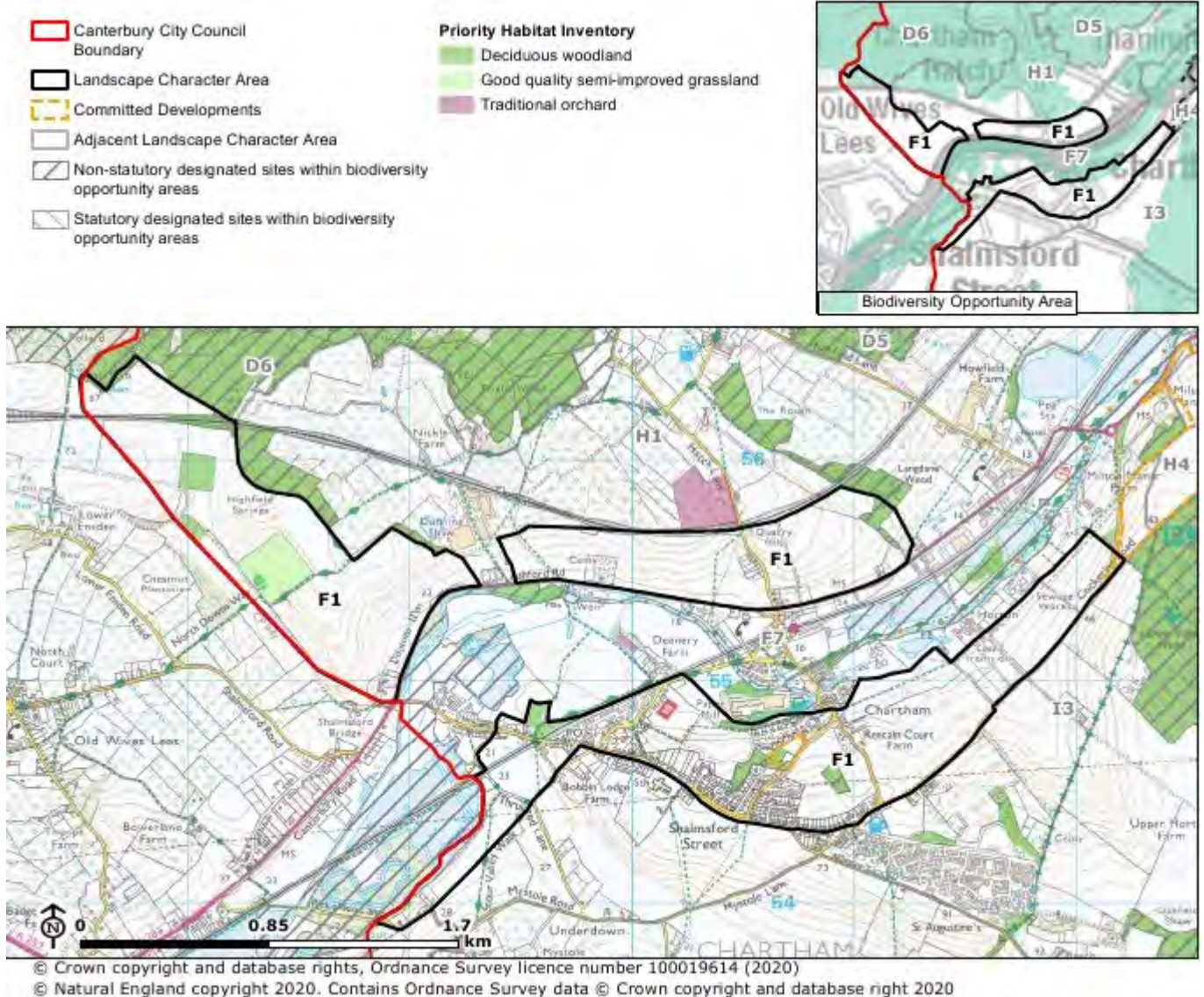
There are a number of PRoW through the landscape, including the North Downs Way in the west and Stour Valley Walk Long Distance Footpath in the south-west. These PRoW connect to the Great Stour River to the east and west and to the Blean woods to the north.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- Steeply sloping landform, with contrast between high open elevated farmlands and more enclosed shallower slopes.
- Open entirely undeveloped slopes north of the Great Stour River (Highfield Springs).
- Occasional ecologically important areas including pockets of priority habitat deciduous woodland and semi-improved grassland, ancient woodland and Blean Woods South LWS.
- Remnant areas of intact historic field pattern provides a sense of place and time-depth.
- The historic settlement of Chartham retains a distinctive building vernacular and contains several listed buildings and is designated as a Conservation Area.
- Good network of PRoW including part of the North Downs Way and Stour Valley Walk Long Distance Footpath are valued for recreation.
- Long distance views across undulating landform to the Blean woodlands to the north.
- Open steeply sloping valley slopes highly visible from surrounding landscape, including the valley floor.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To enhance improved and neutral grasslands and bring them to species rich grassland priority habitat quality.

A very small part of this LCA lies within the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA. Broad habitat types present within the LCA include arable and horticulture, improved grassland, broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland and neutral grassland. Habitats of key importance within the LCA include priority habitat deciduous woodland and good quality semi-improved grassland, and ancient woodland.

As only a small portion of the LCA lies within a BOA, there are limited opportunities to restore or create habitat which will be of strategic importance within the district.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

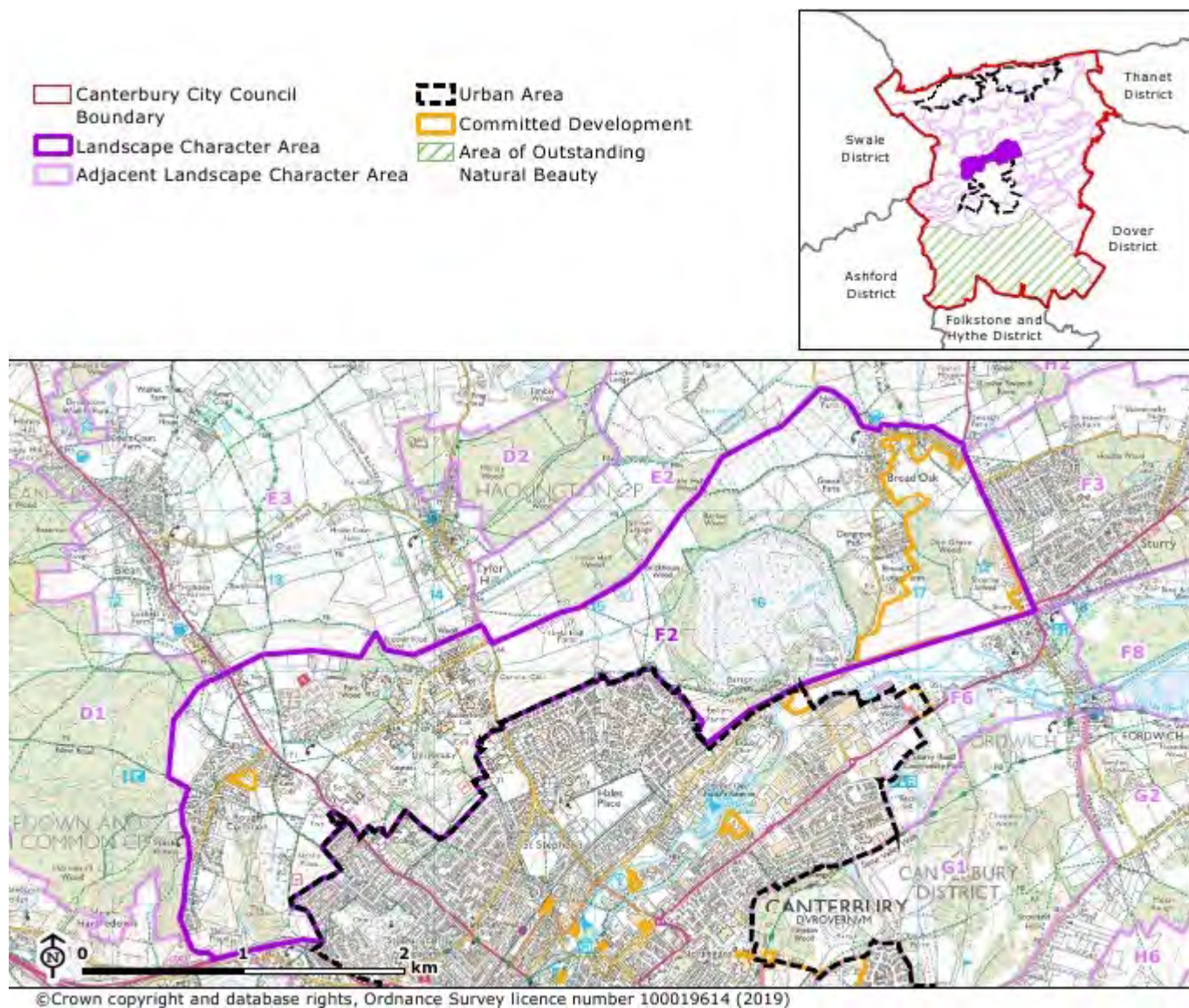
Landscape Management

- Protect and conserve ancient woodland and existing woodland priority habitat. This should include strengthening of habitat connectivity by restoring hedgerows and woodland corridors, particularly linking to Denstead Woods in the north.
- Protect grassland priority habitat. This includes strengthening habitat connectivity and creating buffers by restoring improved grassland to neutral grassland habitat around existing priority habitat and to the BOA, and reinstating management of the Blean Woods South LWS.
- Manage and enhance the wildlife interest of agricultural fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins and other wildlife-friendly farming methods.
- Conserve and improve the traditional landscape pattern and structure, as well as increasing biodiversity interest through the maintenance and re-creation of hedgerows, particularly for internal field boundaries.
- Encourage the replacement of unsympathetic coniferous shelterbelts with native deciduous species where present.

Development Management

- Conserve the local distinctiveness of historic buildings and their rural setting, particularly within the Chartham Conservation Area.
- Conserve the traditional pattern and structure of the landscape by improving the continuity of hedgerow and shelterbelt features to enhance the field pattern.
- Assess new building proposals to ensure that an attractive and integrated edge is formed with the adjacent rural and open landscape. This is important for existing village edges as well as proposed new strategic allocations to the east at Cockerling Farm.
- Conserve and enhance the integration of urban edges, through native wooded boundaries and mature trees to provide visual screening and reduce the impact of built development on the open and exposed landscape.
- Resist unsympathetic proposals that introduce extensive or obtrusive elements on the visually sensitive ridgeline and steeply sloping valley sides, particularly to the north and south of the Great Stour River.
- Any proposals for highway upgrading should retain the rural hedged character of the roads and lanes.
- Protect the valued recreational use of the landscape, seeking opportunities to further enhance opportunities for access and enjoyment.

F2: Stour Valley Slopes



Location and Summary

The Stour Valley Slopes LCA is characterised by slopes rising from the Stour Valley and forms a distinctive ridge north of Canterbury City. It is a mixed area of pasture, orchards and contains land used for landfill and quarrying as well as the University of Kent campus and other educational establishments. The ridgeline forms the northern boundary, with the settlement edges of Sturry and Canterbury City forming the eastern and southern boundaries while the western boundary is formed by the Blean Woods.

Representative Photographs



Orchards with post and wire fencing and pylons



Educational and recreational facilities



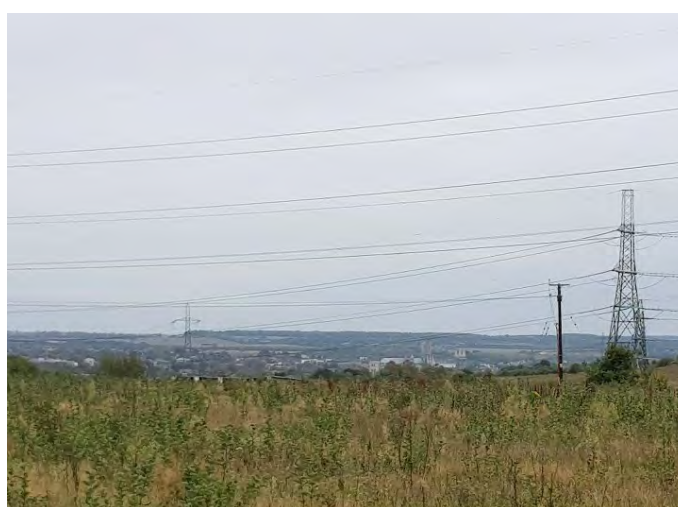
Shelford landfill and gas recovery



Den Grove Wood



Rolling grazing land with parkland character



Views across the Stour Valley to Canterbury City and the Kent Downs AONB beyond

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Sloping topography underlain by a relatively complex geology, rising from 10m AOD to a distinct ridgeline in the north at 75m AOD.
- Blocks of priority habitat deciduous woodland connect to the Blean Woods to the north and north-west.
- Mixed land use including orchards, arable and sloping pasture fields plus educational establishments set within parkland and sports grounds.
- Historic field pattern including post-Medieval and Parliamentary enclosure and remnant parkland, supported by fragmented hedgerows.
- Residential development concentrated within Rough Common and Broad Oak villages, with a number of Grade II listed large farmhouses and halls, with modern infill suburban development.
- Disturbed landscape which includes the Shelford former quarry and landfill site.
- University of Kent campus creates a campus parkland landscape setting for buildings.
- Good PRoW network, which provides connections to the Blean Woods and between settlements.
- Views south to Canterbury Cathedral and the Kent Downs AONB contrast with the more contained views north-east and west from woodland cover. Skyline backdrop in views from the south providing 'setting' for the Cathedral.

Natural Influences

The Stour Valley Slopes rise above the valley and form a definite ridge north of Canterbury City. The area rises from 10m AOD in the south-east along the railway line to 75m AOD in the north-west adjacent to the Blean Woods. The area is underlain by London Clay with Woolwich and Reading beds sandstones at the base of the valley. There are deposits of river terrace gravels in the south-west around The Grove.

There are small watercourses and springs throughout the area, and the soils are seasonally waterlogged. Around Rough Common the soils form a complex pattern of flinty coarse loams over gravelly brown earths which are mostly under grass. The lower slopes towards Broad Oak have the same deep, well-drained, often stoneless soils as the fruit belts areas. These variations in soils create a mixed land cover.

Blocks of woodland occur throughout the area, many of which are ancient and priority habitat deciduous woodland. The woods are part of and connected to the adjacent extensive ancient Blean Woods. Part of the West Blean and Thornden Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) extends into this area, covering Barton Wood, Shelford Wood and Beecham Wood in the east. Brickhouse Wood in the north is part of the Little Hall and Kemberland Woods and Pasture Local Wildlife Site (LWS).

There are small areas of priority habitat good quality semi-improved grassland connected to the woodland, including in the north-west, designated as the Blean Pastures LWS.

The undeveloped grass slopes are in use as medium-sized pasture fields, particularly east of St Stephen's Hill. There are larger arable fields east of Shalloak Road, and small areas of traditional orchard south of Broad Oak. Hedgerows are often fragmented and only form a loose network of ecological

corridors linking the woodland blocks. Polytunnels for fruit growing are a dominant feature in the farmed landscape to the east.

Cultural Influences

This area once formed part of the Blean Woodlands and much of the woodland clearance may be the result of the thriving 9th century pottery and ceramics industry and subsequent Medieval brick and tile manufacture that relied on the use of local clay and charcoal. The brick and tile industry, which was centred on Tyler Hill, continued until the 19th century.

The landscape pattern in the area is essentially Medieval. The Kent HLC categorises much of the area as having a post-Medieval field pattern, with rectilinear wavy boundary enclosure pattern in the south-east and straight-edged Parliamentary enclosure in the centre and west. There were also large areas of orchard in the north-east.

The former Hales Place estate lies to the east of St. Stephen's Hill. It was originally built for Archbishop Stephen Langton in 1227 and was a visiting place for Archbishops until the Dissolution. The estate was bought by the Hales family in 1675 who developed the house and parkland. Hales Place has been developed for housing, however remnant parkland in the form of parkland trees is still present including a group of trees known as 'The Square' to the north of the housing area.

The former Canterbury to Whitstable railway line ran through this LCA. The Tyler Hill Railway Tunnel along the route, now within the University of Kent campus, is the world's first modern railway tunnel on a passenger steam railway and is the only Grade II* listed structure in the area. The former railway line is now in use as the popular Crab and Winkle Way cycle route.

Modern development at Rough Common and Broad Oak has grown up around the scattered Grade II listed small halls and large farmsteads. The detached and semi-detached red brick houses are generally set among mature trees, which softens their appearance. There are a number of Conservation Areas which overlap into this area: Hothe Court; Harbledown; Tyler Hill; Allcroft Grange (Hackington); and a small area of Sturry in the south-east.

The University of Kent is sited along the ridgeline initially built in the 1960s. It is a campus style development with medium to large blocks of buildings set within generous amounts of open space.

The landscape has historically been disturbed by quarrying and the Shelford landfill site in the east is a dominant feature. There is a solar farm west of Broad Oak. A number of electricity pylon routes cross the area and there is a telecommunications tower north of Rough Common, plus prominent floodlighting associated with sports pitches.

The road network was established in medieval times as drove roads to the north Kent coast, and the majority of the current roads follow this pattern. Roads are generally steep and lined by mature trees or hedgerows, although there is some fragmentation.

Perceptual Influences

There are extensive views over Canterbury City from the south facing slopes with the Cathedral as a notable focal point. The best vantage points for these views are the slopes beneath the University, Neal's Place and across the grazed pastures of St Stephen's Hill at on the slopes towards Broad Oak/Sturry. At Neal's Place the view is framed by the landform of the open space. Following the valley side towards Broad Oak, views of the historic city diminish although there are

views to across the open valley setting as well as the more industrial landscape of the Stour Valley along the Sturry Road.

Where the gradient is less steep the enclosure from woodlands and buildings restricts all but local views in and out. This occurs to the north of Rough Common and north of the University beyond the steepest part of the slope as the landform starts to level and form part of The Blean and a more rural enclosed landscape.

This LCA with its pasture slopes backed by woodland on the ridge provides containment for Canterbury City and forms a backdrop for views from the City, including the World Heritage Site, and the eastern side of the Stour Valley. The University buildings, St Edmund's school and water tower at Neal's Place are striking elements on the ridgeline in many views from within and around the City.

There has been considerable fragmentation of the landscape, as shown by the Shelford landfill site and growth and expansion of the University of Kent. In contrast, the slopes from St. Stephen's Hill to Broad Oak are largely undeveloped and hence are more rural in character.

The electricity pylons through the area are a detracting feature, particularly where they appear on the highest ground. There has been hedgerow fragmentation and replacement with post and wire fencing. This combined with an apparent lack of management lends a neglected character to some parts of the landscape, particularly around Broad Oak. There is little tranquillity within the area due to its proximity to Canterbury City and the University of Kent campus.

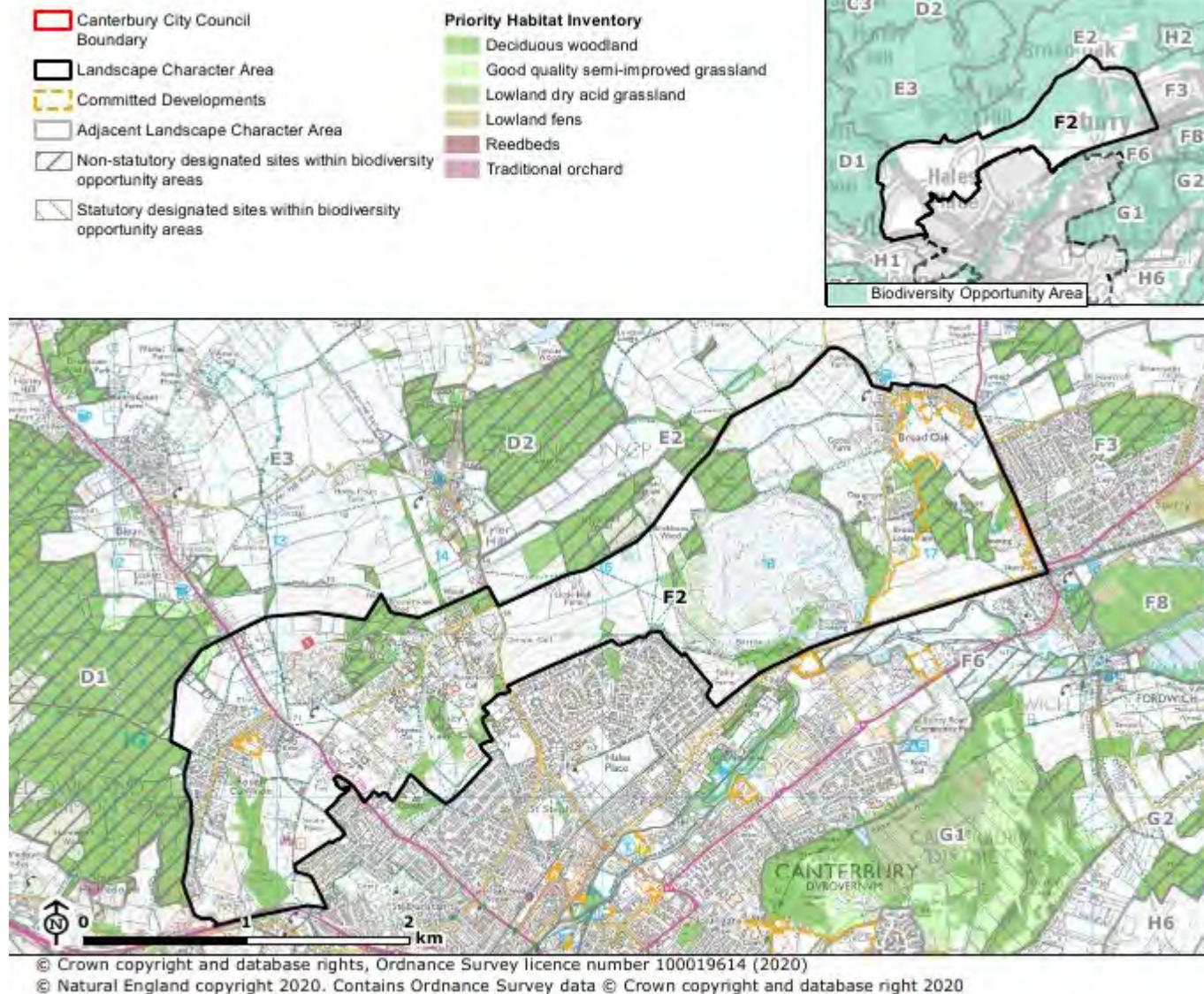
There is a good network of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) throughout the area, which provides connections to the Blean Woods to the north and north-west, as well as between surrounding settlements and Canterbury City.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- Distinctive sloping topography and largely undeveloped ridgeline/skyline which encloses views from, and containment for, Canterbury City – a backdrop in views over a wider area including views across the Stour Valley and the rural ridgeline setting for the Cathedral in long views from the south.
- Long views south over the Stour Valley and Canterbury City to the Kent Downs AONB with the Cathedral as a focal point. Cathedral is seen in a rural valley setting.
- Ecologically valued priority habitat deciduous woodland connected to the Blean Woods.
- Historic field pattern and remnant parkland character at Hales Place provides time depth.
- Scattered farmsteads and small halls designated nationally, and locally as listed buildings and Conservation Areas provide time depth.
- Rural landscape which provides a gap between adjacent small settlements including Rough Common, Tyler Hill, Broad Oak, Sturry and the University of Kent.
- Recreational value through a strong network of PRoW including part of the Crab and Winkle Way link to Whitstable.
- Open parkland of the University of Kent campus.
- Transition to the more rural undeveloped Blean landscape to the north.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To protect ancient and existing woodland priority habitat and to enhance woodland connectivity as part of the wider woodland network of the Blean BOA.

The east of this LCA lies partially within The Blean BOA, which sets out the following relevant key targets:

- No loss of ancient semi-natural woodland and its mosaic of associated habitats.
- Enhance and reconnect woodland to create a very extensive block of habitat, particularly through the maintenance and restoration of coppice management.
- Restore and enhance heath and acid grassland (including grazed wooded heath) as part of the woodland matrix.

- Create species-rich neutral grassland and to bring it to priority habitat Lowland Meadow quality.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include arable and horticulture, improved grassland, neutral grassland, broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland, Inland rock/Quarry and built up areas. Habitats of key importance within the LCA include priority habitat deciduous woodland and good quality semi improved grassland habitat.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

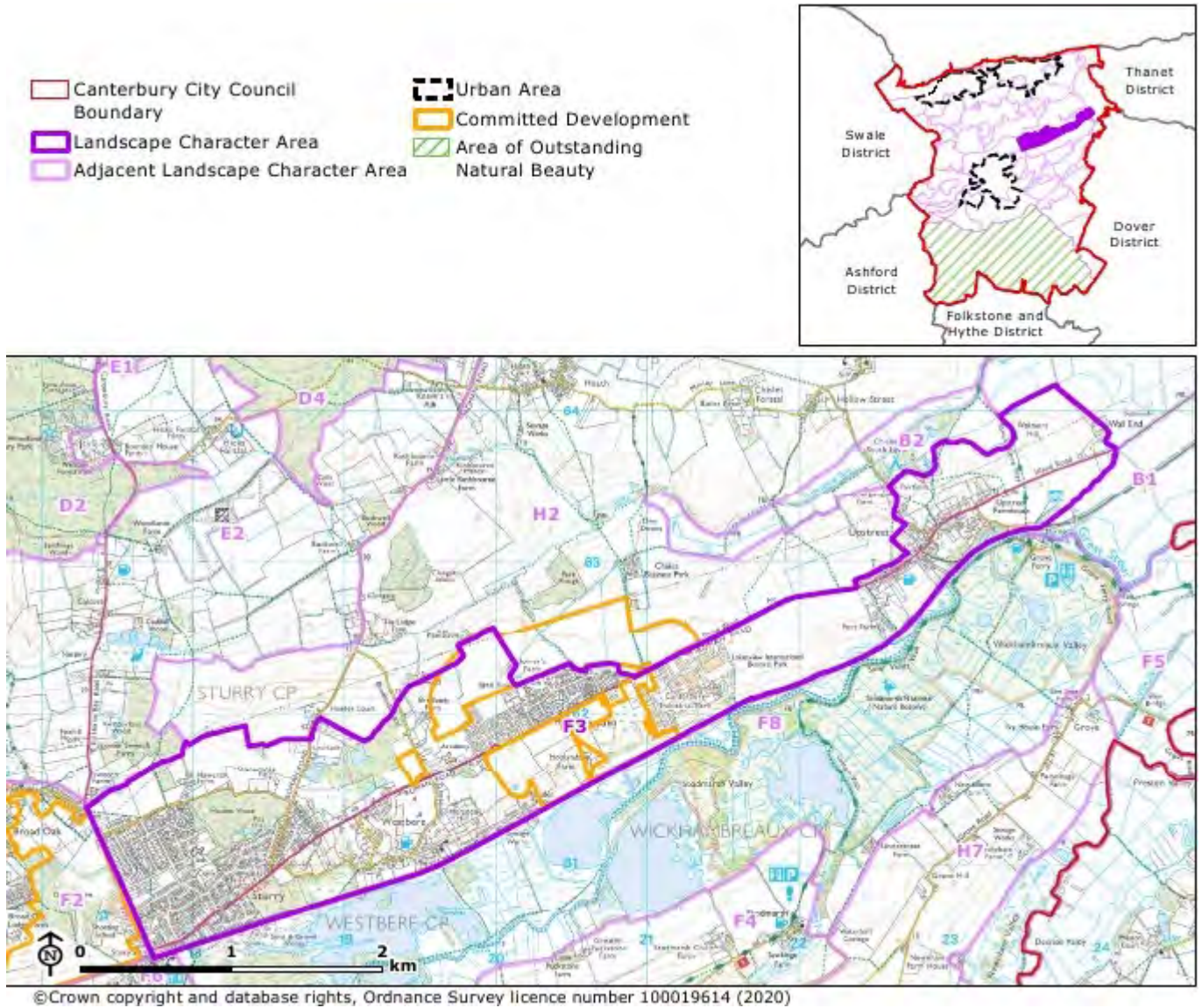
Landscape Management

- Protect and conserve ancient woodland and existing woodland priority habitat. This should include strengthening of habitat connectivity by restoring hedgerows and woodland corridors linking to the Blean Woods, and between woodlands around the University and Broad Oak. No further loss or fragmentation of ancient woodland should be permitted.
- Conserve and improve the traditional landscape pattern and structure, as well as increasing biodiversity interest, through the establishment and maintenance of hedgerows along historic field boundaries. Augment fragmented field boundary hedgerows with native species, replacing post and wire fencing where possible.
- Restore and enhance heath and acid grassland. Consider opportunities to create areas of species-rich neutral grassland y, particularly on the slopes overlooking Canterbury City.
- Conserve remnant orchards for their landscape and biodiversity value.
- Conserve and reinforce the parkland character around Hales Place, putting in place a programme of new parkland tree planting where appropriate.

Development Management

- Conserve the local distinctiveness of historic buildings and their rural setting, particularly within the Hothe Court, Harbledown, Tyler Hill and Allcroft Grange Conservation Areas.
- Conserve the rural character of the landscape ensuring that it continues to play a role in the separation of Rough Common and Blean; the University of Kent and Tyler Hill; and Sturry and Canterbury City.
- Conserve and enhance the integration of urban edges, through native wooded boundaries and mature trees to provide visual screening and reduce the impact of built development on the open and exposed landscape.
- Assess new building proposals within and adjacent to the urban area to ensure that an attractive and integrated edge is formed with the adjacent rural and open recreational landscapes. This is important for existing edges as well as proposed new strategic allocation at Sturry/Broad Oak.
- Conserve the role of the area as an essentially undeveloped backdrop and ridgeline in views framing Canterbury Cathedral and avoid unsympathetic land uses on the visually sensitive ridgelines including further tall structures, which would punctuate the skyline or overtop existing buildings.
- Conserve and enhance key views to the city and Cathedral in its valley setting across open fields from the rising valley slopes
- Ensure development at the University and educational establishments respects their open campus parkland character, with generous amenity grassland and appropriate 'parkland' tree planting and recognises the sensitive skyline locations. Seek opportunities to improve the integration of associated playing fields and sports pitches within the local landscape.
- Consider need for a landscape masterplan for the educational establishments in this area to provide a co-ordinated strategy for future development and expansion.
- Avoid extension of development on and beyond the ridgeline into the more rural Blean landscape to the north.

F3: Hersden Ridge



Location and Summary

The Hersden Ridge LCA rises above the Westbere and Stodmarsh Valley forming a distinct ridge utilised by the A28 and lined with blocks of development. It stretches from Sturry in the west to Upstreet in the east. The southern boundary of the LCA is formed by the Ashford to Ramsgate railway line which also marks the edge of the Westbere and Stodmarsh Valley.

The area is in a state of change influenced by the recent construction of housing in Hersden and the strategic allocations at land north of Hersden, Hoplands Farm and at the former Chislet Colliery.

Representative Photographs



Housing within Hersden located on the ridge is visually prominent from the surrounding landscape



All Saints Church (Grade I listed) in the village of Westbere



Canterbury Industrial Park visible from the Westbere and Stodmarsh Valley



Large arable fields with loss of field boundary hedgerows



Woodland separating the settlements of Sturry and Westbere



Island Road (A28) running along the ridge and lined with residential, commercial and industrial development

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Substantial and visually prominent ridge above the Stodmarsh Valley.
- Complex geology of sandstones and clay overlain with silts and gravel, including a SSSI at Sturry Pit designated for its considerable geological significance.
- Pockets of biodiversity interest including a small parcel of woodland and scrub habitat forming part of the Little Hall and Kemberland Woods and Pasture LWS, and an area accommodating a lichen heath community at the Former Hersden Colliery LWS.
- Scattered small to medium deciduous woodlands, some of which are ancient.
- Varied field pattern of small to large scale with some amalgamation and hedgerow boundary loss following agricultural intensification.
- Conservation Areas at both Westbere and Upstreet, providing a rural setting to some historic buildings including All Saints Church (Grade I listed building).
- Isolated settlements of diverse character with unsympathetic 20th century commercial and industrial development along the A28.
- Urban fringe activities such as horsiculture and playing fields.
- Views mainly enclosed by vegetation and built development, but wide and open from parts of the A28 ridge.

Natural Influences

The geology of the LCA is complex, formed from the sandstone of the Thanet, Woolwich and Oldhaven Beds and London Clay overlain with fine silty drift of head brickearth and gravel. Until 1969 deep coal measures were mined from within this LCA, although surface evidence associated with Chislet Colliery (which has since been demolished) is now gone. The Chislet Colliery Tip is designated as a RIGS. Along the western edge of the LCA lies the Sturry Pit SSSI; a small area of considerable geological significance containing the Pleistocene gravels of Sturry. To the north of the LCA the clay is cultivated for arable production, as are the large clay fields between Hersden and Upstreet which steeply descend from the ridge to the Stodmarsh Valley south of the area.

A small proportion of the LCA in the east was once a part of the former Wantsum Channel. However, in comparison to the remainder of the channel area, it doesn't contain any ditches or streams, and instead comprises large arable fields, resulting in there being no clear visible associations with the former channel and therefore forms the boundary to the Chislet Marshes, Sarre Penn and Preston Marshes LWS which wraps around the eastern edge of the LCA.

The Former Hersden Colliery LWS is situated in the centre of this LCA containing a lichen heath community that has established on the consolidated colliery waste. A strategic allocation now applies to this site. Small parcels of woodland and scrub habitat to the north of Sturry and Westbere are

locally designated as the Little Hall and Kemberland Woods and Pasture LWS, and partly cross the LCA at its western end.

Small to medium areas of priority habitat mixed deciduous woodland are scattered across the LCA and include ancient woodlands at Hoades / Lady Wood in Sturry and a small copse off Roman Road located between Westbere and Hersden. An area of priority habitat lowland fens is located to the south-east of Sturry and to the north of the Westbere Marshes. Many hedgerows have been removed following amalgamation to create large arable fields across the upper slopes, supplemented by post and wire fencing in places. Smaller scale fields enclosed by mature fragmented hedgerows, are located around built up areas. These are mainly farmed for crop production, but some are used for urban fringe activities such as horsiculture and playing fields.

Cultural Influences

Much of the land has been classified in the Kent HLC as prairie fields with 19th century enclosure (resulting in extensive boundary loss). Areas around the periphery of the Sturry, Westbere and Hersden settlements are typically pastoral comprising small regular fields with straight boundaries (Parliamentary type enclosure), and to the north-east of Upstreet are rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries (late Medieval to 17th / 18th century enclosure).

The historic village of Westbere is situated in the west of the LCA and lies within a Conservation Area. It is isolated from other residential areas by topography and has therefore retained its character, although some late 20th century fringe development has expanded the village outskirts. Within the village are many examples of buildings in local vernacular style with flint, brick and weatherboard the primary materials. Elsewhere older properties have been engulfed by 20th century development, uncharacteristic of the area. The village contains a cluster of Grade II listed buildings situated along Westbere Lane, along with Westbere House (Grade II* listed) which was at one time owned by the writer Joseph Conrad. All Saints Church lies within the core of the village and is a mostly Medieval Grade I listed church built of flint and a chancel built of puddingstone.

To the east of Westbere lies Hersden; a former mining village that was developed as part of Abercrombie's Regional Plan for East Kent to provide housing for miners at Chislet Colliery in the early 1900s. It was originally designed for 1000 homes by architect J Skipper and was to include a village green, church, institute, rectory, school, swimming pool, shops and inn. Chislet Colliery closed in 1969 and the planned village was only partially realised. Recent housing development has been built on the western outskirts of Hersden, increasing the presence of built development within the landscape.

The village of Upstreet is situated at the eastern end of the LCA with part of it forming a conservation area. The village consists as a linear roadside settlement that sits astride Island Road (A28) and is characterised by a sequence of buildings of varying sizes and styles together with areas of mature wooded landscape.

Perceptual Influences

The LCA is bisected by Island Road (A28); a Roman Road which linked Canterbury to Richborough. It runs east to west across the top of the ridge and provides extensive views since it is open on either side, including broad views across the large arable fields which stretch across the landscape towards the village of Hoath in the north and views of the Westbere and Stodmarsh Valley to the south. Views are more restricted around areas of settlement as they tend to be enclosed by vegetation and built development.

There are many detracting features along the road, resulting in there being a sense of incoherency. Residential areas are vastly different in character and are interrupted by a large modern car showroom as well as light industrial units within the Canterbury Industrial Park (which occupy the former colliery site, with some shale remaining on former spoil heaps). These industrial units are visible from the surrounding landscape including from the sensitive Westbere and Stodmarsh Valley to the south. At Hersden, institutional style housing is located on the ridge and is also highly visible from the surrounding landscape, with recent development having extended this settlement, increasing the built character of the area. Without its original function of serving the colliery it now sits isolated in the landscape. There are also scattered farms with land fragmented by areas of residential development

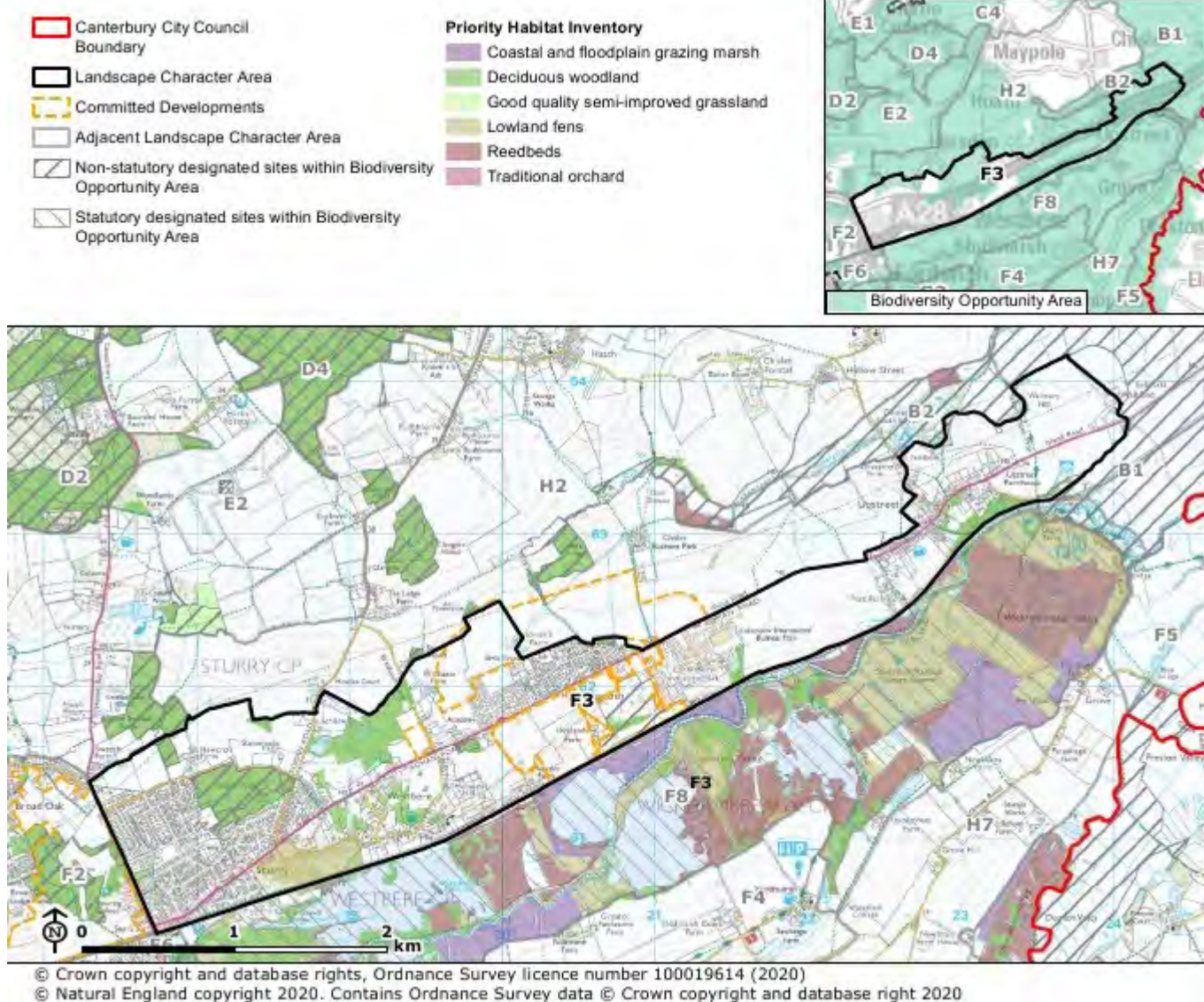
The landscape plays some role in separating the settlement of Sturry to both Hersden and Westbere, with the areas between these settlements mainly consisting of woodland and pasture. However, the proximity of these settlements from one another and the presence of some isolated development within the gaps weakens the perception of an open landscape in between the built-up areas.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- The visually prominent ridge is intervisible with the surrounding landscape.
- Limited areas of valuable habitats including woodland and scrub habitat at the Little Hall and Kemberland Woods and Pasture LWS and the area of priority habitat lowland fens.
- The remaining areas of ancient semi-natural woodland at Hoades / Lady Wood and along Roman Road, forming part of a priority habitat.
- The small, isolated and historic village of Westbere and its distinctive local vernacular of flint, brick and weatherboard – a Conservation Area – with many historic buildings including the Grade I listed All Saints Church.
- Rural setting to Westbere and Upstreet, with the former having retained its character due to its sense of isolation from the surrounding landscape.
- The role of the LCA in providing separation between Sturry and Hersden / Westbere, where development is limited.
- Wide and open long-distance views from parts of the A28 ridge.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To protect, restore and create woodland and associated habitats, as part of the wider woodland network of the Blean BOA.

This LCA lies within the Blean BOA, which sets out the following relevant key targets:

- No loss of ancient semi-natural woodland and its mosaic of associated habitats.
- To enhance and reconnect woodland to create a very extensive block of habitat, particularly through the maintenance and restoration of coppice management.
- To restore and enhance heath and acid grassland (including grazed wooded heath) as part of the woodland matrix.

- To create species-rich neutral grassland to bring it to priority habitat Lowland Meadow quality.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include arable and horticulture, improved grassland, neutral grassland, broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland and built up areas. Habitats of key importance within the LCA include ancient woodland and deciduous woodland, which is listed as a priority habitat.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

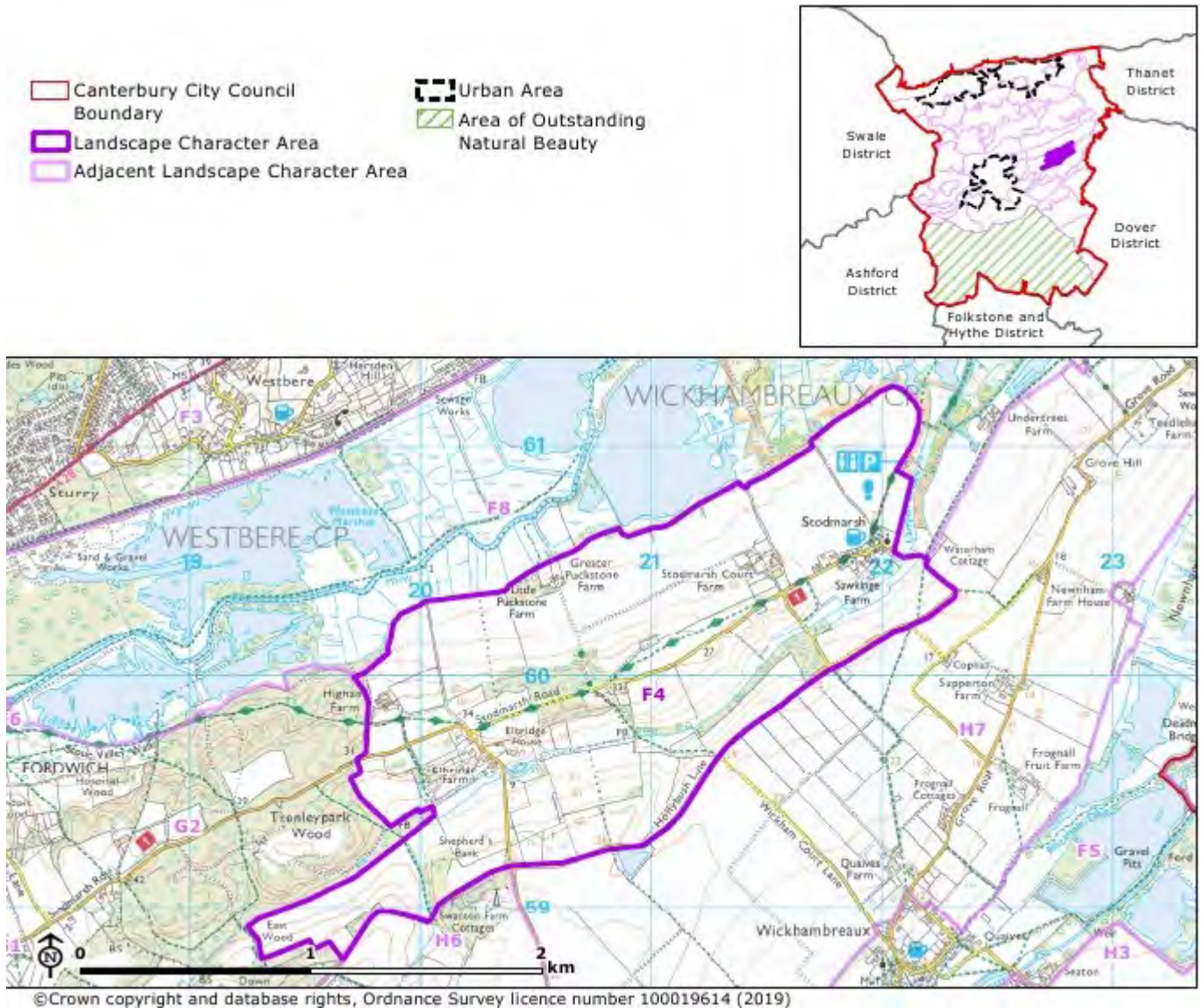
Landscape Management

- Protect the landscape's valued semi-natural habitats including at the Little Hall and Kemberland Woods and Pasture LWS, priority habitat mixed deciduous woodland (including ancient woodland) and the area of priority habitat lowland fens.
- Increase the extent of native deciduous woodland, using locally occurring native species in order to link to existing woodland and to strengthen habitat connectivity. Seek to avoid the introduction of coniferous boundaries/shelterbelts.
- Create habitat buffers to protect and enhance habitats associated with designated sites, including those to the south within the Westbere and Stodmarsh Valley.
- Conserve and enhance areas of neutral grassland bringing it up to priority habitat quality and seeking to extend and buffer neutral grassland areas where appropriate.
- Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA including the creation of acid grassland and heath and neutral grassland across the LCA, fertile soil woodland in the north and east of Hersden and acid soil woodland to the south of Port Farm.
- Manage and enhance the wildlife interest of agricultural fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins and other wildlife-friendly farming methods.
- Improve and restore the traditional landscape pattern and structure, as well as increasing biodiversity interest through the establishment and maintenance of hedgerows along roadsides and historic field boundaries, while retaining long distance views from the A28.

Development Management

- Resist unsympathetic proposals that introduce extensive or obtrusive elements on the visually sensitive valley sides and ridgeline. Tree screening, muted colours, varied rooflines, cladding and non-reflective surfaces will help provide mitigation and integration.
- Conserve and enhance the integration of urban edges, through native wooded boundaries and mature trees to provide visual screening and reduce the impact of built development on the open and exposed landscape. This is important for existing edges as well as the new strategic allocations north of Hersden, at Hoplands Farm and at the former Chislet Colliery.
- Conserve the local distinctiveness of historic buildings, particularly within the Westbere Conservation Area and maintain its rural and detached character by resisting unsuitable proposals for new development on the outskirts of the village.
- Conserve areas of rural and wooded character where they provide a well-defined distinction between the rural landscape and the settlement edges of Sturry, Westbere and Hersden.

F4: Stodmarsh Ridge



Location and Summary

The Stodmarsh Ridge LCA is located to the south of the Westbere and Stodmarsh valley, and north of the Lampen Stream valley. It comprises a distinctive central ridge that runs east to west, from the village of Stodmarsh to the edge of Trenley Park Wood. It is crossed along its length by the Lampen Stream and contained along its southern edge by Hollybush Lane.

Representative Photographs



Pasture on the ridge used for grazing



The village of Stodmarsh including the Church of St Mary (Grade I listed)



The Stour Valley Walk Long Distance Footpath running through Long Shot Wood



Long distance views across the Westbere and Stodmarsh Valley



Steep slopes to the Lampen Stream Valley with views over the adjacent fruit belt to the south



Elbridge Farmhouse (Grade II* listed) situated within Elbridge House Conservation Area

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- An isolated undulating landscape composed of a prominent ridge landform between two valleys forming a prominent backdrop and skyline.
- Small to medium scale fields comprising a square and rectangular pattern.
- Fragmented mature hedgerows with standard oaks.
- Blocks of broadleaved deciduous woodland habitats forming part of the Swanton Aerial Site, Littlebourne LWS and Trenley Park, Fordwich LWS, as well as an area of ancient woodland at Long Shot Wood.
- Isolated settlements scattered residential properties and farmsteads of historic interest.
- Containing the Stodmarsh Conservation Area and providing a rural setting to the many historic buildings including Church of St Mary (Grade I listed building).
- Encompassing most of the Lampen Stream Conservation Area, providing protection to the special character of the stream including the meadowland and woodland on the lower stretches of the watercourse.
- Encompassing most of the Elbridge House Conservation Area providing protection to historic houses and their landscape setting (a former country park).
- Crossed by the Stour Valley Walk Long Distance Footpath running along the ridge, with opportunities for some long-distance views.

Natural Influences

The central ridge that characterises the LCA has been formed by steep south-facing valley slopes to the Lampen Stream and more gentle slopes that descend towards the Great Stour River in the north. Its geology comprises a complex pattern of sandstone derived from the Thanet and Oldhaven beds, overlain with the fine silty drift deposits of head brickearth and river terrace gravels. The field pattern is generally on a smaller, more intimate scale within the Lampen Stream Valley and along the ridge, where the land is classified as being poorer quality in terms of agriculture, consisting of pasture and meadows used for grazing cattle. To the north larger cereal fields are located on better quality land made up of silty soils.

Small areas of priority habitats in the form of mature broadleaved deciduous woodland exist within the LCA, including a block of ancient woodland at Long Shot Wood. There is also an increased wooded presence which now exists along the dense riparian corridor to the Lampen Stream. A small parcel of woodland and acid grassland lies in the south west corner of the LCA forming part of the Swanton Aerial Site Littlebourne LWS. The LCA also encompasses a very small part of the Trenley Park Fordwich LWS which consists as an expansive network of small interconnecting woodlands that link to the larger Trenley Park Wood. Elsewhere the LCA comprises a mixture of arable land with smaller parcels of improved pasture and woodland.

The Lampen Stream flows through the valley below the ridge to the south and upstream of where it enters Stodmarsh Nature Reserve, which abuts the north-eastern corner of the LCA. This gives the watercourse particular conservation value due to its influence on internationally important wetland habitat downstream. It is also part of the Lampen Stream Conservation Area, designated to protect the special character of the stream that includes meadows and woodland on the lower stretches of the watercourse.

Narrow winding hedge lined lanes lead into this isolated character area. Hedgerows are well maintained, but fragmented in some places, and contain standard oaks.

Cultural Influences

Throughout the area fields are typically square or rectangular with straight boundaries, classified as 19th century Parliamentary type enclosure by the Kent HLC.

Settlement is restricted to the linear village of Stodmarsh in the east, containing isolated historic farmsteads and infrequent scattered cottages. Stodmarsh is designated as a Conservation Area and known to have been settled since Saxon times with earliest documentary evidence dating from 678AD. Its name has its origins in the Saxon word 'stode' or mare when the area was devoted to breeding horses. A Saxon barrow in the area has revealed a number of antiquities. Many of the buildings in Stodmarsh reflect the historic character of

the village, built in vernacular materials such as weatherboard, brick, half tile hung and flint. A large proportion of the buildings are historic and Grade II listed, as well as the Grade I listed Church of St Mary.

The Lampen Stream Conservation Area also protects historic buildings (as well as the special character of the stream), including the Grade II listed Kingsley House, Waterham Cottage and Barn at Undertrees Farm.

Elbridge House is another Conservation Area in the western part of the LCA, comprising a collection of historic houses (including the Grade II* listed Elbridge Farmhouse) set within former parkland dating back to the 15th century that includes a small lake. Evidence of former hop production is indicated by the immaculately maintained oasthouses of Elbridge Farm.

Perceptual Influences

Given the elevated nature of the LCA, long distance views are afforded from along the ridge, although restricted in some places by intervening topography and vegetation. Views exist to the south over the adjacent fruit belt which includes an array of polytunnels on sloping ground forming visual detractors, and views across the Westbere and Stodmarsh Valley to the north, with steep valley slopes beyond, ascending towards the settlement of Hersden. The ridge is visually prominent from these surrounding areas resulting in intervisibility.

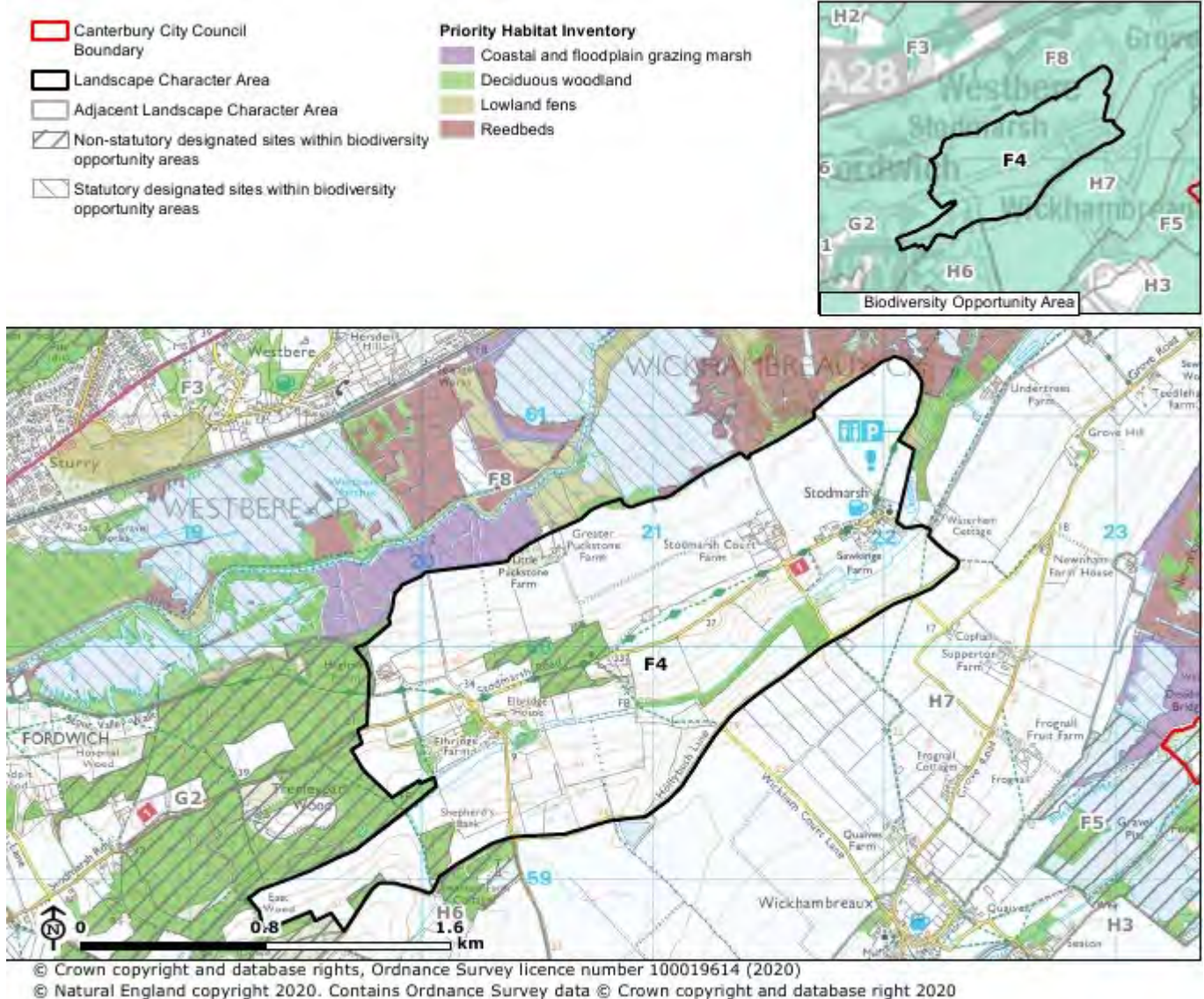
The Stour Valley Walk Long Distance Footpath runs along the top of the ridge, following Stodmarsh Road in part. The road is relatively quiet, consisting as a rural lane with a mixture of openness and enclosure along its route, as hedgerows along its edges are fragmented and have been replaced by uncharacteristic post and wire fencing where they have been lost.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- Visually prominent and exposed ridgeline with steep valley slopes forming a backdrop and skyline from adjacent valley landscapes.
- The special character of the Lampen Stream including a dense riparian corridor with associated meadows and woodland.
- Areas of valuable habitats including woodland and acid grassland at Swanton Aerial Site Littlebourne LWS and woodland at Trenley Park Fordwich LWS.
- The remaining areas of ancient semi-natural woodland at Long Shot Wood and other blocks of mature broadleaved deciduous woodland, forming part of priority habitat.
- The small, historic village of Stodmarsh and its distinctive local vernacular of weatherboard, brick, half tile hung and flint – a Conservation Area – with many historic buildings including the Grade I listed Church of St Mary.
- Rural and historic setting to the Stodmarsh and Elbridge House Conservation Areas.
- Rural character of lanes lined with hedgerows.
- Long distance views from the Stour Valley Walk Long Distance Footpath.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To protect priority habitat woodland (including ancient woodland) and to create grassland habitat, which contributes to the wider habitat network associated with the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA.

This LCA lies within the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA, which sets out the following relevant key targets:

- To protect and enhance existing priority habitats and designated sites.
- To create acid grassland and heathland from other existing or new semi-natural habitat.
- To enhance species-rich grassland to bring it to priority habitat quality.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include arable and horticulture, improved grassland, coniferous woodland, broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland, open standing water and canals and built up areas. Habitats of key importance within the LCA include ancient woodland and deciduous woodland habitat, which is listed as a priority habitat.

There are limited opportunities to improve habitats that specifically contributes to the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA. However, there are opportunities to protect existing habitats, such as ancient woodland and priority habitat woodland, which have significant habitat value.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

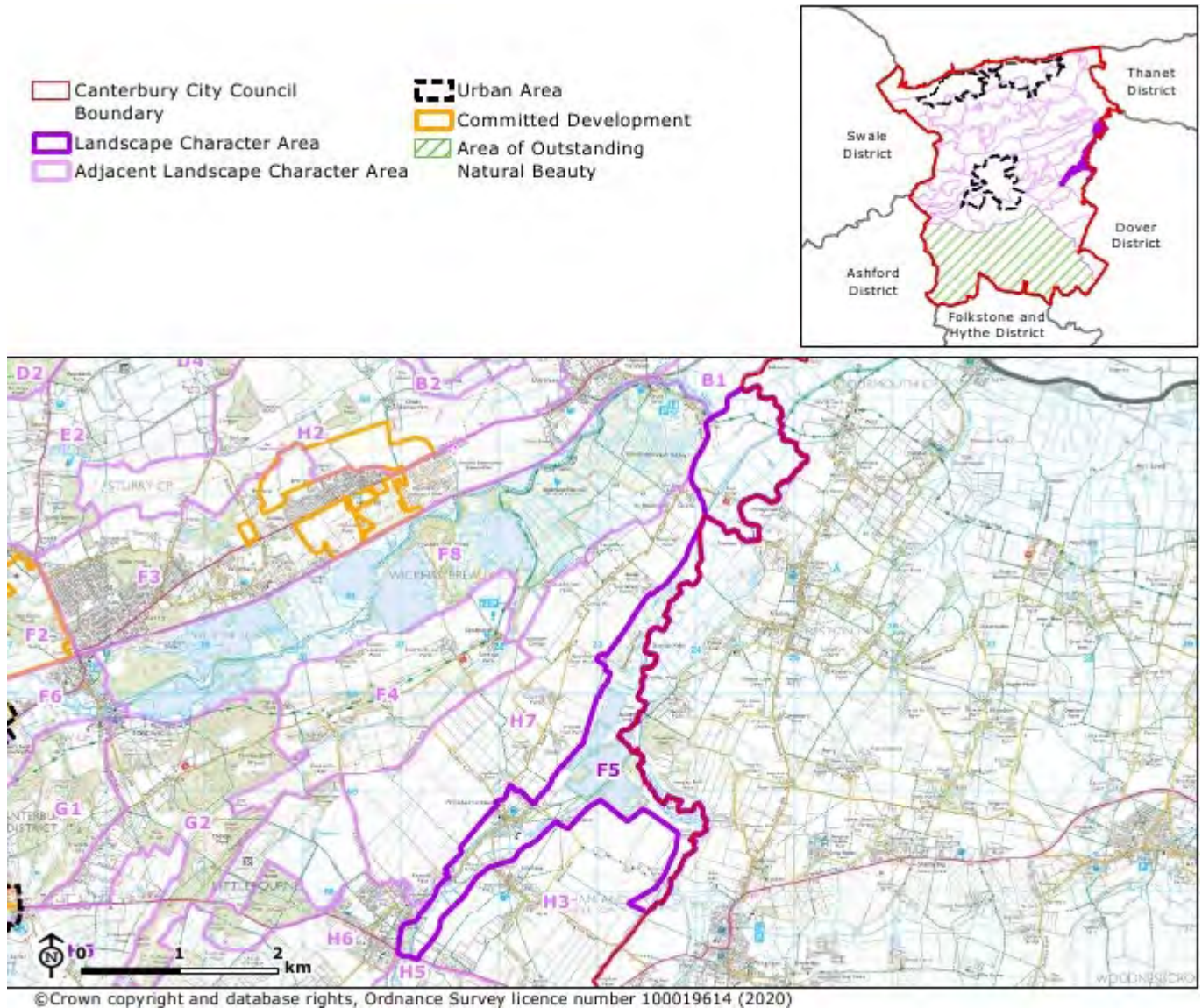
Landscape Management

- Conserve and manage the biodiversity interest from wetland habitats and riparian planting of the Lampen Stream by managing scrub encroachment.
- Protect the landscape's valued semi-natural habitats including at Swanton Aerial Site Littlebourne LWS and at Trenley Park Fordwich LWS.
- Protect priority habitat broadleaved deciduous woodland (including ancient woodland) and enhance the wooded character of the area through appropriate woodland management.
- Increase the extent of native deciduous woodland to strengthen habitat connectivity, using locally occurring native species in order to link to existing woodland. Seek to avoid the introduction of coniferous boundaries/shelterbelts.
- Enhance and augment fragmented field boundary hedgerows with native species to strengthen habitat connectivity, replacing post and wire fencing where possible.
- Create habitat buffers to protect and enhance habitats associated with designated sites, including those to the north within the Westbere and Stodmarsh Valley, as well as ancient woodland at Trenley Parks Woodland to the west.
- Enhance and upgrade areas of improved grassland to priority habitat quality, where appropriate.
- Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA including the creation of fertile soils, woodland and neutral grassland across the LCA, wet woodland in small pockets and acid grassland and heath to the north of Elbridge Farm.
- Create and implement a long term management plan for invasive species across the river catchment. Excavation and removal techniques should be favoured, where this is not possible an appropriate herbicide treatment is recommended.

Development Management

- Avoid visually intrusive development in order to conserve the distinctive ridgeline topography, the character of undeveloped skylines and to retain long-distance views from the ridge.
- Conserve the local distinctiveness and strong vernacular of historic buildings, particularly within the Stodmarsh and Elbridge House Conservation Areas, maintaining their rural character by resisting proposals for new development.
- Any proposals for highway upgrading should retain the rural character of the roads and lanes

F5: Little Stour Valley



Location and Summary

The Little Stour Valley LCA extends in a narrow corridor along the length of the river from the village of Littlebourne in the south to pastoral fields north-east of Grove. The river forms the eastern boundary to Canterbury District with the characteristics associated with this LCA, generally mirrored to the east of the river in the Dover District.

The LCA is characterised by the flat alluvial flood plain of the Little Stour river and associated tributaries (including the Wingham river and the Blackhole Dike) which continue to be managed in the traditional manner for grazing.

Representative Photographs



Large man-made lakes formed as a result of gravel extraction, part of the Seaton Pits and Wenderton Manor Pits LWS



Village of Wickhambreaux



Traditional weirs associated with the Little Stour river



Views towards the Church of St John in Ickham seen across the floodplain



Church of St Andrew (Grade I listed) in Wickhambreaux



Dyke off the Little Stour river with security fencing around the lake

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Low lying and waterlogged, flat alluvial flood plain of the Little Stour river.
- Rectangular fields comprising mainly pasture with areas of grazing marsh.
- Large man-made lakes formed as a result of gravel extraction.
- Wetland habitats associated with the river corridor providing biodiversity interest, including the Preston Marshes SSSI, Wenderton Manor Pits LWS and part of the Chislet Marshes, Sarre Penn and Preston Marshes LWS.
- Distinctive riparian landscape character borne from historic functions.
- Little Stour valley located between small picturesque historic villages and buildings of unique character, encompassing part of the Ickham-Wickhambreaux-Seaton Conservation Area.
- Narrow winding lanes frequently cross the river.
- Views restricted by large areas of mature vegetation, although occasionally long across valley floor and areas of open water.

Natural Influences

The geology of the LCA comprises Thanet Beds to the north, and Upper Chalk to the south, overlain with alluvium drift and soils that are clay to loam. The Little Stour is a small river with a strong chalk river influence. Chalk rivers are a priority habitat, and although the habitat is greatly influenced by a series of mill structures, the river provides an important wildlife corridor with riparian planting following its course.

Large areas have been used for gravel extraction during the 20th century. To the north east of Wickhambreaux the resultant large man-made lakes are an important feature of the landscape and have been designated as the Seaton Pits and Wenderton Manor Pits LWS; a wetland site containing a rich flora with some rare plant species making it important for wetland birds. Further to the north, the Preston Marshes SSSI contains the last significant area of fen vegetation in the Little Stour valley, mostly consisting of priority habitat reedbed as well as scattered willow scrub. There is a diverse plant community here, and the habitat attracts many breeding and wintering birds. Water voles are present at a number of sites along the river, and brown hare, water shrew and harvest mouse are recorded in the LCA.

The LCA also includes other priority habitats in the form of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh (which line the flooded gravel pits, river and dikes) and blocks of deciduous woodland. A small area of ancient woodland lies to the south-east of Teedleham Farm in the centre of the LCA.

The low-lying and waterlogged nature restricts arable practices, resulting in a predominantly pastoral land use. To the north grazing marshland fields are divided by a network of wide ditches, with a small area to the south of Grove Road

forming a detached part of the Chislet Marshes, Sarre Penn and Preston Marshes LWS; most of which extends to the east of the Canterbury District boundary into the Dover District.

Cultural Influences

The Little Stour winds its way across the meadow landscape, which is crisscrossed by minor lanes that follow the valley floor, linking the small picturesque historic villages and buildings found along its length. Buildings are a mixture of well-maintained vernacular style properties. They include rare examples of weatherboarded water mills scattered along the Little Stour (reinforcing the riparian character), large Georgian red brick properties, small Victorian red brick terrace cottages, occasional thatched cottages and ancient flint churches.

Despite the variation in building styles the village of Wickhambreaux, the outlying farmsteads and scattered residential properties, provide the area with a strong and unified identity. Wickhambreaux forms part of the Ickham-Wickhambreaux-Seaton Conservation Area and has a rich history with connections to the Church and Crown dating back to Saxon times. Most notably it was home to the Fair Rosamund Clifford in the 12th century and Joan Plantagenet, wife of the Black Prince, in the 14th century. The village contains numerous historic buildings including distinctive properties clustered around the village green. Notable buildings include the Church of St Andrew (Grade I listed), The Old Stone House (Grade II* listed) and Wickham House (Grade II* listed), now known as The Old Rectory.

The village of Littlebourne abuts the LCA at its south-western edge, and the valley provides a rural setting to its Conservation Area and associated historic buildings along Nargate Street.

Perceptual Influences

The valley has largely retained its traditional character. The distinctive wetland vegetation of marginal and aquatic species of the river corridor, the overgrown mill ponds and mill races associated with the tall weatherboarded mill houses, all add to the unique quality of this landscape and its sense of tranquillity. The built environment is particularly well integrated into the landscape. The older buildings sit comfortably in their rural setting and new development is limited in extent and well-integrated.

The LCA is crossed by a number of PRoW including the Saxon Shore Way Long Distance Footpath in the north, as well as a local footpath which follows the Little Stour river.

Visibility from along these routes is relatively limited, contained by the valley itself and intermittent vegetation. However, there are some long views that look across the more open areas of the valley floor and open water. This includes views from positions in proximity to Wickhambreaux in the south of the LCA that look towards the Church of St John in Ickham, forming a distinctive feature on the skyline.

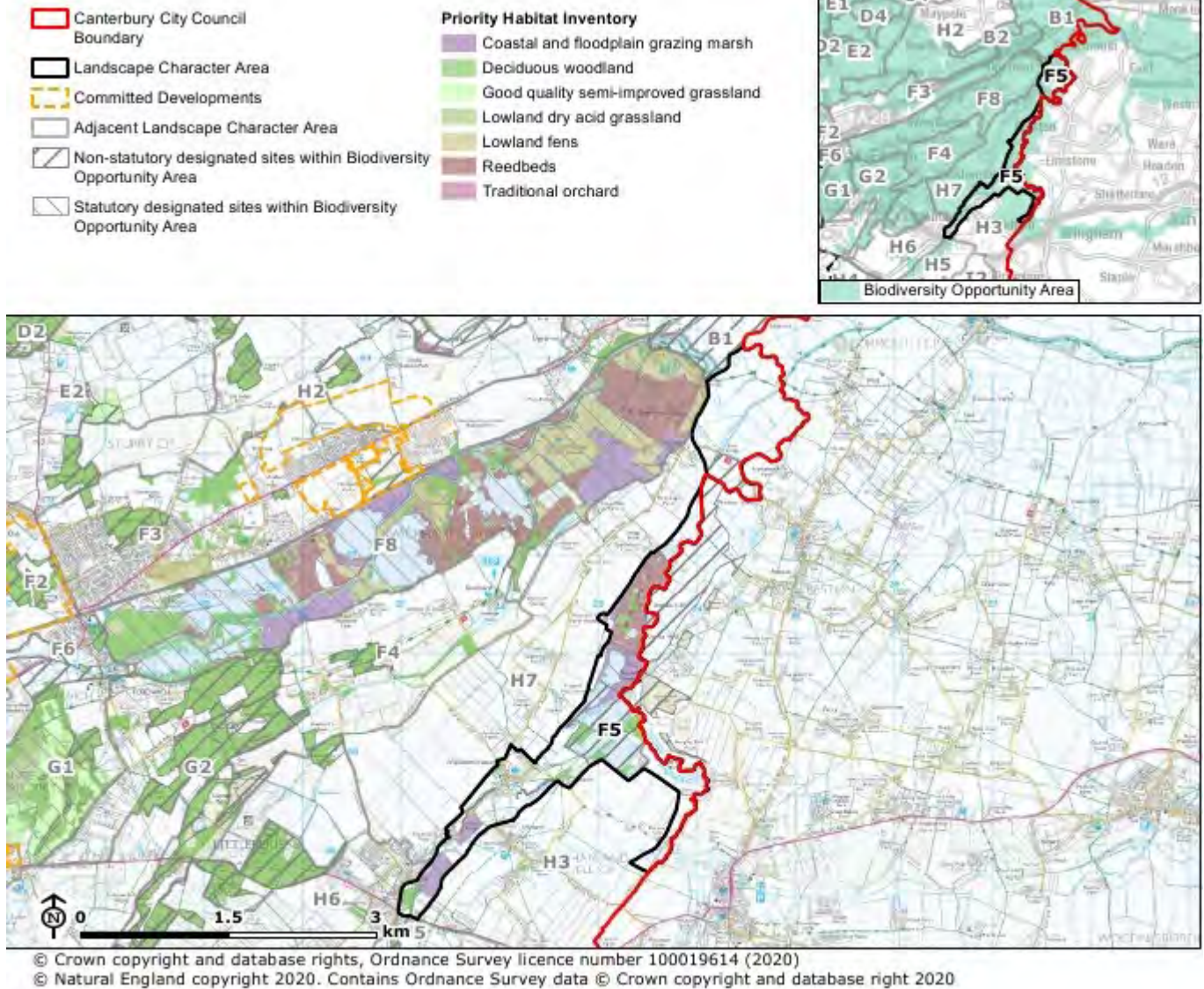
In some places hedgerows are fragmented leading to the introduction of post and wire fencing, detracting from the character, although they tend to be intact around actively grazed pasture. Security fencing used to deter access around the lakes is also a visual detractor, contrasting with the perceptual tranquil qualities that the lakes provide.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- The Little Stour as a priority habitat chalk river, provides an important biodiversity corridor containing priority habitats including coastal and floodplain grazing marsh and blocks of deciduous woodland.
- Large man-made lakes forming part of the Seaton Pits and Wenderton Manor Pits LWS, being important for wetland birds.
- The Preston Marshes SSSI containing the last significant area of fen vegetation in the Little Stour valley, and containing priority habitat reedbed.
- Grazing marshland in the north forming part of the Chislet Marshes, Sarre Penn and Preston Marshes LWS.
- Complex pattern of rivers, dykes and ditches are distinctive features.
- Ancient woodland to the south-east of Teedleham Farm contributes towards the historic setting of the landscape.
- The small, historic village of Wickhambreaux and its distinctive local vernacular of Georgian and Victorian red brick, thatched roofs and flint – a Conservation Area – with many historic buildings including the Grade I listed Church of St Andrew.
- Rural and historic setting to the Ickham-Wickhambreaux-Seaton and Littlebourne Conservation Areas.
- Traditional features of the river corridor including overgrown mill ponds and mill races, tall weatherboarded mill houses, contributing towards the sense of tranquillity.
- Perceptual tranquil qualities of the valley.
- Long distance views from PRoW including towards the Church of St John in Ickham.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To enhance and restore grazing marsh and wetland habitats as part of the county-wide targets of the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA.

The LCA lies within the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA, which sets out the following key relevant targets:

- Protect and enhance existing priority habitats and designated sites.
- Pursue opportunities to enhance the biodiversity and landscape interest of the floodplain of the Stour.
- To establish new, landscape-scale, freshwater wetland complex, including fen, reedbed and grazing marsh, in which successional processes are allowed to proceed.

- Enhance at least 15ha of species-rich grassland to bring it to priority habitat quality.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include arable and horticulture, neutral grassland, improved grassland, built up areas and standing water and canals. There are some small fragments of deciduous ancient woodland within the LCA which is listed as a priority habitat.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

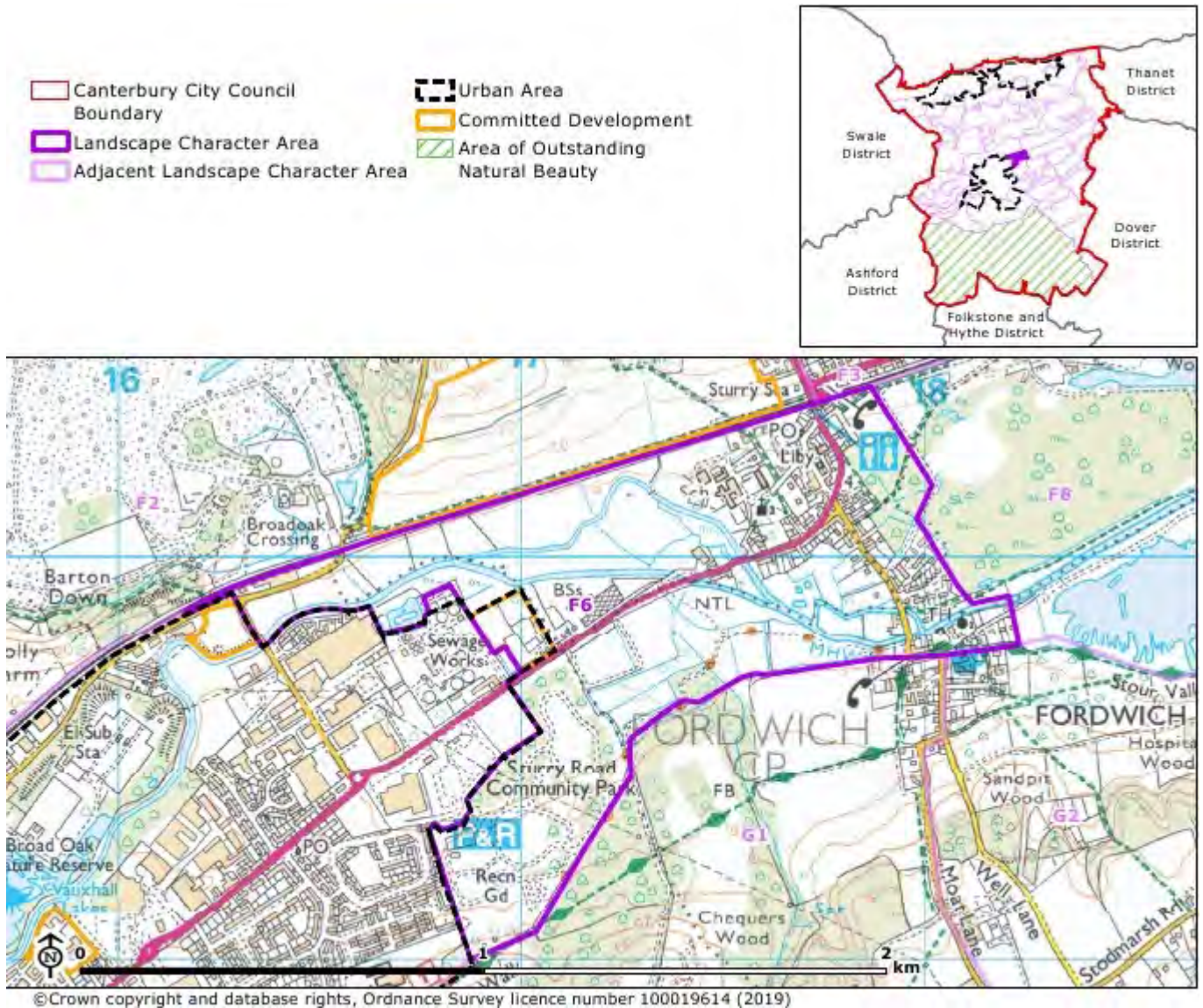
Landscape Management

- Protect the landscape's valued semi-natural habitats including at The Preston Marshes SSSI, the Seaton Pits and Wenderton Manor Pits LWS and at the Chislet Marshes, Sarre Penn and Preston Marshes LWS.
- Conserve, restore and enhance marsh grazing and wetland habitats which follow the corridor of the Little Stour river. Encourage management practices to conserve the mosaic of habitats including low intensity grazing of semi-natural grassland.
- Enhance and create further areas of species-rich floodplain grassland as part of the wider county requirements.
- Conserve the traditional field pattern of rivers, dykes and ditches by avoiding unsympathetic culverting of water courses.
- Increase the extent of native deciduous woodland, using locally occurring native species in order to link to existing woodland. Seek to avoid the introduction of coniferous boundaries/shelterbelts.
- Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA including the creation of wet woodland, fertile soils woodland, grazing marsh, river floodplain, wetland, neutral grassland.
- Create and implement a long term management plan for invasive species across the river catchment. Excavation and removal techniques should be favoured, where this is not possible an appropriate herbicide treatment is recommended.

Development Management

- Conserve the local distinctiveness and strong vernacular of historic buildings, particularly within the Wickhambreaux and Littlebourne Conservation Areas, maintaining their rural character by resisting proposals for new development.
- Conserve the undeveloped character and tranquillity of the landscape by avoiding the introduction of large scale or incongruous elements, retaining long views towards the Church of St John in Ickham.
- Protect the valued recreational use of the landscape, seeking opportunities to further enhance opportunities for access and enjoyment around the lakes, while retaining the perceptual tranquil qualities that they offer.

F6: Stour Valley – Sturry and Fordwich



Location and Summary

The Stour Valley - Sturry and Fordwich LCA forms a flat floodplain to the River Great Stour, encompassing parts of the village of Sturry and the town of Fordwich. It lies to the north-east of Canterbury City and extends from its urban edge (dominated by retail, commercial and industrial units located along Sturry Road) to the western edge of the Westbere marshes. The Ashford to Ramsgate railway line forms the northern boundary and woodland associated with Old Park borders the LCA to the south.

Representative Photographs



Sturry Road Community Park



Sheiford Landfill and pylons form visual detractors on the skyline



River Great Stour and Grade II listed bridge



The School Hall at Junior King's School (Grade I listed) situated within the village of Sturry Wetland tree species line the edges of channels and ditches



Wetland tree species line the edges of channels and ditches



Channels and ditches define the small, linear field pattern

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Flat alluvial floodplain with deep waterlogged soils divided by river channels and ditches.
- Linear fields of improved pasture mostly managed as wet meadows and divided by water courses and drains.
- Clumps of wetland tree species along channels and ditches.
- Small blocks of priority habitat broadleaved deciduous woodland.
- Areas comprising amenity grassland provide recreational opportunities including at Sturry Road Community Park.
- Wetland corridor to the River Great Stour providing strong biodiversity interest to the area and designated locally as a Local Wildlife Site.
- Includes part of the Fordwich and Sturry Conservation Areas and encompasses traditional historic buildings with weatherboarding, local brick and tile including Grade I listed buildings.
- Parts of the area form a pastoral valley setting to Canterbury City, with views across the floodplain meadows.
- Area of local intrusion and disturbance including, excavation and landfill, the Park and Ride facility and large-scale commercial buildings/out of town retail units along parts of the Sturry Road.

Natural Influences

The flat alluvial floodplain to the Great Stour River that characterises the LCA contains waterlogged soils. Wetland tree species typically line the edges of channels and ditches, including along the course of the river, streams and feeder drains; all of which define the field pattern forming small, linear fields. Small blocks of priority habitat broadleaved deciduous woodland lie within the LCA, forming part of the enclosing woodland to the village of Sturry in the east as well as where Chequers Wood extends into the LCA from Old Park in the south.

The land use of the LCA consists mainly of improved pasture with some amenity grassland associated with playing fields around Junior King's School in the north and Sturry Road Community Park in the south which lies adjacent to the park and ride off Sturry Road. The area of land accommodating the park is difficult to place in a particular character area because of its history of disturbance and lack of boundaries on the ground. Historically it was part of an ancient deer park at Old Park (which lies immediately to the south). It is included within the Stour Valley because of the open flat characteristics it exhibits today as a public park. It contains extensive young planting, created from community led green space regeneration of former wasteland, and accommodates a network of footpaths that form circular routes throughout the park.

The River Great Stour and its associated wetland corridor contribute strongly to the biodiversity interest within the LCA. This is recognised by its non-statutory designation as the Great Stour, Ashford to Fordwich LWS. This designated riverine habitat extends from Ashford to Fordwich, and so the river corridor within this LCA is the most downstream part of

the LWS and an important aquatic and wetland habitat link into the Stodmarsh SSSI which abuts the eastern boundary of the LCA and the Stodmarsh NNR which lies further upstream to the east.

Riverine UK BAP species such as the otter and water vole are known to be present in this part of the Stour and although immediately downstream of the urban area, a good variety of aquatic plants and invertebrates are present.

Cultural Influences

The eastern section of the Stour Valley encompasses the core of Sturry (a historic village) and overlaps with the northern edge of Fordwich (a historic remnant market town). These existing settlements are designated as Conservation Areas and each contain clusters of historic buildings, most notably The School Hall at Junior King's School (Sturry), the Church of St Nicholas (Sturry) and the Church of St Mary (Fordwich) which are all Grade I listed and lie within this LCA. The boundaries of the Conservation Areas extend to the west across the majority of the Stour Valley, despite these settlements occupying only a small proportion of the LCA in the east, indicating the important role that the Stour Valley landscape plays in providing a rural and historical setting that has seen many changes over the centuries.

Canterbury District's earliest port was in the vicinity of Sturry on the north west of the Stour, with a quayside, located at the meeting point of two Roman roads (Canterbury to Upstreet and the road to Reculver). Archaeological evidence points to human habitation at Sturry from the Lower Palaeolithic period. It was also an important focus for early Anglo-Saxon settlement as an early Anglo-Saxon estate centre. Its importance continued in Medieval times when the manors of Sturry and Fordwich were held by St. Augustine's Abbey and

frequented by royal and archiepiscopal visitors. Fordwich has been settled since prehistoric times and is first mentioned as an Anglo-Saxon settlement in 675 AD. It replaced Sturry as a port in Saxon times.

The Abbot of St. Augustine's was granted the right by Edward the Confessor to levy a toll on all merchandise brought by water to Fordwich. At this time the quay used to import Caen stone, wine and oil. The Stour remained navigable at Fordwich well into the 18th century despite a constant battle to prevent silting up since the 15th century. It was particularly valuable for the import of coal.

The Sturry Road itself was a principle Roman Road connecting Canterbury City to Thanet. In Roman times, when access from Thanet was probably by ferry across the Wantsum Channel where the Sarre Wall now runs, the road to Canterbury City ran almost in a straight line to Sturry. It passed to the north of the church and then continued directly to Northgate. The Sturry Road has remained an important route into Canterbury City. Its use intensified in the early 19th century with the growth of the Thanet towns and Herne Bay. The road from Sturry to Herne was turnpiked in 1814.

Perceptual Influences

The Stour Valley landscape plays an important role in separating the north-eastern edge of Canterbury City with Sturry and Fordwich to the east. There is however a garden nursery situated along the northern edge of the road within the centre of the LCA, comprising a typical collection of large-

scale structures that weakens the perception of an open landscape in between the built-up areas. Apart from this, the landscape adjacent to Sturry and Fordwich has largely escaped the pressures of the 20th and 21st centuries and the Stour retains its traditional character threading its way across low-lying pasture, with areas of quite/tranquillity in places including within the Sturry Road Community Park. In contrast the perception of this character is almost lost close to the edge of Canterbury City (between Sturry Road and Broad Oak Road) which exhibits typical urban fringe characteristics such as out of town retail, car dealerships, park and ride and sewage works. Here the River Stour and the valley floor are largely lost from public view.

The Shelford Landfill to the north of the LCA forms a dominant feature on the skyline and coupled with the rows of overhead cables and frequent pylons that partly cross the area, form intrusive elements and detract from the more unified character of the valley landscape. The Ashford to Ramsgate railway line along the northern edge of the area also provides some aural and visual intrusion.

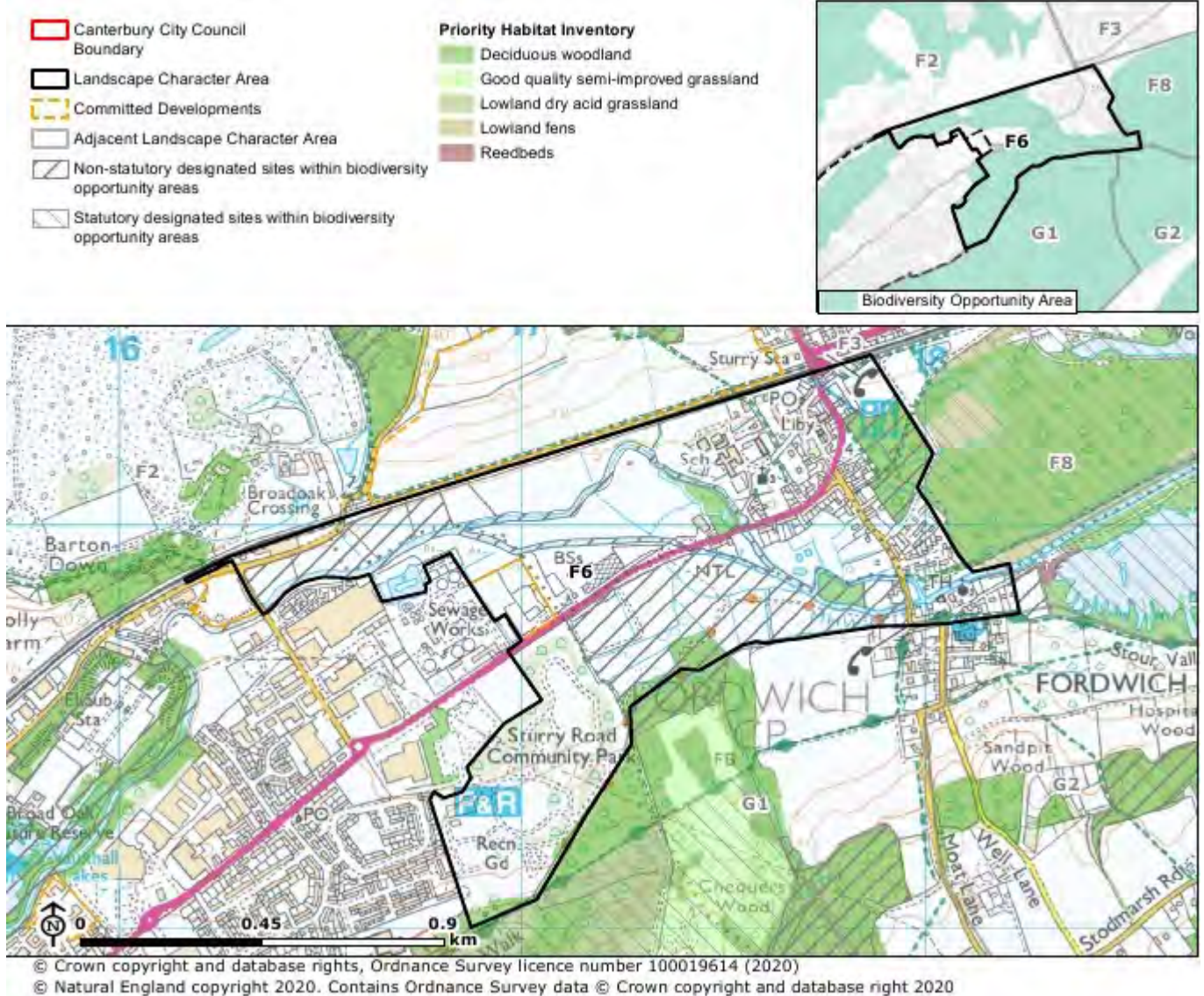
Views of the city are limited from along Sturry Road due to the scale of the buildings blocking views along the valley floor. At Fordwich the buildings diminish and there are attractive views across meadows in the floodplain towards the city. The intrusive urban fringe elements are lost behind groups of wetland trees, creating a tranquil, pastoral quality to the landscape. However large-scale retail and commercial buildings block many views of the city.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- The wetland corridor that contains important habitats contributing towards the biodiversity interest, forming part of the Great Stour, Ashford to Fordwich LWS.
- Blocks of priority habitat broadleaved deciduous woodland provide semi-natural habitats and enclosure to the village of Sturry plus areas of floodplain meadow habitat.
- Flat valley floor landscape providing an open character that is highly visible due to limited tree coverage in the form of wetland species lining the edges of channels and ditches.
- Traditional pattern of channels, ditches and meadows are distinctive features.
- The core of Sturry and the northern edge of Fordwich – Conservation Areas – with many historic buildings including the Grade I listed School Hall at Junior King's School (Sturry), the Church of St Nicholas (Sturry) and the Church of St Mary (Fordwich).
- The rural and historic setting the landscape provides to Sturry and Fordwich, forming part of their associated Conservation Areas.
- Sturry Road as an important route into Canterbury City with historic associations.
- The role of the landscape in providing rural separation between Canterbury City and Sturry / Fordwich, where development is limited.
- The role of the landscape in contributing towards the valley setting of the historic city of Canterbury.
- Pockets of quiet/tranquil valley landscape which persist in proximity to more developed areas.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To restore and create species-rich grassland and wetland habitat, as part of the wider network of the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA.

This LCA lies within the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA, which sets out the following relevant key targets:

- Protect and enhance existing priority habitats and designated sites.
- To restore and/or recreate intertidal habitats, grazing marsh, fen and reedbed (including for bittern) as part of a matrix of natural wetland and coastal habitats.
- To establish a new, landscape-scale, freshwater wetland complex, including fen, reedbed and grazing marsh, in which successional processes are allowed to proceed.

- To enhance species-rich grassland to bring it to priority habitat quality.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA included improved grassland, neutral grassland, broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland, rivers and streams, open standing water and canal and built up areas. Habitats of key importance within the LCA included deciduous woodland, which is listed as a priority habitat.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

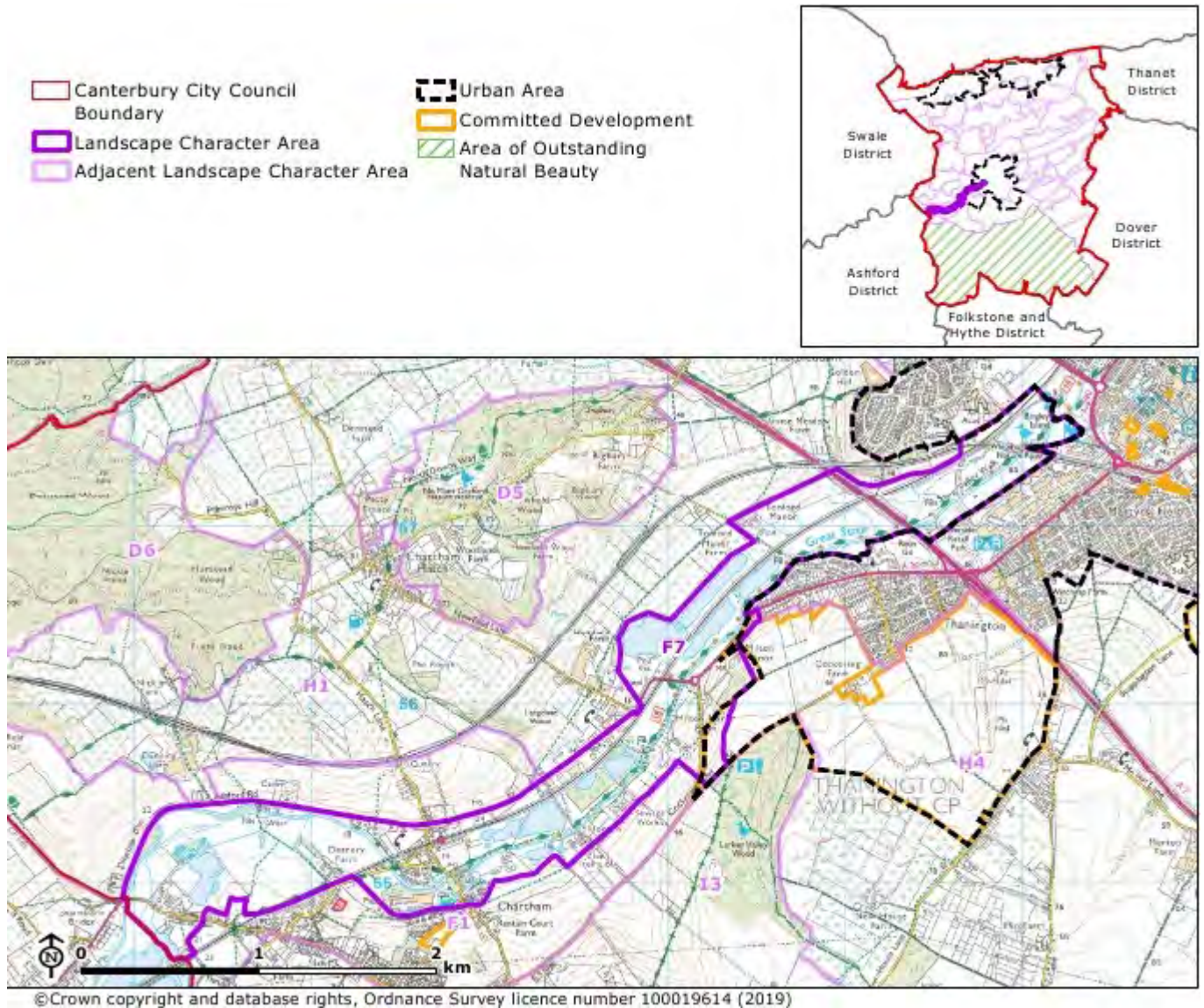
Landscape Management

- Conserve and enhance the biodiversity interest from wetland habitats and watercourses as part of the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA.
- Protect the landscape's valued semi-natural habitats including blocks of priority habitat broadleaved deciduous woodland, grassland habitats and wetland tree species along channels and ditches.
- Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA including the creation and enhancement of woodland, river floodplain, wetland and neutral grassland habitat.
- Manage and enhance the wildlife interest of agricultural fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins and other wildlife-friendly farming methods.
- Conserve the historic field pattern of the landscape by avoiding unsympathetic culverting of water courses and channels.
- Create and implement a long term management plan for invasive species across the river catchment. Excavation and removal techniques should be favoured, where this is not possible an appropriate herbicide treatment is recommended.

Development Management

- Conserve the local distinctiveness of historic buildings and their rural setting, within the Sturry and Fordwich Conservation Areas.
- Enhance the visual characteristics and quality of the Sturry Road approach drawing upon its historic connections.
- The open character of most marshland landscapes and flat valley floors accentuate the visual impact of many proposals over a wide distance as compared with more enclosed landscape types. Avoid proposals that can impinge on the remote undeveloped quality the marshland landscape.
- Conserve and enhance the integration of urban edges, through native wooded boundaries and mature trees to provide visual screening and reduce the impact of built development on the open and exposed landscape.
- Conserve the rural character of the landscape with its well-defined distinction between the rural landscape and the settlement edges of Canterbury City and Sturry / Fordwich.
- Avoid urban fringe uses which detract from the valley setting to the historic Canterbury City.
- Any proposals in pockets of quiet areas including in Sturry Community Park should ensure that the sense of remoteness and tranquillity is retained.

F7: Stour Valley West



Location and Summary

The Stour Valley West LCA lies to the south-west of Canterbury City. It is defined by the flat river floodplain of the Great Stour River and associated waterbodies. It extends from the settlement edge of Canterbury City at Thanington to the district boundary in the west.

Representative Photographs



Chartham paper mill



Grade II listed Chartham Corn Mill



The Stour Valley Walk Long Distance Footpath running along the Great Stour River



Restored floodplain grazing marsh at Hambrook Marshes with railway infrastructure in background



Former gravel pits converted to lakes, surrounded by vegetation



Glimpsed views of Canterbury Cathedral above treeline

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Flat alluvial floodplain of the Great Stour River, on chalk geology, with river terrace deposits on higher valley edges.
- Great Stour River meanders across the floodplain with floodplain ditches and open lakes providing wetland habitats, including priority habitat floodplain grazing marsh and wet woodland forming an important biodiversity corridor.
- Wetland tree species associated with the river and ditches, with small areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland surrounding the water bodies and along railway embankments.
- Poor soils result in medium-scale wet meadows predominantly in use as grazing land, interspersed with occasional larger arable fields.
- Past and current gravel workings and industrial activities have altered large areas of the valley, including creation of large open waterbodies.
- Settlement concentrated in nucleated historic settlement of Chartham, with industrial/commercial development extending along the A28 Canterbury Road.
- Major transport routes, including the A28 Canterbury Road and Canterbury to Ashford railway line run through the valley.
- Good network of PRow crossing the valley and running along the valley floor, allowing recreational access.
- Small scale landscape with a strong sense of enclosure from dramatic steeply rising valley sides and woodland.

Natural Influences

The landscape is underlain by the Sussex White Chalk formation, with bands of alluvium and brickearth deposits in the east. The LCA is formed by the flat alluvial floodplain of the Great Stour River, which lies between 10 and 20m AOD. The Great Stour River here has a strong chalk influence.

There are a number of floodplain ditches and open lakes within the floodplain, which add to the riverine character of the area. The former gravel workings to the west of Thanington form large water bodies surrounded by mature wetland vegetation. The river corridor and lakes are designated locally as the Great Stour, Ashford to Fordwich LWS, and chalk rivers are a priority habitat.

Riverine priority species such as the otter and water vole are known to be present in this part of the Great Stour River. The Stour Valley is also an important habitat for breeding and wintering birds.

Small blocks of priority habitat deciduous woodland line the transport corridors and the water bodies. A small area of ancient woodland is recorded in the north-east.

The low-lying land and waterlogged soils mean that settlement and arable crops are not typical on the valley floor. Much of the valley floor is now used for grazing, and in the east the meadows are locally designated as the Whitehall Meadows LNR. There is a large arable field in the west.

The river corridor and lakes are part of the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA.

Cultural Influences

Meadows around Canterbury City are noted in the Domesday survey in 1086, and the landscape remained largely unchanged until the introduction of the railways in the Victorian era. The grazing meadows in the east are being restored and are in use for grazing once again.

Field boundaries include post and wire fencing, with a few hedgerows. Settlement is mostly limited to the nucleated village of Chartham sited within the floodplain and buildings on the outskirts of Shalmsford Street. Many of the properties are historic, and are Grade II listed, while the Church of St Mary is Grade I listed and the dovecot at Burnt House Farm is a Scheduled Monument. The village and grazing meadows to the west are designated as the Chartham Conservation Area.

The remains of the flint Horton Chapel are Grade II listed and are a Scheduled Monument. Milton Manor Farm contains a number of traditional buildings including the Grade II* Chapel of St John the Baptist. Further east Tonford Manor is a Grade II* Listed Building, originally built in the 15th century by Thomas Browne, the controller and treasurer to King Henry VI. There is also a Grade II listed barn.

Industry has grown up along the A28, and particularly between the A28 and the railway. The paper mill at Chartham is a distinctive feature, noted in the Chartham Conservation Area

appraisal as a key feature of the townscape. The mill provides a link to the industrial heritage of the village, with the first paper mill being built in 1738.

The Stour Valley is an important link between the City and the countryside and throughout history it has been an important transport corridor. Today the A2, A28 Canterbury Road and the Faversham-Canterbury and Ashford-Canterbury railway lines cross the valley floor. The railway embankments and associated architecture are significant features in the valley, subdividing the area. The brick viaduct over the Great Stour River creates a focal point in the landscape and allows glimpses of the floodplain beyond. The few local roads through the area are small with high hedgerows.

Gravel extraction and large-scale industrial works in the 20th century have altered much of the landscape. Restoration at Milton Manor Farm, west of Cockering Road, has resulted in a localised manicured landscape with the landform appearing slightly unnatural along Cockering Road. Current excavation is, however, well screened from the surrounding landscape by mature vegetation belts.

Perceptual Influences

The landscape is generally enclosed by vegetation and topography, although there are some views to the orchard

slopes and Blean woodland to the north. In the east there are attractive views of the higher ground around Harbledown from the valley floor.

There are intermittent views along the valley floor of the City and the Cathedral. To the south of the A2 these views are partly blocked by the road on embankment although Bell Harry Tower rises above this providing a strong focal point. The pasture and water bodies lend a coherent rural character to the landscape, and in the west are an important pastoral setting to Chartham, as noted in the Conservation Area appraisal.

Road corridors, railway lines and quarrying activity are all visually and aurally intrusive and disturb the rural character. The telecommunications tower along Hatch Lane to the north is also prominent in views.

The LCA has an important rural character although the influence of the city is strong to the east where residential and commercial development rises on the valley sides at Thanington and Wincheap and the A2 and rail line both cross the valley.

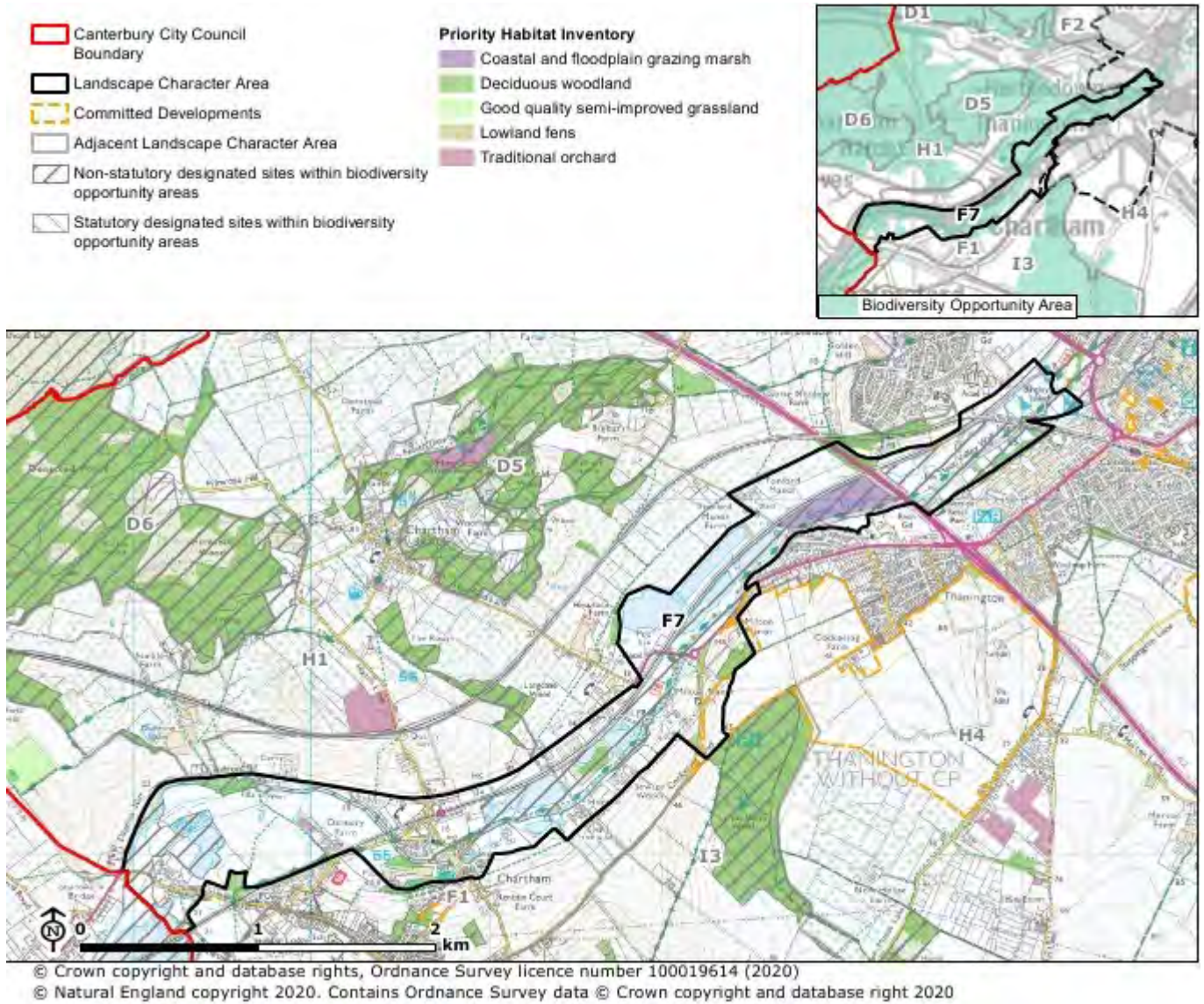
The landscape is popular for recreation, with walking, cycling and fishing in the artificial lakes. A number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) cross the floodplain, including the Stour Valley Walk Long Distance Footpath.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- The open flat river floodplain with the meandering Great Stour River and open lakes has a strong sense of place.
- Ecologically important wetland habitats including priority chalk river, habitat floodplain grazing marsh and deciduous woodland, designated locally as the Great Stour Ashford to Fordwich LWS forming part of an important biodiversity corridor.
- Historic pattern of grazing meadows retained by traditional network of ditches still in use today.
- Rural grazing marsh and floodplain provide important setting to historic Chartham and Canterbury City. At Chartham many distinctive buildings are listed, and the valley forms a setting to the Conservation Area.
- Recreational value from PRoWs following the Great Stour River including Stour Valley Walk Long Distance Footpath and cycle route.
- Glimpsed views to Canterbury Cathedral along the valley provide a sense of place.
- Small scale landscape with strong sense of enclosure created by the enclosing valley sides.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To enhance wetland habitat, as part of the wider network of the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA.

This LCA lies within Lower Stour Wetlands BOA, which sets out the following relevant key targets:

- Protect and enhance existing priority habitats and designated sites.
- Establish freshwater wetland complex, including fen, reedbed and grazing marsh, in which successional processes are allowed to proceed.
- Enhance species-rich grassland to bring it to priority habitat quality.

- Enhance or reinstate management of LWS woodlands.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include improved grassland, neutral grassland, broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland, rivers and streams, open standing water and canal and built up areas. Habitats of key importance within the LCA include ancient woodland and priority habitat coastal and floodplain grazing marsh and deciduous woodland.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

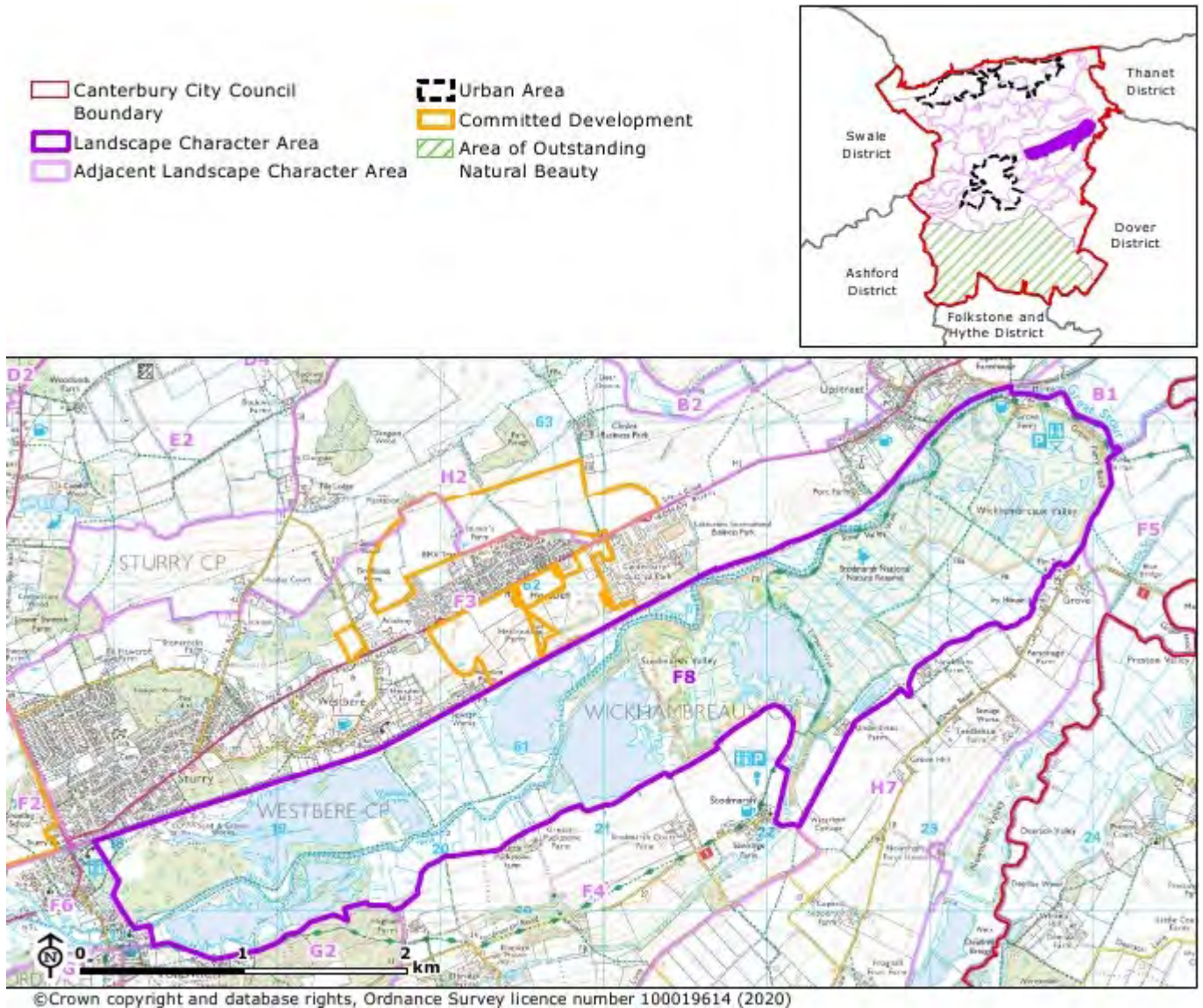
Landscape Management

- Conserve and enhance the biodiversity interest of wetland habitats, the Great Stour River and associated lakes by managing scrub encroachment. Explore opportunities for further wetland habitat creation within the floodplain, linking the existing floodplain grazing marsh.
- Protect ancient woodlands and existing woodland priority habitat. Enhance improved grassland to bring them to species rich grassland of priority habitat quality.
- Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA including the creation of chalk and neutral grassland, wetland, river floodplain, chalk scarp and wet woodland.
- Conserve and improve the traditional landscape pattern and structure, as well as restoring the traditional drainage pattern where possible. Encourage the restoration and management of extensive wetland grazing and enhance the pastoral valley floor setting of the Great Stour River.
- Seek to remove detracting features from the valley, including replacing/removing post and wire fencing where practicable.
- Create and implement a long term management plan for invasive species across the river catchment. Excavation and removal techniques should be favoured, where this is not possible an appropriate herbicide treatment is recommended.

Development Management

- Conserve the local distinctiveness of historic buildings and their rural floodplain setting, particularly within the Chartham Conservation Area.
- Conserve the open landscape and avoid the introduction of large scale or incongruous elements, which are prominent in the open valley landscape.
- Assess new building proposals within adjacent urban and suburban areas to ensure that an attractive and integrated edge is formed with this rural and open recreational landscape. This is important for existing edges as well as the new strategic allocations at Cockering Farm. Design of this development on the adjacent slopes should consider views from the valley and views to and from the city. Physical access into the Larkey Valley Woods SSSI (within I3) should be minimised to avoid an increase in visitor numbers.
- Soften the retail and industrial development to the east, roads and railway corridors with appropriate deciduous woodland including wetland species and wetland trees, avoiding planting on areas of existing biodiversity interest.
- Conserve the undeveloped character of the landscape, ensuring it continues to play a role in providing a setting to Chartham and an approach to Canterbury City.
- Continue to provide and promote opportunities for wider public access from the heart of the city, while also managing recreation pressures. Retain a natural and informal character to existing and new features, including a muted colour scheme for car parks, footpaths and interpretation.
- Restore the quality of views to Canterbury Cathedral by mitigating the impact of the built-up areas and ensuring planting does not obscure views.

F8: Westbere and Stodmarsh Valley



Location and Summary

The Westbere and Stodmarsh Valley LCA forms a flat floodplain landscape of the Great Stour River, encompassing the Stodmarsh NNR. It extends from Sturry in the west to the Great Stour River in the east, and follows the river as it meanders south-east. The Ashford to Ramsgate railway line runs along the northern edge of the LCA.

Representative Photographs



Low-lying grazing meadows



Great Stour River provides recreational value with some intrusion from the Ashford to Ramsgate railway line



Lampen Stream



Nature trail within the Stodmarsh NNR



Formation of lakes following flooding of areas used for past gravel extraction



Network of formal / informal footpaths throughout the Stodmarsh NNR

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- A distinctive and remote flat alluvial plain with ancient floodplain grazing meadows, extensive areas of reedbed and artificial lakes.
- Complex pattern of grazing meadows divided by dykes and ditches.
- Abundance of priority habitats including reedbeds, lowland fens, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh and deciduous woodland.
- Internationally important wetland site of Stodmarsh, providing strong biodiversity interest to the area and designated as a SSSI, SPA, SAC and Ramsar Site.
- Contains the Stodmarsh NNR comprising a restored wetland habitat important for breeding and overwintering birds, invertebrates and a range of rare plants.
- Encompassing part of the Lampen Stream Conservation Area, providing protection to the special character of the stream.
- Forms part of the Conservation Area to Upstreet and encompasses the Grove Valley Inn historic building.
- Long open views across marshland (although interrupted by blocks of mature riparian vegetation).
- Sense of tranquillity experienced along the network of public footpaths.

Natural Influences

The flat alluvial floodplain to the Great Stour River forms a distinctive landscape, comprising a complex pattern of low-lying grazing meadows separated by a series of dykes and ditches that are rich in flora and invertebrate fauna. Extensive areas of open water with priority habitat reedbeds are also characteristic of the LCA and support a diverse range of flora and fauna. These have taken the form of large lakes and have occurred following the flooding of areas used for gravel extraction following mining subsidence. The Great Stour River and its tributary, the Lampen Stream, both flow through the LCA, providing connectivity between the chalk influenced river sections upstream and the marshland sections downstream. The LCA encompasses part of the Lampen Stream Conservation Area, designated to protect the special character of the stream.

The LCA is an internationally important wetland site with an abundance of priority habitats consisting of reedbeds, lowland fens, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh and deciduous woodland, along with other habitats in the form of scrub, alder carr and open water. The habitat interest in this LCA is entirely covered by the Stodmarsh SSSI part of which is also the Stodmarsh NNR, a SPA for birds, Ramsar (important wetland) site and a SAC. It is an ideal area for breeding and wintering birds and the Stodmarsh NNR in the east was restored to wetland habitat to encourage and improve numbers of breeding Bittern, reliant for its survival on large areas of undisturbed reedbed. The LCA is also important for a range of

rare plants, invertebrates (such as Desmoulin's whorl snail), mammals and other wetland birds (such as gadwall, northern shoveler and hen harrier). A wild Eurasian beaver population has been recorded locally, which will likely expand in range and abundance resulting in significant changes to the local landscape.

The Great Stour River and its associated wetland corridor continues to the west of the area, recognised by its non-statutory designation as a LWS which extends from Ashford to Fordwich and provides an important aquatic and wetland habitat link into the Stodmarsh SSSI, with a small fragment of the LWS located in the south-western corner of the area. There is also a link to the Chislet Marshes which lie to the north-east and are designated as an LWS, with a small part extending into the Westbere and Stodmarsh Valley between Grove Ferry Road and the Great Stour River.

Cultural Influences

The Westbere and Stodmarsh Valley provides a setting to the Fordwich and Sturry Conservation Area which abuts the western edge of the area. However, intervisibility is restricted by the wooded character of the Westbere Marshes in the west. The Upstreet Conservation Area lies to the north-east; with a small part being encompassed by the LCA along with the Grade II listed Grove Ferry Inn (originally a coaching house on the road from Herne Bay to Dover built around 1830). Again, intervisibility between Upstreet and the Stodmarsh NNR is limited by woodland and the vegetated

railway embankment. An area of woodland also contains a Grade II listed barn at Undertrees Farm in the south-east (within the Lampen Stream Conservation Area).

Perceptual Influences

Views across the LCA are long and open from certain points but limited by mature riparian vegetation, which is dense around areas of open water and to the north along the river and railway corridors. Across the marshland and open reedbed areas, trees are limited to small mature pockets and patchy areas of scrub.

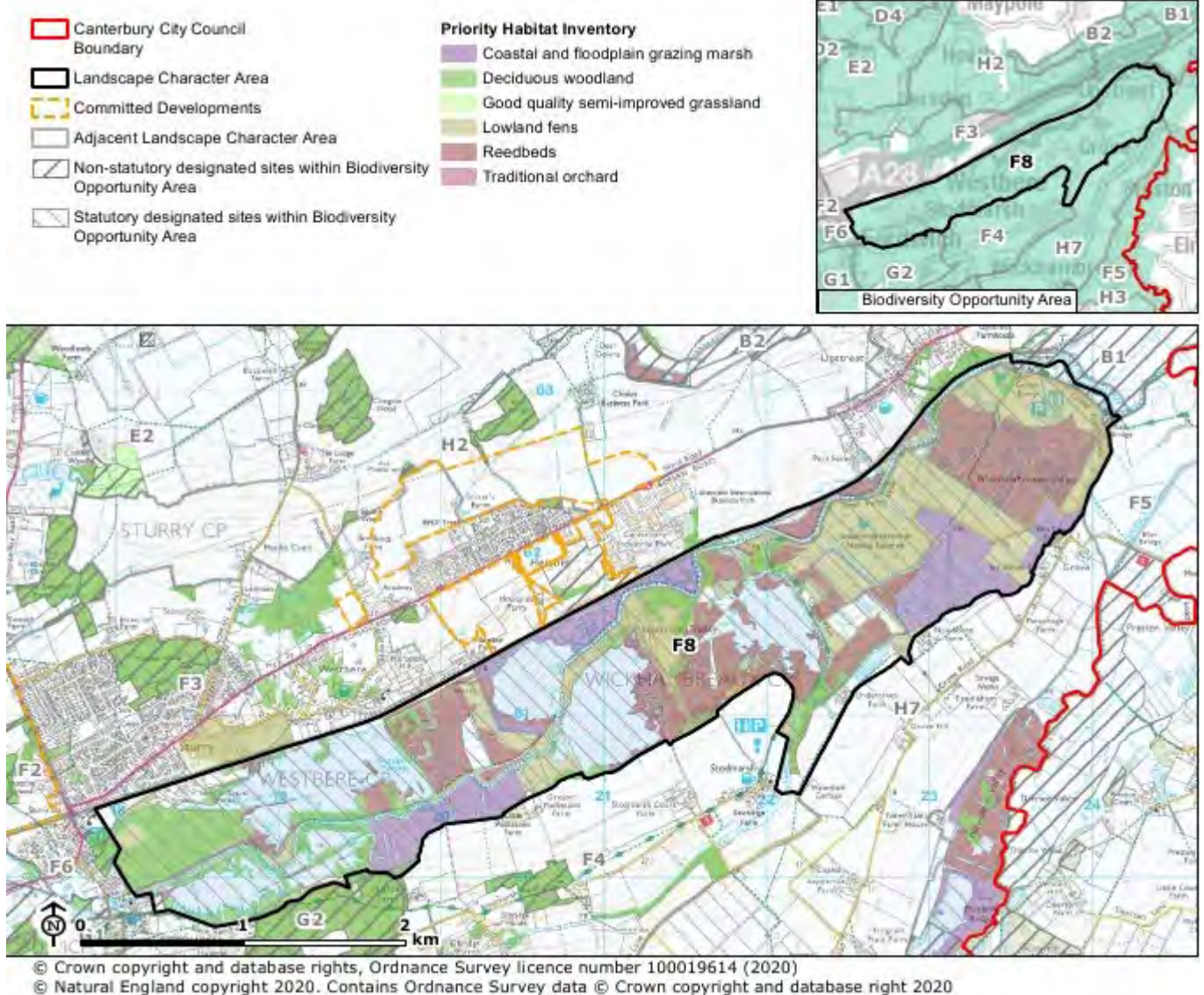
The LCA is largely inaccessible to vehicles, apart from Grove Ferry Road along the north-eastern edge. Built form is also mainly absent and therefore results in a strong sense of remoteness. A network of PRow and nature trails cross the LCA and the Stour Valley Walk Long Distance Footpath is a key route running through the Stodmarsh NNR. Users of the footpaths and trails are afforded a sense of tranquillity as they cross numerous habitats isolated from surrounding human influences.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities

- The wetland corridor of international importance containing important habitats including reedbeds, lowland fens, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh and deciduous woodland priority habitats, contributing strongly towards biodiversity.
- Complex pattern of dykes and ditches are distinctive features.
- The special character of the Lampen Stream comprising a dense riparian corridor with associated meadows and woodland.
- Rural setting to the villages of Sturry and Upstreet, and remnant market town of Fordwich, forming part of their associated Conservation Areas.
- Flat valley floor landscape providing an open character with some long views across marshland.
- Sense of remoteness and tranquillity experienced along public footpaths.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To protect and enhance wetland habitat, as part of the wider wetland and coast network of the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA, working with the changes likely to be made by the beaver population.

This LCA lies within the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA, which sets out the following relevant key targets:

- Protect and enhance existing priority habitats and designated sites.
- To restore and/or recreate intertidal habitats, grazing marsh, fen and reedbed (including for bittern) as part of a matrix of natural wetland and coastal habitats.
- To establish a new, landscape-scale, freshwater wetland complex, including fen, reedbed and grazing marsh, in which successional processes are allowed to proceed.

- Enhance species-rich grassland to bring it to priority habitat quality.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include improved grassland, neutral grassland, fen, marsh and swamp, broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland, river and streams, open standing water and canals. Habitats of key importance within the LCA include coastal floodplain grazing marsh, deciduous woodland, good quality semi-improved grassland, lowland fens, reedbeds and traditional orchards, which are listed as priority habitat.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

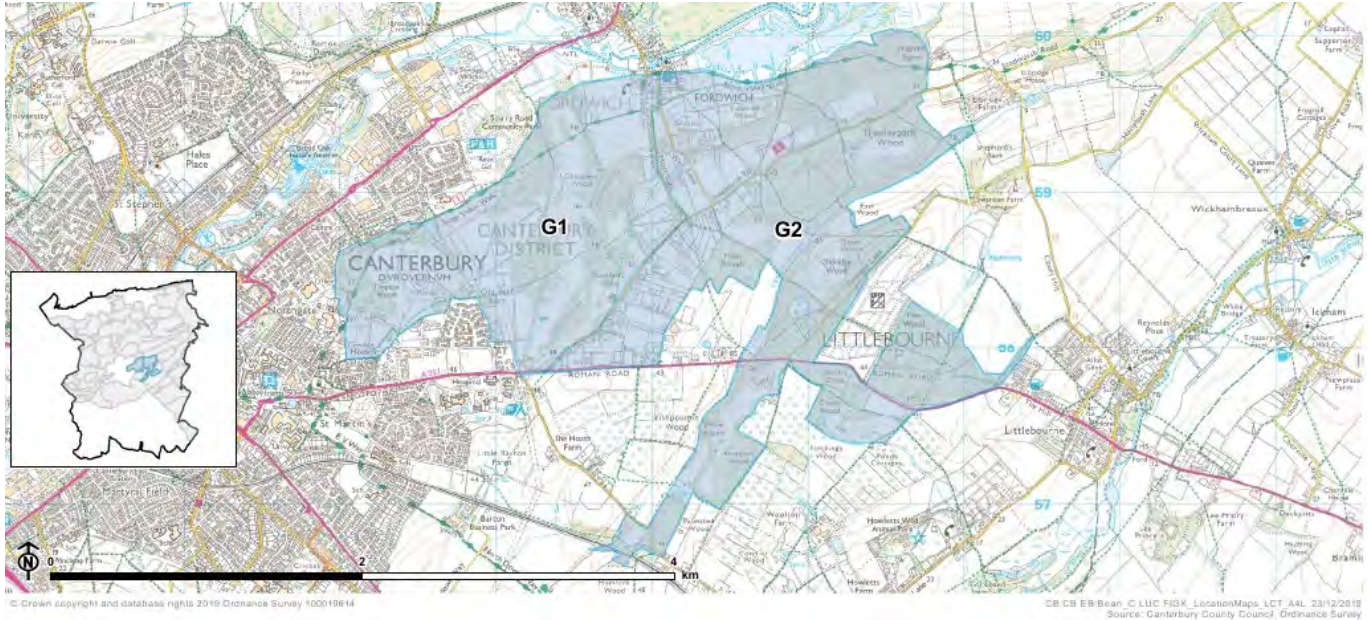
Landscape Management

- Conserve and enhance the biodiversity interest of wetland habitats, which contribute to the wider network of the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA, including the management of recreational disturbance and implementation of appropriate management techniques such as grazing and restricting scrub encroachment.
- Support the natural behaviours of the beaver population including tree cutting and the creation of dams and canals to increase habitat and plant diversity.
- Conserve the neutral grassland of the floodplain grazing meadows and enhance areas of grassland bringing it up to priority habitat quality.
- Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA including the creation of neutral grassland, wetland, river floodplain, fertile soils woodland and wet woodland. Conservation of existing valued habitats (floodplain grazing meadow) being priority over creation of new habitats,
- Conserve the traditional field pattern of dykes and ditches by avoiding unsympathetic culverting of water courses, including management to avoid pollution from adjacent land uses.
- Conserve and manage valued wetland habitats and riparian planting of the Lampen Stream, protecting its special character.
- Create and implement a long term management plan for invasive species across the river catchment. Excavation and removal techniques should be favoured, where this is not possible an appropriate herbicide treatment is recommended.

Development Management

- Conserve the rural character of the landscape with its well-defined distinction between the rural landscape and the settlement edges of Sturry, Fordwich and Upstreet.
- Conserve the open and undeveloped 'remote' character of the landscape by avoiding the introduction of large scale or incongruous elements.
- Protect the valued recreational use of the landscape, carefully managing tourist pressures to retain a natural and informal character, including a muted colour scheme for car parks, footpaths and interpretation.

LCT G: Stour Valley Woodlands



Description

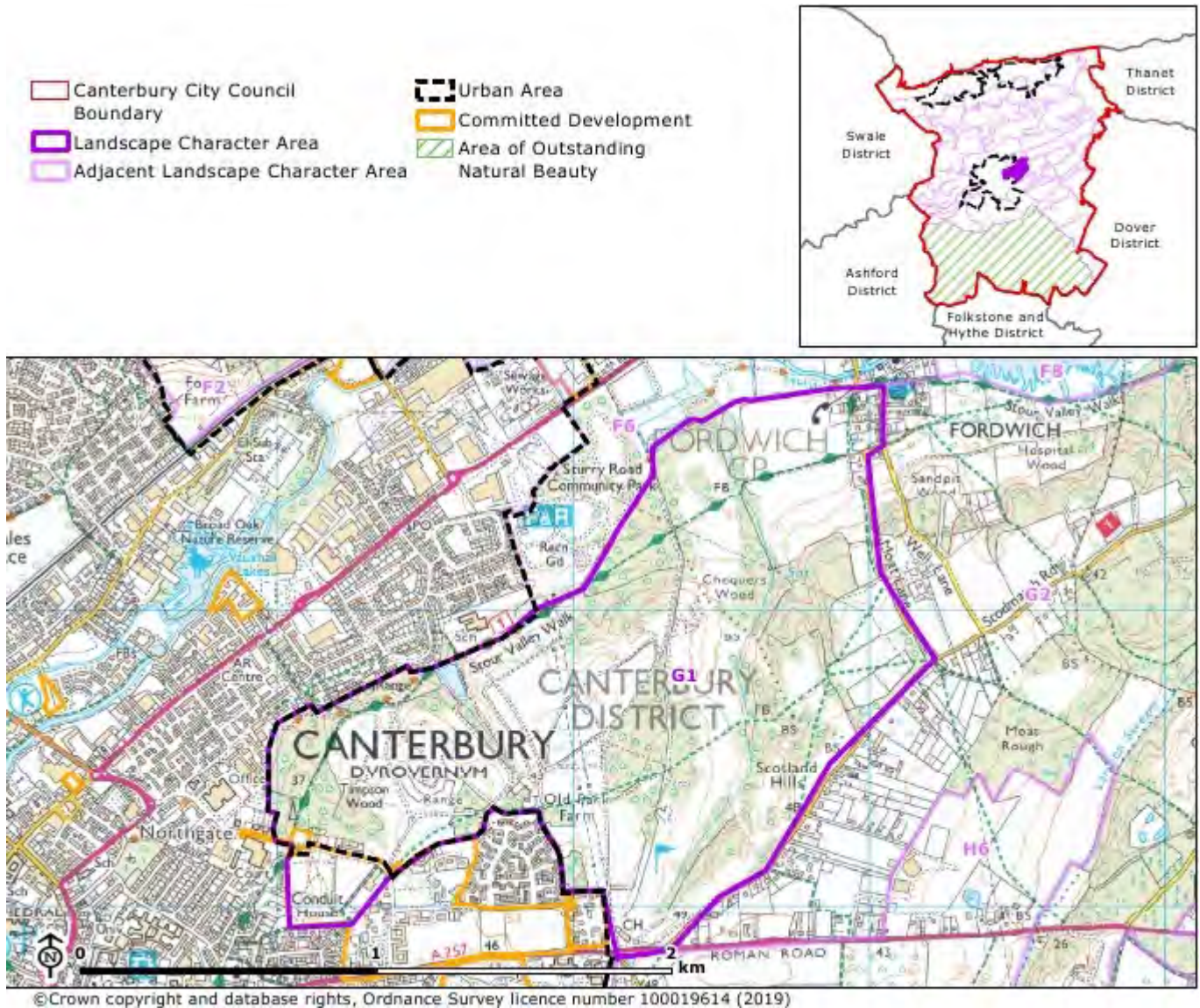
This LCT is distinguished by the historic character of former deer parks. It is an undulating landscape with elevated plateaus which has thin acidic soils. This results in valuable biodiversity with heathy qualities and woodland. The area provides a setting for the historic settlements of Canterbury, Fordwich and Littlebourne.

Landscape Character Areas

The Stour Valley Woodlands LCT is subdivided into two LCAs:

- G1: Old Park
- G2: Trenley Park Woodlands

G1: Old Park



Location and Summary

The Old Park LCA lies to the east of Canterbury City and extends from the urban edge at St. Martin's towards Fordwich. It is one of the few areas of rural landscape surrounding Canterbury City which extends into the core of it. The extent of the LCA is formed by the undulating and irregular topography over Thanet Beds and River Terrace Gravels, with thin acidic soils and heathy qualities which make it distinct from the adjacent fruit growing areas and Stour floodplain. Boundaries are formed by the urban edge of Canterbury City to the west, the Great Stour River floodplain to the north and linear settlement patterns to the east and south.

The LCA contributes towards the valley setting to the historic Canterbury City.

Representative Photographs



Wet woodland / carr surrounding Old Park pond located within a lower lying area



Acid grassland and dense scrub habitats within the Chequers Wood and Old Park SSSI with overhead pylons forming visual detractors



Canterbury Golf Course backdropped by Chequers Wood



Agricultural fields on the eastern edge of Old Park, forming part of the Fordwich Conservation Area



Shelford Landfill and pylons form visual detractors on the skyline



Track running through Chequers Wood

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Steep valley slopes to the Great Stour River, ascending towards a central plateau.
- Thin soils hosting a mosaic of open acid grassland, areas with a heathland character, dense scrub, and wet woodlands.
- Golf course landscape to the east with localised variations in topography and a manicured aesthetic.
- A variety of valuable habitats including mosaic of acid grassland/heath species rich neutral grassland scrub and woodland providing biodiversity interest resulting in its designation as a SSSI.
- Provides a rural setting to the Fordwich Conservation Area, incorporating a large part of it as well as Fordwich House (Grade II listed building) and rural setting/backdrop to Canterbury City.
- Former ancient royal deer park with small blocks of ancient woodland and subsequent uses as military training ground resulting in a historically unenclosed landscape with low intensity use.
- The elevated topography and openness allow good views towards Canterbury City and the cathedral.
- A distinctive historic landscape with strong sense of place.

Natural Influences

The LCA contains stony coarse textured, well drained soils over Thanet Beds and River Terrace Gravels. This mixed geology creates a varied topography comprising steep valley slopes to the Great Stour River in the north, plateaued areas and gentle undulations, which overall is distinct from the adjacent orchards to the south and the floodplain to the north, which are both situated on relatively flat ground. The LCA is mostly open on the higher plateaued ground while wet woodland or carr associated with the streams, ponds and wet flushes are situated within lower lying areas.

Old Park is generally an area of significant ecological value. The Chequers Wood and Old Park SSSI comprise a variety of habitats that contribute towards the biodiversity interest within this LCA. It contains a valuable mosaic of acid grassland, dense scrub and woodland which is further diversified by the contrast of the acidic sandy soils of the plateau with the base-rich peaty soils of the valley bottom. This is reflected in the floristic diversity of the area. The northern boundary of the LCA abuts the majority of an LWS comprising a riverine habitat to the Great Stour River that extends from Ashford to Fordwich. The LCA encompasses a small part of this LWS.

The LCA also supports a diverse breeding community of birds including the three British woodpeckers, cetti's warbler and nightingale.

Ensure that woodland proposals are not perceived to trump the acid grassland which must be afforded the highest protection – highlight the scarcity, rarity and importance of the acid grassland in this area, and opportunities to enhance and protect it. Support proposals to provide access, recreation,

leisure and amenity, and opportunities to promote understanding of the rich cultural history of Old Park.

Cultural Influences

Old Park consists as one of three ancient deer parks to the east of Canterbury City. It was established as a Royal Park in Henry VIII's reign about 1538 and was only used for about a century. The original park also included marshy areas in the Stour Valley, and it is likely that it has never been intensively managed. Military paraphernalia scattered across the park provides evidence of its former use as a MOD site, with Howe Barracks having been located adjacent to the southern boundary but now replaced by a residential development. The site was once a military training ground and rifle range, having last served as the home for the Royal Regiment of Scotland, before the active MOD site closed in 2015. Future management of this ex-military land is uncertain at present as the MOD seeks to dispose of it in a relatively piecemeal fashion.

The eastern part of Old Park is managed as a golf course, comprising gently rolling smooth green lawns scattered with a few ornamental tree species that have been introduced, and contrasting with the tussocky rough grassland and native woodlands that surround it. The eastern edge of the golf course is formed by blocks of ancient woodland including Chequers Wood, a pre-19th century coppice, as well as pre-1810 scarp & steep valley-side woodland.

The eastern boundary of the LCA is characterised by small regular agricultural fields on gently sloping ground with straight boundaries, typical of 19th century Parliamentary type enclosure. Most of these fields lie within the Fordwich

Conservation Area, providing a rural setting to the many historic buildings that occupy the small remnant market town, including Fordwich House (Grade II listed) which is encompassed by the LCA and many other Grade II listed buildings that lie along the eastern boundary.

Perceptual Influences

The whole LCA is almost entirely contained by woodland which limits views in and out of the area from lower areas. However, from some PRoW that cross the area, views are afforded towards Canterbury Cathedral from elevated ground to the west of Old Park. To the east, undulating topography and blocks of woodland restrict views out.

The Shelford Landfill to the north of the LCA forms a dominant feature on the skyline and coupled with the rows of overhead

cables and frequent pylons (including those that cross the LCA) form intrusive elements and detract from a landscape that has had little disturbance.

Although there is some intervisibility with Canterbury City, there is an overall sense of remoteness and detachment from the urban edge, enhanced by the containment provided by the wooded character of the LCA. However, the area evidently suffers from antisocial behaviour and unauthorised uses, damaging the setting and character of this location.

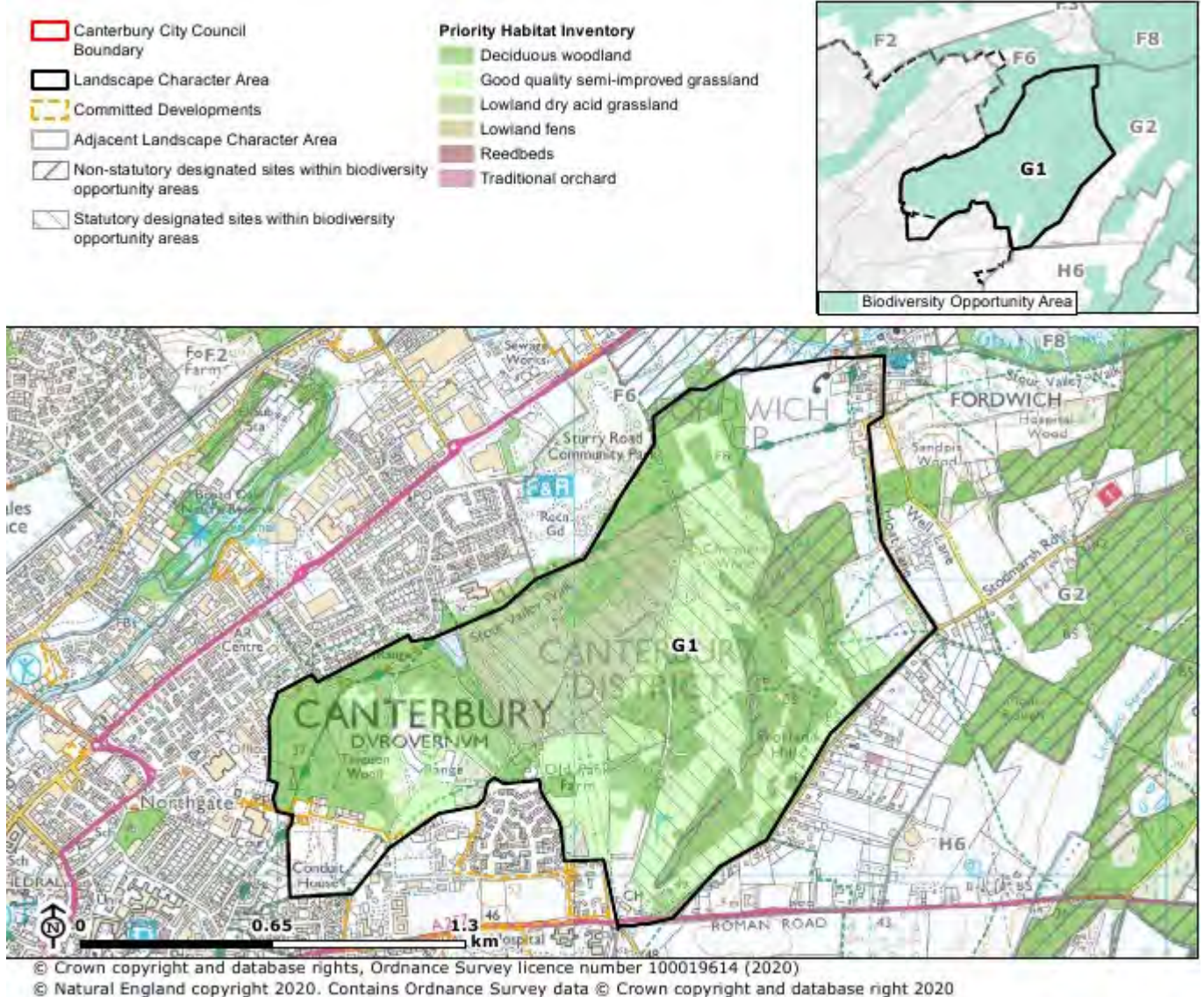
The Stour Valley Walk Long Distance Footpath crosses the LCA in its northern part and is largely enclosed by woodland providing a quiet and remote pedestrian route between Canterbury City and Fordwich.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- Valuable mosaic of habitats including acid grassland, heathland mosaic, dense scrub and woodland, as part of the Chequers Wood and Old Park SSSI.
- Blocks of ancient woodland contribute toward the role of Old Park as a historic setting to Canterbury City.
- Steep valley slopes to the Great Stour River and open plateaued areas on higher ground afforded with views towards Canterbury Cathedral.
- The role of the area in contributing towards the valley setting to the historic Canterbury City.
- The rural and historic setting the landscape provides to Fordwich, forming part of its associated Conservation Area.
- Ancient landscape that has escaped intensification for agricultural use or development, retaining a strong sense of place (and remoteness away from the urban edge of Canterbury City).
- Valued for informal recreational use extending into the heart of the city.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To protect and enhance acid grassland and woodland habitat, as part of the wider network of habitat within the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA.

This LCA lies within the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA, which sets out the following relevant key targets:

- Protect and enhance existing priority habitats and designated sites.
- To create acid grassland and heathland from other existing or new semi-natural habitat.
- Enhance species-rich grassland to bring it to priority habitat quality.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include arable and horticulture, improved grassland, neutral grassland, bracken,

acid grassland, broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland. Habitats of key importance within the LCA include ancient woodland at Chequers Wood and Scotland Hills and deciduous woodland, good quality semi-improved grassland, lowland dry acid grassland, which are listed as a priority habitat.

Due to the extent of designated sites and priority habitats identified, the key focus for this LCA will be to protect and enhance the existing habitat, particularly from committed development proposed in the south-west corner of the LCA.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

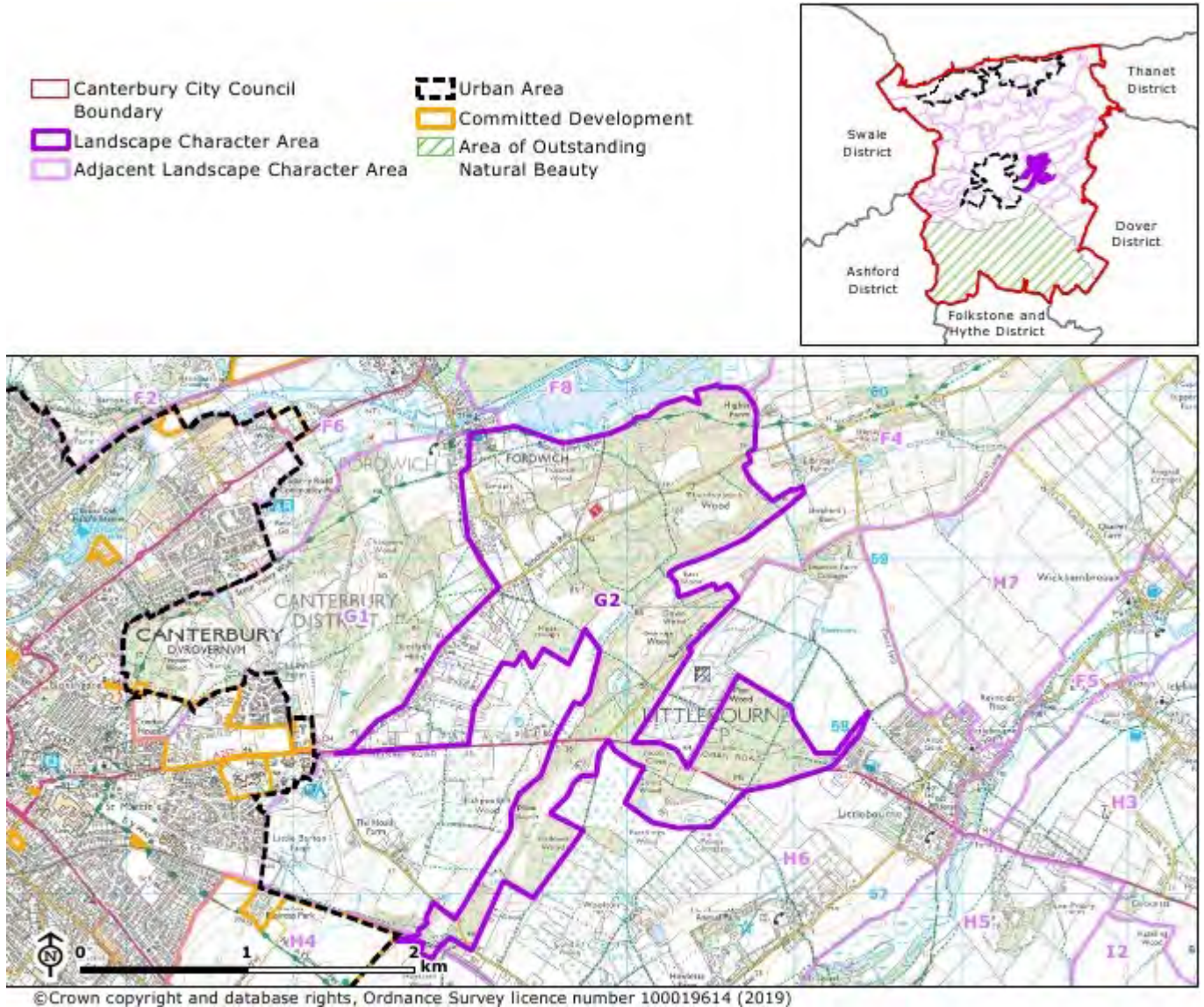
Landscape Management

- Protect and enhance habitat including ancient woodland and priority habitats within and outside of the strategic habitat network.
- Restore and create acid grassland and heath, species-rich neutral grassland and acid soil woodland habitat within the SSSI and to the east and west. This will create a buffer between proposed development in the south-west and the SSSI.
- Encourage management practices to conserve the mosaic of habitats including low intensity grazing of semi-natural grassland/heathland.
- Conserve and enhance the wooded character of the area through the creation of a woodland corridor along the Stour Valley walk and through promotion of appropriate woodland management in combination with areas of heathland. Encourage phased replacement of non-native species. However, ensure that woodland proposals are not perceived to surpass the acid grassland which must be protected for its scarcity, rarity and importance in this area.
- Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA including the creation of acid grassland and heath, neutral grassland, acid soil woodland, fertile soils woodland and wet woodland.

Development Management

- Conserve the undeveloped character of the landscape, avoiding the introduction of large scale or incongruous elements, and ensuring that it continues to play a role in separating the urban edge of Canterbury City and Fordwich.
- Resist unsympathetic proposals that introduce extensive or obtrusive elements on the visually sensitive valley sides and open plateaued areas, retaining uninterrupted views towards Canterbury Cathedral.
- Any proposals to develop within woodland should ensure that the sense of remoteness and tranquillity is retained.
- Assess new building proposals within adjacent urban area to ensure that an attractive and integrated edge is formed with the adjacent rural, wooded and recreational landscape including through the planting of tree belts and hedgerows.
- Provide opportunities for wider public access from the heart of the city, supporting proposals that allow for recreation, leisure and amenity uses. Seek opportunities to promote understanding of the rich cultural history of Old Park.

G2: Trenley Park Woodlands



Location and Summary

The Trenley Park Woodlands LCA lies to the south-west of the Westbere and Stodmarsh valley, between Old Park in the west and the Stodmarsh Ridge in the east. It is distinctive for its historic character as former deer park and extensive woodland cover that extends into the surrounding fruit belt in the south. The LCA is characterised by coppice woodland with thin acid soils and contributes towards the setting for the surrounding historic settlements including the villages of Fordwich and Littlebourne.

Representative Photographs



Chestnut coppice woodland



Woodland management occurring in Trenley Park Wood



Area of improved grassland grazed by horses



Mount Hospital Conservation Area



Rural and wooded setting to Fordwich



Stodmarsh Road enclosed by Trenley Park Wood

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Varied landform with elevated plateaus forming ridges.
- Thin soils and varied landform supporting coppice woodland with active woodland management evident.
- Fingers of woodland extend along valleys.
- Trenley Park Wood LWS providing valuable habitat through deciduous woodland on acid soils.
- Complex of ancient woodland contributes towards providing a historic wooded landscape setting to surrounding settlements, roads and recreational routes.
- Former ancient deer park resulting in a historically unenclosed landscape with low intensity use.
- Provides a rural and wooded setting to several Conservation Areas on the periphery of the area and historic buildings within Fordwich.
- Crossed by the Stour Valley Walk Long Distance Footpath and a network of PRoWs with a sense of remoteness along the routes afforded by woodland enclosure.

Natural Influences

Trenley Park Woodlands is an extensive woodland area on stony coarse textured, well drained soils over Thanet Beds and River Terrace Gravels. This mixed geology creates a varied topography comprising steep valley slopes to the Stour valley in the north and the Lampen Stream in the south, plateaued areas forming ridges and undulations of varying gradients. Fingers of woodland point south-west along valleys, emerging from the adjacent fruit belt. The most distinctive of these is the Lampen Stream valley.

A large proportion of the area is covered by the Trenley Park Wood LWS, consisting of a large ancient woodland complex (also priority habitat deciduous woodland) on acid soils together with some former sand pits. The woods are somewhat fragmented by roads, agricultural land and sand pits. Some are under active coppice management, with others being unmanaged. The flora is varied and there are notable populations of woodland birds. Outside of the predominant woodland, the landcover is mostly improved grassland, often grazed by horses, and an area of sports pitches exists in the north-west. There is also a very small area of priority habitat traditional orchards within a property boundary off Stodmarsh Road in the south-west of the LCA.

Cultural Influences

The woodlands are part of Trenley Park, the oldest documented deer park in Kent, as well as one of the oldest in the country. It was created by Odo of Bayeux and was first mentioned in a charter dating 1071-82 and is one of two deer parks in Kent mentioned in Domesday Book. The exact location on the ground is not known, however it was a

detached part of the parish of Wickham (later Wickhambreaux) located within the Littlebourne parish. The shape is typical of Medieval deer parks with rounded banks and in places remains of the external ditch can be seen. It ceased to be enclosed around 1425 when 200 acres of the wood were sold when the last Earl of March, and Lord of the Manor of Wickham, died.

Today Trenley Park has lost its open character and is managed as chestnut coppice woodland with oak standards and some coniferous plantation.

The LCA contributes towards the setting of several Conservation Areas, encompassing parts of them. Fordwich lies to the north-west with a part of the remnant market town (and associated Conservation Area with a cluster of Grade II listed buildings) extending into the LCA, which provides a wooded and rural setting to the town through a regimented pattern of woodland copses and small regular fields. In the north-east, part of Trenley Park Wood lies within the Elbridge House Conservation Area, providing visual enclosure to Elbridge Farm. A small strip of woodland in the south-east marks the edge of Littlebourne (and its associated Conservation Area) providing a wooded buffer to the village. The LCA encompasses the entirety of the Mount Hospital Conservation Area, which comprises a very small area along Stodmarsh Road in the south-west. Originally it was opened as the Canterbury Sanatorium in 1897, consisting as a collection of Victorian buildings set within mature landscape grounds, and was later acquired by the National Health Service in 1948 before being used as student accommodation. It has since been redeveloped and now provides 21 homes.

Perceptual Influences

Overall, the wooded character of the LCA provides enclosure and results in a sense of remoteness and tranquillity, particularly from the network of PRoW that run through the woodlands which includes the Stour Valley Walk Long Distance Footpath along the northern edge.

There are some visually detracting features in the form of ribbon development along Stodmarsh Road, fencing associated with equestrian uses, woodland coppicing (with exposed stumps) and security features.

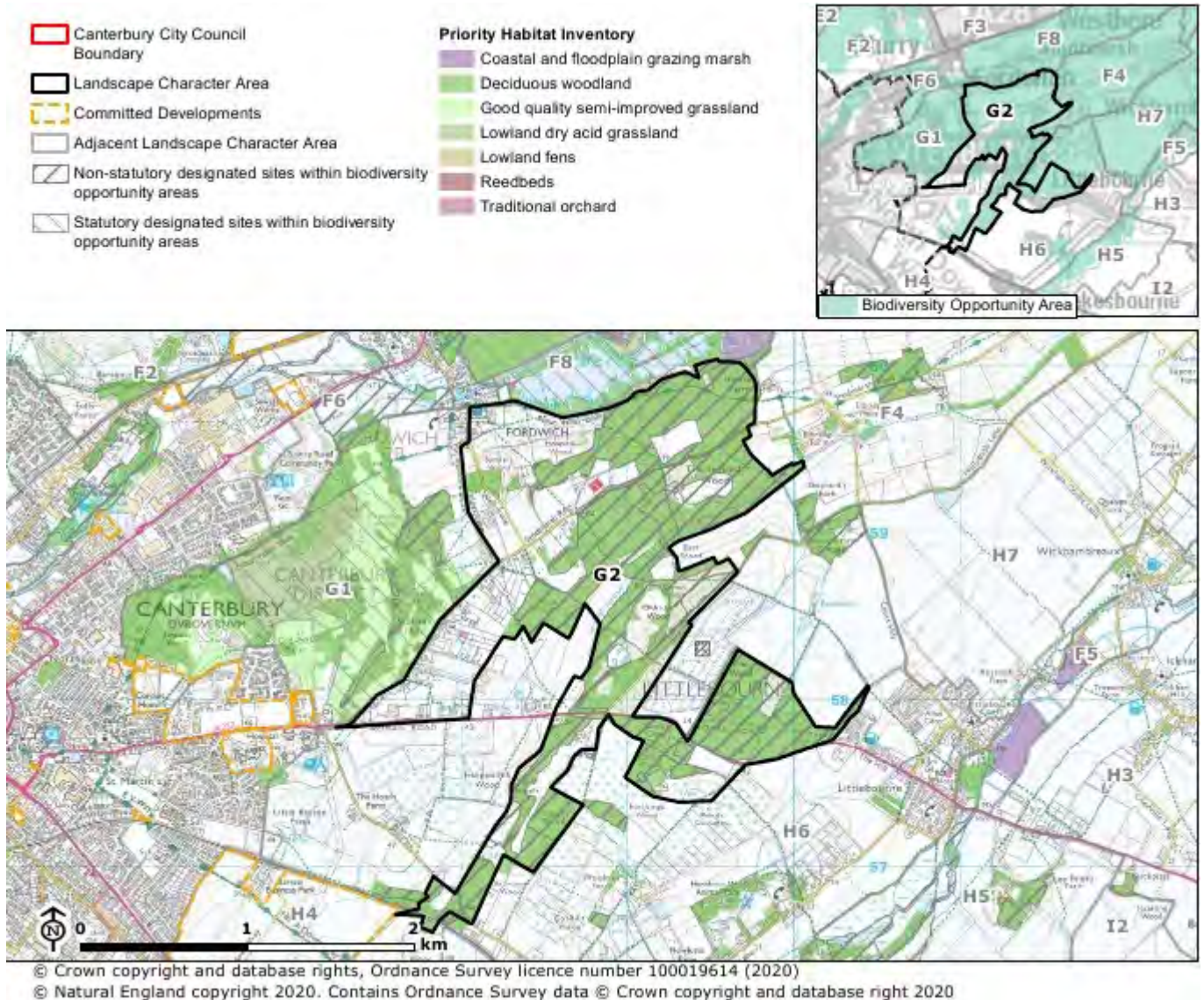
There is some aural intrusion from vehicles travelling along the roads that cross the LCA, although these are typically in the form of rural lanes lined with hedgerows. Stodmarsh Road crosses through the centre of the LCA and is relatively busy, providing a connection between Canterbury City and villages to the west, although is also well enclosed as it runs through Trenley Park Wood.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- Extensive areas of valuable habitats including woodland on acid soils at Trenley Park Wood LWS.
- The remaining areas of ancient semi-natural woodland at Trenley Park Wood and other blocks of mature broadleaved deciduous woodland, forming part of priority habitat.
- The ancient character associated with the former deer park (being the oldest documented deer park in Kent, as well as one of the oldest in the country), with remnants in the form of rounded banks and external ditches.
- Rural and wooded setting to the Fordwich, Littlebourne and Elbridge House Conservation Areas.
- Rural character of lanes lined with hedgerows.
- The remote character along PRoW providing areas of tranquillity.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To protect and enhance woodland habitat, which forms part of the wider habitat network within the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA.

This LCA lies within the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA, which sets out the following relevant key targets:

- Protect and enhance existing priority habitats and designated sites.
- To create acid grassland and heathland from other existing or new semi-natural habitat.

- Enhance species-rich grassland to bring it to priority habitat quality.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include arable and horticulture, bracken, improved grassland, broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland and open standing water. The majority of the LCA comprises ancient woodland at Trenley Park Wood and deciduous woodland, which is listed as a priority habitat.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

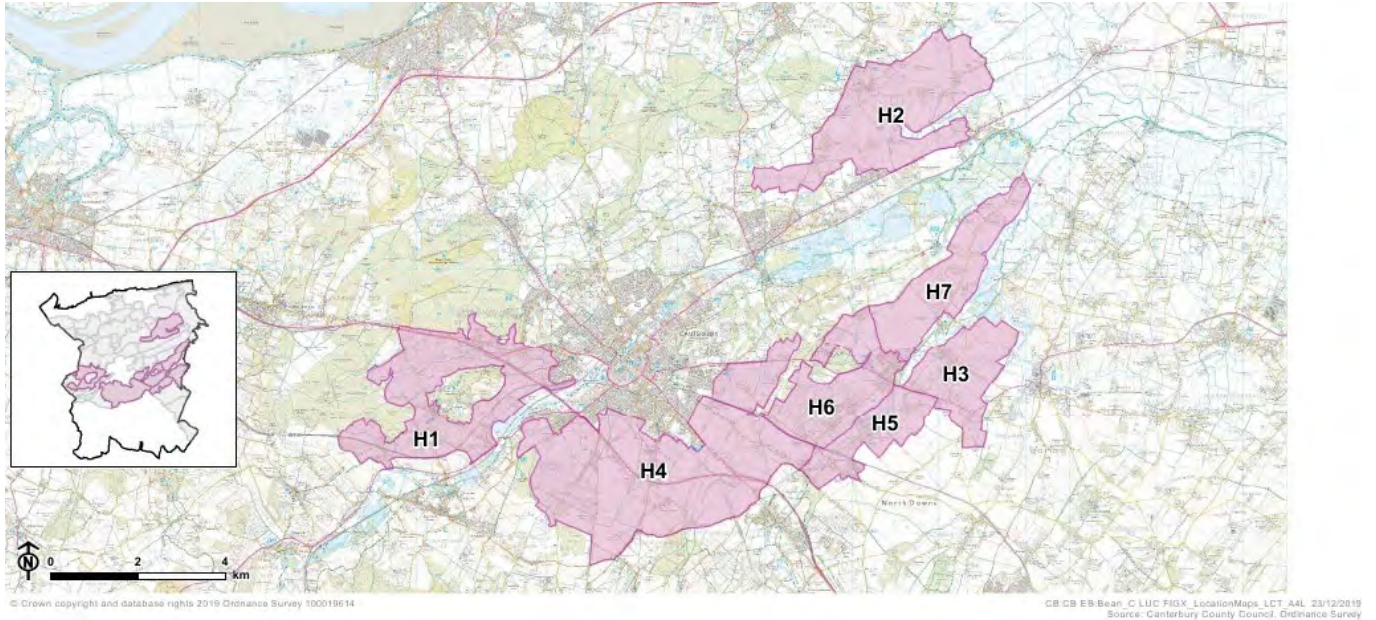
Landscape Management

- Protect and enhance habitats, including ancient woodland and priority habitats within and outside of the strategic habitat network.
- Conserve and reinforce the wooded character of the area through continued and improved coppice management. If native deciduous woodland is planted, use locally occurring native species in order to link to existing woodland. Seek to avoid the introduction of coniferous boundaries/shelterbelts.
- Encourage the replacement of coniferous or introduced species with native deciduous species within the woodland.
- Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA including the creation of acid grassland and heath, neutral grassland, acid soil woodland, fertile soils woodland and wet woodland.

Development Management

- Conserve and enhance historic features including the remnants of the former ancient deer park (rounded banks and external ditches).
- Conserve the undeveloped character of the landscape, avoiding the introduction of large scale or incongruous elements, and ensuring that it continues to play a role in providing a rural and wooded setting to the Fordwich, Littlebourne and Elbridge House Conservation Areas.
- Any proposals for highway upgrading should retain the rural and wooded character of the lanes.
- Any proposals for new development within the LCA should maintain the secluded rural character. Use woodland to frame existing buildings, soften hard edges and provide an appropriate setting to properties.
- Resist proposals to increase access or develop within the woodland, ensuring that the sense of remoteness and tranquillity is retained from along PRoW.

LCT H: Central Mixed Farmlands



Description

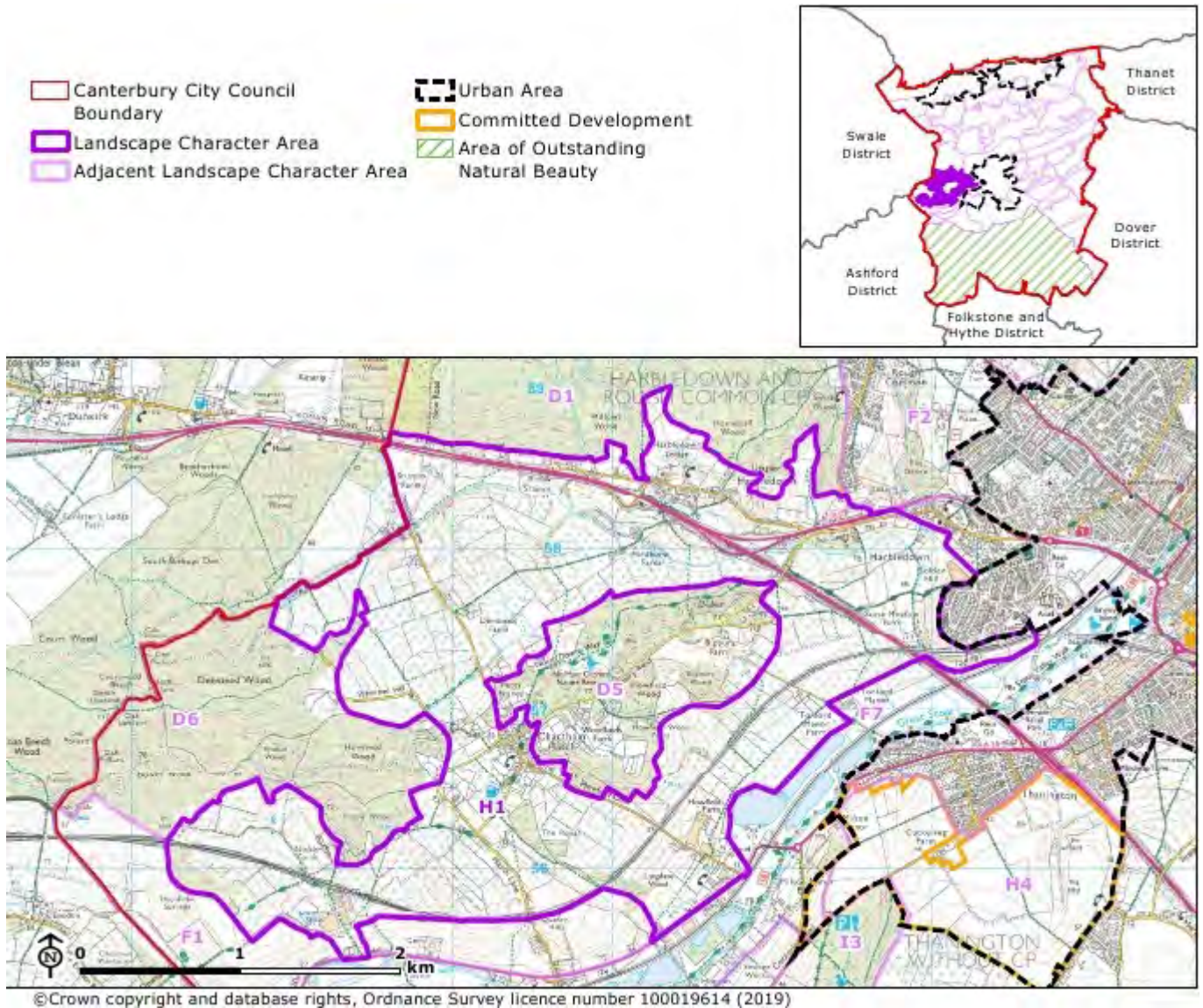
This LCT is distinguished by its agricultural land use and slightly sloping landform. The farmland is predominantly arable with some pasture and orchards. There is a contrast between open areas of large-scale fields due to agricultural intensification and hedgerow removal, and more enclosed historic parklands and small river valleys. There are small villages and hamlets linked by narrow rural roads, with some larger transport infrastructure. The area contains a number of Committed Developments forming extensions to the existing edge of Canterbury. The landscape provides a link between other LCTs including the marshes, woodland of the Blean and south to the Kent Downs AONB.

Landscape Character Areas

Central Mixed Farmlands LCT is subdivided into seven LCAs:

- H1: Harbledown Fruit Belt
- H2: Hoath Farmlands
- H3: Ickham Farmlands
- H4: Nackington Farmlands
- H5: Nailbourne Parklands
- H6: Littlebourne Fruit Belt
- H7: Wickhambreaux Horticultural Belt

H1: Harbledown Fruitbelt



Location and Summary

The Harbledown Fruit Belt LCA is an area of distinctive folded landscape which is predominately under orchard cultivation. The boundaries are contained by the edge of the district to the west, the Blean Woods to the north and Canterbury City and the Stour Valley to the east and south. It is part of a much larger fruit belt area that covers a substantial part of North East Kent and surrounds the outcrop of higher wooded ground at Bigbury Hill.

Representative Photographs



Narrow rural lane lined with high hedgerows



Hops along Denstead Lane with the Blean Woods in the background



Grade II listed Denstead Oast



Large agricultural barns



Pasture field with views north to the Blean Woods



Orchards are common throughout the area

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Distinctly folded landscape, ranging from 15m AOD in the south-east to 89m AOD in the far west, surrounding the wooded outcrop of Bigbury Hill.
- Land cover dominated by productive commercial orchards.
- Small scattered areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland containing coppice stands of hazel.
- Irregular field pattern, predominately in use for fruit production both traditional and modern orchards.
- Settlement confined to larger village at Chartham Hatch and scattered farmsteads and oast houses, which are often Grade II listed.
- Rural lanes with good hedgerows provide access through the area. The A2 and railway cross through and bisect the area.
- Good PRoW network including the North Downs Way/part of the Pilgrim's Way.
- Views are enclosed by the surrounding Blean woodlands, although there are some isolated long views to south and west from high points and along valleys including landmark views to Canterbury Cathedral in its Stour valley setting.

Natural Influences

This is an area of mixed geology that is predominantly Thanet Beds overlain with River Gravel Terraces, producing a distinctly folded topography. Chartham Hatch Pit, an abandoned chalk pit, is designated as a RIGS site as it contains the type locality of the Chartham Flint. The deep, well drained and often stoneless soils support a mosaic of productive orchards.

The Harbledown Fruit Belt represents something of an 'island' of agricultural and horticultural land amongst the more biodiverse landcover in the south-west of the district. There are small areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland and priority habitat traditional orchard. Many of the woodland areas are connected to the surrounding wooded landscapes of the Blean, and small areas of the Blean Woods South LWS extend into this landscape. There are also fragments of ancient woodland found in the north-east and south-west.

In the north a stream corridor emerges from Denstead Wood and contains linear open water and scrub habitat.

Ornamental tree species are associated with settlement throughout the area and particularly at Chartham Hatch.

Cultural Influences

The majority of the landscape is classified as orchards by the Kent HLC. In-between the orchards are small pockets of rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries (e.g. around Poldhurst and Denstead farms) and small-medium regular, Parliamentary fields (e.g. by The Rough and at Harbledown Lodge).

Current land use is predominately productive orchards and hops. There are some areas of horse grazing in the north-west and around settlements. Windbreaks and thick belts of natural vegetation create a strong but irregular field pattern, which is exaggerated by the straight rows of orchard trees and hops.

Settlement is concentrated at Chartham Hatch and Upper Harbledown. Chartham Hatch is an isolated nucleated village, which contains a variety of irregularly grouped houses. Many of the houses within the village have an indistinct style and not related to the local vernacular.

Upper Harbledown, which lies north of the A2 contains a number of Grade II listed buildings and is designated as the Upper Harbledown Conservation Area. The eastern landscape, including Golden Hill, forms a rural backdrop to the adjacent village of Harbledown (reflected in the extent of its Conservation Area).

Elsewhere, farmsteads and clusters of historic cottages are scattered along rural lanes, a number of which are Grade II listed. Numerous oast houses, some of which are also Grade II listed, indicate a once thriving hop growing area. There are also some large industrial units linked to farmsteads e.g. at Dunning Shaw and Howfield Farm.

The A2 cuts across this landscape, effectively separating Upper Harbledown from the rest of the LCA. The Chatham main line railway runs through the south of the area, and also acts as a barrier within the landscape. The A28 Ashford Road separates this landscape from the Great Stour river valley (within LCA F7: Stour Valley West).

The landscape forms part of the setting to Bigbury Camp Iron Age hillfort, with a small part of the Scheduled Monument extending into this LCA.

Perceptual Influences

The Blean woodlands to the north, east, and west, and the woodlands of the Kent Downs AONB provide enclosure and a horizon for the majority of views. The undulating landform also reduces long-distance views. Once within the folds of the broader landscape the containment creates a distinctly rural character. There are occasional views towards Canterbury City, with the Cathedral tower appearing above the woodland. The most extensive views towards Canterbury City are from the east facing slopes below Bigbury Hill. Here there are broad views across the Stour valley from Thanington through to the city centre.

Small areas of arable fields and strips of woodland interrupt the pattern of orchards. Post and wire fencing edges many of the orchards and there are some windbreaks formed of fast-growing conifers which are out of place in the landscape.

The A2, A28 Ashford Road and railway line are visually and aurally detracting. The large agricultural units around farmsteads, and industrial units which line the A2 and the A28 (within LCA F7: Stour Valley West) are also intrusive features. The modern houses and fringe areas on the edge of Chartham Hatch also impact on the rural landscape.

Roads are limited to narrow winding lanes often enclosed by high hedgerows which lead into and out of Chartham Hatch.

The area is accessible through the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network, which links the scattered farmhouses, Chartham Hatch village and the Blean woodlands to the north, east and west. Part of the North Downs Way Long Distance Footpath and the Pilgrim's Way (a pilgrimage route from Winchester to Canterbury) runs from the south-west through Chartham Hatch into Canterbury City.

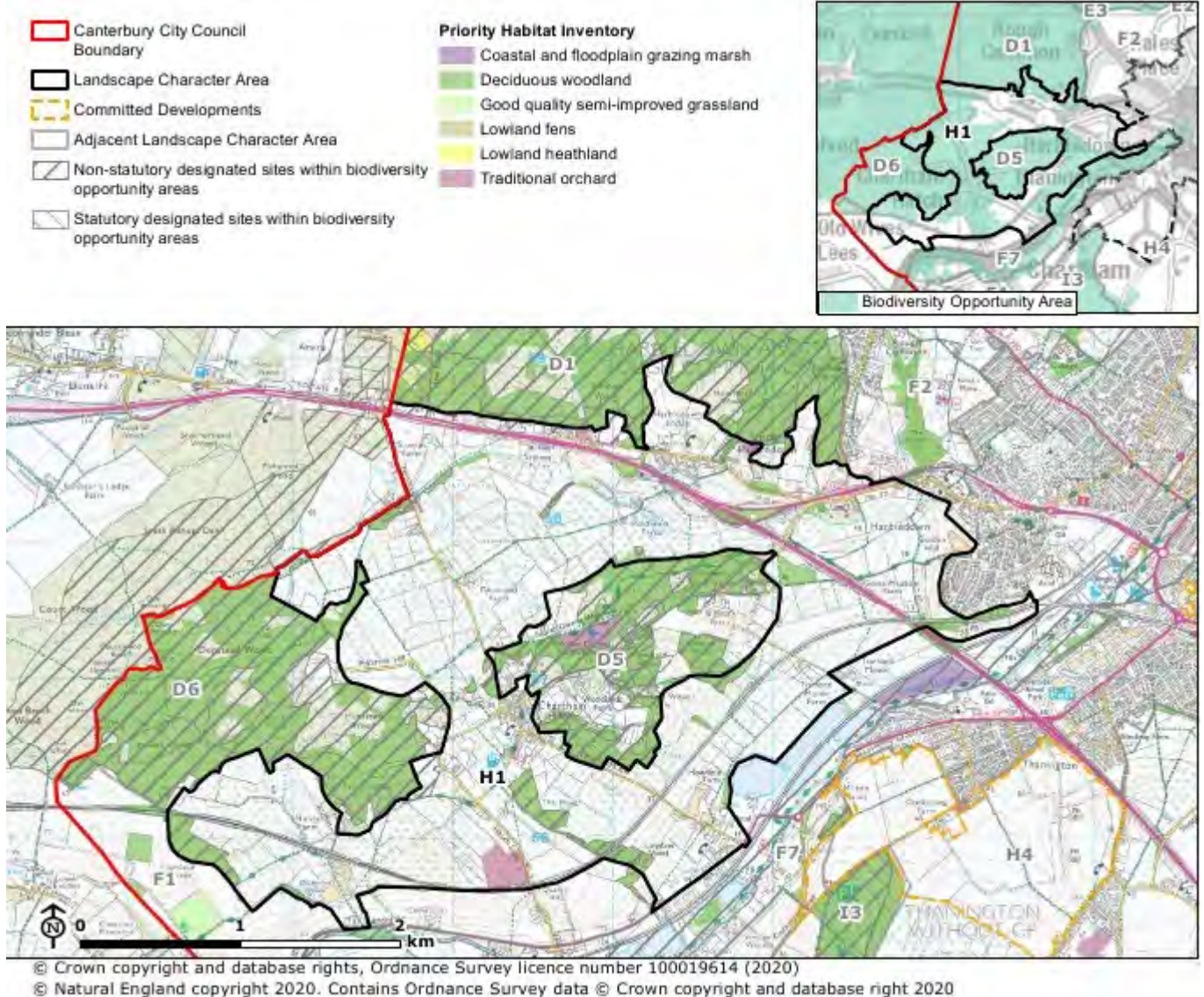
Overall, the area retains a rural character, despite proximity to Canterbury City and the transport corridors.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- Rolling topography with mosaic of orchards and woodland provides visual interest and diversity.
- Occasional areas of ecologically important priority habitat deciduous woodland which forms part of the wider Blean Woods.
- Historic farmsteads and oast houses provide a sense of place and time depth.
- Provides important rural setting to Bigbury Camp Scheduled Monument and historic village of Harbledown.
- Good PRoW network which provides recreational value.
- Occasional glimpsed views to Canterbury City and the Cathedral from high points and long valleys.
- Strong rural character with limited development, enclosed by the Blean Woods.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To enhance wetlands, grassland and ancient woodlands, as part of the wider wetland, species rich grassland and woodland networks of the Blean and Lower Stour Wetlands BOAs.

The LCA lies within the Blean and Lower Stour Wetlands BOAs.

Key relevant targets identified in relation to the Blean BOA, include:

- Enhance and reconnect woodland to create an extensive block of habitat, particularly through the maintenance and restoration of coppice management.
- Restore and enhance heath and acid grassland (including grazed wooded heath) as part of the woodland matrix.

- Create species-rich neutral grassland and to bring it to priority habitat lowland meadow quality.

Key relevant targets identified in relation to the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA, include:

- Protect and enhance existing priority habitats and designated sites.
- Create acid grassland and heathland from other existing or new semi-natural habitat.

- Enhance species-rich grassland to bring it to priority habitat quality.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include arable and horticulture, improved grassland, broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland, rivers and streams and built up areas. Habitats of key importance within the LCA include a small area of ancient and priority habitat deciduous woodland.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

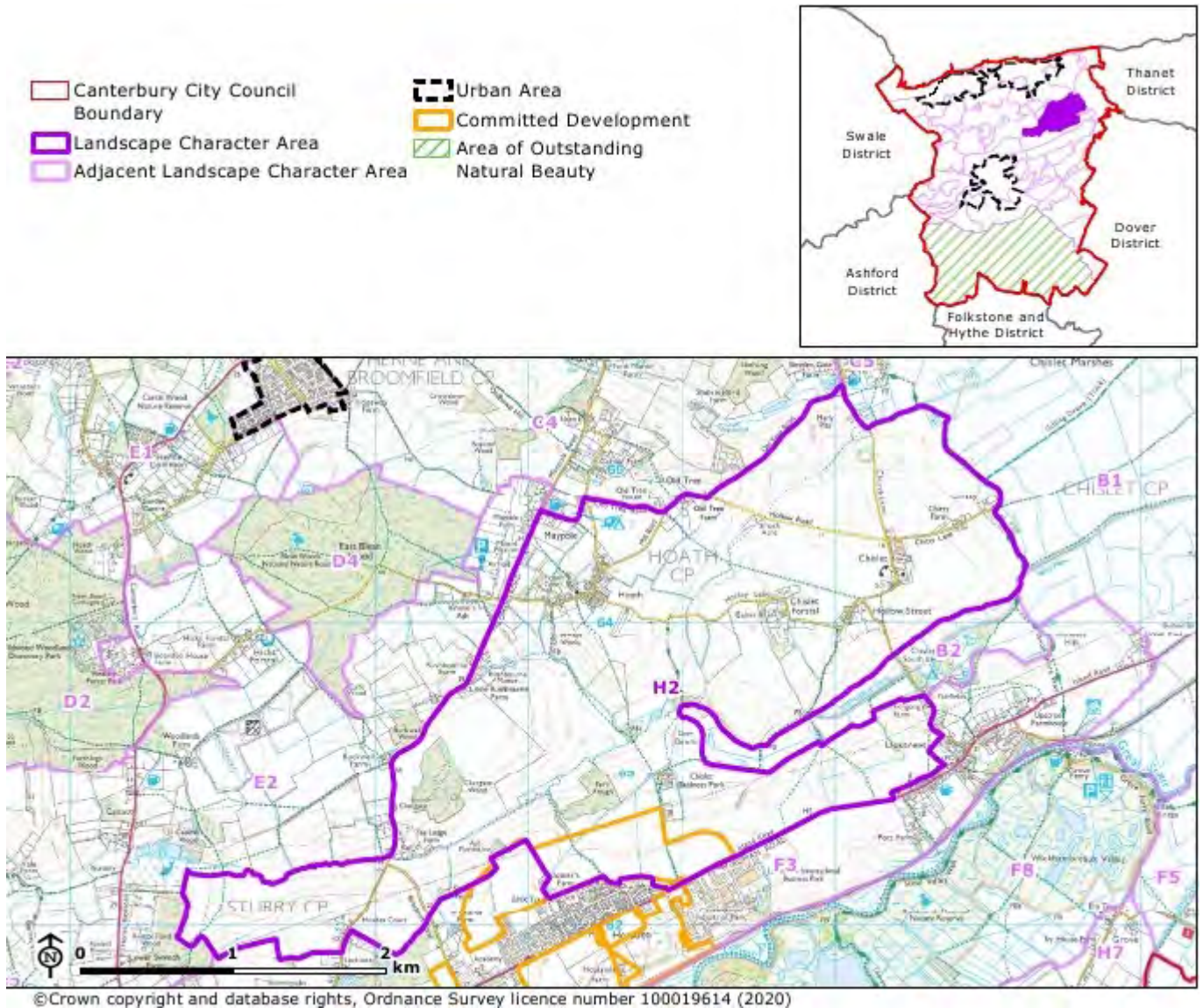
Landscape Management

- Conserve and enhance the biodiversity interest of wetland habitats around the watercourse at Upper Harbledown by managing scrub encroachment and in the south of the LCA near Howfield Farm as part of the wider habitat improvement to be carried out along the banks of the Great Stour.
- Restore and create acid grassland and heath and woodland habitat in the north around Denstead Farm.
- Manage and enhance the wildlife interest of agricultural fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins and enhance areas of improved grassland and arable fields to species rich grassland.
- Enhance or reinstate management of ancient woodlands at South Blean Woods LWS and reconnect with surrounding areas of ancient woodland such as those at Hunstead Wood.
- Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA including the creation of fertile soils woodland, wet woodland, chalk scarp woodland, acid soil woodland, chalk grassland, neutral grassland and acid grassland.
- Enhance and augment fragmented field boundary hedgerows with native species, replacing post and wire fencing where possible. Encourage the replacement of unsympathetic coniferous shelterbelts with native deciduous species
- Conserve old orchards for their landscape, visual and biodiversity value.

Development Management

- Conserve the strong vernacular of historic buildings and their rural setting, particularly within the Upper Harbledown and Harbledown Conservation Areas.
- Conserve the rural character of the landscape ensuring that it continues to play a role in the setting to Harbledown and Canterbury City and conserve the key views to the Cathedral in its Stour valley setting.
- In relation to Canterbury City conserve the distinct rural edge formed by the steep slopes of Golder Hill.
- Seek to enhance the setting of Chartham Hatch and areas of larger farm building, including opportunities for further woodland planting to help integrate these areas within the landscape.
- Conserve and respect the character of historic built form and their association with traditional farming practices by resisting further agricultural intensification.
- Protect the valued recreational use of the landscape, seeking opportunities to further enhance opportunities for access and enjoyment.

H2: Hoath Farmlands



Location and Summary

The Hoath Farmlands LCA consists of an area that stretches from the north of Sturry in the west to Upstreet in the east, extending up to Boyden Gate at the northern most point. The area of farmland forms a transition between The Blean and the marshes/Stour Valley. It comprises a landscape that has undergone extensive agricultural intensification with frequent hedgerow removal, resulting in a large-scale open character. The LCA encompasses a number of small settlements including the historic villages of Hoath and Chislet.

Representative Photographs



Agricultural intensification resulting in field amalgamation with fragmented hedgerows



Clangate Wood forming part of the East Blean Woods SSSI



Church of St Mary the Virgin (Grade I listed) located within Chislet



Large arable fields with past hedgerow removal



Rolling landscape with blocks of woodland



Oasthouse at Buckwell Farm (Grade II) within the Hoath, Rushbourne and Tile Lodge Conservation Area

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Open and rolling arable landscape with medium to large scale fields.
- Articulated topography cut by small streams feeding into marshes.
- Extensive areas of Head Brickearth and alluvium along river valleys and low-lying areas, with London Clay and gravel on adjacent slopes.
- Clangate Wood providing biodiversity interest forming part of East Blean Woods SSSI.
- Small areas of open stream, wetland and woodland forming part of the Sarre Penn section of the Chislet Marshes, Sarre Penn and Preston Marshes LWS.
- Fragmented network of hedgerows with extensive loss of field boundaries following agricultural intensification.
- Small isolated blocks of ancient woodland.
- Containing both the Chislet and Chitty Conservation Area and the Hollow Street and Chislet Forstal Conservation Area, providing a rural setting to the many historic buildings including Church of St Mary the Virgin (Grade I listed building).
- Encompassing most of the Hoath, Rushbourne and Tile Lodge Conservation Area, providing a rural setting to the historic buildings including Oasthouses.
- Small isolated villages, properties of historic interest, scattered farms and groups of cottages.
- Long views across open fields and surrounding marshes from elevated positions.

Natural Influences

The Hoath Farmlands LCA comprises a rolling landscape of river valleys and rounded slopes, gently falling away from a southern ridge, north east towards the village of Hoath. It is cut by small streams feeding into surrounding marshes, resulting in an articulated topography. It is an area of complex geology, formed from the sandstones of the Oldhaven, Woolwich and Thanet Beds; with large areas of blue- grey London Clay across the southern slopes, overlain with fine silty drift of Head Gravel and Brickearth. The Sarre Penn stream flows from west to east across the south of the LCA flowing onto the low lying Chislet Marshes. A small proportion of the LCA in the east was once a part of the former Wantsum Channel, however in comparison to the remainder of the channel area, it doesn't contain any ditches or streams, and instead comprises large arable fields, meaning there is no clear visible associations with the former channel.

The soils are intensively cultivated almost exclusively for arable production, with a Grade 1 agricultural land classification within the large area of silty drift deposits, found in the far north of the LCA. This agricultural intensification has led to the most extreme treatment of the landscape with loss of all hedgerow field boundaries and field amalgamation. Elsewhere lower graded land is found over clay and gravels, where cereal production is also intensive, but the removal of hedgerows has been less extreme. As well as the fragmented network of hedgerows scattered along the lanes and across some internal field boundaries, there are also small isolated

blocks of semi-natural woodland, some of which are priority habitat deciduous woodland. These are of great value to wildlife, with Clangate Wood (located in the south-western part of the LCA) and Buckwell Wood (abutting the western boundary of the LCA) being included within the East Blean Woods SSSI and are also ancient woodlands.

Other areas of biodiversity interest lie to the north and west of Chislet Business Park, consisting as an extension to the Sarre Penn section of the Chislet Marshes, Sarre Penn and Preston Marshes LWS. These include small areas of open stream, wetland and a small Ancient Woodland known as Park Rough / Joiners Wood. Other small areas of Ancient Woodland lie along the southern boundary including at Little Babs Oak Wood and Broad Wood.

Cultural Influences

The majority of the LCA is classified as Prairie fields (19th century enclosure but with extensive loss of hedgerow boundaries) by the Kent HLC. A smaller area surrounding the village of Hoath is classified as rectilinear fields (late-Medieval enclosure) where field boundaries are still intact, particularly between the village and Rushbourne Farm to the south-west where there is a more intricate and smaller scale field pattern.

Many narrow hedge lined lanes make for good vehicular access to the lower lying areas, however, this is restricted in the south, to the narrow Roman road passing from Sturry to Reculver and another which winds from Upstreet to Boyden Gate. Scattered along these lanes are small nucleated and

linear villages, isolated farmsteads and groups of detached cottages. Whilst the cores of the villages are generally of historic value, 20th century development has meant the expansion and degradation of some peripheral areas. However, there are many examples of properties of historic importance within the LCA, built in local vernacular materials such as brick and weatherboarding. They typically form part of Conservation Areas that are encompassed either entirely or in part by this LCA. The Hoath, Rushbourne and Tile Lodge Conservation Area is situated along Roman Road (which runs along the north-western boundary of the LCA). It lies almost entirely within the LCA and includes the intricate and smaller field pattern defined by hedgerows along with Clangate Wood, providing a rural setting to the village of Hoath and its associated historic buildings including the Church of Holy Cross (Grade II* listed), as well as to Rushbourne Farm / Manor and Tile Lodge Farm. Evidence of former hop production within this area is indicated by existing Oasthouses at Rushbourne Manor and Buckwell Farm.

Further to the north lies the Ford, Maypole & Oldtree (Hoath) Conservation Area; its southern edge crossing into the LCA along with historic buildings at Old Tree. Similarly, a small part of the Boyden Gate Conservation Area lies within the north-eastern corner of the LCA.

The eastern part of the LCA encompasses both the Chislet and Chitty Conservation Area and the Hollow Street and Chislet Forstal Conservation Area. They adjoin one another and lie along Church Lane / Chitty Lane and Marley Lane respectively. They include historic buildings that are immediately surrounded by small pastoral fields bounded by mature boundaries comprising woodland copse and tree lined hedgerows, providing a rural setting that is somewhat enhanced by the contrasting wider landscape of large arable

and hedge-less fields. One of the historic buildings is Church of St Mary the Virgin (Chislet) that overlooks the former Wantsum Channel. The earliest reference to the church is 605AD when King Ethelbert gave the manor of Chislet to the newly founded St Augustine's Abbey. The Church is dominated by its Norman tower measuring 17 feet square and has a Norman nave with 13th century chancel and nave aisles. It is built of coursed rubble with Caen stone dressings and is Grade I listed. The historical associations with the Church are still in evidence today with Chislet Court adjacent to the Church still being owned by the Church Commissioners and the Church primary school. At Chislet Forstal, the Tudor House is a hall-house of Wealden form dating back to the late 14th century although the present house has been built in several phases during the 15th and 16th centuries. It is Grade II* listed and is recorded as having exceptional interior features.

Perceptual Influences

Overall the agricultural intensification and extensive loss of hedgerows that has occurred throughout the LCA has resulted in an open, managed landscape lacking in tranquil qualities. The mainly large-scale field pattern and loss of many of the vegetative boundaries provides for wide open views across the internal scene, including from along the PRow that cross the area, such as the Saxon Shore Way Long Distance Footpath that borders the eastern boundary.

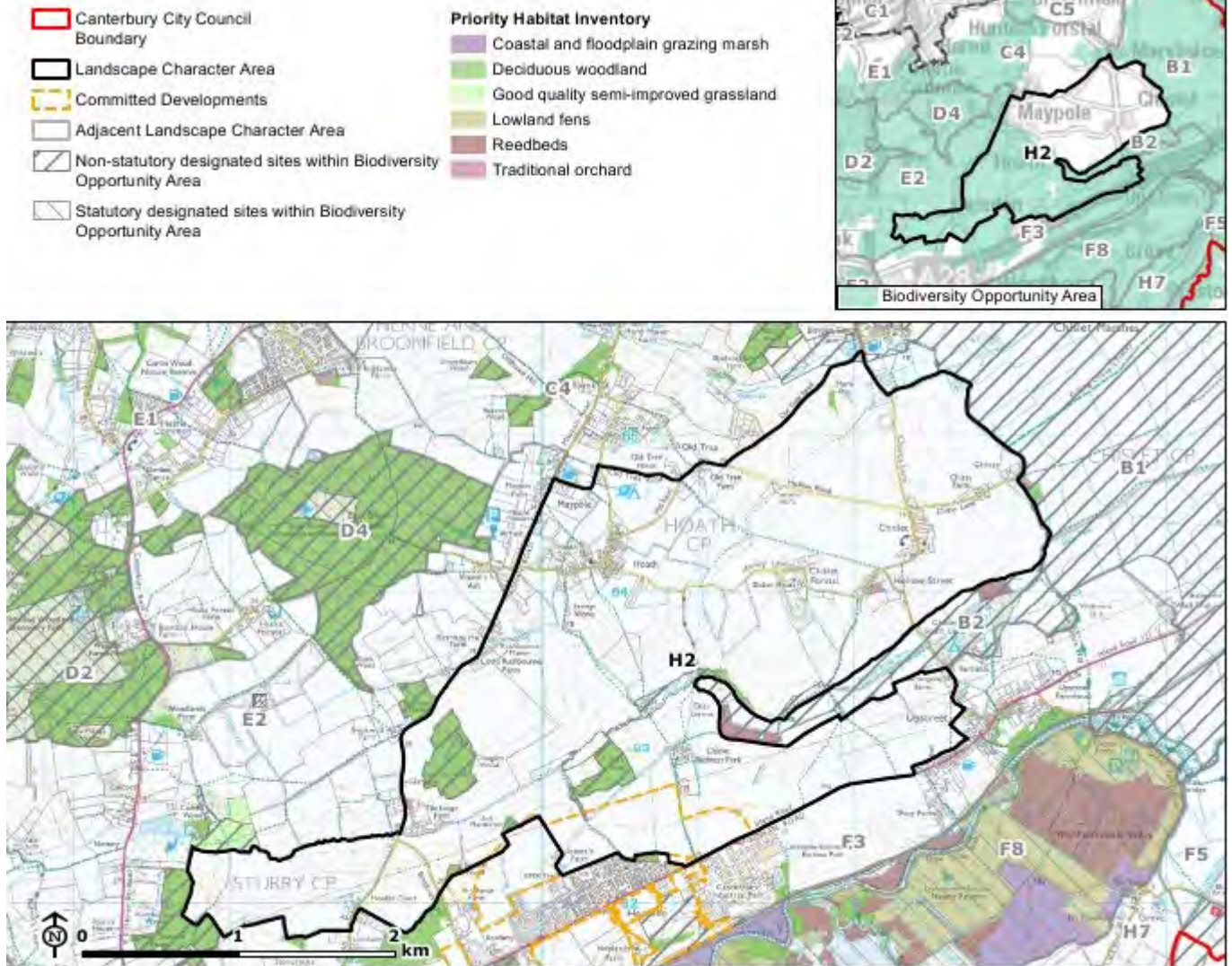
Modern housing, large agricultural barns and some industrial buildings (within Chislet Business Park) detract from the traditional landscape, whilst pylons are sited across the southern slopes and seen on the skyline from many views within the LCA.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- A variety of valuable habitats including at Clangate Wood (resulting in it forming part of a SSSI) and the areas of open stream, wetland and woodland forming part of the Chislet Marshes, Sarre Penn and Preston Marshes LWS.
- The remaining areas of ancient semi-natural woodland and other blocks of mature deciduous woodland, forming part of priority habitat.
- The Conservation Areas of Hoath, Rushbourne and Tile Lodge, Chislet and Chitty Conservation Area and Hollow Street and Chislet Forstal, with many historic buildings including the Grade II* Church of Holy Cross and the Grade I Church of St Mary the Virgin.
- Rural setting to a number of historic settlements including Hoath, Rushbourne, Tile Lodge, Chislet, Chitty and Chislet Forstal.
- Rural character of lanes lined with hedgerows.
- Long distance views from PRowS including from along the Saxon Shore Way Long Distance Footpath.

Biodiversity Appraisal



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Aim: To protect, restore and enhance woodland and associated habitats, as part of the wider woodland network of the Blean and Lower Stour Wetlands BOA.

The LCA lies within the Blean BOA in the west and the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA in the east.

Key relevant targets identified in relation to the Blean BOA, include:

- To enhance and reconnect woodland to create an extensive block of habitat, particularly through the maintenance and restoration of coppice management.
- To restore and enhance heath and acid grassland (including grazed wooded heath) as part of the woodland matrix.

- To create species-rich neutral grassland and to bring it to priority habitat Lowland Meadow quality.

Key relevant targets identified in relation to the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA, include:

- Protect and enhance existing priority habitats and designated sites.
- To create acid grassland and heathland from other existing or new semi-natural habitat.
- To enhance species-rich grassland to bring it to priority habitat quality.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include arable and horticulture, improved grassland, broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland and built up areas. Habitats of key importance within the LCA include ancient woodland and deciduous woodland and good quality semi-improved grassland, which are listed as priority habitats.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

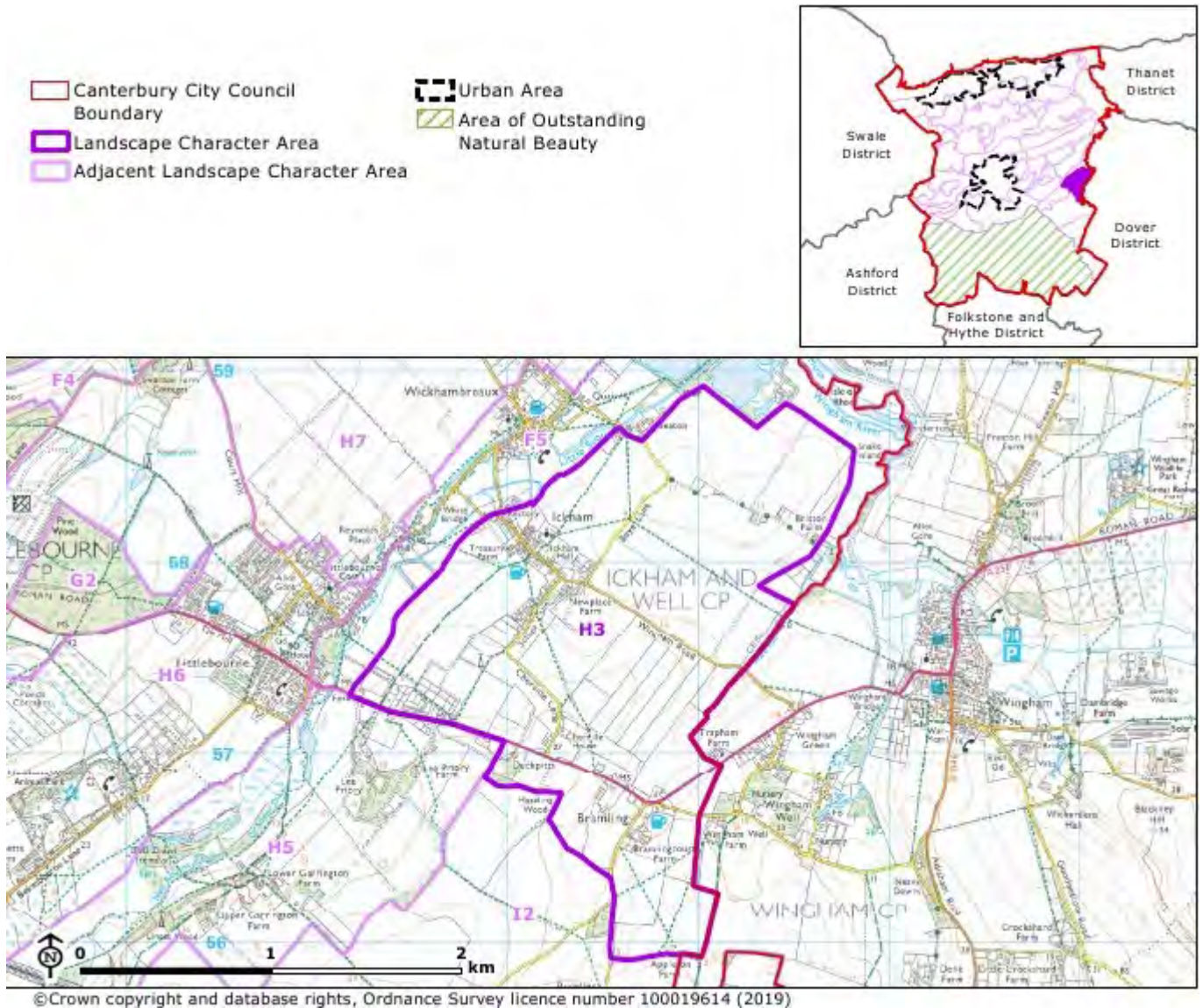
Landscape Management

- Protect the landscape's valued semi-natural habitats including at Clangate Wood and the areas of open stream, wetland, and woodland forming part of the Chislet Marshes, Sarre Penn and Preston Marshes LWS.
- Explore opportunities for the creation of wetland features associated with the Sarre Penn to enhance biodiversity interest.
- Restore and create acid grassland, heath, and woodland habitat in the south and west.
- Conserve and enhance the blocks of deciduous woodland (including ancient woodland), which are of key importance and form part of the wider strategic habitat network, through appropriate woodland management.
- Increase the extent of native deciduous woodland, using locally occurring native species in order to link to existing woodland. Seek to avoid the introduction of coniferous boundaries/shelterbelts.
- Enhance and augment fragmented field boundary hedgerows with native species.
- Enhance and upgrade areas of improved grassland to good quality semi-improved grassland, bringing it up to priority habitat quality.
- Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA including the creation of neutral grassland, acid grassland and heath and fertile soil woodland with more limited opportunities for wet woodland, river, and flood plain, wetland habitat.
- Manage and enhance the wildlife interest of agricultural fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins including wet meadows and other wildlife-friendly farming methods.

Development Management

- Conserve the local distinctiveness/strong vernacular of historic buildings and their rural setting, particularly within the Conservation Areas associated with the settlements of Hoath, Rushbourne, Tile Lodge, Chislet, Chitty and Chislet Forstal. Ensure that the rural separation between the settlements is retained.
- Any proposals for highway upgrading should retain the rural character of the lanes.
- Assess new building proposals of adjacent urban area along A28 Island Road to ensure that an attractive and integrated edge is formed with the adjacent rural and open landscape. This could be through the planting of tree belts and hedgerows. This is important for existing edges as well as for the new strategic allocation on land north of Hersden.
- Conserve the open and rural landscape and avoid the introduction of large scale or incongruous elements in order to retain long distance views. This includes avoiding extension of development along Island Road in order to conserve the overall rural character.

H3: Ickham Farmlands



Location and Summary

The Ickham Farmlands are located around the village of Ickham, bound by the Little Stour and its tributary (Wingham River) to the north and west, and by the edge of the rising Bramling Downland (LCA I2) to the south. The boundary with Dover District forms the eastern boundary. This is a low lying, very gently rounded landscape, with a slight incline to the south. Its predominant use for large scale arable agriculture provides a distinctive contrast to the enclosed Little Stour Valley which surrounds most of the Ickham Farmlands to the north and west. Agricultural intensification has occurred within this landscape resulting in limited hedgerow boundaries, and an overall open landscape. It includes the hamlet of Bramling in the south.

Representative Photographs



Historic Oasthouses on the edge of Ickham



Spire from the Church of St John in Ickham prominent on the skyline from many locations throughout the landscape



Large agricultural buildings / structures visible across farmland



Remnant shelterbelts / field boundaries following agricultural intensification across the landscape



Evidence of fruit production within the landscape



Grade I listed flint Church of St John in Ickham

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Low lying, very gently rounded landscape.
- Fertile, well drained soils supporting large scale open arable fields with cereal crops, field vegetables, polytunnels and small areas of fruit production.
- Some semi-natural habitats including small areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland, as well as some mature hedgerow trees and hedgerows – although many have been removed following agricultural intensification of the landscape.
- The historic village of Ickham and hamlet of Bramling containing frequent historic buildings with a distinctive vernacular and impressive mature specimen trees.
- Provides a rural setting to the Conservation Areas at Ickham-Wickhambreaux-Seaton, Bramling and Lee Priory & Garrington and Bramling.
- Narrow lanes, generally open to adjacent landscape due to loss of hedgerows.
- Open and expansive character afforded by a lack of field boundaries.
- Long distance views afforded across open large-scale fields, with skyline features including mature woodland to the north and the spire of the Grade I listed Church of St John in Ickham.
- Provision of an interconnected network of public rights of way including local footpaths, bridleways, and other routes with public access.

Natural Influences

The underlying chalk geology supports intensive arable production, being largely sited on silty drift of Head Brickearth with small areas of River Terrace Gravels adjacent to the fertile, alluvial soils of the Little Stour River. The resultant landform is gently undulating. The fertile soils (Grade 1) support large scale open arable fields with high productivity. Cereal crops, field vegetables and small areas of fruit production are also characteristic of the Ickham Farmlands.

Overall, the LCA has a relatively low ecological value due to the intensive arable farming that has occurred, enabled by hedgerow removal. Semi-natural vegetation is largely limited to mature trees and hedgerows around settlements. Those around Ickham are well managed and include areas of small woodland blocks - priority habitat deciduous woodland. Other semi-natural vegetation includes dispersed fragments of hedgerows, small amounts of scrubby vegetation along field margins and rows of conifer screening (although these appear out of place in some areas detracting from the landscape character).

Cultural Influences

The Kent HLC identifies that most of the land in this LCA is prairie fields, which have experienced significant boundary loss as a result of 19th century enclosure. The HLC also identifies some localised areas of small Parliamentary

enclosure fields with straight boundaries, and larger straight-edged Parliamentary enclosure fields surrounding Bramling. Along Wingham Road (the A257) there are also some fields identified as Orchards, although many traditional orchards have been lost and are only signified in the landscape by remnant shelterbelts.

Ickham is a linear village of historic significance, located centrally within the LCA and a focal point in the landscape. It includes many distinctive vernacular buildings typical in this part of Kent. These include weather boarded, red brick and timber framed buildings and oasthouses. A considerable proportion of these vernacular buildings have been sensitively restored and converted to residential or commercial functions. New developments and modifications to existing buildings largely follow the stipulations recommended within Conservation Area appraisals; therefore, much of the historic character of the settlement has been retained. A high proportion of the buildings within the Ickham are Grade II listed; however, the village also contains the Grade I listed flint Church of St John, which forms a landmark feature, as well as two Grade II* listed buildings (The Old Rectory and New Place). The village forms part of the Ickham-Wickhambreaux-Seaton Conservation Area, encompassing the settlement and a significant proportion of the surrounding land.

The small hamlet of Bramling is also within the LCA and clusters around the A257 and adjoining minor roads in the

south. Buildings are mostly traditional, although large scale agricultural barns at Bramling Court Farm, provides a contrasting element in terms of scale and design. The village contains several Grade II listed buildings and is a designated Conservation Area.

Along the south-western edge, a very small part of the LCA is included within the Lee Priory and Garrington Conservation Area, although this does not encompass any of the associated historic buildings.

Outside of the defined settlements, scattered groups of cottages and isolated farms are spread across the rural landscape, and accessible via lanes that are narrow and straight with occasional right-angled bends. They are generally open to the adjacent landscape, due to the removal of hedgerows.

Perceptual Influences

The large agricultural fields maintain an open character in this generally flat landscape, with long distance views afforded

given the lack of hedgerows and tree cover. The open character allows intervisibility between built features; with taller buildings such as the spire of the Grade I listed Church of St John in Ickham being visually prominent on skylines from surrounding areas. Woodland following the River Wingham and Stour outside of the LCA, creates wooded skylines to the north and some enclosure to this edge.

There is a good provision of PRoW in the LCA with local footpaths, bridleways and other routes with public access connecting Ickham with other outlying villages including Wingham, Littlebourne, Bramling and Wickhambreaux.

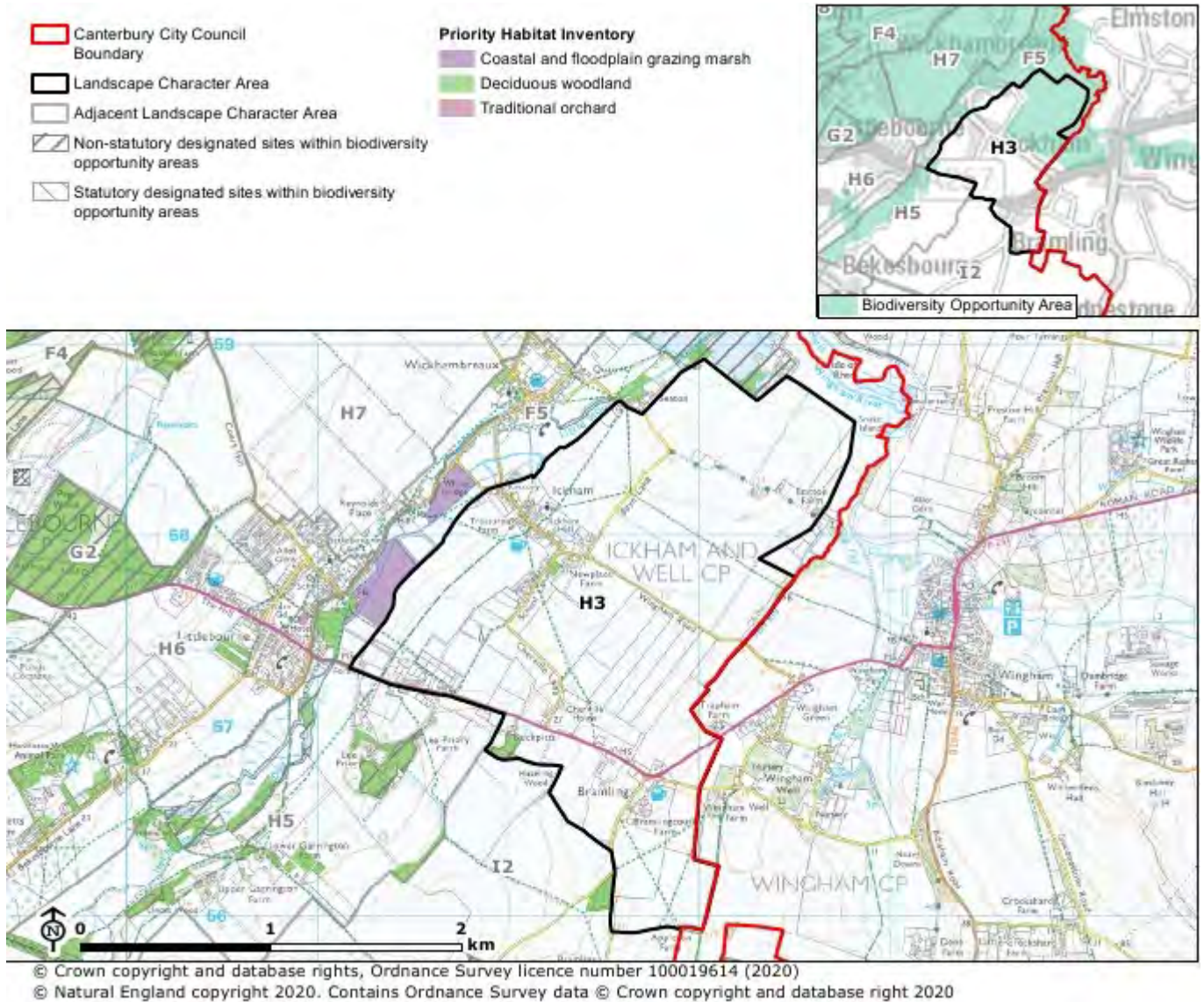
Overall, the agricultural character is a prominent characteristic of the LCA, providing a rural setting. However, features such as the A257, polytunnels and large corrugated metal / concrete barns influence the area to a degree, detracting from its historical agricultural character.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities

- Mature specimen trees provide a distinctive setting to the village of Ickham, including small pockets of priority habitat deciduous woodland.
- Occasional mature hedgerow trees and hedgerows that have been retained / planted following agricultural intensification and field amalgamation.
- The historic village of Ickham and hamlet of Brambling, as well as other isolated cottages within the landscape, have a distinct vernacular style which has been well retained / restored. Distinctive linear form of Ickham.
- The Conservation Areas of Ickham-Wickhambreaux-Seaton and Bramling, with many historic buildings including the Grade I Church of St John which forms a local landmark.
- Rural character of lanes lined with scrubby verges.
- The relatively flat landform combined with the lack of mature field boundaries creates an open character with long distance views.
- Open and relatively undeveloped skylines mean built features such as the spire of the Grade I listed Church of St John in Ickham and woodland associated with the River Wingham to the north are visually prominent and locally distinctive.
- The provision of a well-developed network of PRoW maintains the connection between the villages within and surrounding the LCA.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To enhance and create species-rich grassland and protect woodland habitat as part of the woodland network of the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA.

Part of the LCA lies within the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA, which sets out the following key relevant targets:

- Protect and enhance existing priority habitats and designated sites.
- Enhance species-rich grassland to bring it to priority habitat quality.
- No loss of ancient semi-natural woodland and its mosaic of associated habitats.

- Enhance and reconnect woodland to create a very extensive block of habitat, particularly through the maintenance and restoration of coppice management.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include arable and horticulture, improved grassland and built up areas. No habitats of key importance are found within the LCA, however bordering it to the north and west are areas of floodplain grazing marsh and deciduous ancient woodland, which are listed as a priority habitat.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

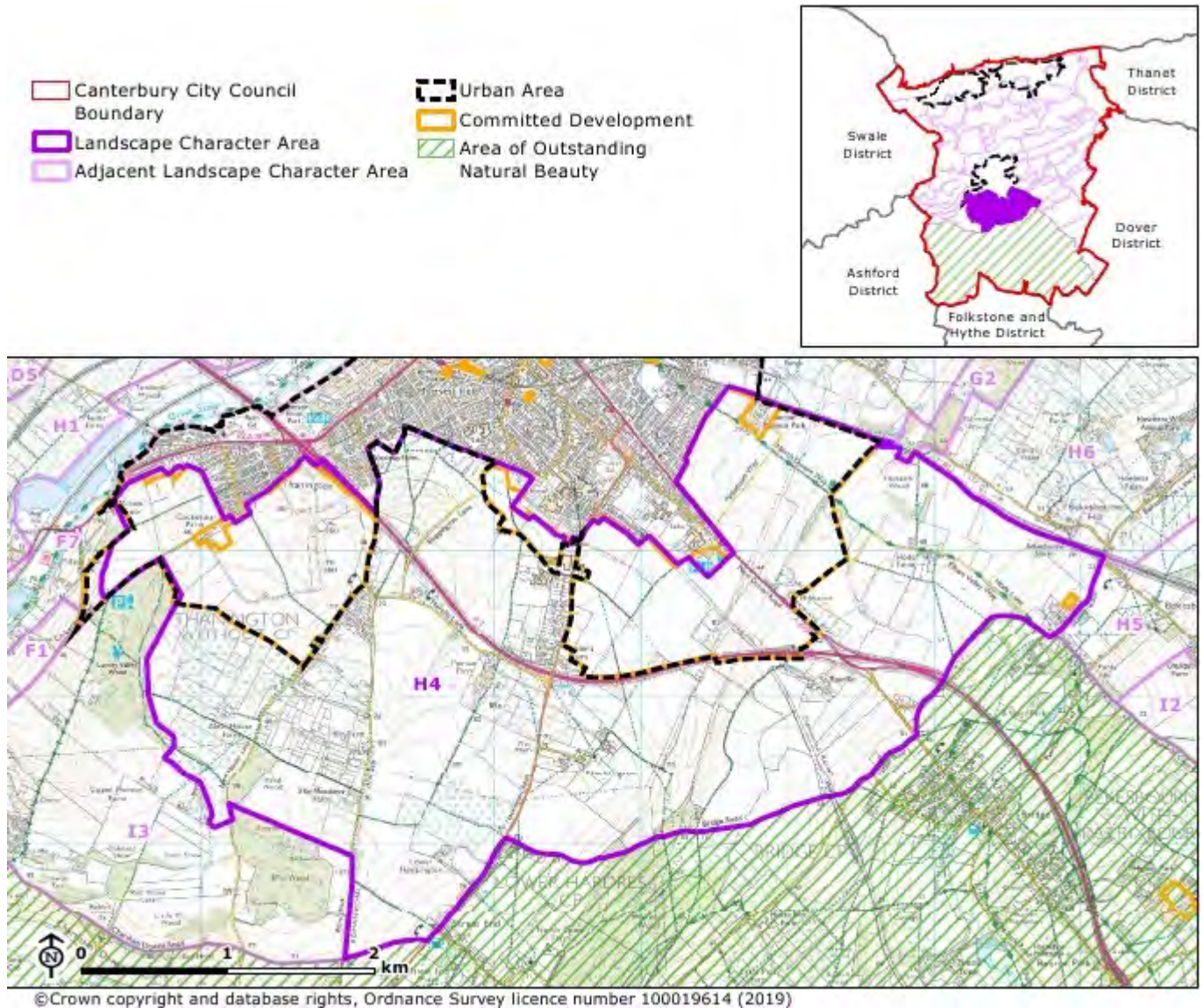
Landscape Management

- Protect the landscape's valued semi-natural habitats including the small blocks of priority habitat deciduous woodland and mature specimen trees that contribute towards the setting of Ickham.
- Increase the extent of native deciduous woodland and hedgerows, using locally occurring native species. Seek to avoid the introduction of coniferous boundaries/shelterbelts. Mature specimen trees which are a feature of Ickham should be retained and perpetuated.
- Encourage the replacement of unsympathetic coniferous shelterbelts with native deciduous species that can continue to screen the visually detracting polytunnels.
- Restore the traditional pattern and structure of the landscape by improving the continuity of hedgerow and shelterbelt features to enhance the rectilinear field pattern.
- Enhance and augment fragmented field boundary hedgerows with native species, replacing post and wire fencing where possible, and particularly along rural lanes.
- Manage and enhance the wildlife interest of agricultural fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins and other wildlife-friendly farming methods and encourage wildlife friendly management of the grass verges along the lanes.
- Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA including the creation of chalk grassland, neutral grassland, and a very small area of chalk scarp woodland at Bramling.

Development Management

- Conserve the local distinctiveness and strong vernacular of historic buildings and their rural setting, particularly within the Ickham-Wickhambreaux-Seaton and Bramling Conservation Areas.
- Conserve the linear form of Ickham avoiding infilling.
- Encourage the sympathetic conversion of traditional barns/oast houses, to retain their rural character.
- Any proposals for highway upgrading should retain the rural winding character of the lanes and include sensitive road verge management.
- Conserve the open landscape and avoid the introduction of large scale or incongruous elements. Consider ways to improve the appearance of large agricultural buildings through the use of tree planting to soften harsh lines and materials.
- Conserve the distinctive character of undeveloped skylines and retain vistas towards the Grade I listed flint Church of St John.
- Protect the well-developed network of PRow that provides connections to outlying villages, seeking opportunities to further enhance opportunities for access and enjoyment.

H4: Nackington Farmlands



Location and Summary

The LCA is located on the lower dip slope of the Kent Downs, immediately to the south of Canterbury City rising gently towards the AONB which forms the southern boundary as defined by Bridge Road and Chartham Road. To the west the boundary is marked by the more intricate chalk topography of Chartham Downs and to the east by the railway marking the boundary with the fruit belt landscapes of Littlebourne.

The LCA is in a state of change with substantial strategic allocations at the land south of Thanington (Cocking Farm), either side of the Dover Road (Land south of Canterbury) and Land at Ridlands Farm and Langton Field.

It provides part of the wider rural setting to Canterbury City with occasional dramatic views across to the Cathedral in the Stour Valley. It also performs as a rural gap between Canterbury City and the outlying villages of Lower Hardres, Bridge and Patricbourne which are all within the AONB.

Representative Photographs



Open rolling arable dip slope



Flint church at Nackington



Soft fruit under polytunnels on Bridge Road



Large arable fields with the Chatham Main Railway near SE edge of Canterbury City



Orchards around Merton Farm



Canterbury Cathedral from Iffin Lane set against Stour Valley slopes backdrop

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- A gently rolling landscape with broad dry valleys extending northwards towards Canterbury City, forming part of the dip slope setting of the Kent Downs AONB.
- Simple, smooth open arable landscape, with deep, calcareous soils intensively farmed for cereals, with some areas of more enclosed fruit belt/orchards.
- Remnant shelterbelts, parkland trees and hedgerows create diversity and interest within the open arable landscape, with small remnant areas of ancient woodland.
- 18th and early 19th century farmsteads and remnants of former estates as at Renville and Nackington.
- Currently small-scale settlement focused along roads and former trackways located on ridges.
- Dramatic and surprising views from more elevated areas and along valleys and the North Downs Way to Canterbury City and the cathedral in its Stour valley setting.
- Transport corridors, including roads and rail radiating out from Canterbury City subdivide the area. Historic routes link Canterbury City and Dover.
- Rural character separating Canterbury City and outlying villages at Lower Hardres, Bridge and Patricbourne.
- Includes part of the North Downs Way/Elham Valley Way linking Canterbury City to Dover.

Natural Influences

This landscape is formed where the chalk dip slope of the North Downs (within the adjacent Kent Downs AONB) diminishes. The underlying geology is Upper Chalk overlain in places with River Gravel Drift. Cooper's Pit is a designated RIGS site, which although in a degraded condition retains two good chalk faces. The topography is very gently rolling with dry valleys reaching northwards towards Canterbury City.

The deep calcareous fine silty soils support intensive farming on Grade 1 and 2 agricultural land, with cereal production and some top fruits. Typically, there are large arable fields and hops and orchards have generally been lost to arable although remnant shelterbelts are still apparent. Dwarf fruit orchards and polytunnels occur around New House Lane and Merton Farm, plus some areas of horse paddocks.

Throughout the area there are clumps and belts of native and naturalised trees and small areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland. To the east there are small remnants of Ancient Woodland (at Haystacks Wood) and to the west there are two small extensions of larger LWS that fall mainly within adjacent landscapes to the south. These are both ancient woodland sites at Iffin Wood and Whitehill Wood. Whitehill Wood has been known to support the rare pearl-bordered fritillary. A further small area of ancient woodland is found at Three Corner Piece near Renville, whilst patches of priority habitat deciduous woodland are found south of Nackington, around Iffin Farm and Iffin Lane and on the edge of Thanington.

Traditional orchards (priority habitat) are also found at Iffin Farm.

Elsewhere the character area is dominated by intensive agriculture/horticulture, with any habitat interest largely limited to field boundaries.

Cultural Influences

Large parts of the LCA are classified as 'orchards' by the Kent HLC, with most of the surrounding farmland being regular straight-edged Parliamentary enclosures of small to medium size. Many of the areas classified as orchards are now part of the arable landscape. Late-Medieval rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries are a feature of the landscape in the south-east of the LCA, around Renville. Land under intensive cereal production around Lower Heppington and Iffin Wood is contained within a large-scale open landscape, created as a result of extensive 19th century field boundary removal.

The name Nackington is believed to derive from 'Nating dun' which is Old English for Nata's Hill and was first recorded in 993 AD. Nackington itself is a remarkably unspoilt 19th century agricultural settlement (a Conservation Area) with very little modern development. Many of the farm and estate buildings surrounding the village date from the 18th and early 19th centuries and the Grade I Listed church is a local landmark. In the south-eastern corner of the LCA is the historic hamlet of Renville (also a Conservation Area) with remnant parkland and the dismantled Elham Valley railway marked by

deciduous woodland, with the site of the former Bridge Station. Part of Street End Conservation Area falls within the south of the LCA along the B2068.

Older buildings across the landscape comprise farmsteads and remnants of estate properties. These are typically of a soft coloured red brick and tile construction. Post war housing has developed along Iffin Lane and New House Lane and recent housing occurs on the edges of the urban area around Nackington Road.

A small area of remnant parkland characterised by mature beech and ash in pasture abuts Nackington Road. This is a remnant from Nackington House that occupied this site until it was demolished after the First World War. The house dated from the reign of Charles I and in 1796 Jane Austen noted in her diary that she had '*dined at Nackington, returned by moonlight, and everything in stile*'. By the 1880s the holding comprised of farms, woodlands and 18 acres of gardens. Groups of parkland trees survive in arable fields to the west of Nackington Road, while large detached properties with mature gardens are now sited in the former park and garden, evoke a more suburban character.

The historic development of the transport and communication network is of interest in this area. The North Downs Way from Dover to the city centre crosses the area and is widely believed to have prehistoric origins. It marks where the section of Roman Road (Old Dover Road) was that provided access into the city, before it was superseded in 1791 by the New Dover Road (A2050) built by the Canterbury to Barham Turnpike Trust. This replacement road was described by Hasted in 1800 as '*... in a straight line from that [St. George's] gate for more than a mile and a half through Barton field, on each side of which several genteel houses are already built...*' The remains of the turnpike gatehouse can be found at the Old Gate public house. This was the main route to Dover until the A2 Canterbury Bypass was built in 1977.

The western boundary of the LCA is marked by the London to Dover Railway line (Chatham Main Railway line) and the area is also crossed by the disused Elham Valley Railway that opened in 1889 and closed soon after the Second World War in 1947. Both railway lines are distinctly marked by mature vegetation and, together with roads that radiate from the city, A2500 Dover Road, and Nackington Road they subdivide this area.

Perceptual Influences

The landscape plays an important role in separating the south eastern edge of Canterbury City with the settlement of Bridge and villages of Bekesbourne, Patribourne and Lower Hardres. The agricultural land abuts tightly to the southern and eastern perimeters of the Canterbury City urban area, with some limited urban influences, including the cluster of buildings within Barton Business Park, allotments, and areas of rough pasture/paddocks. Modern, ribbon housing development extends along New House Lane and Iffin Lane. Despite these influences, the overall rural agricultural character of this area is still dominant, although this will change where there are substantial allocations close to the settlement edge.

The North Downs Way from Dover cuts across this area and although it partly crosses a ridge in the south-east of the area, views towards the city and cathedral are obscured by intervening vegetation. It is not until on the approach to the edge of the city that the cathedral is seen on the skyline. To the east of the ridge the open agricultural character dominates but is contained by hedgerows, groups of trees and the vegetated railway cuttings. The gentle folds of this area obscure many views of the city.

To the west, there are occasional dramatic views from more elevated areas and along the open arable dry valleys towards the city and the cathedral, particularly from New House Lane and Iffin Lane. Bell Harry Tower creates a powerful focal point that distracts the eye away from the more intrusive elements in the view. Also dominant in these views are the water tower on higher ground to the west at Neal's Place and the chimney at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital. The Stour Valley slopes provide an important backdrop.

The cathedral can also be seen from the A2 across the arable landscape, particularly in winter. This is one of the few views for passing motorists and as such the cathedral is a notable landmark when travelling from Dover. The A2 itself is in deep cutting and therefore is largely hidden from the wider views although with local audible influence.

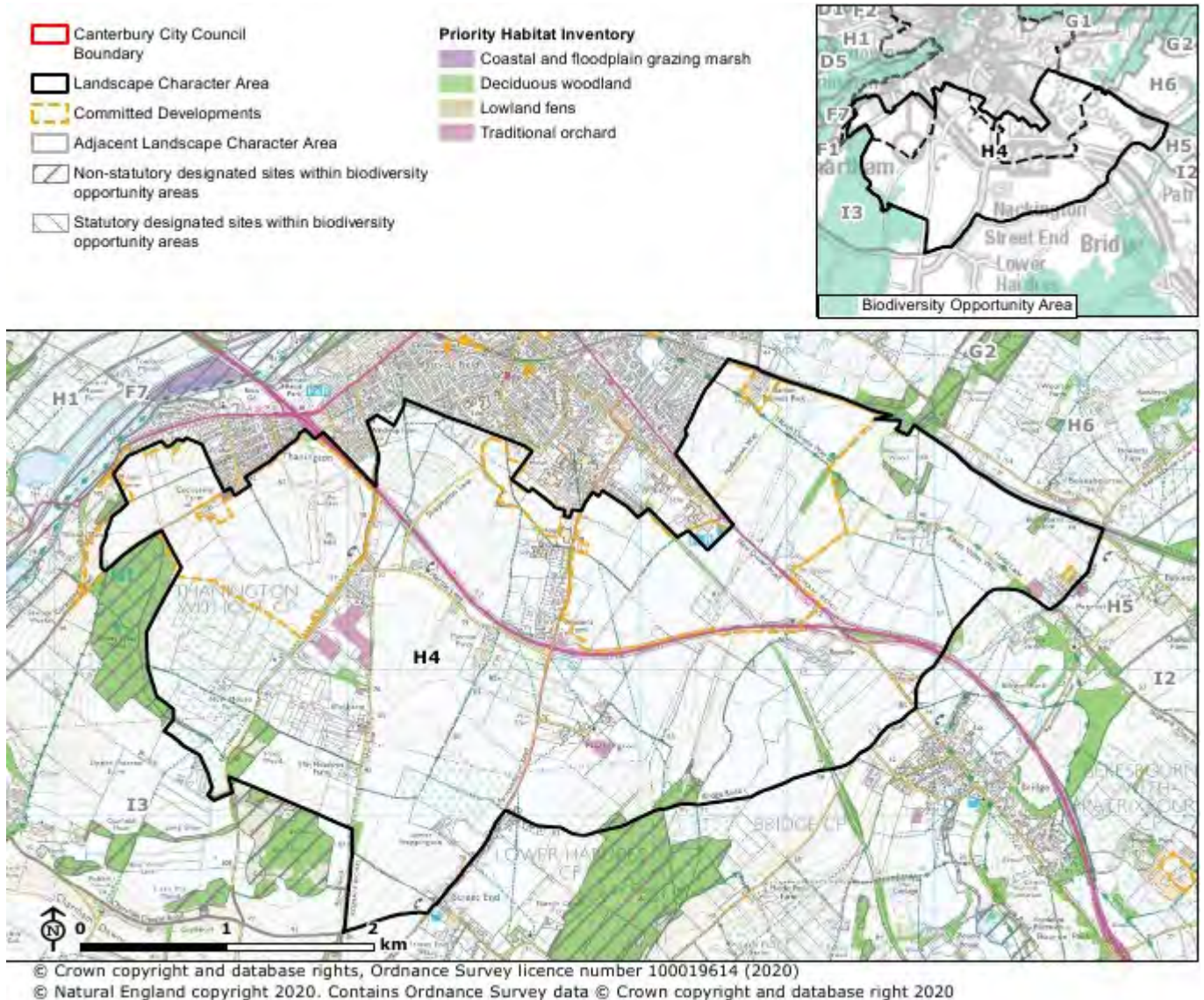
Mobile telephone masts and pylons are sited centrally within the rural landscape forming visual detractors and are dominant in many of the views within the area, particularly rows of overhead cables that cross the area. Other features that detract from the landscape character include the generally busy rural lanes.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- Coherent chalk arable landscape cut by dry valleys forming the dip slope of the Kent Downs, area to the south forming an important part of the setting of the AONB.
- The dominant agricultural character extending to the urban edge of Canterbury City and role of the area in providing a rural landscape between the city and outlying settlements of Patixbourne, Bridge and Lower Hardres.
- Occasional remnant traditional orchards (priority habitat) and shelterbelts and oast houses serving as a reminder of past land uses (orchards and hop gardens).
- Areas of ancient woodland and priority habitat deciduous woodland linking to a wider network of woodland sites beyond the LCA.
- The remaining network of hedgerows forming strong patterns of Parliamentary and late-Medieval fields around areas of intensive arable and horticulture production, which provide landscape and biodiversity value.
- The historic rural hamlets of Nackington and Renville, with their distinctive buildings – Conservation Areas with local parkland qualities.
- Farm and estate buildings of red brick, weatherboarding, and tile, including a number of Grade II Listed examples.
- Remnant parkland with specimen beech and ash trees adjacent to Nackington Road.
- Occasional surprising and dramatic views to Canterbury Cathedral set against the skyline and backdrop of the Stour Valley slopes to the north.
- Immediate dip slope setting and continuation of character from the AONB, which lies adjacent to south, especially apparent south of the A2 in the central part of the area.
- Rights of way and access links between Canterbury City and the AONB including the North Downs Way.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To protect, restore and enhance ancient woodland, priority habitats and designated sites within the LCA

A very small area of this LCA lies within the East Kent Woodlands & Downs BOA. The targets associated with this BOA should be considered in relation to the adjacent Larkley Valley Wood SSSI / LNR and the Iffin Wood and Little Iffin Wood (of which a very small part lies within the LCA), which offer important strategic habitat within the district.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include arable and horticulture, improved grassland, neutral grassland, broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland, traditional orchard

and built up areas. Habitats of key importance within the LCA include ancient woodland and deciduous woodland and traditional orchard, which are listed as a priority habitat.

Given the limited extent of the strategic habitat network and proposals to include development across a large proportion of the LCA in the north, there are limited habitat opportunities within the LCA, although there are opportunities to create new habitats. Key opportunities are detailed below.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

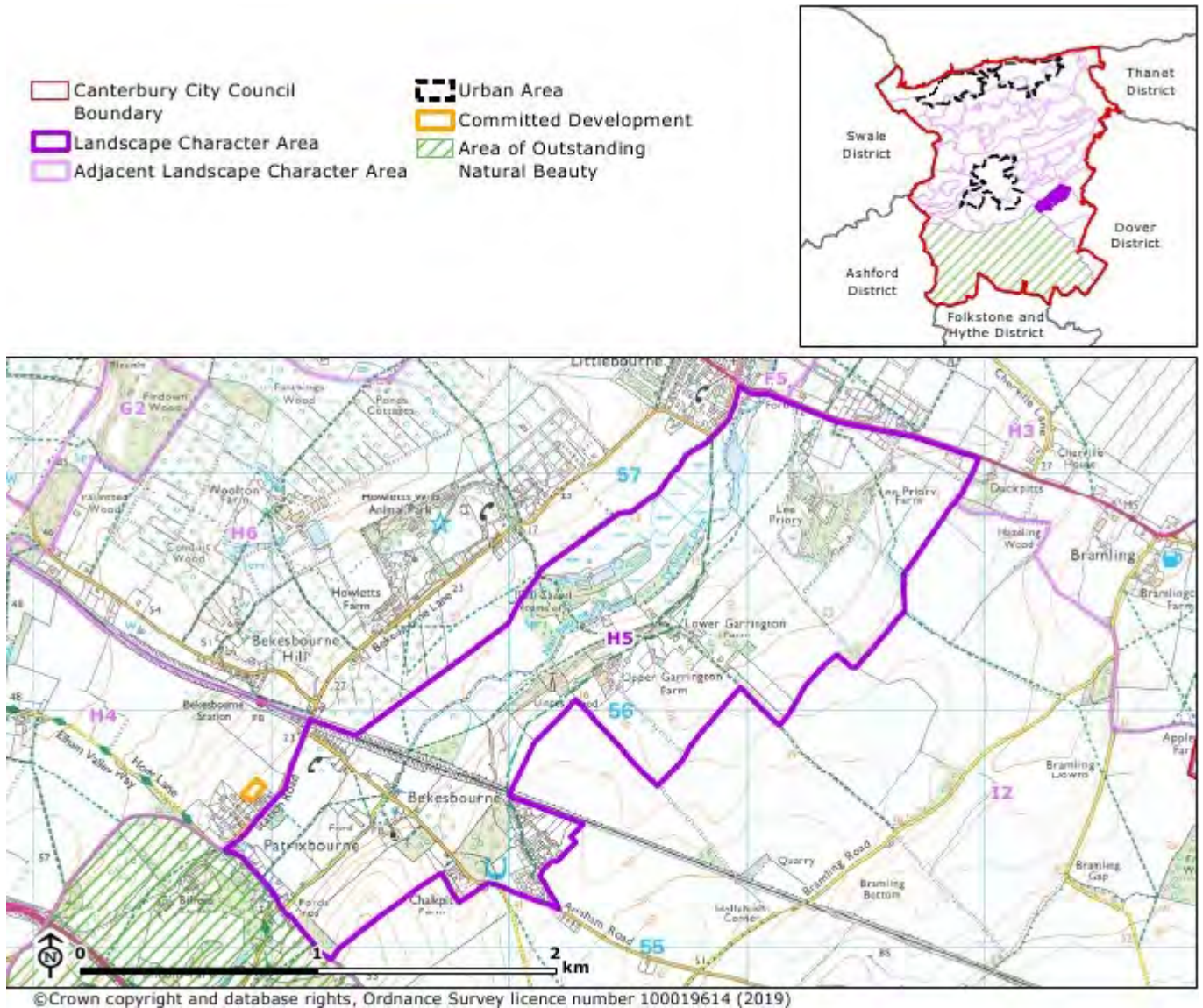
Landscape Management

- Conserve and reinforce the parkland character around Nackington House and Renville putting in place a programme of new parkland tree planting where appropriate.
- Conserve remnant traditional orchards for their landscape, biodiversity, and historic value.
- Manage and enhance the interest of arable fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins and other wildlife-friendly farming methods.
- Improve the quality of the existing boundaries and restore hedgerows, tree belts and areas of deciduous woodland (including ancient woodland) to strengthen the connectivity to habitats within the BOA.

Development Management

- Conserve the open character of the arable dip slope cut by more enclosed dry valleys.
- Conserve and enhance views of Canterbury City and seek to maintain views to Canterbury Cathedral against the Stour valley slopes and open skyline backdrop.
- Conserve the visual links with the AONB ensuring that this area continues to provide a rural dip slope setting to the Kent Downs.
- Improve the definition of and strengthen the boundary with the existing and new urban edge respecting the contribution from the traditional field pattern. For new development the aim should be to secure a sensitive and integrated edge with the surrounding rural area avoiding hard built or tall development, with open space/green infrastructure, plus associated hedgerow and tree planting to soften edges and provide a transition to the rural dip slope landscape.
- Conserve the sense of scale avoiding separation and further subdivision of field parcels which are in active agricultural use.
- Improve the continuity of the green link afforded by the disused Elham Valley Railway and potential as a green infrastructure connection.
- Resist the introduction of contrasting tall visual elements such as pylons, telecommunications masts etc. Seek opportunities to rationalise multiple/ double pylon lines.
- Conserve the distinctive vernacular of historic buildings and their rural setting, particularly within the Nackington and Renville Conservation Areas and reference the pattern of red stock weather board and clay tile buildings in new buildings.
- Enhance the approach to the city along the New Dover Road and North Downs Way in sympathy with their historic significance by creating vistas towards the city and cathedral and sense of a gateway to Canterbury.
- Conserve the PRoW connections between the AONB and Canterbury City, managing and restoring key views and their setting.
- Conserve the rural character of the landscape ensuring that it continues to play a role in providing a rural separation between Canterbury City and the outlying villages of Bridge, Patricxbourne and Lower Hardres.

H5: Nailbourne Parklands



Location and Summary

The Nailbourne Parklands LCA follows the gently sloping and secluded stream valley of the Nailbourne. This historically significant section of the valley is situated between the settlements of Littlebourne in the north and Patixbourne in the south and encompasses the village of Bekesbourne. The LCA has been strongly influenced by the extent of several historic parklands and still possesses many of their characteristics. The southernmost edge of the LCA is defined by the edge of the Kent Downs AONB, with some of its historic wooded valley characteristics extending into the LCA.

Representative Photographs



Nailbourne Stream



Site of the Old Palace in Bekesbourne



Church of St Peter (Grade I listed) in Bekesbourne



Fertile silty soils supporting fruit and hop production



Areas of marshland with wooded features on the skyline



Wetland habitats of the Nailbourne Stream

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- The southern extension of the Little Stour Valley, following the Nailbourne Stream and comprising a mixed geology.
- Mixed field pattern and scale, consisting of Parliamentary enclosure, miscellaneous valley bottom paddocks and pastures and large prairie fields.
- Wetland habitats providing biodiversity interest to the area including the Littlebourne Pastures LWS to the north.
- Frequent priority habitat deciduous woodlands (some of which being ancient) and pockets of priority habitat traditional orchards.
- Numerous fine examples of traditional vernacular buildings within Conservation Areas.
- Scheduled Monument at Bekesbourne village at the site of the Old Palace (originally built in 1552).
- Isolated farmsteads with some large-scale agricultural barns.
- A string of historic parklands along the Nailbourne, characterised by mature in-field specimen trees and estate buildings.
- A traditional secluded valley landscape with a strong sense of enclosure, provided by frequent mature tree / wooded features.
- A historic landscape with little built development, resulting in a rural, removed, and tranquil setting.
- Some areas of horse paddocks with associated post wire fences and horse tape.
- A limited road network with a proportion of the LCA not accessible by road. Crossed by the Canterbury – Dover railway.
- A well-developed network of PROW.

Natural Influences

The Nailbourne Parklands has a mixed geology dominated by the alluvial soils along the river valley, Chalk beds to the south and overlying Brickearth drift and pockets of River Terrace Gravel. The LCA contains a range of grades associated with its agricultural land classification, reflecting the nature of the underlying soils, with the most fertile silty soils of brickearth drift (Grade 1) supporting fruit and hop production in the north of the LCA, although these practices are not extensive. The chalk slopes on the eastern side of the river and alluvial river valley soils support a mixture of cereal crops and grazing pasture.

The landform is defined by the shallow stream valley of the Nailbourne and other associated watercourses including Silver Dyke. The eastern bank of the Nailbourne Stream has a notably steeper slope, particularly at Linces Wood. Elevation ranges from its highest point at 50m AOD in the southeast to 15m AOD at the valley bottom.

The field pattern is mixed, with small scale irregular enclosed fields to the south and more open areas towards Littlebourne, broken down into smaller parcels by drainage ditches, which largely define the pattern. The land use is diverse, with broad

areas of pasture, indicative of the former parklands with some areas of arable production along the valley floor. To the west of School Lane at Bekesbourne, a hop farm (open to visitors) contains distinctive linear formations of hop poles. There is also frequent horse grazing, particularly in the south near Bekesbourne.

The ecological integrity of the area is strong with extensive pasture, mature hedgerows, and small woodland areas. The LCA contains the Littlebourne Stream LWS. This consists of the Little Stour River and floodplain scrub, damp pasture, and fen habitat. These habitats support a range of wetland plants and attract some notable birds. The river represents the headwater section of the Little Stour, which itself becomes the downstream extension of the Nailbourne Stream, a winterbourne stream with ephemeral flows.

Field boundaries to the small-scale fields contribute towards the wooded character of the LCA, defined by shelterbelts, orchards, hedgerows, scattered mature field poplars and the wooded railway embankment. There are several priority habitat deciduous woodlands, including Linces Wood and woodland at Lee Priory, with areas of ancient woodland existing at both of these locations. There is also a small area

of priority habitat traditional orchard near Patrixbourne in the southwest of the LCA.

Cultural Influences

The field pattern in the LCA is most commonly associated with regular straight-edged Parliamentary type enclosure, ranging from small scale in the south to medium in the north. Also present in the northwest are miscellaneous valley bottom paddocks and pastures, contrasted by large prairie fields in the southeast, as classified by the Kent HLC.

Although much of the parkland is now in mixed farming use, parkland trees, estate buildings and features such as bridges indicate the heritage of the landscape.

There are numerous fine examples of traditional vernacular buildings that are indicative of the history of the area. This is reflected by the high proportion of the LCA protected by Conservation Areas, each containing an abundance of historic buildings. Five Conservation Areas extend into the LCA including those associated with the settlements of Patrixbourne, Bekesbourne, a small part of both Littlebourne and Bramling (Ickham & Well), as well as the extensive Lee Priory & Garrington (Ickham & Well) Conservation Area which occupies most of the LCA.

In the south, Bekesbourne village is the site of the Old Palace, part of which is a Scheduled Monument. The current buildings date from the 18th century, although the first palace was built here in 1552 by Thomas Cranmer Archbishop of Canterbury 1535-54. Bekesbourne also contains the Grade I listed Church of St Peter. A number of modern bungalows, alien to the local character are sited within Bekesbourne and somewhat detracting from the rural scene. There is a small remnant of parkland south of the railway line. Patrixbourne is part of the estate village associated with Bifrons Park and is particularly notable for its fretwork barge board gables that adorn many of the buildings.

The Lee Priory and Garrington Conservation Area follows the Little Stour valley between Bekesbourne and Littlebourne. Lee Priory was a Gothic house of 1783. It was demolished in the 1950s, however, a considerable amount of the original parkland remains with open pasture and fine mature trees. Isolated farms also remain, including Upper Garrington Farm, Lower Garrington Farm and Lee Priory Farm, comprising clusters of buildings including some large agricultural barns

which are out of scale with the surrounding landscape, although surrounding vegetation integrates them to an extent.

Part of Littlebourne extends into the north eastern corner of the LCA, consisting of oasthouses along The Green.

Perceptual Influences

Vertical features including the shelterbelts, orchards, hedgerows and scattered mature field poplars, create a rural secluded landscape with a strong sense of enclosure. This is further emphasised by the Victorian railway embankment that cuts across the south of the LCA and is densely vegetated with mature broadleaved trees. Skylines are therefore punctuated by wooded features and views are typically enclosed by the mature corridors of vegetation and the topography, as it gently rises away from the flat-bottomed valley floor. There are some longer views across the grazing meadows along the valley corridor.

The LCA possesses a strongly historic and rural parkland character with limited modern built features being present. The centre of the valley, particularly surrounding Garrington farm and Lee Priory, is notably secluded with the passing of the Nailbourne Stream contributing to its tranquil perceptual qualities. Where perceptual detractors exist, such as the railway line and large agricultural barns, they are well screened by woodland. The woodland embankment following the railway line also limits aural intrusion from passing trains. Detractors from the landscape character are therefore localised and typically consists of post and wire fencing and tape, associated with the areas characterised by horse paddocks.

The quiet character is emphasised by the limited road network in the LCA being undeveloped, with the centre not accessible by road. Only small lanes associated with Bekesbourne and Patrixbourne cross the LCA in the south and the northern boundary of the LCA is followed by the A257. The LCA does however have a highly developed network of public rights of way including footpaths and bridleways which extend its entire length, passing through its remote centre.

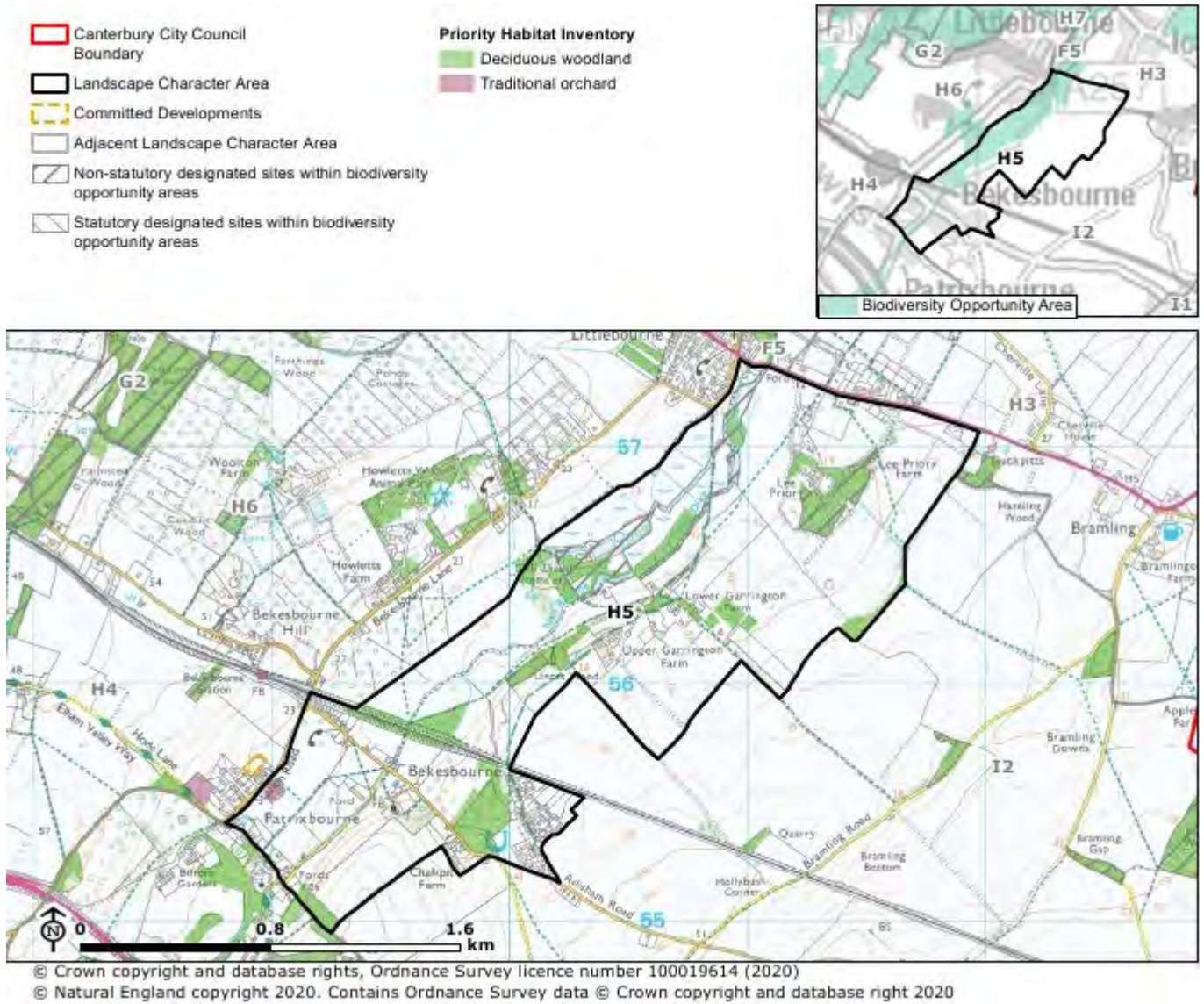
There is a strong relationship with the adjacent Kent Downs AONB to the south, with several of its special qualities exhibited in this LCA. This includes its cultural heritage and time depth, as well as biodiversity rich habitats including chalk streams.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- Priority habitats including frequent deciduous woodlands (some being ancient) and a pocket of traditional orchard.
- High concentration of woodland and other mature tree features, creating an enclosed and naturalistic landscape.
- The ecologically important wetland habitats protected by the Littlebourne Stream LWS.
- The small, historic village of Bekesbourne – a Conservation Area – with many historic buildings including the Grade I listed Church of St Peter and site of the Old Palace (Scheduled Monument).
- Traditional vernacular buildings with fretwork barge boards and traditional Kentish buildings such as oasthouses and estate cottages add to the charm of the valley.
- The string of historic parklands along the Nailbourne.
- The rural and historic setting provided for the five Conservation Areas.
- The tranquil and removed rural landscape, that has largely avoided modern built development,
- Small-scale road network (made up of rural lanes) and an expansive network of interconnected public rights of way.
- The strong relationship with the adjacent Kent Downs AONB, exhibiting several its special qualities.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To enhance wetlands, improved grassland, and arable fields, as part of the wider wetland and species rich grassland network of the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA.

A small part of the LCA lies within the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA, which sets out the following key relevant targets:

- Protect and enhance existing priority habitats and designated sites.
- To establish a new, landscape-scale, freshwater wetland complex, including fen, reedbed and grazing marsh, in which successional processes are allowed to proceed.
- To create acid grassland and heathland from other existing or new semi-natural habitat.

- To enhance species-rich grassland to bring it to priority habitat quality.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include arable and horticulture, improved and neutral grassland, broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland, rivers and streams and built up areas. Habitats of key importance within the LCA include ancient woodland, as well as deciduous woodland and traditional orchards which are listed as priority habitats.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

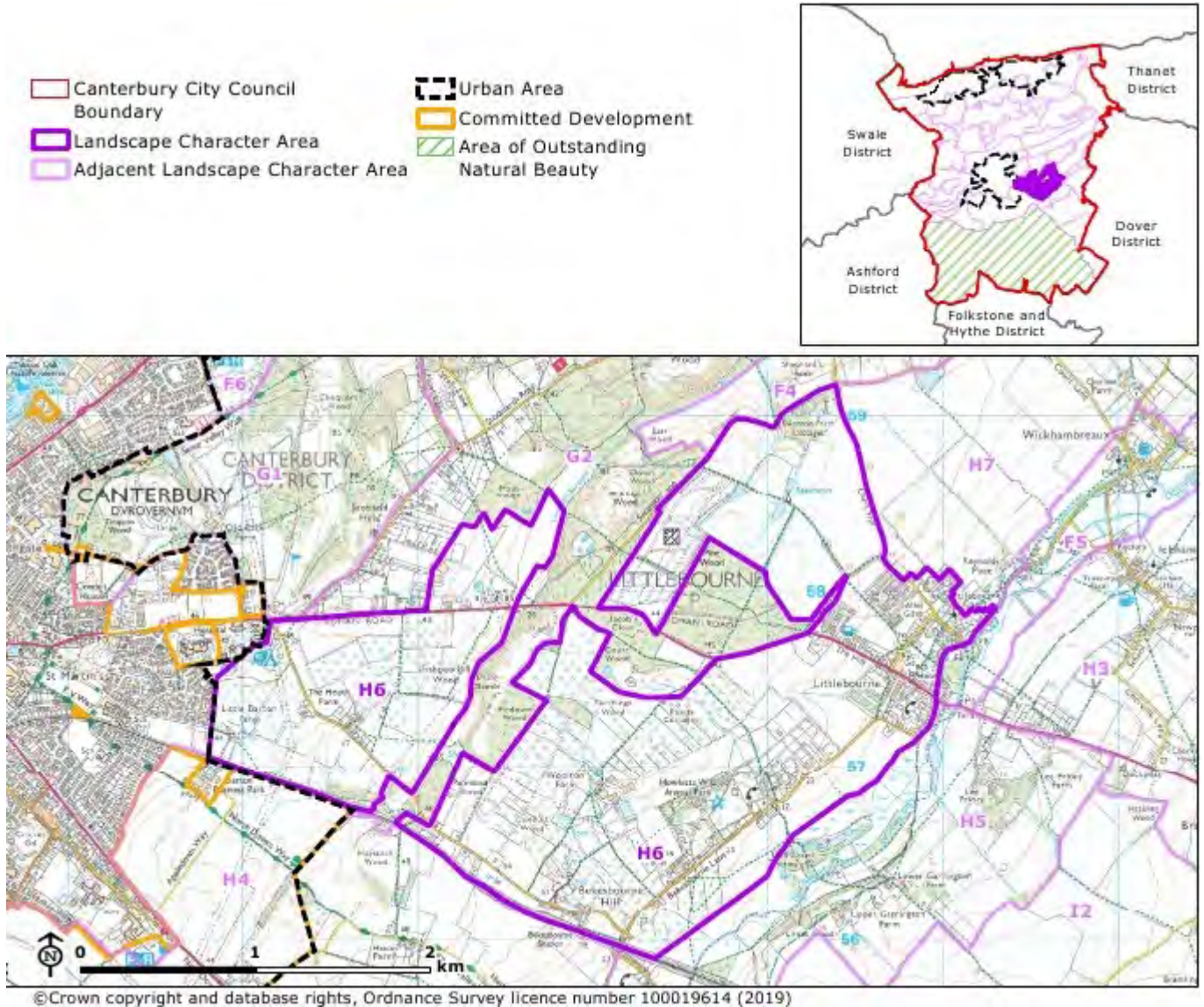
Landscape Management

- Protect and manage the valued semi-natural habitats including at the Littlebourne Stream LWS and priority habitats deciduous woodland and traditional orchards.
- Restore and create acid grassland, heath, and woodland habitat in the south west of Upper Garrington Farm.
- Create and enhance areas of improved grassland and arable fields to species rich grassland.
- Increase the extent of native deciduous woodland, using locally occurring native species in order to link to existing woodland. Seek to avoid the introduction of coniferous boundaries/shelterbelts.
- Explore opportunities for the creation of wetland features on the valley floor to enhance biodiversity interest.
- Encourage management practices to conserve the mosaic of habitats including low intensity grazing of semi-natural grassland.
- Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA including the creation of neutral grassland, acid grassland and heath, chalk scarp and fertile soils woodland and wetland habitat.
- Conserve and reinforce the parkland character putting in place a programme of new parkland tree planting where appropriate.

Development Management

- Promote enhanced management of horse paddocks, ensuring they are sympathetically integrated into the landscape, and that any stables or manèges are carefully sited.
- Conserve the local distinctiveness and strong vernacular of historic buildings, particularly within the Conservation Areas, maintaining their rural character.
- Conserve the undeveloped character and tranquillity of the landscape by avoiding the introduction of large scale or incongruous elements.
- Any minor highway upgrading should consider landscape setting and character and enhance these local aspects wherever possible.

H6: Littlebourne Fruit Belt



Location and Summary

The Littlebourne Fruit Belt LCA is part of an extensive fruit belt area that covers a substantial part of East Kent. The LCA lies to the east of Canterbury City and extends from its urban edge towards the village of Littlebourne in the north-east. The LCA wraps around the fragmented character of Trenley Park Woodlands which lies adjacent to the north, and its southern edge is defined by the London to Dover Railway line (Chatham Main Railway line). Much of the LCA is characterised by traditional farming practices associated with the production of top fruit and hops, balanced with areas that have undergone some agricultural intensification through arable conversion.

The LCA contributes towards the valley setting to the historic Canterbury City.

Representative Photographs



Agricultural intensification leading to arable practices and fragmented field boundaries



Swanton Aerial Site LWS in Littlebourne



Traditional farming practices associated with the production of top fruit



Church of St Vincent (Littlebourne) (Grade I)



Solar Farm off Swanton Lane contained by woodland



Arable fields following agricultural intensification enclosed in the distance by mature vegetation associated with railway embankment

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Gently rolling landform with deep loamy soils.
- Agricultural land intensively farmed traditionally as orchards and hops but giving way to arable practices resulting in there being an overall limited biodiversity interest.
- Small parcel of woodland and acid grassland forming the Swanton Aerial Site LWS
- Strong field pattern created by windbreaks and crops.
- Clumps and belts of trees including small isolated blocks of ancient woodland.
- Encompassing most of the Littlebourne, Bekesbourne and Woolton Farm and Little Barton Farm Conservation Areas, providing some rural setting to their associated historic buildings (although influenced by the agricultural intensification that has occurred following changes from fruit production to arable).
- Scattered clusters of historic buildings including traditional farm buildings, remnants of estate properties and oast houses.
- Proximity to the urban edge of Canterbury City with localised urban fringe influences and some suburbanisation.

Natural Influences

The LCA has a mixed geology dominated by Thanet Beds overlain with silty drift of Head Brickearth and outcrops of River Terrace Gravels which creates an undulating, gently rounded topography and a series of shallow ridges and valleys running generally south west to north east across the LCA. The soils are deep, well drained, and often stoneless loams of a type which is only found in north and east Kent. These soils are traditionally fertile supporting top and soft fruit, although some areas of arable farming have replaced fruit production in recent years.

The fertility is reflected in the agricultural land classification which is mainly Grade 1 with pockets of Grade 2 at the margins. The traditional intensive agricultural use is characterised by orchards, high hedgerows, and shelterbelts, with remnant shelterbelts indicating where orchards and hop gardens have been lost to arable, while providing a trace of the former structure and pattern.

This LCA has limited existing biodiversity interest by comparison with surrounding areas. The only designated habitat represented here is a very small parcel of woodland and acid grassland in its north east corner known as Swanton Aerial Site, Littlebourne LWS. Elsewhere, the area is dominated by intensive arable and fruit production, with habitat interest limited to field boundaries, improved grassland and occasional small parcels of woodland and scrub within farms, at Howletts Wild Animal Park and along the Chatham Main Railway line which runs along the southern edge of the LCA. Whilst some wildlife corridors are fragmented and the understorey of hedgerows and shelterbelts poor, there are strong hedgerow and woodland corridors, and streams leading into naturalised reservoirs and associated riparian vegetation.

These small wetland areas are surrounded by dense mature planting.

Throughout the LCA there are clumps and belts of native and naturalised trees and small areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland; some of which are designated as ancient woodland (at Farthings Wood, Lackenden Wood and Palmstead Wood West). These are fragmented but tend to follow the pattern of the topography in a generally south-west to north-east direction, almost linking with the fingers of Trenley Park Woods which stretch along the valleys. Other trees in the LCA are a mix of ornamental trees associated with houses and amenity areas.

Cultural Influences

The historic pattern of this landscape has been broadly similar since the 1800s when hops were introduced to the area. The Kent HLC indicates that while there is still a large coverage of orchards within the area, there has been some clearance for arable farming with Prairie fields (19th century enclosure), leading to extensive boundary loss. This is particularly noticeable around Little Barton Farm (a designated Conservation Area with a historic farmhouse) where the intensification of arable farming has resulted in the loss of shelterbelts and opened up large fields, changing its setting.

Other Conservation Areas are also located in the LCA or within the periphery. The historic core of Littlebourne village in the north-east contains many buildings of historic interest, including weather boarded, half tile and brick. The Barn at Littlebourne Court and adjacent Church of St Vincent are both important historic buildings and Grade I listed. Recent development is less distinct and varies greatly in style and character.

Further to the south, Bekesbourne and Woolton Farm is an area that includes the historic Woolton Farmhouse, surrounded by ornamental grounds which are included in Kent County Council's supplementary list of Historic Parks and Gardens 1985, while interspersed by areas of orchards containing rows of polytunnels. At the northernmost point of the LCA the Swanton Aerial Site LWS forms part of the Elbridge House Conservation Area, providing visual enclosure to Elbridge Farm. In the west the site of St Martin's Hospital partly falls within the LCA, as a historic parkland setting was once provided for the hospital, although has now been diminished following the introduction of the Canterbury Camping and Caravanning Club Campsite.

Historic buildings in the landscape typically consist of farmsteads and remnants of estate properties, an example being Howletts House (Grade II* listed) located at Howletts Wild Animal Park. Oasthouses are also a feature and are typically of red brick and tile construction, sitting comfortably in the landscape.

In the north the Littlebourne Road (A257) was an important Roman Road to the port at Richborough and is almost certainly the route St. Augustine first took to Canterbury City. It was also a valued trade link with Sandwich that grew in importance as the Stour silted up and Fordwich declined. It was turnpiked in 1802.

Perceptual Influences

The agricultural land of the LCA abuts tightly to the eastern perimeter of the Canterbury City urban area. Here there are some urban fringe issues that create an unkempt appearance

to the immediate edge of the city; namely the Canterbury Camping and Caravanning Club Campsite, adding to the clutter of an otherwise simple but highly structured landscape. Despite this urban influence, the agricultural character of this LCA is still dominant. Away from the influence of Canterbury City's urban fringe there are fewer detracting features, and these tend to be limited to uncharacteristic fencing and housing within and around Littlebourne.

Views are enclosed by the dense woodland which surrounds the northern and western boundaries. However, there are some isolated long views to the east, over the undulating rural landscape. Mobile telephone masts and pylons are sited centrally within the rural landscape forming visual detractors and are dominant in many of the views within the area, particularly rows of overhead cables that cross the LCA, extending from the A2 in the south to the caravan park in the north-west and Trenley Park Woods in the north. Other features that detract from the landscape character include Littlebourne Road (A257). Elsewhere roads consist as narrow winding lanes and residential streets. A small area off Swanton Lane in the north now exists as a solar farm and is a dominant visual feature when travelling along the PRoW that run adjacent to it. However, its visual impact is localised as surrounding woodland contains the solar farm.

The estate and house at Howletts are now established as a wild animal park and despite high visitor numbers, has a very local impact on the landscape. The park is surrounded by dense vegetation (including windbreaks of former orchards) that screen the essential high security fences and car parks.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- Areas continuing with traditional agricultural practices that are under threat from arable conversion.
- Hedgerows and remnant shelterbelts that provide a trace of the former structure and pattern of the landscape.
- Limited areas of valuable habitats including woodland and acid grassland at Swanton Aerial Site LWS, and other hedgerow and woodland corridors.
- Blocks of ancient woodlands contribute towards the historic setting of the landscape.
- The historic village of Littlebourne and its distinctive local vernacular of weather board, half tile and brick – a Conservation Area – with many historic buildings including the Grade I listed Barn at Littlebourne Court and adjacent Church of St Vincent.
- Rural setting to Littlebourne, Bekesbourne and Woolton Farm and Little Barton Farm Conservation Areas, which is evidently being influenced by agricultural intensification diminishing the sense of place.
- Rural character of lanes lined with hedgerows (although heavily trafficked).
- The role of the LCA in contributing towards the rural setting to the historic Canterbury City, in separating it with outlying villages to the east and the rural separation provided between Bekesbourne / Patixbourne and Littlebourne.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

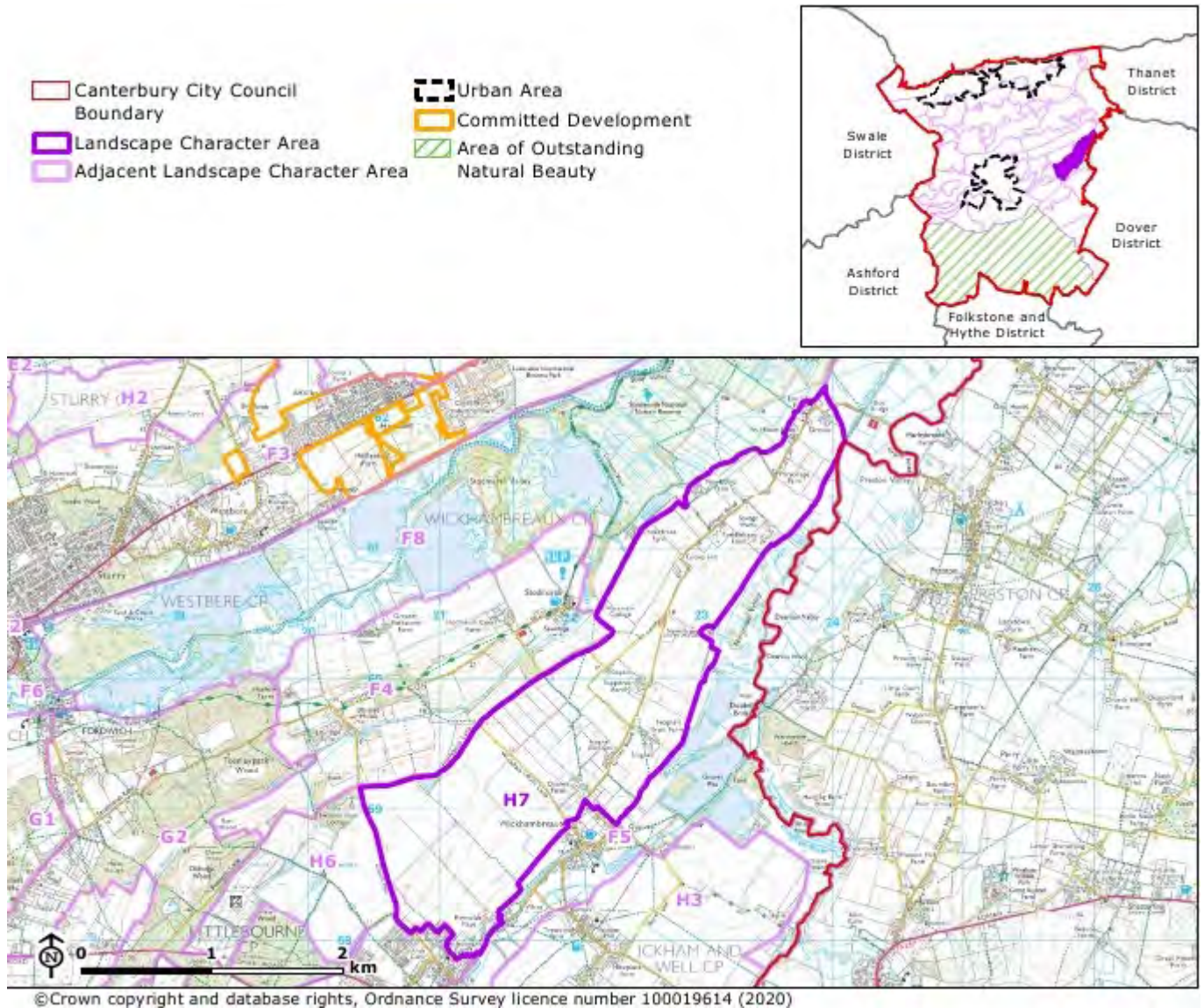
Landscape Management

- Conserve old orchards for their biodiversity value and to restore areas for the traditional farming practice of top fruit production.
- Conserve the traditional pattern and structure of the landscape by improving the continuity of hedgerow and shelterbelt features to enhance the rectilinear field pattern and to strengthen habitat connectivity.
- Explore opportunities for acid grassland/heath habitat creation in areas near to Old Park and Trenley Park to link to existing habitats and enhance biodiversity interest.
- Restore and create wetland habitat, which contributes to the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA habitat network.
- Manage and enhance the wildlife interest of agricultural fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins and other wildlife-friendly farming methods.
- Conserve and improve belts of native vegetation to help re-establish ecological corridors linking to Trenley Park Woods.
- Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA.

Development Management

- Conserve the local distinctiveness and strong vernacular of historic buildings, particularly within the Littlebourne Conservation Area.
- Conserve and respect the character of historic built form / settlement and their association with traditional farming practices by resisting further agricultural intensification.
- Avoid urban fringe uses which detract from the otherwise simple pattern of the landscape and rural setting to the historic Canterbury City, improving boundary treatments with the use of native hedgerows to help filter views of urban fringe uses.
- Any proposals for highway upgrading should retain the rural character of the lanes.
- Conserve the rural character of the landscape ensuring that it continues to play a role in the separation of Canterbury City with outlying villages to the east, and the separation of Bekesbourne / Patricbourne and Littlebourne.

H7: Wickhambreaux Horticultural Belt



Location and Summary

The Wickhambreaux Horticultural Belt LCA comprises an area to the north of Wickhambreaux, stretching between the villages of Littlebourne in the south-west and Grove at its northernmost point. It is a distinct and structured landscape characterised by a series of geometric shaped fields used for fruit production and arable practices. The landscape varies in its level of openness as agricultural intensification has led to the loss of hedgerows in some places, while mature hedgerows and shelterbelts provide enclosure in other places.

Representative Photographs



Rows of polytunnels contained by coniferous shelterbelts



Large arable fields with agricultural barns, sheds, and stores



Supperton Farmhouse (Grade II listed) along Grove Road



High hedgerows / shelterbelts contribute towards the structured landscape



Fields used for the traditional practice of fruit production, contained by the wooded character of the Lampen Stream to the north



Rural setting to historic buildings (including Waterham Cottage)

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Gently rounded agricultural landscape with deep well drained loamy soils.
- Agricultural land intensively farmed for fruit production (including the use of polytunnels) but giving way to arable practices (cereals and vegetables) resulting in there being an overall limited biodiversity interest.
- Geometric and structured field pattern with a series of square and rectangular fields of moderate to large scale and divided by a strong network of hedgerows and shelterbelts.
- Isolated farmsteads and occasional groups of dwellings including occasional historic farmhouses.
- Provides a rural setting to surrounding Conservation Areas at Littlebourne, Wickhambreaux, Elbridge House and the Lampen Stream.
- Relatively open landscape due to the fragmented nature of hedgerows, although with some enclosure provided by tall hedgerows and shelterbelts.

Natural Influences

This gently rounded agricultural landscape is derived from the Tertiary Beds, most notably the Thanet Beds, overlain by River Terrace Gravels and Head Brickearth. The soils are deep, generally well drained, and often stoneless loams. These soils are fertile, supporting the production of soft and hard fruit, potatoes, field vegetables and cereals. The fertility is reflected in the Grade 1 agricultural land classification which exists across the majority of the LCA.

It is a structured landscape with a coherent field pattern, generally held together by a strong network of mature hedgerows and shelterbelts (although these often comprise single species limiting the diversity of habitats). The traditional intensive agricultural function is characterised by areas of orchard. Where cereal and vegetable production are the primary functions, larger fields with fewer hedgerows have developed as fruit and hop production has declined.

Situated on the higher ground between the Little Stour River and the Lampen Stream at Stodmarsh, this LCA is dominated by arable and fruit farming with habitat interest limited to hedgerows and field margins (although field boundaries have been lost in places following agricultural intensification) and a small area of priority habitat deciduous woodland at Grove Hill. Despite being situated adjacent to the Westbere and Stodmarsh NNR, the LCA contains no designated sites for nature conservation.

Cultural Influences

The Kent HLC indicates that most of the LCA comprises regular fields with straight boundaries (Parliamentary enclosure), interspersed with small pockets of orchards, reflecting the decline of traditional farming practices

associated with fruit production. To the west of Newnham Farm, a small area consists of an enclosure and ring ditch which is designated as a Scheduled Monument.

Settlement is limited to isolated farmsteads and sporadic groups of dwellings scattered along Grove Road. Most of the buildings are 20th century with simple brick or concrete construction, although there are a number of Grade II listed buildings, most of which comprise redbrick farmhouses from between the 17th and 19th centuries.

The Wickhambreaux Horticultural Belt forms the boundary to a number of Conservation Areas which abut its edge. It therefore provides a rural setting to the villages of Littlebourne and Wickhambreaux in the south, as well as to Elbridge House and the Lampen Stream in the west, although influenced by the intensive agricultural function of the area.

Perceptual Influences

The landscape is relatively open due to its slight elevation from the surrounding area, the predominantly large field pattern, and the fragmented nature of field boundary hedgerows. Hedgerow loss is evident in the LCA and has been replaced with fencing in places. However, some areas are afforded with a sense of enclosure where boundaries comprise tall hedgerows or shelterbelts which form mitigation features for the expansive use of polytunnels which detract from the landscape. The well-wooded character of the neighbouring Lampen Stream Valley (to the north) and Little Stour Stream Valley (to the south) provides some containment to the LCA.

Grove Road cuts through the centre of the LCA along most of its length, providing a connection between the settlements of Wickhambreaux and Grove. Along its route the road is

afforded with varying levels of enclosure as hedgerows are fragmented along its edge. In some places the road is open on both sides, where vehicles would result in aural and visual intrusion. Other rural lanes (that are narrow and twisting) adjoin Grove Road and are also relatively open and exposed in some places, as well as being sunk between grass verges and high hedgerows in others. Large agricultural barns, sheds and stores in corrugated iron and concrete also form visual detractors as well as overhead lines on wooden poles, although their impact is relatively localised.

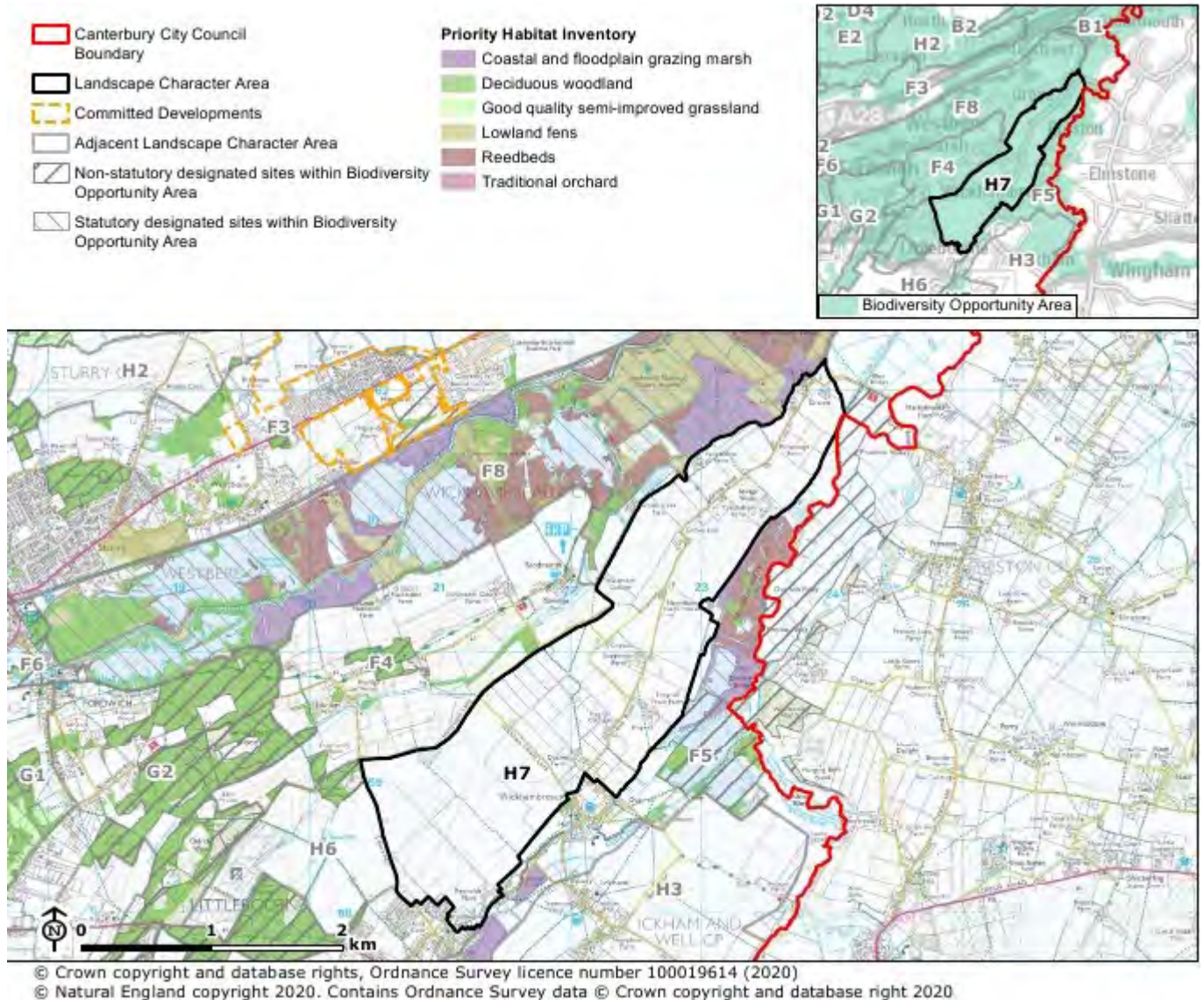
Public access is overall limited within this LCA with only a few local footpaths crossing the working farmland.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- Areas continuing with traditional agricultural practices that are under threat from arable conversion.
- Hedgerows and shelterbelts that provide structure and pattern to the landscape and some biodiversity interest.
- Small area of priority habitat deciduous woodland at Grove Hill providing a limited valuable habitat.
- Remnants of the enclosure and ring ditch to the west of Newnham Farm (Scheduled Monument).
- Rural setting to historic farmhouses as well as to the Littlebourne, Wickhambreaux, Elbridge House and the Lampen Stream Conservation Areas (although influenced by agricultural intensification diminishing the sense of place).
- Visually open areas where field boundary enclosure is in decline following agricultural intensification.
- Rural character of lanes lined with mature hedgerows in some places.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To create species rich neutral grassland and woodland, which form part of the wider habitat network in the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA.

This LCA lies within the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA, which sets out the following relevant key targets:

- Protect and enhance existing priority habitats and designated sites.
- Enhance species-rich grassland to bring it to priority habitat quality.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include arable and horticulture, improved grassland, and built-up areas. No priority habitats are recorded within the LCA, apart from a very small area of priority habitat deciduous woodland at Grove Hill.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

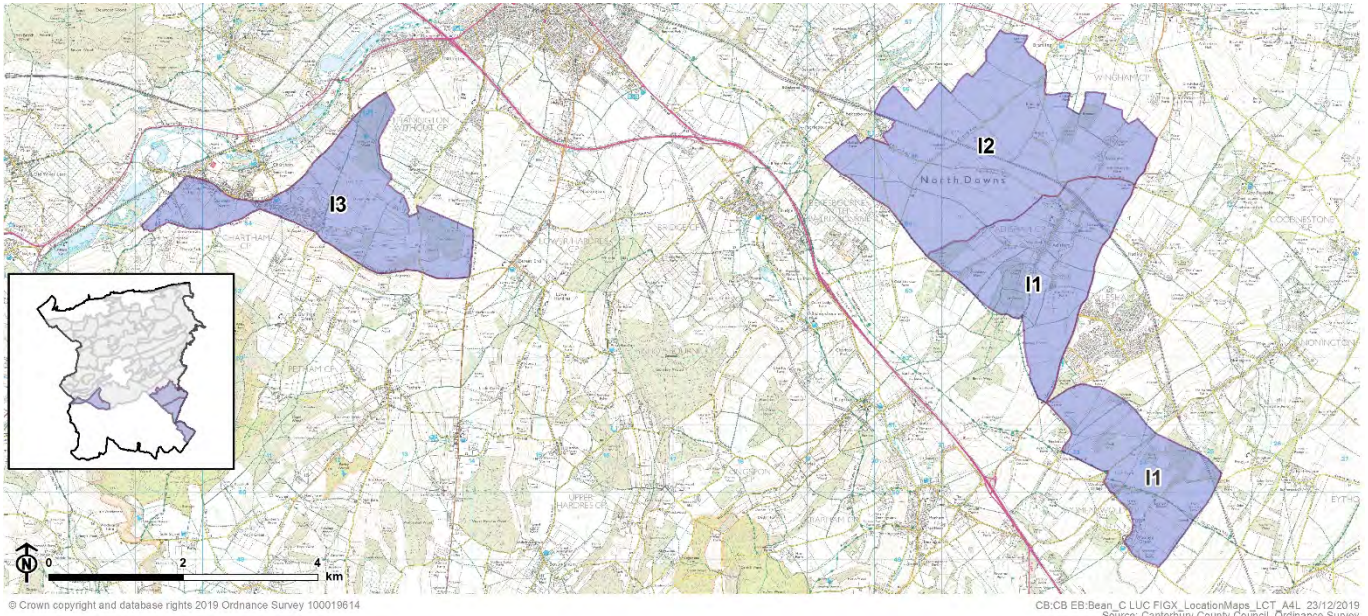
Landscape Management

- Create areas of species-rich neutral grassland and woodland, which contribute to the wider habitat network of the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA and protects adjacent designated sites by acting as a buffer.
- Manage and enhance the wildlife interest of agricultural fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins and other wildlife-friendly farming methods.
- Conserve traditional orchards for their biodiversity value.
- Conserve and improve the traditional landscape pattern and structure, as well as increasing the biodiversity interest through the establishment and maintenance of hedgerows along historic field boundaries and rural lanes.
- Encourage the replacement of unsympathetic coniferous shelterbelts with native deciduous species.
- Enhance and augment fragmented field boundary hedgerows with native species, replacing fencing where possible.
- Protect the landscape's only valued priority habitat deciduous woodland at Grove Hill
- Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA including the creation of neutral grassland, fertile soils woodland throughout and wetland woodland in localised areas of the LCA.

Development Management

- Protect the remnants of the enclosure and ring ditch to the west of Newnham Farm.
- Conserve the local distinctiveness of historic farmhouses and protect the rural setting of surrounding Conservation Areas at Littlebourne, Wickhambreaux, Elbridge House and the Lampen Stream.
- Conserve the open landscape and avoid the introduction of large scale or incongruous elements.
- Any proposals for highway upgrading should retain the rural and winding character of the lanes.

LCT I: Downland



Description

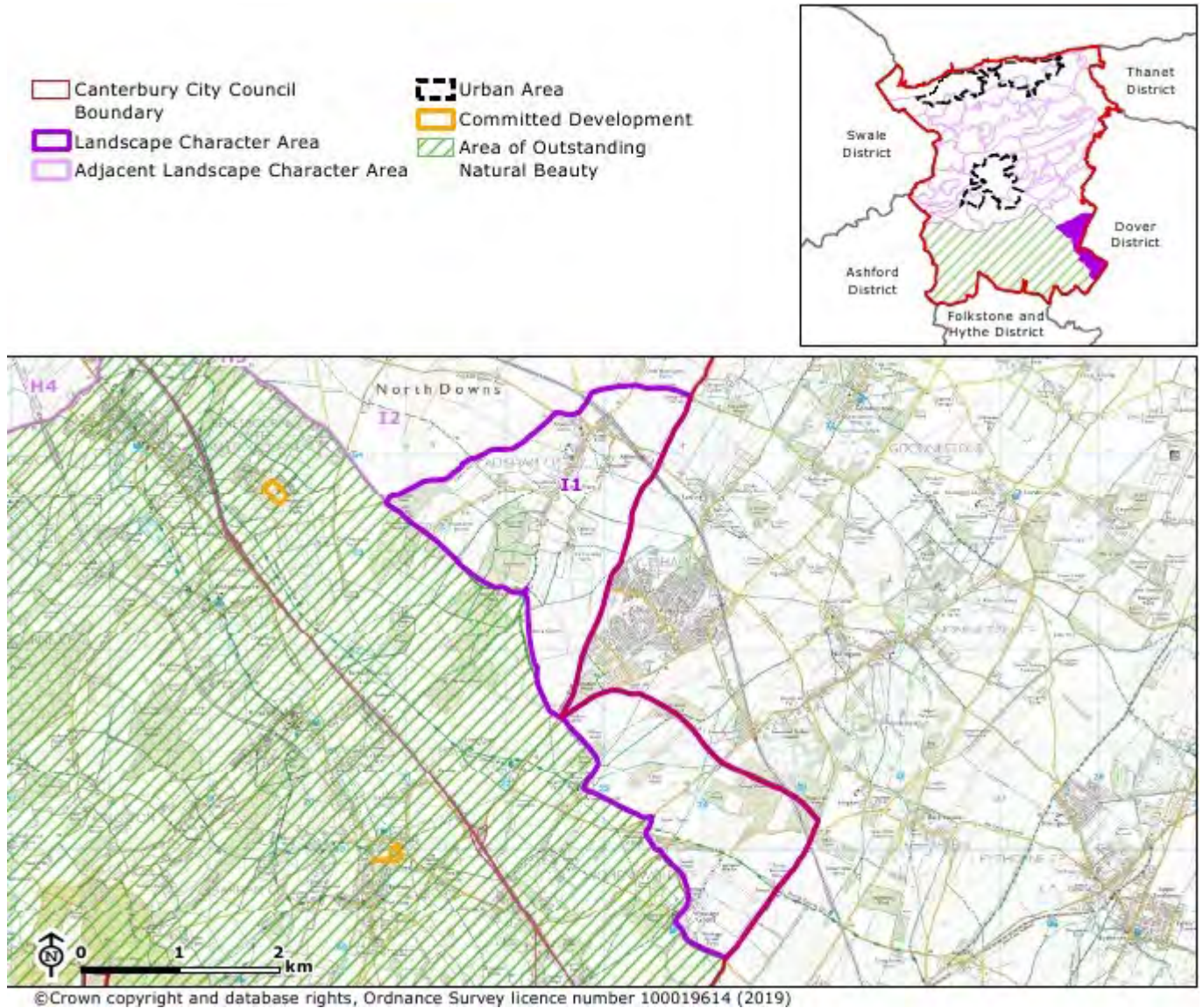
This LCT is distinguished by undulating chalk downland with dry valleys, forming part of the dipslope of the Kent Downs AONB. Land use is generally agricultural with large arable fields creating an open expansive landscape. There are some blocks of large deciduous woodland, and the area has a rural character. This LCT has many similar characteristics to the Kent Downs Chalk Downs LCT which lies to the south of Canterbury district.

Landscape Character Areas

The Downland LCT is subdivided into three LCAs:

- I1: Adisham Arable Downland
- I2: Bramling Downland
- I3: Chartham and Shalmsford Downland

I1: Adisham Arable Downland



Location and Summary

A distinctive area of downland landscape forming part of the extended dip slope of the Kent Downs. It is linked to Bramling Downland to the north but identified as a separate character area due to the greater extent of woodland cover and more settled character including the linear village of Adisham. It has continuity with the AONB along the western boundary at Pond Lane. It is divided into two distinct areas by Aylesham, a former mining settlement of the East Kent Coalfield within Dover District.

The area forms part of the rising chalk slopes to the south of Canterbury City and the elevation and openness allow long views including distant glimpse of the cathedral from high points to the north.

Representative Photographs



Large arable fields are set within a wooded framework



Modern housing and open amenity land at Woolage village



Grazed pasture along valley at Woolage Green



Woodland belts along the lanes form distinctive green tunnels



The flint church at Adisham is a prominent local landmark



Linear development along 'The Street' at Adisham with soft brick and white weatherboard cottages

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating chalk landscape forming part of the dip slope of the Kent Downs.
- Large arable fields interspersed with broadleaved woodland blocks on ridges forming distinctive wooded horizons.
- Small settlements linked by narrow roads, with modern buildings as well as traditional flint, brick weatherboard and thatch. Long linear village of Adisham follows a dry valley, with other settlements on ridgetops.
- Open views partially contained by the backdrop of woodland blocks in places.
- A strongly rural landscape that can be experienced and enjoyed by an extensive network of rights of way which connect through to the Kent Downs and the North Downs Way.

Natural Influences

The underlying geology supports intensive arable production, although in this area the open arable landscape is set within a wooded framework.

Woodland blocks and belts are characteristically located on higher ridges forming a backdrop in longer views. Woodland is mostly native broadleaf, with some integration of pine and chestnut coppice and non-native sycamore and Turkish oak trees. South-west of Adisham village lies part of the Ileden and Oxenden Woods SSSI. This site is representative of east Kent plateau woodland on chalk, with a variety of stands (including two nationally rare types) and a diverse ground flora. It also supports a rich breeding bird community.

A series of woods to the north of Womenswold and Woolage Village, and to the west of Woolage Green are designated as the Woolwich Wood and Well Wood LWS. Woolwich Wood, which is a remnant of a larger woodland lost in the 1960s made up of a variety of coppice trees with oak standards. Chalk Wood also forms part of the LWS and is mainly sweet chestnut coppice with fewer standards. The Woods South of Snowdown LWS, which include Oxney and Cony Wood, also comprise ancient coppice-with-standards. A rich flora is present, and the woods are also noted for their butterfly and bird assemblage. Other bands of deciduous woodland classed as priority habitat are found throughout the LCA. A small LWS at Adisham Churchyard is rich in lichens, containing an area of unimproved chalk grassland.

There are intermittent native hedgerows, although they are frequently replaced by post and wire fencing. Clumps and belts of native trees in between fields remain.

The arable land use and woodland blocks provide seasonal variation with crop cycles and tree leaf growth, colour, and winter loss.

Cultural Influences

The Kent HLC indicates that a significant proportion of the farmed landscape comprises open, prairie fields created following boundary removal since the 19th century. Areas of enclosed grazed pasture remain – in smaller, regular Parliamentary fields – on the slopes above Adisham and east of Woolage Green. A small area of land north-west has rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries of late-Medieval origin.

Pockets of derelict fruit orchards reflect previous land use in places, as do small former quarries which clearly display the underlying chalk.

Adisham is an ancient settlement named in the Domesday book, with a historic core centred on 'Pond Hill' and 'The Street'. It contains some 20th century development and a number of traditional buildings of locally distinct materials, including its Grade I listed flint church, which forms a prominent local landmark, plus timber framed barns, Kent peg tiles, vernacular Georgian housing and Victorian school. The settlement is linear, and housing is densely positioned along 'The Street'. Adisham and the nearby hamlets of Blooden and Cooting are Conservation Areas.

The small settlements of Womenswold (partially in the LCA), Woolage Green and Woolage Village are located to the south west. They contain some modern housing, although traditional properties with flint walls and thatched roofs occur throughout. Womenswold is an ancient picturesque village with a main street lined with a variety of period houses centred around the Grade I listed Church (which lies outside of the LCA). Woolage Green and Womenswold are Conservation Areas, recognising the historic merit of the settlements and a number of Listed Buildings.

Isolated farmsteads are scattered across the countryside surrounding Adisham, with clusters of large agricultural barns and outbuildings. Few roads cross the area, providing links between the small-scale settlements. The railway passes

through the landscape to the north, lined by distinctive linear vegetation belts, with two brick viaducts carrying the railway to the north of Adisham.

Perceptual Influences

The gently undulating and elevated topography frequently affords open views across arable farmland, although far-reaching views are contained by the backdrop of distinctive ridge-line woodland blocks and belts. It is a strongly rural landscape that can be experienced and enjoyed by an extensive network of rights of way which connect through to the Kent Downs and the North Downs Way.

Some settlement edges are unsympathetic with the rural setting. Large agricultural barns and silos at Woolage Farm detract from the small scale of surrounding residential properties and settlements. Amenity playing fields to the north of Woolage Village provide a slightly suburban character alongside the high density and modern housing.

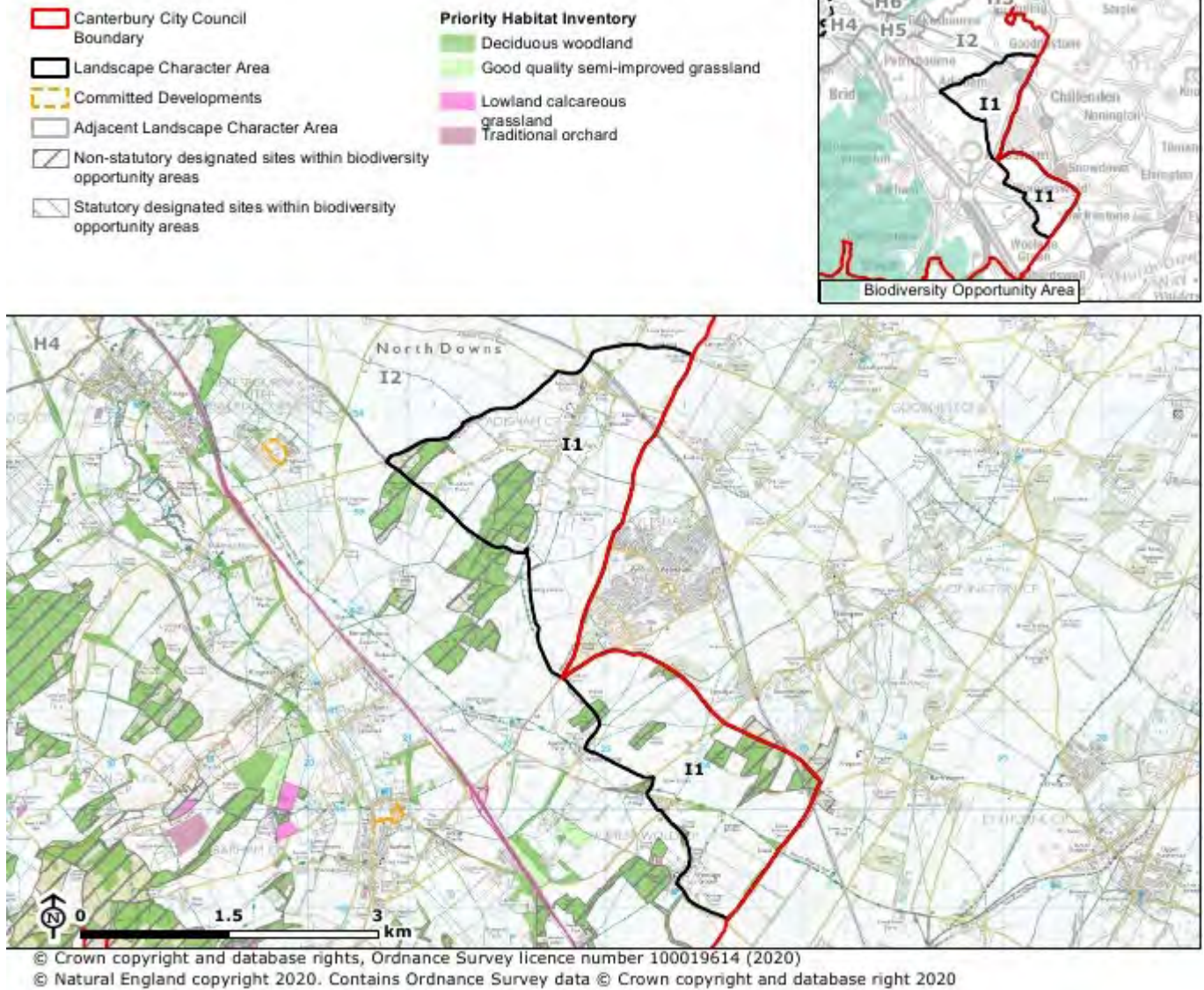
The railway is well integrated by vegetation and has limited impact within the area.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- Strongly undulating chalk dip slope which forms an extension and setting to the Kent Downs AONB which lies immediately adjacent to the south/west.
- Distinctive woodland blocks and belts on ridgelines, including the nationally designated Ileden and Oxenden Woods SSSI, several LWS and clumps/bands of priority habitat deciduous woodland, which form distinctive wooded horizons in views.
- Remnant areas of traditionally grazed pastures in hedged fields, particularly on the slopes above Adisham and near Woolage Green (including fields with wavy boundaries of late-Medieval origin).
- Traditional buildings with strong local vernacular (including flint, timber frames, Kent pegs), including Grade II Listed Buildings within settlements. The landmark Grade I listed flint churches at Adisham and Womenswold.
- The Conservation Areas of Adisham, Blooden, Cooting, Womenswold and Woolage Green, reflecting the historic importance of the settlements, nestled within in the valleys and on ridges and representing distinctive settlement forms.
- Local landscape features that provide interest and time depth including the distinctive brick railway viaducts at Adisham, one of which incorporates WWII defences.
- The strongly rural qualities of the landscape, with its mosaic of farmland and woodland with isolated farms linked by quiet roads.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To protect and enhance woodland habitat by strengthening connectivity to habitat within the strategic habitat network.

This LCA lies outside of a BOA. Broad habitat types present within the LCA include arable and horticulture, improved grassland, broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland and built-up areas. In addition to this, small fragmented areas of ancient woodland and deciduous woodland, which is listed as a priority habitat were identified.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

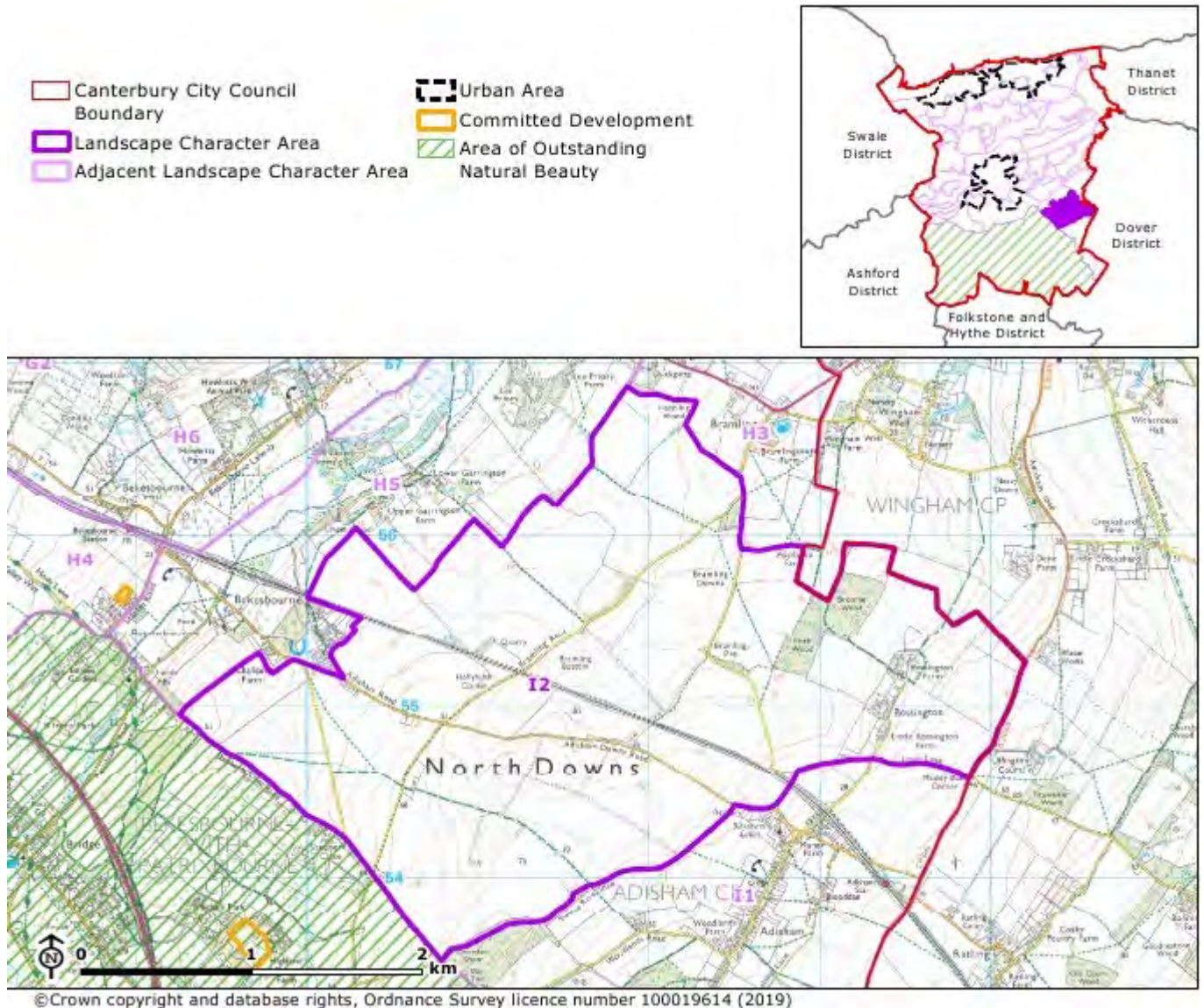
Landscape Management

- Conserve and manage the woodland blocks and belts and seek to replace non-native species with native trees. Seek to link up the network of existing woodlands to strengthen habitat connectivity.
- Improve boundaries and reinstate native hedgerow field boundaries where possible along roads and to replace fencing.
- Seek to enhance the arable landscape through management along margins for biodiversity and conserve remaining areas of pasture.
- Encourage suitable native planting around visually prominent farm buildings (particularly large, modern sheds) to soften the visual impact.

Development Management

- Conserve traditional buildings and local heritage features that add diversity and distinctiveness to the landscape.
- Encourage the use of traditional materials in new development, such as flint, Kent peg tiles and timber frames.
- Manage the settlement edges and seek to create well contained edges that integrate development within the landscape setting. Native woodland and tree planting is an appropriate treatment in this LCA.
- Conserve the traditional linear settlement form of Adisham in the chalk valley with a single line of dwellings along the road and views out between buildings to the rising slopes beyond.
- Conserve the more nucleated enclosed village forms at Woolage Green and Womenswold located on slight ridges.
- Avoid any development including large scale farm buildings in prominent locations such as on higher ground.
- Seek to ensure new development at Aylesham and along the Adisham Road in Dover District respects the rural character and quality of this area.
- Conserve the visual links with the AONB ensuring that this area continues to provide a rural dip slope setting to the Kent Downs.

I2: Bramling Downland



Location and Summary

A distinctive area of open downland landscape forming part of the extended dip slope of the Kent Downs. This is an open elevated landscape rising south of the wooded valley at Bekesbourne and has continuity with the AONB along the western boundary at Shepherds Close Road, where the landscape is more enclosed with orchards. To the south is an area of more wooded downland at Adisham Downs. To the north west the boundary is drawn at the administrative boundary with Dover District.

The area forms part of the rising chalk slopes to the south of Canterbury City and the elevation and openness allow long views including a distant glimpse of the cathedral from high points to the north.

Representative Photographs



Expansive open arable landscape



Smaller scale landscape of pasture along Bramling Bottom



Ploughed arable landscapes create seasonal diversity



Lavender fields provide local colour



Pillbox along Adisham Downs Road, part of WWII defences



Converted farm buildings forming part of the Conservation Area at Bossington

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- An elevated, gently undulating landform underlain by chalk, with gentle slopes cut by minor dry valleys.
- Intensive arable farming with very large fields and sense of openness.
- Occasional pockets of pasture such as around Bossington and Bramling Bottom.
- Limited tree cover with some woodland blocks, modern plantations, and intermittent hedgerows. Frith and Broome Woods to the west are prominent in the open landscape.
- Open views across the landscape, with glimpses from high points to distinct landmark features, including Canterbury Cathedral.
- Sparsely settled with occasional isolated properties, minor modern residential expansion along Adisham Road, small hamlet at Bossington and some large agricultural barns.
- Three narrow roads cross the open downs, plus the Canterbury – Dover railway.
- An open, expansive landscape with long views.

Natural Influences

The dip slope topography is gently undulating on chalk bedrock with pockets of Head Brickearth extending along the dry valleys. Bramling quarry is an abandoned chalk pit which contains the only remaining inland exposure of some of the youngest Upper Chalk in Kent and is designated as a RIGS site. The land is used primarily for intensive arable farming within large open fields, with some pockets of pasture around Bossington to the east.

Hedgerows, where they have not been removed or replaced by fencing, are thin and intermittent. Blocks of woodland, some coniferous and some recent plantations, are sparsely scattered across the arable landscape, providing visual variation and biodiversity interest. There are no sites designated for their nature conservation interest in this intensively farmed landscape, although Frith and Broome Woods near Bossington are ancient woodland, along with small tracts at Bramling Gap, along Bramling Road and at Woodlands Wood (which extends into LCA I1 to links to Twelve Acre Shaw). These are deciduous woodland (priority habitat).

Crop cycles provide seasonal variation, with open expanses of ploughed earth during the winter months, arable cropping including new crops such as lavender providing splashes of colour. Poplar shelterbelts are evident in the north as remnants of historic soft fruit production.

Cultural Influences

The Kent HLC indicates that the majority of the LCA comprises large 19th century fields, with extensive boundary

loss. Some pockets of pasture remain in smaller straight-edged Parliamentary fields around Bossington to the east, enclosed by intact hedgerows, as well as along the dry valleys.

There is some evidence of past mineral extraction, with a small quarried area displaying the underlying chalk.

Development is sparsely scattered, with the small, secluded hamlet of Bossington, tucked into the gentle slope to the east. Bossington is a Conservation Area and includes three Grade II listed buildings – Great Bossington Farmhouse, Little Bossington Farmhouse and Bossington House. The local agricultural vernacular style includes black weatherboard and brick oast houses.

Although the area is largely undeveloped, isolated properties and large-scale agricultural barns are sporadically scattered across the landscape. Minor narrow roads cross the landscape and linear vegetation belts distinguish the railway line, which dissects the landscape (linking Bekesbourne and Adisham).

Local features of interest include the WWII pillbox built for defensive purposes along Adisham Road and the distinctive brick viaducts associated with the railway.

Perceptual Influences

This is a working, intensively farmed landscape with strong rural qualities owing to the general lack of development and absence of major roads. There are few visual detractors in the area, although its open character, gentle topography and limited tree cover accentuates the visibility of small pylons, electricity poles and occasional large agricultural buildings.

Tree cover is generally limited, allowing open views across the landscape to distant landmark buildings including Canterbury Cathedral. Overall, it has a sense of elevation, expansive and open character where the rolling chalk topography can be perceived in combination with large skies. There is a relatively good network of rights of way through the landscape.

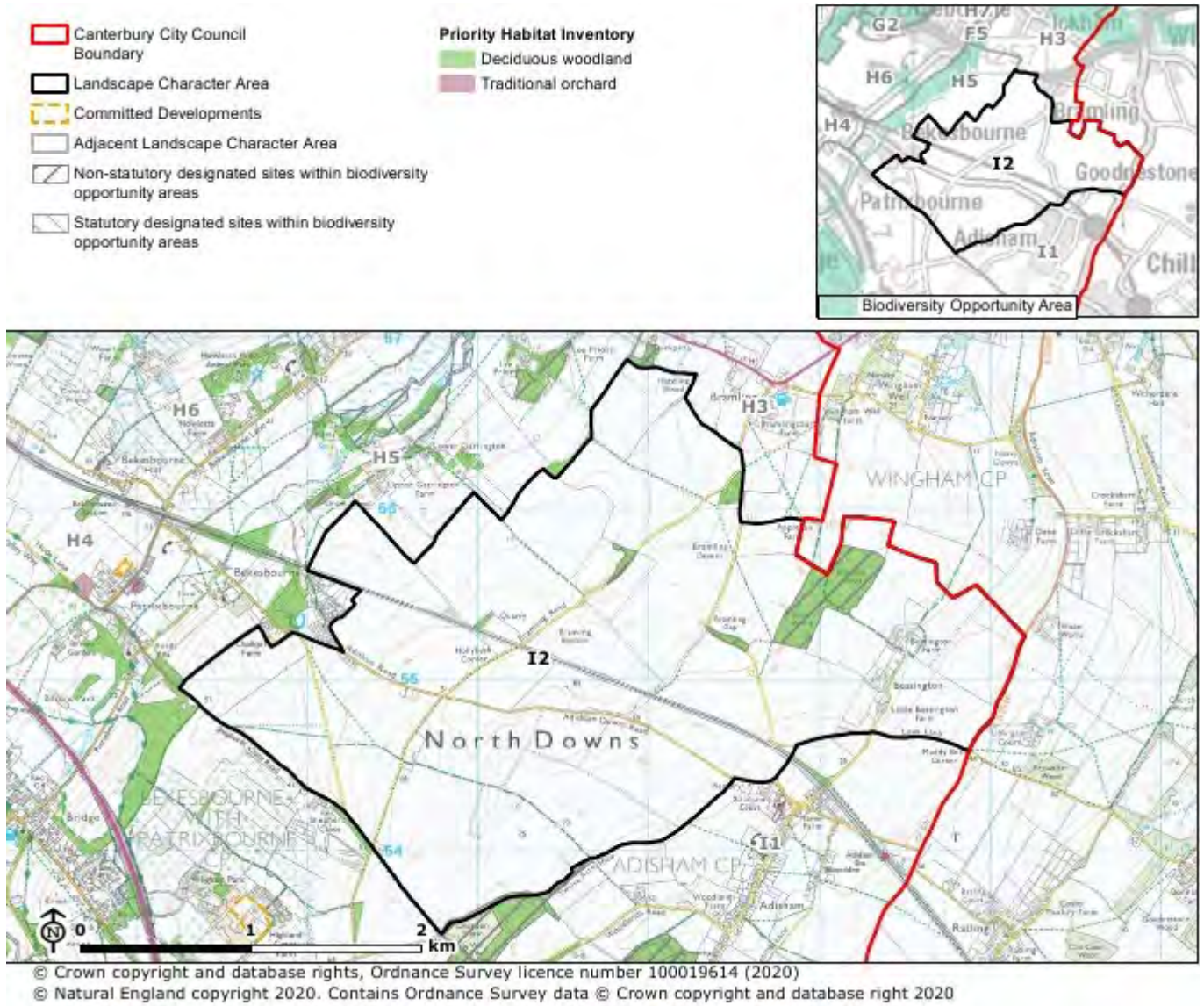
Tranquillity is intermittently broken when local trains pass through the area, although the combination of lineside tree cover and cuttings reduce impacts.

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- Open elevated chalk dip slope forming an extension of and setting to the Kent Downs AONB landscape.
- The remaining areas of ancient semi-natural woodland at Firth and Broome Woods, Bramling Gap, along Bramling Road and at Woodlands Wood, forming part of priority habitat.
- Smaller scale, regular Parliamentary pasture fields in the east of the LCA around Bossington, with intact hedgerow field boundaries.
- The small, historic hamlet of Bossington and its distinctive local vernacular of black weatherboard, brick oasts – a Conservation Area – with three Grade II Listed buildings.
- The sparsely settled, largely undeveloped working agricultural character of the landscape.
- The diversity provided by minor dry valleys through the chalk and local areas of grazed pasture.
- Local landscape features that provide interest and time depth including the WWII pill box on Adisham Road.
- Sense of elevation, openness, and expansiveness, allowing uninterrupted views across the landscape and beyond, including to the landmark of Canterbury Cathedral.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To protect and enhance woodland habitat by strengthening connectivity to habitat within the strategic habitat network.

The LCA lies outside of a BOA.
 Broad habitat types present within the LCA include arable and horticulture, improved grassland, broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland, inland rock/quarry, and built-up areas. In addition to this, there are small fragmented areas of ancient woodland and deciduous woodland, which is listed as a priority habitat.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

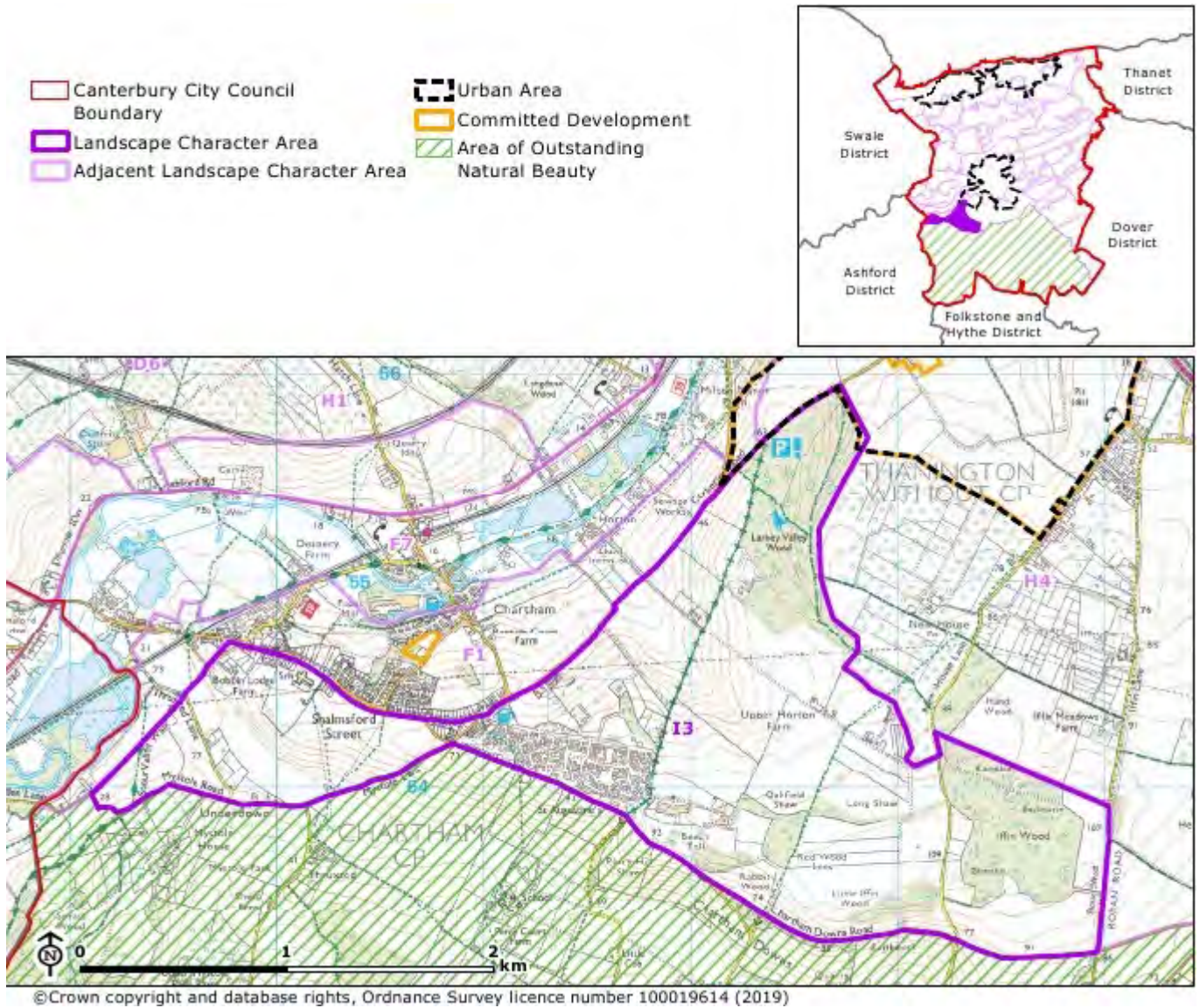
Landscape Management

- Conserve and enhance the remaining hedgerows and vegetation belts, thickening and replanting hedgerows where appropriate.
- Seek to increase the extent of tree cover with further woodland planting to link and extend the existing network, as well as strengthening habitat connectivity. Manage existing ancient semi-natural woodlands.
- Manage arable land to enhance diversity through appropriate management of field margins and conserve existing areas of pasture.
- Conserve the limited impact of the small landfill and quarry site and seek opportunities to former quarries for biodiversity.

Development Management

- Conserve the sparsely settled character and limited development maintaining strong open, rural character.
- Conserve local heritage features that add diversity and distinctiveness to the landscape.
- Avoid any development proposals in prominent locations such as on higher ground which would interrupt the long open views.
- Maintain the rural character of the narrow roads that cross the landscape.
- Encourage suitable planting around visually prominent farm buildings (particularly large, modern sheds) to soften their visual impact.
- Conserve the visual links with the AONB ensuring that this area continues to provide a rural dip slope setting to the Kent Downs.

I3: Chartham and Shalmsford Downland



Location and Summary

The Chartham and Shalmsford Downland forms part of the chalk dip slope of the North Downs, extending in from the Kent Downs AONB which lies directly south to the slopes of the Great Stour River. It mainly consists as an undulating landscape with dry valleys, with some large blocks of woodland. It is situated to the south and east of the Stour Valley. It is bordered and contains part of Shalmsford Street (a settlement that is contiguous with the village of Chartham).

Representative Photographs



Elevated views towards the Kent Downs AONB, framed by ancient woodland at Iffin Wood and Little Iffin Wood the edge of Shalmsford Street



Large open arable chalk slopes with mature hedgerows



Beech avenue on the edge of Shalmsford Street



Elevated views looking west across the Stour Valley from the edge of Larkey Valley Wood



Visual connection with the Kent Downs AONB



Small scale soft fruit farming with shelterbelts remain in places

Landscape Description

Key Characteristics

- Undulating downland chalk slopes with silty soils, used for intensive arable agriculture.
- Large arable fields with evidence of hedgerow loss.
- Mixed woodland blocks (including priority habitat deciduous woodland) and hedgerows both dominated by beech, forming Larkey Valley Woods SSSI/LNR and Iffin Wood/ Little Iffin Wood LWS.
- Blocks of ancient woodland.
- Poplar shelterbelts and some orchards, remnant of traditional farming practices.
- Modern, densely populated housing at Shalmsford Street.
- Encompassing part of the Garlinge Green, Kenfield and Swarling Conservation Area and part of the Mystole Park Conservation Area, providing a rural setting to the historic buildings including Oasthouses and cottages.
- Narrow hedge lined lanes.
- Long panoramic views across the Kent Downs AONB which lies immediately adjacent to the south.
- Crossed by the Stour Valley Walk Long Distance Footpath in the west.

Natural Influences

Beneath the chalk slopes, the drift geology comprises ribbons of Dry Valley and Nailbourne Deposits. Soils are silty and land is used predominantly for intensive arable agriculture. Small scale soft fruit farming remains in places, and linear poplar shelterbelts enclose fields in parts, remnant of more extensive fruit farming practices. Some small pockets of pasture used for horse grazing are located around Hillside Farm and Chartham View Farm.

Tree cover is significant in the form of mixed woodland blocks and mature hedgerows. Beech is a common species throughout the woodland and hedgerows, with some chestnut coppice. Iffin Wood, located on higher ground to the east, supports a strong proportion of coniferous species.

Larkey Valley Wood SSSI and LNR occupies the northern 'finger' of the LCA. The woodland is dominated by ash-maple coppice (including actively coppiced areas) which grades into beech high forest on the thin calcareous soils on the upper slopes, with hornbeam coppice on the deeper soils of the valley bottom. The varied ground flora supports many uncommon plants and the site is important for breeding birds, invertebrates, and mammals. The woodland is also defined as ancient. Although the woodland itself is managed to high ecological standards, there have been some conflicts of interest in the past in respect of the use of the site, which has evidently led to some damage occurring affecting the landscape setting to the periphery of the site to the south and west. This has included the destruction of chalk grassland to the west.

In the east of the LCA, Iffin Wood and Little Iffin Wood LWS comprises ancient and secondary broadleaved woodland,

mostly converted to chestnut coppice, but including some areas of hornbeam, hazel, and ash coppice. Oak standards occur throughout, and the site supports a good variety of plants and birds. Ancient woodland sites are also found at Rabbit Wood and Long and Oakfield Shaws.

Bands of priority habitat deciduous woodland are also found on the fringes of development in the south of the LCA.

In the west, the Shalmsford slopes are absent of woodland blocks, although tree cover is apparent in the form of native hedgerows which line the narrow roads, and mature vegetation around properties. The silty soils are intensively farmed, with hedgerow loss contributing to expansive and irregularly shaped open arable fields. Some smaller scale pockets of pasture are located around Underdown Farm to the south, providing a localised but more intimate character.

Cultural Influences

The Kent HLC indicates that, outside of the woodland blocks, the landscape comprises three main types of enclosure – medium, regular straight-edged Parliamentary enclosures upon the majority of the Chartham Slopes, large-scale prairie fields in the east created following extensive field boundary loss (from the 19th century) and rectilinear late-Medieval to 17th / 18th century enclosure upon the Shalmsford slopes in the west. Around Upper Horton Farm are areas of orchards/fruit growing.

Settlement within Shalmsford Street (forming the south-eastern section of Chartham) extends into the LCA and is predominantly modern, including across the former St. Augustine hospital site. An avenue of mature beech trees, characteristic of the area, forms a dominant feature to the north of the high-density housing area, although some amenity

land comprising a cricket ground and playing field provide a localised but suburban character.

Several traditional farmsteads are scattered across the area, linked by minor tracks, promoting the rural and predominantly undeveloped character of the landscape. Only a few roads cross the LCA, although Chartham Downs Road to the south provides a historic route which follows the contours of the Downs.

A distinctively narrow and tree lined road (New House Lane) runs against the steep contours in a north south direction west of Iffin Wood. To the west of this road, Little Iffin Wood forms the northern edge of the Garlinge Green, Kenfield and Swarling Conservation Area, which extends south into the Kent Downs AONB. Within Iffin Wood itself are two prehistoric bowl barrows, both designated as Scheduled Monuments. In the west, the northern edge of Mystole Park Conservation Area extends into the LCA, containing three Grade II listed buildings (two cottages and oasthouses), situated along Mystole Lane.

Perceptual Influences

Overall, this LCA forms a strong relationship and continuation with the adjacent Kent Downs AONB, through its dominant landform providing a strong downland character and high visibility. However, a loss of hedgerows and historic field pattern is evident, given that much of the land has been converted to arable use. This agricultural intensity is somewhat lessened by the small areas of pasture and

woodland blocks that are interspersed across the LCA. The woodland blocks and hedgerows also provide a sense of enclosure and a strong landscape framework, although post and wire fencing has replaced some hedgerows resulting in a loss of the historic field pattern.

As the landform ascends northwards (reaching 100m AOD in the east), extensive panoramic views look to the south across the Kent Downs AONB, and are made more apparent by the open arable land use. Although relatively few in number, PRoWs typically run in a north-south alignment and therefore views are afforded from these routes. Elevated views also look to the west across the Stour Valley. The Stour Valley Walk Long Distance Footpath briefly crosses the landscape in the west.

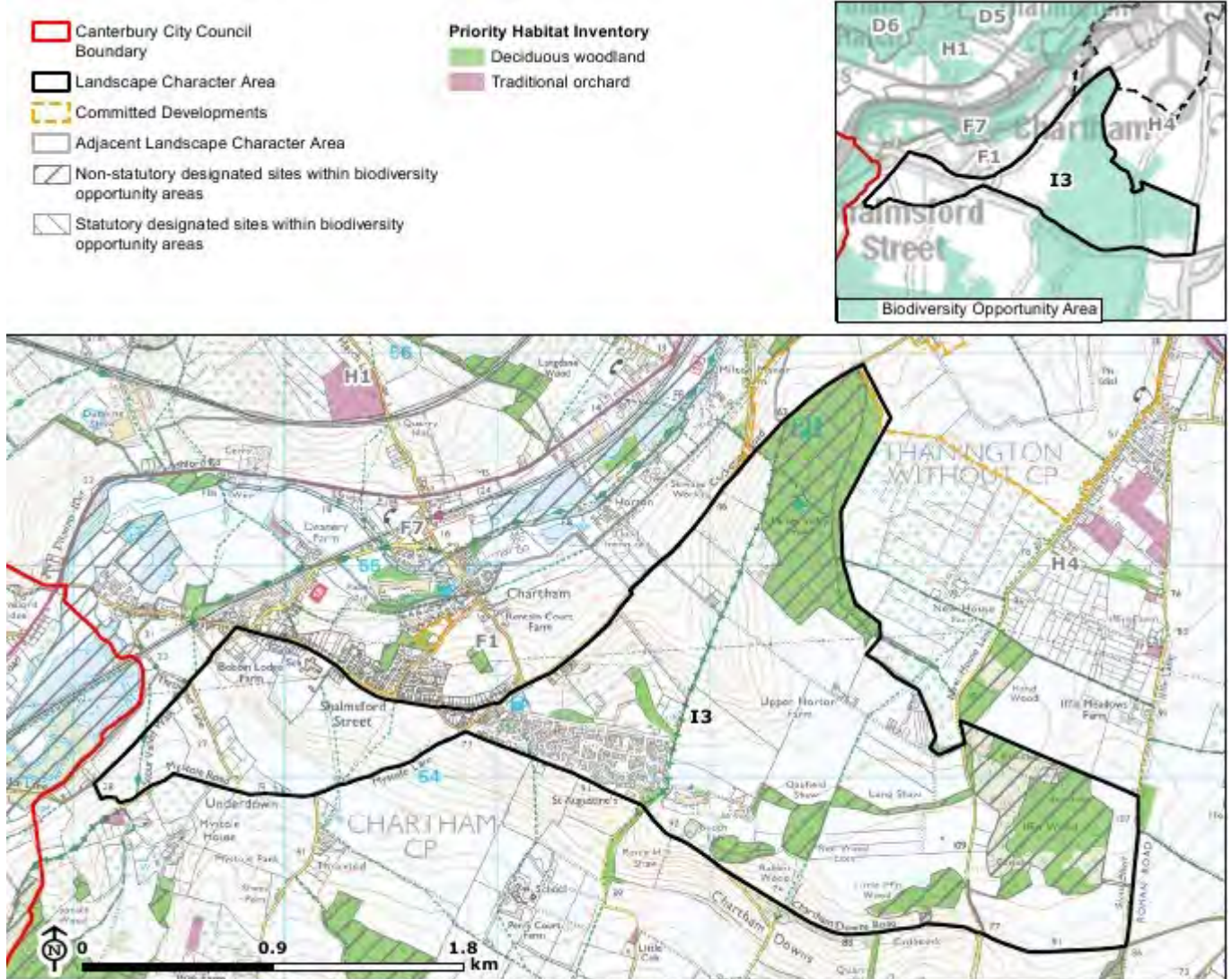
There are few visual detractors across the landscape; limited to the modern high-density housing within Shalmsford Street, large agricultural barns, pylons, and horse paddocks. The modern development at Shalmsford Street contrasts with the settlement found within the AONB to the south, including the traditional clustered settlement at Underdown to the south-west, where properties are traditional and isolated (including oasthouses and the use of Kent peg tiling). The impact of this development is localised and therefore not extensive. The few roads that cross the LCA provide some aural intrusion, particularly along busier routes such as Shalmsford Street and Cockerling Road (along the north-western boundary) which have been widened to accommodate the volume of traffic through Chartham

Evaluation

Key Sensitivities and Values

- Strongly undulating and coherent chalk arable landscape forming the dip slope to the Kent Downs.
- Strong landscape framework provided by intact hedgerows connecting with characteristic beech avenues and woodlands (deciduous woodlands defined as priority habitats).
- Designated woodland and coppice habitats at Larkey Valley Woods SSSI/LNR and Iffin Wood/ Little Iffin Wood LWS, along with areas of ancient woodland at Rabbit Wood and Long/Oakfield Shaws.
- The remaining network of hedgerows forming strong patterns of Parliamentary and late-Medieval fields around areas of intensive arable and horticulture production, which provide landscape and biodiversity value.
- Areas continuing with traditional agricultural practices (including priority habitat orchards) that are under threat from arable conversion.
- The landscape's role as a setting to the northern edge of the Kent Downs AONB and the Garlinge Green, Kenfield and Swarling Conservation Area and the Mystole Park Conservation Area.
- Traditional farmsteads connected by minor trackways, contributing towards the rural character.
- Prehistoric bowl barrows (Scheduled Monuments) within Iffin Wood.
- Rural and historic route of Chartham Downs Road.
- Panoramic elevated views that look across the AONB to the south, including from along PRoWs.
- Pockets of quiet/tranquil landscape in the north and east, away from developed areas.

Biodiversity Appraisal



Aim: To protect and enhance ancient woodland and to create chalk, neutral and acid grassland as part of the wider network of these habitats within the East Kent Woodlands & Downs BOA.

The LCA lies within the East Kent Woodlands & Downs BOA, which sets out the following key relevant targets:

- Chalk grassland creation where this would contribute to the county-wide target.
- Enhance or reinstate woodland management and restore plantations on ancient woodland sites to native woodland, particularly where this would contribute to conservation of woodland butterflies. Extend and reconnect fragmented woodlands where this would not conflict with grassland conservation and enhancement.

- To create species-rich neutral grassland where this would contribute to the countywide target and bring it to priority habitat Lowland Meadow quality.
- To create acid grassland where this would contribute to the county-wide target and bring it to priority habitat lowland acid grassland quality.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include arable and horticulture, improved grassland, broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland and built up areas. The east of the LCA contains habitats of key importance in the form of deciduous ancient woodland, which is listed as a priority habitat.

Guidance

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

Landscape Management

- Conserve and manage the woodland blocks and belts (including the characteristic beech avenues) and seek to replace non-native species with native trees. Seek to link up the network of existing woodlands to strengthen habitat connectivity.
- Increase the extent of native deciduous woodland, using locally occurring native species in order to link to existing woodland. Seek to avoid the introduction of coniferous boundaries/shelterbelts.
- Protect the landscape's valued semi-natural habitats including ancient woodland at Larkey Valley Woods SSSI/LNR and Iffin Wood/ Little Iffin Wood LWS, Rabbit Wood and Long/Oakfield Shaws, seeking to reconnect with other fragments of this habitat. Physical access into Larkey Valley Woods SSSI should be minimised to avoid an increase in visitor numbers.
- Seek to enhance the arable landscape through management along margins for biodiversity and conserve remaining areas of pasture.
- Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA including the creation of fertile soils woodland, chalk scarp woodland, chalk grassland, neutral grassland and acid grassland and heath where appropriate.
- Conserve and improve the traditional landscape pattern and structure, as well as increasing biodiversity interest through the establishment and maintenance of hedgerows along roadsides and along historic field boundaries. Enhance and augment fragmented field boundary hedgerows with native species, replacing post and wire fencing where possible.
- Conserve and enhance historic field patterns and features including the prehistoric bowl barrows within Iffin Wood.
- Conserve old orchards and their landscape and biodiversity value.

Development Management

- Conserve the rural setting to the Garlinge Green, Kenfield and Swarling Conservation Area and the Mystole Park Conservation Area, respecting the character of historic built form along Mystole Lane.
- Protect the remnants of prehistoric bowl barrows within Iffin Wood including appropriate vegetation management.
- Conserve the undeveloped character and tranquillity of the landscape by avoiding the introduction of large scale or incongruous elements. Any proposals to upgrade the road network should retain the rural character of the roads, including the historic route of Chartham Downs Road.
- Retain uninterrupted long-distance panoramic views across the AONB to the south and views from the AONB towards this LCA by avoiding any development in prominent locations such as on higher ground including large scale farm buildings.
- Promote enhanced management of horse paddocks, ensuring they are sympathetically integrated into the landscape.

Seek to integrate visually prominent development including large agricultural buildings within the landscape through appropriate screening planting.

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms



Appendix A

Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum (sea level).
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – a statutory national landscape designation.
BAP	UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species and habitats were identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK BAP. The original lists of UK BAP priority habitats were created between 1995 and 1999 and were subsequently updated in 2007. See http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5155 for further information.
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
HLC	Historic Landscape Characterisation
LCA	Landscape character area. A unique geographic area with a consistent character and identity, which forms part of a landscape character type.
LCT	Landscape character type. A generic term for landscape with a consistent, homogeneous character. Landscape character types may occur in different parts of the county, but wherever they occur, they will share common combinations of geology, topography, vegetation or human influences.
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
NCA	National Character Areas - defined within the <i>National Character Area Study, Natural England (2013)</i> - NCAs divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, history, and cultural and economic activity.
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NNR	National Nature Reserve
OS	Ordnance Survey
SAC	Special Area of Conservation (EC Directive 92/43/EEC Habitats Directive)
SANGS	Suitable Alternative Green Space
SPA	Special Protection Area (EC Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds)
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest

A large, leafy tree with a thick trunk stands in the foreground on the left side of the image. The tree's canopy is dense and green, with some yellowing leaves visible. The background shows a wide, flat field of brown, tilled earth, likely a plowed field. In the distance, there are rolling hills and a line of trees under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. A semi-transparent white box is overlaid on the upper right portion of the image, containing the title text.

Appendix B: Landscape Classification Changes

Appendix B

Landscape Classification Changes

Old LCT / LCA Name ¹⁵	Notes	New LCT / LCA Name ¹⁶
Coastal Landscapes		A: Open Coastal Edge
1: Beltinge Coast	Extended to the east to include Reculver Towers/ruins as the Country Park contributes towards its setting so both to be in the same LCA	A1: Beltinge Coast
2: Swalecliffe Coast	No change	A2: Swalecliffe Coast
Marshland Landscapes	Name change to indicate covers both coastal and inland marshes	B: Coastal and Inland Marshes
3: Chislet Arable Belt	Merged 3 and 7 as both are marshland with no discernible difference between areas. No influence from the coast in both areas.	B1: Chislet Marshes and Snake Drove
4: Nethergong Sarre Penn Inlet	No change	B2: Nethergong Sarre Penn Inlet
5: Seasalter Marshes	Name change to reflect coastal influence.	B3: Seasalter Coastal Marshes
6: Shelvingford Inlet	Merged 6 and 12 as very small area - both form part of a distinctive valley	N/A
7: Snake Drove Pastures	Merged 3 and 7 as both are marshland with no discernible difference between areas. No influence from the coast in both areas.	N/A
8: Reculver Coastal Marshes	Boundary change to reflect changed boundaries of A1	B4: Reculver Coastal Marshes
Urban Areas	Name change as urban suggests that areas are very built up	C: Coastal Hinterland
9: Chestfield Gap	Merged 9 and 13 due to extent of committed development	C1: Chestfield Gap and Greenhill
10: Chestfield Wooded Farmland	changed name as not wooded	C2: Chestfield Farmland
11: Court Lees and Millstrood Farmlands	No change	C3: Court Lees and Millstrood Farmlands
12: Ford and Maypole Mixed Farmlands	Merged with 6 as very small area - both form part of a distinctive valley	C4: Ford and Maypole Mixed Farmlands

¹⁵ As set out in: Jacobs (2012) *Canterbury Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal (Draft)*

¹⁶ As set out in: LUC (2020) *Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal*

Appendix B
Landscape Classification Changes

Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity
Appraisal
October 2020

Old LCT / LCA Name ¹⁵	Notes	New LCT / LCA Name ¹⁶
13: Greenhill and Eddington Fringe	Merged 9 and 13 due to extent of committed development	N/A
14: Herne Common	Moved to be part of The Blean - Farmland	N/A
15: Hillborough Arable Farmlands	No change	C5: Hillborough Arable Farmlands
16: Wraik Hill	No change	C6: Wraik Hill
17: Yorkletts Farmlands	Moved into Coastal Hinterlands LCT from Blean as more typical of farmlands	C7: Yorkletts Farmlands
The Blean	Name change to indicate the wooded character	D: The Blean – Woodland
17: Yorkletts Farmlands	Moved into Coastal Hinterlands LCT from Blean as more typical of farmlands	N/A
18: Blean Woods: Harbledown	No change	D1: Harbledown
19: Blean Woods: Thornden	No change	D2: Thornden
20: Blean Woods: Yorkletts	Merged 20 and 24 as Victory Woods has been planted as woodland and Clay Hill is a very small area (D3)	D3: Ellenden and Victory Woods
21: Blean Woods: East	No change	D4: East Blean
22: Blean Woods: Bigbury Hill	No change	D5: Bigbury Hill
23: Blean Woods: Denstead Woods	No change	D6: Denstead Woods
24: Clay Hill	Merged 20 and 24 as Victory Woods has been planted as woodland and Clay Hill is a very small area (D3)	N/A
N/A	New LCT created LCA 25, 36 and 14 moved to this LCT as farmland is closely linked to the Blean woods.	E: The Blean – Farmland
14: Herne Common	Moved from Coastal Hinterland Type	E1: Herne Common
25: Broad Oak Valley	Includes strip of pasture which forms part of the Little Hall and Kemberland Woods and Pasture LWS. Name change as Broad Oak relates to the area to the south and Sarre Pen is the valley.	E2: Sarre Penn Valley
36: Blean Farmlands	Moved from Central Mixed Farmland Type	E3: Amery Court Farmland
Valley Side	Valley sides and valleys LCTs merged into one type as they are better suited together.	F: River Valleys
25: Broad Oak Valley	Moved to The Blean - Farmland LCT	N/A

Appendix B
Landscape Classification Changes

Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity
Appraisal
October 2020

Old LCT / LCA Name ¹⁵	Notes	New LCT / LCA Name ¹⁶
26: Shalmsford Slopes	Merged 26 and 48 as both are part of the downland LLD and have similar characteristics.	N/A
27: Stour Valley Sides	Extended to include the slope west of Cockering Road which forms part of the valley side	F1: Stour Valley Sides
28: Stour Valley Slopes	No change	F2: Stour Valley Slopes
29: Stour Valley Slopes: Westbere	Changed name due to the prominence of Hersden on the ridge	F3: Hersden Ridge
30: Stodmarsh Ridge	No change	F4: Stodmarsh Ridge
VALLEY	'Valley Sides' and 'Valleys' LCTs merged into one type as they are better suited together.	Forms part of F: River Valleys
31: Little Stour Valley	No change	F5: Little Stour Valley
32: Stour Valley: Chartham	Merge 32 and 34 as both consist of a flat river valley with grazing fields/recreation and former gravel pits.	N/A
33: Stour Valley: Sturry and Fordwich	No change	F6: Stour Valley – Sturry and Fordwich
34: Stour Valley: Wincheap and Thanington	Merge 32 and 34 as both consist of a flat river valley with grazing fields/recreation and former gravel pits.	F7: Stour Valley West
35: Westbere and Stodmarsh Valley	No change	F8: Westbere and Stodmarsh Valley
N/A	New LCT created	G: Stour Valley Woodlands
42: Old Park	Moved from Central Mixed Farmland Type	G1: Old Park
44: Trenley Park Woodlands	Moved from Central Mixed Farmland Type	G2: Trenley Park Woodlands
Central Mixed Farmlands		H: Central Mixed Farmlands
36: Blean Farmlands	Moved to The Blean - Farmland LCT	N/A
37: Harbledown Fruit Belt	No change	H1: Harbledown Fruit Belt
38: Hoath Farmlands	Exclude strip of pasture which forms part of the Little Hall and Kemberland Woods and Pasture LWS	H2: Hoath Farmlands
39: Ickham Farmlands	No change	H3: Ickham Farmlands
40: Nackington Farmlands	Extended to the railway and in north-west to include arable land and committed development (from 43).	H4: Nackington Farmlands
41: Nailbourne Parklands	No change	H5: Nailbourne Parklands
42: Old Park	Moved to Stour Valley Woodlands LCT	N/A

Appendix B
 Landscape Classification Changes
 Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity
 Appraisal
 October 2020

Old LCT / LCA Name ¹⁵	Notes	New LCT / LCA Name ¹⁶
43: South Canterbury and Littlebourne Fruit Belt	Name changed to reflect changes to boundary.	H6: Littlebourne Fruit Belt
44: Trenley Park Woodlands	Moved to Stour Valley Woodlands LCT	N/A
45: Wickhambreaux Horticultural Belt	No change	H7: Wickhambreaux Horticultural Belt
Downland		I: Downland
46: Adisham Arable Downland	No change	I1: Adisham Arable Downland
47: Bramling Downland	No change	I2: Bramling Downland
48: Chartham Downland	Merged 26 and 48 as both are part of the downland LLD and have similar characteristics. Name change to reflect boundary change.	I3: Chartham and Shalmsford Downland

Appendix C: Biodiversity Appraisal Method



Appendix C

Biodiversity Appraisal Method

Habitat Networks

C.1 A review of ecological data sources was undertaken to identify the presence of statutory and non-statutory designated sites, priority habitats, biodiversity opportunity areas (BOA) and habitat opportunity areas within Canterbury District Boundary. This comprised a data search of the following sources, including:

- Kent Landscape Information Systems (KLIS)¹⁷
- Kent Biodiversity Strategy and Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA)¹⁸
- Green Infrastructure Strategy¹⁹
- Kent Living Landscapes²⁰
- Kent Wildlife Trust²¹
- MAGIC Map database²²
- Aerial imagery and Ordnance Survey mapping.

C.2 A review of these data sources identified the following datasets as detailed below, which were mapped and used to identify existing ecological resources and strategic biodiversity networks.

Designated sites

C.3 Internationally, nationally and locally, important designated sites were identified within the Canterbury District. This included:

- Statutory sites:
 - Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
 - Special Protection Areas (SPA)
 - Ramsar sites
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
 - Local Nature Reserves (LNR).
- Non-statutory:
 - Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)
 - Roadside Verges.

¹⁷ <https://www.kent.gov.uk/waste-planning-and-land/kent-landscape-information-system>

¹⁸ <http://www.kentnature.org.uk/kent-biodiversity-strategy2.html>

¹⁹ Canterbury City Council, 2018, Canterbury District Green Infrastructure Strategy Supporting Document – Evidence Report

<https://news.canterbury.gov.uk/media/Green-Infrastructure-Strategy-Evidence-Report.pdf>

²⁰ As detailed in Appendix A of Canterbury City Council and Jacobs, 2012, Draft Canterbury Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal

²¹ <https://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/>

²² <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

C.4 Reference should be made to **Figure 3.5** for the map of designated sites.

Kent Habitat Survey 2012

C.5 This data sourced from KLIS is comprised of a Phase 1 Habitat survey, which was initially undertaken in 2003 and was updated in 2012 to inform the presence of natural and semi-natural habitats in Kent. The data from 2012 was incorporated into the assessment to understand the baseline conditions of each LCA.

Priority Habitat Inventory

C.6 A spatial dataset that describes the geographic extent and location of Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) Section 41 habitats of principal importance.

C.7 Key priority habitats considered in this assessment included:

- Coastal floodplain and grazing marsh
- Coastal saltmarsh
- Coastal vegetated shingle
- Deciduous woodland
- Good quality semi-improved grassland
- Lowland calcareous grassland
- Lowland dry acid grassland
- Lowland fens
- Lowland heathland
- Lowland meadows
- Maritime cliff and slope
- Mudflats
- Reedbeds
- Traditional orchard.

Ancient Woodland

C.8 This habitat type is irreplaceable and has potential to offer considerable biodiversity value and has been considered as part of the assessment. This has been included under non-statutory designated sites as part of the assessment.

Biodiversity Opportunity Areas

C.9 There are five biodiversity opportunity areas (BOA) within Canterbury District, which form the basis of the strategic habitat network and where Kent Biodiversity Strategy targets should be focussed to secure maximum biodiversity benefits and greatest gains from habitat enhancement, restoration and recreation can be made, as these areas offer the best opportunity for establishing large, well-connected network of habitat.

C.10 The key areas of the BOA were formed by statutory designated sites, which are protected and should therefore

already be in positive conservation management. For example, the majority of SSSI in the district are considered to be in a favourable condition and therefore are of key importance to the strategic habitat network.

C.11 Additional areas which are identified as of secondary importance are LWS and priority habitats, which are identified as important for biodiversity and may or may not be in positive nature conservation management. These should be brought into positive management and present opportunities for improving biodiversity, improving landscape connectivity and for increasing the area of respective habitat.

C.12 The remaining areas within the BOA present opportunities for habitat creation, which could increase landscape connectivity and/or buffer existing habitats from degradation. Refer to Biodiversity Appraisal for each LCA for detail on the BOA identified during the assessment.

Habitat Opportunities

C.13 This data is sourced and has been developed by KLIS from field-level information on the current distribution of habitats in Kent, the distribution of protected areas and areas under agri-environment schemes. Ecological rules defined by KLIS have been used to identify the best opportunities for habitat creation. The rules are aimed at increasing valuable habitats within Kent and reducing the effects of fragmentation across the landscape.

Committed sites

C.14 This provides detail on the location of proposed housing and employment allocations in the adopted Local Plan.

Limitations and Constraints

C.15 This is high level assessment of existing habitats resources and strategic habitat network opportunities at the broad landscape scale for each LCA. A detailed ground assessment would be required to ensure that recommendations are deliverable, and that the data used accurately reflects the ground conditions.

C.16 This assessment highlights key opportunities within the strategic habitat network of the BOA. However, this does not take into account small fragmented, isolated habitats, which lie outside of the strategic habitat network and are of key ecological value, such as designated sites, priority habitats and ancient woodland. Where possible, this assessment highlights the need to strengthen habitat connectivity between the strategic habitat network and habitats of key ecological value outside of the network.

Appendix D: Conservation Areas



Appendix D

Conservation Areas

Adisham

D.1 The rich heritage and importance of this area is recognised by the numerous Conservation Areas which have been designated. These are scattered across the district, mostly centred around small settlements.

D.2 Adisham is a linear settlement situated along the bottom of a chalk valley under the Downs. The north end of the village is the most interesting, both historically and visually. Here there are a collection of older buildings with the parish church and Adisham Court set on the hill among trees. The street undulates gently from north to south and there are several bends which add interest to the views up and down the road. The meadows and hedgerows behind the houses form quite a strong visual link to the southern end of the Street, producing an attractive landscape setting. The Lindens is set in a mature garden with some fine trees. Oxenden Wood, which forms the backdrop to the southern end of the village, is a SSSI.

Amery Court

D.3 The Amery Court Conservation Area lies to the north east of Blean in what was originally a clearing in the forest. Much of the forest has now been felled and the landscape is fairly flat and open. However, the original field pattern has survived together with most of the boundary hedges and ditches. Many of the hedges are well grown with mature trees and contain a good range of indigenous species although there are some examples of recent hedge planting with single species, mainly poplars. These hedged meadows form an important part of the setting of the hamlet. A wedge of orchard and arable land runs south eastwards from Amery Court and is enclosed by two very ancient tracks, a salt track and a drove. Amery Court was the Court of the almonry land of Christchurch in The Blean and derived its name from this connection. The original court or sub-manor has gone but the moat still survives adjacent to the present house which is a fine red brick building with wooden eaves cornice and tiled roof dating from the 18th century (listed Grade II). The house is set in a fine site with many mature trees. The granary, a weatherboarded building with a tiled roof, is of similar age and is locally listed. Cutballs Farm (renamed Arbele) occupies a very old site. Its name is derived from the Cotebold family who farmed here during the 13th and 14th centuries. The present house is largely 15th and 16th century in origin of timber-framed construction with later additions. The traditional local

building materials are red stock bricks and clay tiles. The older buildings were timber framed and there are quite a few examples of painted or tarred weatherboarding and some slate roofs within the vicinity.

Bekesbourne

D.4 The Conservation Area is centred around the Old Palace, a house built by Robert Packham in the late 18th century (Grade II and a Scheduled Ancient Monument). Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1535-1554, built a palace here in 1552, which was enlarged by Archbishop Matthew Parker later in the 16th century. This was demolished during the Civil War and only the gatehouse remains which is now a cottage adjoining the house. (The gatehouse is Grade II). The Church of St. Peter is Grade I and is built of flint with stone dressings. The nave and tower are 12th century, the chancel 13th century. The round-arched doorway is Norman with zig-zag mouldings. The transept dated 1715 has the south wall faced with mathematical tiles. The building was much restored in 1881-90. The churchyard contains some interesting 18th century skull, cherub, hourglass and spade headstones, chest tombs and oval bodystones. Cobham Court dates from the late-Medieval period and was a court house of the manor. Bekesbourne was a limb of the Cinque Ports and the Court of the Deputy Mayor of Hastings took place here in a large panelled room. Originally L-shaped of two storeys in red brick with tiled roof the earlier portion of the house was extended in the early 19th century. The brick bridge spanning the Nailbourne just south of the Church is dated 1776 and carries an inscription now indecipherable. The Old Vicarage in School Lane is dated 1729 but appears later in style. Of red brick with grey headers it has a doorcase with flinted pilasters. Parsonage Farmhouse is a 16th century or earlier timber-framed building.

D.5 The conservation area was extended in 1994 to include the landscape setting particularly the tree-covered railway embankment which forms a natural northern limit and the former small park to the Old Palace links Bekesbourne to Patricxbourne with the Nailbourne flowing along its eastern edge.

Bekesbourne Hill and Woolton Farm

D.6 This area includes Woolton Farmhouse and, to the south, an attractive house and gardens called Mudhole. Woolton Farmhouse is timber framed, refaced in red brick dating from the 17th century or earlier. It is surrounded by ornamental grounds which are included in Kent County Council's supplementary list of Historic Parks and Gardens 1985. There is a chain of ponds to the north and a small park to the south with further ponds. The modern farm buildings are unsympathetically designed but screened. At Bekesbourne Hill there is a pleasing group of buildings including Star Cottage,

dated 1728 and the Unicorn Public House. Some modern development west of the public house is less attractive but overall the area is considered to be of sufficient importance to be designated.

Bifrons Park

D.7 Bifrons Park lies to the south of Patricxbourne and, other than the northernmost section, lies within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Nailbourne runs through the park and the woodland along the ridge to the east is a very important landscape feature, which marks the eastern edge to the park. Despite the park being divided by the A2, but both halves are of considerable landscape value. It has many fine trees and forms an important part of the setting of the villages of Bridge and Patricxbourne.

Blean

D.8 The Blean Conservation Area is centred on the 13th Century Church of St Cosmus and St Damian. The church was at the centre of a Medieval settlement located on the site of a Roman-British Villa. Earthworks and hollows remain but this settlement was deserted in the 15th century, possibly as a result of the Black Death.

D.9 Areas of the Blean Forest were gradually cleared and colonised. However, until the 19th century development was limited to a series of 'clearances' creating arable farms. The Ecclesiastical landowners retained much of the Blean Woodland for economic purposes. The forest was divided into a series of 'dennes' (woodland pastures) and commons connected by a network of droves. This pattern remains with the droves now in the form of bridleways or roads. Blean Common was enclosed in the 19th century and in the late 19th and early 20th century was developed to form the modern village.

D.10 There are a number of interesting buildings along Blean Hill mostly on the east side. Tyler Hill Road, a drove, runs along the top of the ridge to the north of the Church. This is mainly hedge and tree lined with pastures and the recreation ground to the north. At the western end of the road are a scattering of houses several of which are of some interest. The former Vicarage is situated within an attractive garden containing many fine, mature trees. The character of School Lane has changed since the land to the west was developed but the properties on the eastern side are of considerable interest, some being listed or locally listed. The new buildings within this area are mainly neutral in character.

Blooden

D.11 The hamlet of Blooden is set on a ridge to the east of Adisham and contains several buildings of interest, including Megetts Cottage, a small thatched building with a 18th century

thatched barn. The buildings are interlinked by paddocks, gardens, hedges and small trees. There are interesting views of the village from Cooting Lane.

Bossington

D.12 Bossington, north of Adisham, is an attractive hamlet situated on a gentle slope with a string of older, listed properties and 19th century cottages and farm buildings, linked trees, hedgerows and meadows. Great Bossington Farmhouse dates from 17th century, Bossington house is 18th century and Little Bossington farmhouse is 17th century. There are several modern farm buildings which form a fairly obtrusive group on the hillside, however as part of the wider landscape which has extensive views, the impact is very modest.

Bourne Park

D.13 Bourne Park House is a brick built, two storey, Grade 1 listed building set in the wide valley of the Nailbourne. The extensive parkland stretches up to the skyline on both sides of the valley, with many specimen trees, clumps and belts of woodland. Although once a formal parkland, the park is now mainly meadow. Redhill Wood and Warren Wood define the western boundary, which is naturally continued northwards with the tree-clad former railway embankment running northwards towards Canterbury.

Boyden Gate

D.14 Boyden Gate is one of the larger settlements in the Chislet Parish. It is on what would have been the western bank of the Wantsum Channel (that used to run between Kent and the Isle of Thanet) in earlier times and now sits along the western edge of the plain that is the Chislet Marshes. The hamlet still contains a large number of ponds, ditches and waterways, which are probably some of the remains of the early ditch system used to drain the Wantsum Channel. The most prominent of these is North Stream.

D.15 The Conservation Area consists of a collection of larger homes and farm buildings, centred around the public house and the church. The built form is generally larger detached homes and semi-detached cottages, 10 of which are listed. Of particular note is the collection of 17th century barns and the Farmhouse at Home Farm, all Grade II listed, Endeavour and Kosi Kot a pair of 18th century cottages, Shersby Cottage and Boyden Gate House.

D.16 The hamlet has a slightly more urban feel than some of the other settlements in this parish with a small amount of footpaths. However, this is softened by the large number of hedgerows and trees that make a major contribution to the character of the area.

Bramling

D.17 Bramling is a hamlet lying on the eastern edge of the study area on the main road from Canterbury to Sandwich. Bramling House occupies the site of a former residence built in the 1700's. The present house was built in 1869 by a wealthy local banking family and is set within a modest park created in the 19th century.

D.18 Bramling Court Farmhouse dates from the 17th century and the tarred weatherboarded stables are late 18th century. The Haywain Public House dates from the early to mid-19th century. There are also a number of cottages within the hamlet mostly dating from the 17th and 18th centuries.

Broomfield

D.19 Broomfield is centred around a pond. The properties mostly date from the 18th and 19th century, although the original part of Parsonage Farmhouse and a long aisled barn north of the house were built in about 1650. Most notably the Conservation Area contains the Huntsman and Horn Public House (circa 1800), Pond Cottages (end 18th century), Goldfinch Farm (18th century), Broomfield House and Spicers House (both early 19th century). Other notable buildings include Hoopers Farmhouse, Rose Cottage and Chapel Cottages. Traditional building materials include red and brown brick, render and some weatherboarding with clay roofing tiles and slates.

Canterbury and Whitstable Railway (Hackington and Blean) Conservation Area

D.20 The Canterbury and Whitstable Railway, known locally as 'The Crab and Winkle', was the first passenger railway in the south of England and the first in Great Britain to regularly carry fare paying passengers in trains hauled by steam power.

D.21 The railway opened on 3 May 1830 and closed to goods traffic on 29 November 1952, having ceased to carry passengers in December 1931. In more recent times much of the existing track bed through the Conservation Area has

D.22 become part of the 'Crab and Winkle Way' cycle path, a new use that helps preserve the course by allowing public access.

D.23 The conservation area is one of five that follow the line of this historic railway between Canterbury and Whitstable. The others being The Canterbury and Whitstable Railway and Whitstable Station Conservation Area, The Canterbury and Whitstable Railway (St Stephen's) Conservation Area, The Canterbury and Whitstable Railway (Hackington) Conservation Area and The Canterbury (West Station) Conservation Area.

D.24 The southern end of the conservation area includes the northern tunnel portal in a tree lined cutting, below the hilltop campus of the University of Kent at Canterbury. Heading north, the track bed gradually comes out onto an embankment that crosses the Sarre Penn Stream. The conservation area follows the course of the line on an easy gradient northwards and abuts the south west boundary of the Tyler Hill Conservation Area. The views on either side are across cultivated fields, orchards and pastures to distant woods in the gently undulating countryside.

D.25 The summit of the line is within Clowes Wood which has a mixture of dense woodland, more open woodland and some areas of scrub. Oaks predominate with strands of Scots pine and spruce with a scattering of other species including yew and birch. The conservation area boundary includes the circular pond for the winding engine that once stood here. The attractive grassy clearing around the pond is used as a picnic area associated with the cycle path. Continuing northwards, the conservation area follows the course of the railway out of the wood on a steep descent and onto a tree covered embankment that crosses a small bridge, beneath which, runs a farm track. A little way beyond this point, evidence of the railway ends abruptly, obliterated by agricultural works and the Thanet Way. This marks the northern end of the conservation area.

Chartham

D.26 Chartham is a downland parish situated within a loop of the Great Stour. The main settlement with the Parish Church and the Green lies just to the north of the river.

D.27 The name Chartham probably means a settlement in rough pasture. The village was a manor in 970 and Saxon and Roman relics have been found in barrows and tumuli in the area. The paper mill was established on the river in the 17th century becoming an important industry. The Church of St. Mary was built between 1285 and circa 1305 except for the tower which is late 14th century. The Kentish tracery to the windows is particularly fine. De L'Angle House dates from the early 18th century and is thought to have been built by John Maximilien de L'Angle, a Huguenot refugee and Rector of Chartham between 1696 and 1724. The house has a round headed niche containing a half-length stone statue of Charles II which originally stood in the garden. Other notable properties around the Green include Bedford House, a 16th century or earlier timber-framed building, The Forge, a 18th century two-storey red brick house with attics, and The Old Kings Head, 16th century or earlier and timber-framed refaced with brick and tile. The majority of buildings around the village green are listed or are of local architectural interest. At Rattington Street there is a fine group of historic buildings including The Artichoke Inn, a late 15th century timber-framed

building and Rentain Farmhouse, an 18th century red brick building of two stories with attics.

D.28 The conservation area covers a wide diversity of features including the water meadows contained within the spacious loop of the A28 Ashford Road, the agricultural landscape to the south of the meadows, the open development around the green and the Parish Church, the compact settlement at Rattington Street, the linear development at Shalmsford Street and the tree-topped downland which forms a backdrop to the south. Trees are a special feature of the riverside meadows and there are other important groups at Deanery Farm, around the paper mill and along the top of the ridge to the south. The hop-garden at Deanery Farm is the last survivor of a once-common crop. There is a considerable contrast between the flat landscape alongside the river at the northern edge of the conservation area and the downland at the southern edge.

Chestfield

D.29 Chestfield is located 2.5 km to the south east of Whitstable between the old Thanet way to the north and the new Thanet way to the south. The irregular shape of the conservation area is determined by the historic road structure and open spaces. Originally developed as low-density suburb, only 10% of the built urban form is actual buildings, which gives a general indication of how much of the area is set aside for the landscape setting. The overall character of the area is of a 'leafy' verdant suburb set in a relatively flat topography.

Chislet and Chitty

D.30 The Chislet Conservation Area is centred on the St Mary's Church (Listed Grade I), Chislet Court and Oasts. St Mary's includes a Norman nave and tower and is set in attractive grounds surrounded by mature trees. Chislet Court is a substantial home probably built by Thomas Jones in the 18th century. The school dating from 1864, the cemetery and model farm buildings at Chislet Court are also important features. Chislet is located on a wide flat plateau on the western edge of the Wantsum Channel. There are also many mature trees, which make an important contribution to the landscape setting of the area.

D.31 Chitty Lane is a hamlet to the east of Chislet and contains four listed buildings together with significant trees and landscaping. The boundary includes the Farm Cottages, Chitty Farm and Homleigh, the Old School House, Invicta Cottages and Lower Chitty Farm, together with the trees and orchards and is linked to Chislet via Chitty Lane and its hedgerows.

D.32 The landscape importance of Chislet and Chitty is their location on the edge of the Chislet marshes marking the edge of the Wantsum Channel. The hamlets nestle amongst many

mature trees and hedgerows, particularly those around Lower Chitty Farm, making a prominent and very attractive contribution to the landscape. The principle landmark is St Mary's, which can be seen from miles around.

Cooting

D.33 At Cooting to the south east of Adisham is Cooting Farmhouse dated 1837. It is set in a large garden with mature trees. Cooting Farm Cottages have a 19th century exterior and are surrounded by trees, which acts as a screen and provides an attractive visual part of the landscape in this area.

Court Lees Manor

D.34 The name Court Lees was recorded over 400 years ago. The estate came into the hands of the Hyder family and William Hyder almost certainly built the present house in 1839.

D.35 Court Lees Manor is a square stuccoed two storey building with a slate roof. There is a small private garden with mature trees, shrubs and lawns. The original small park is still intact and used mainly for grazing and partly for arable. Although some of the trees have been felled the perimeter tree belt is intact. The red brick farmhouse is of considerable interest, although the appearance of the farmyard has been spoiled by a range of large modern farm buildings.

D.36 Court Lees Manor features in Somerset Maugham's book 'Mrs Craddock', where it is called Court Ley. The author often stayed as a guest at Court Less Manor when he was a pupil at Kings School in Canterbury and describes the manor and its park in some detail in the book. He also mentions the house in other works.

Eddington

D.37 Eddington lies to the south of Herne Bay, approximately 1.5 kilometres from the seafront, with the Canterbury to Herne Bay road cutting through the middle of the conservation area. The old and new Thanet Ways run east-west at

D.38 the south of the conservation area, cutting the settlement off from its rural hinterland. The old Thanet Way cuts across the southern part of the conservation area forming a hard 'urban' feature and the new Thanet Way physically severs Eddington from its setting to the south. The new road is a major work of engineering and although in a cutting has a negative affect both visually and aurally. Views across to Underdown Lane are disrupted by a new development at St Augustine's Court, although the immediate setting of listed buildings remains relatively unchanged.

Elbridge House and Lampen Stream

D.39 The whole of this conservation area has an unspoiled rural atmosphere. The landscape is punctuated by hedgerows,

areas of woodland, shelterbelts and specimen trees. Much of this planting was designed to complement and set off Elbridge House and to improve the views from within the house. The woodland along the ridges to the north and south is very important. The conservation area includes the former park to Elbridge House, the ornamental grounds north of Elbridge farm and wooded areas to the north, south and west.

D.40 Elbridge Farmhouse is a 15th century, timber-framed hall house of Wealden Plan. The 18th century weatherboarded oasthouse with 19th century cylindrical red brick kilns and the 18th century weatherboarded granary on 16 saddle stones form an important group with the farmhouse. The house is listed Grade II and the farm buildings Grade II.

D.41 Lampen Stream creates interest along the valley floor. The small artificial lake created as part of The Elbridge House park provides a focus in the centre of the conservation area. There are particularly attractive views from the north- south road which dips into the valley and from Hollybush Lane and Swanton Lane across the valley.

D.42 The Lampen Stream leaves the Elbridge Conservation Area and flows through the valley between Stodmarsh Road and Hollybush Lane. An attractive belt of woodland runs along the southern bank of the stream as far as Burnt House Hill. The meadowland on the slopes within the suggested boundary is particularly fine. From this point onwards the land becomes more marshy and below Waterham cottage there are many willows. Waterham Cottage (Grade II) has a very attractive well-treed garden and Undertrees Farmhouse and a barn are attractive although unlisted. The land at this point is a nature reserve.

D.43 The conservation area is of particularly high scenic value and a large part of the streamside meadowland to the south of Stodmarsh is an important part of the setting to Stodmarsh Conservation Area. The trees within the valley are also particularly important.

Ford, Maypole and Oldtree

D.44 This conservation area includes the settlements of Ford, Maypole and Oldtree and their landscape setting. Ford is the site of the manor of Archbishop Morton which it is believed he constructed at the end of 15th century. It was an important residence for many years, and it is noted that Henry VIII was entertained here in 1544. A deer park of around 166 acres extended to the north of the house. Little now remains of the house and deer park except a barn, a number of standing walls, part of the old gateway and depressions marking the location of fishponds. Today a farm occupies the site and it is believed this was established soon after the principal residence was taken down. The park survived until the 19th century. There is also a group of historic buildings in Maypole Road. Designated surrounding land which contributes to the

setting of the settlements includes Beacon Wood and Shelving Wood, agricultural land and other features including a shave, pond, hedgerows and the stream that runs through Ford.

Garlinge Green, Kenfield and Swarling

D.45 This area, assisted with landscaping improvements and tree planting forms an attractive setting for Kenfield Hall, Swarling Manor and the hamlet of Garlinge Green. The park at Kenfield Hall contains many specimen trees and Walk Wood forms a natural boundary to the conservation area. Rabbit Bank Wood forms the northern boundary, but because Kenfield Hall is sited on rising ground, there are views towards Chartham Downs. Similarly there are views of Garlinge Green, Kenfield Hall and Swarling Manor. Both Kenfield Hall and Swarling Manor have attractive landscaped gardens.

Harbledown and Upper Harbledown

D.46 The Harbledown Conservation Area includes the village itself, Vernon Holme, its parkland and the orchards that probably formed part of the original 32 acre land holding purchased by Thomas Sydney Cooper. It also includes part of the North Downs Way and the lower slopes of Golden Hill. Hall Place to the north of the village and its park which forms part of the setting for the house and the village are also included.

D.47 The settlement of Upper Harbledown was originally a series of scattered farms and houses along Watling Street, centres loosely upon Harbledown Lodge and Park. Harbledown Lodge is a good quality large 19th century building, surrounded by a park which seems to be the site of an earlier house. The park contains many fine mature trees and Church Wood, Willow Wood and Homestall Wood form a natural background to both the park and the settlement as a whole.

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Hawe Farm

D.49 This conservation area protects the setting of Hawe Farm and its barn. The site was the house of Sir John Fyneux, Chief Justice of the Kings Bench in the reign of Henry VII. Fragmentary remains of his 15th century brick built house

remain, but the house was largely rebuilt in the 16th century. The large aisled barn adjoining is 18th century or earlier.

Herne

D.50 In the 18th century Herne was a principal settlement with Strode House as the main residence set within a landscaped park stretching southwards towards Herne Common. The conservation area includes the older parts of the village, Strode Park and its parkland, sections of the Common and the former Herne Hospital.

D.51 The main buildings within the conservation area are St. Martin's Church, Strode Park and the former Herne Hospital. The church is 14th century, constructed from flint and ragstone. Herne Hospital was formerly the Workhouse of the Blean Poor Law Union. It was erected in 1836 on Herne Common and served 16 neighbouring parishes, housing 420 inmates. In 1879 the Workhouse was extended with the construction of a hospital for 'infectious cases'. It is currently being redeveloped for housing.

D.52 Strode Park is a mid-19th century Italianate house set within formal gardens with a lodge and stable block. Its former parkland is now used partly as pasture where it retains its original character and partly as arable farmland. Most of the wooded areas and tree belts remain but many of the specimen trees have been lost. There are several ponds.

D.53 The conservation area includes parts of Herne Common to the south and east of Canterbury Road. Part of this area is a continuation of Strode Park and fragments of the Common remain.

Herne Windmill

D.54 This is a small area separate from the main conservation area of Herne and includes the Windmill and adjoining Mill House. The smock Windmill was built in 1781 and the house is of similar date. The Windmill has unfortunately been surrounded by bungalows and much of the setting has been eroded. The immediate surroundings, including the old dairy are of interest.

Highstead (Chislet)

D.55 This hamlet lies 1 1/2 miles north west of Chislet. The hamlet is strongly defined by the trees and hedgerows that enclose it. Among the buildings there are a number of mature trees and two ponds, which together make an attractive, prominent feature. It contains three listed buildings, Highstead Farmhouse, Walnut Tree Farmhouse and thatched Cottages. The most prominent of these is Highstead Farmhouse, which is probably a late-Medieval timber building with a 19th century brick exterior. Other attractive buildings include Bay Tree and

White Hall Cottage. The ponds, pasture, trees and hedgerows enhance the rural setting of this hamlet.

Hoath, Rushbourne and Tile Lodge

D.56 The Hoath, Rushbourne and Tile Lodge conservation area, located adjacent to what was the Roman road from Reculver to the city, includes the village of Hoath, together with the smaller settlements, or farmsteads, of Knave's Ash, Rushbourne Manor, Buckwell farm and Tile Lodge.

D.57 Hoath village is sited towards the edge of a gravel terrace below which London Clay beds drop south into the little valley of the Rushbourne Stream. At the foot of the clay, alluvial deposits follow the course of the stream and beyond these an expanse of fertile brickearth, topped by more clay and then again gravel, rises up to Clangate Wood. South from the wood, from Buckwell down to Tile Lodge Farm in the next valley, the sequence of gravel, clay, brick earth and alluvium is reversed.

D.58 Hoath village is largely developed along a single main street which divides around the school site at its north east end and off which there is one 'T' junction some two thirds of the way along its length on the south side. The street within the conservation area is the main focus of the village. There are no back lanes or serious cross routes, though there is a short alleyway running off at right angles on the north side.

D.59 Rushbourne Manor's site is concealed from the southern approaches and to a degree also from the north. It is on both sides of the main road, the section to the west completely hidden from public view by hedges and trees. The Manor House's setting to the south is the modern farmyard and beyond that the tree belt along the Rushbourne closes the view. On the north east a rather arbitrary modern fence line defines the extent of domestication there. Westward the house and front garden face across the road up the large arable field beyond. Views north east towards Hoath from the roadside north of Rushbourne Manor are entirely closed by the hedgerows and mature trees lining the road into Hoath and growing within the former Rectory garden.

D.60 The complex of buildings at Tile Lodge is partly surrounded by tree screening and hedges on two sides and is hidden by hedges and falling ground on a third, making it a visual 'surprise' element from whichever direction it is approached. This limited area including the screen planting can thus be said to be its landscape setting. The set back cottage on the right, a little up the hill from Tile Lodge Farm itself, forms part of the group. Tile Lodge Cottages over the road on the left have a wider visual backdrop that extends beyond the conservation area boundary and forms a good group with the bridge, the open space between, and the stream. Tile Lodge Farm's farmhouse and oasthouse with the open planted and landscaped space between them and the

road, and the adjacent garden areas and trees and hedges, are the site's character elements. This whole site, low in the valley of the Nethergong, is concealed from Hoath village to the north by rising ground crowned by Clangate Wood.

Hollow Street and Chislet Forstal

D.61 Hollow Street is a hamlet to the west of Chislet School. It contains the Hollow Street Cottages and Ivydene (a fine early 19th century house set in mature and attractive gardens) and the former vicarage which includes a screen of mature trees and planting. The group of buildings at Hollow Street form an attractive landscape group from a distance.

D.62 This settlement is highly visible across the agricultural plateau from both Hersden and Upstreet. There are prominent skyline trees at the top of Sandpit Hill and within the grounds of the Old Vicarage. These trees are very important for the setting of the important buildings at the top of Sandpit Hill.

D.63 Hollow Street and its hedgerows link Hollow Street and Chislet Forstal. Chislet Forstal is centred on the half-timbered, listed Tudor house, now known as Clayhanger Hall. The hall, dated 1440, is typical of a well-preserved Wealden timber framed house with large curved braces and exceptional internal features. A two-storied inserted bay in the centre is decorated with rustic scrollage and dated 1637. It is set in substantial grounds, which include a number of modern farm buildings and lines of Cypress trees. There are two other pleasant small farm buildings and a good 19th century house. There are also ponds, watercourses and other natural features of interest. Although presently surrounded by lines of cypress trees. The new farmhouse just to the north has a number of specimen trees growing in the gardens and is bounded by mature hedgerows. There is an old orchard adjoining the farm, which may suggest that the site pre-dates the current farmhouse.

D.64 As with Hollow Street, this settlement is prominent on the skyline especially when viewed from the south. The trees make an important contribution to its setting, as does the pond to the north and the stream course to the south of Clayhanger Hall.

Hothe Court (Blean)

D.65 Hothe Court is situated at the junction of the Salt Road and Whitstable Road in an area known in the 14th century as le Hothe suggesting an area of heathland. The present house is essentially a 14th century building with an 18th century veneer. There is also a fine barn to the north. The University of Kent development is now very close to the house although the house and its immediate surroundings and farm building still retain much of their former character.

D.66 Moat House is a building of about 1800 on an early moated site. It is now rather hemmed in by modern housing developments, but the house and moat are well screened by mature trees. Some farm buildings survive.

D.67 Blean House is early 19th century and is located along Rough Common Road. Pre-war houses fronting the road are typical of their period and form an important backdrop to the open area in front of Blean House. There is also a group of interesting mid and late 19th century cottages somewhat confusingly also known as Hothe Court. The playing field to the rear forms part of the setting of the group.

Ickham - Wickhambreaux and Seaton

D.68 The conservation area follows the route of the Little Stour from Littlebourne to Seaton and includes the settlements of Wickhambreaux, Ickham and Seaton. Wickhambreaux Conservation Area is centred on the village green and St. Andrew's Church. The approach to the church is by an avenue of pleached limes from the north west corner of the village green. The green contains several mature lime trees and several buildings of great character; Wickham Court and Wickham House (now known as The Old Rectory). The most picturesque corner is to the south east with the Old Stone House and Wickham Mill adjoining the river. Much of the village housing comprises of small cottages along The Street with the Quaives at the eastern end.

D.69 Ickham is a linear village. St. John's Church and large houses and farms (The Rectory, Ickham Court and Ickham Court Farm) lie on the north east side of The Street. To the south west are more humble cottages in brick or weatherboarding. Although The Street is quite long, it has a distinctive shape, swelling and then contracting to the south west. The black barns of Ickham Court Farm form a view of the church which is set back from the street. The landform is virtually flat and mature trees form an important part of the rural character of the village.

D.70 Seaton is a small hamlet based around a watermill on the Little Stour, which was used to grind India rubber.

Lee Priory and Garrington

D.71 This conservation area lies to the south of Littlebourne and follows the Little Stour valley between Bekesbourne and Littlebourne. Lee Priory was a Gothic house of 1783 designed by James Wyatt and said by Horace Walpole to be "a child of Strawberry Hill, prettier than the parent". Regrettably it was demolished in the 1950s, although the park and grounds remain. The Stables by Sir G Scott of C1865 in red brick with blue-grey diaper patterns remain and have been converted into residential use. Other fragments survive including a Wyatt archway dated 1783. All are listed Grade II. The former park is still of significant historic value with open pasture and many

fine mature trees and contributes to the setting of the remaining listed buildings, as well as the village of Littlebourne.

D.72 To the west of Lee Priory is an area of meadowland and trees through which flows Silver Dike and The Little Stour. This is a very attractive area and forms part of the historic setting of the south eastern edge of Littlebourne. The land along much of the ridge at Garrington has a park-like quality as does the pasture just north of the railway line. The trees along the ridge are of considerable landscape value and the setting of Well Chapel is attractive. Part of this has been declared a site of Nature Conservation Interest by the Kent Trust for Nature Conservation and it is judged to be of countywide ornithological importance.

D.73 On the east side of the valley within an area of wooded slopes and old meadows are two 17th century houses; Lower and Upper Garrington Farms. Both are listed Grade II together with the oast at Lower Garrington. The ruins of Well Chapel are a scheduled Ancient Monument. The combination of these features creates an attractive historic landscape.

Little Barton Farm

D.74 The house at Little Barton Farm dates from the 17th century with 18th century additions. The outbuildings, which include a small thatched structure, are also of considerable interest. The group is located within a miniature park like setting with mature trees, gardens and several ponds.

Littlebourne

D.75 The conservation area includes the majority of the historic settlement. To the east is the Church of St. Vincent, Littlebourne Court and the 14th century barn. To the west is the recreation ground and 19th century properties on Littlebourne Hill. The junction of Nargate Street, High Street and The Green is another attractive group of buildings; containing Littlebourne House, the oast and cottages to The Green, together with the Anchor Inn and the Vicarage. North of the parish church are some attractive meadows with mature trees which contribute considerably to the character and setting of the conservation area of the Church (Grade I).

D.76 There are eight listed and three locally listed buildings on Littlebourne Hill as well as other properties of architectural interest. Together with the trees these form an attractive area of interest. However, there are a number of modern buildings along the Hill and several of these tend to spoil the character of this area. However, the new housing estate has been designed to give a 'vernacular' appearance and it should blend in well with age. As one approaches Littlebourne from the west, turning the corner at the top of the hill one is presented with a fine view of the High Street right into the historic core of the village. The Recreation Ground which

forms a green link with the rest of the conservation area and the Old School. Visually it gives the impression of a Village Green providing the setting for the surrounding buildings, many of which are of architectural interest.

Lower Hardres and Street End

D.77 Lower Hardres is a well spread settlement, greatly enhanced by the large number of trees, particularly along Hardres Court Road and School Lane. The Church and Rectory are set slight apart from the remainder of the village on a slight rise with a good view along the valley to North Court Farm. This valley, with its ornamental tree planting and woodland background is an important part of the setting of this part of Lower Hardres.

D.78 Street End, to the north west of the conservation area marks the end of the Roman road, Stone Street. Street End Place, a large modern, but traditionally designed house, is set within a landscaped park on the edge of the village. While it is now mainly used for grazing, much of the planting still remains, creating a landscape of great interest and quality, forming a fine setting for the village. The garden is included in the KCC list of Historic Parks and Gardens in Kent.

Marshside

D.79 Marshside is at the edge of Chislet marshes on the upper edge of Wantsum Channel, which separated the Isle of Thanet from the Kentish mainland. The Wantsum Channel gradually silted up and was actively drained by the 12th Century although this was on going until the last gap in the North Sea Wall was closed in 1808. Records show that the dominant uses of the Chislet Levels/Marshes were seasonal grazing and hay making. Some arable cultivation took place during the Second World War, but the land has since reverted to pasture. It is only during the last 30 years that a transformation to arable has been taking place following improved drainage stimulated by the 1953 floods.

D.80 Many of the original drainage ditches remain and there are eight brick bridges that cross the stream at Marshside giving access to the droves and fields of Chislet Marshes. One is dated 1793 and the rest, probably of similar age, were put in by the Flemish engineers who were responsible for the waterways.

D.81 The conservation area consists of a strip of houses, gardens, small paddocks and hedgerows between the flat pastureland of the Chislet Marshes and gently rolling pasture and orchards towards Hoath. The predominant natural feature of the area is the North Stream and a small strip of trees, and marshland that runs down the eastern side of the conservation area. Across the road from North Stream there are three collections of buildings that appear to have been associated with farms. The large farmhouses and converted barns set in

well-landscaped gardens overlook North Stream and what is now drained pasture. The conservation area contains six listed buildings all Grade II listed. Of particular note are the cottages at Poors Farm, which are a pair of 16th century cottages refaced in red brick in the 18th century.

D.82 At the northern end of the conservation area, the A299 has become a prominent feature from the conservation area, both visually and in terms of noise.

Nackington

D.83 There are a number of buildings and groups of interest. The house known as Sextries and its traditional farm buildings are particularly important as the group has changed little since the time of the 1840's tithe map.

D.84 The prevalent and traditional building materials are red stock bricks, tarred weatherboarding and clay tiles with slate on more recent buildings. The church is flint and the older barns were originally thatched.

Nailbourne

D.85 The Nailbourne Conservation Areas are a group of neighbouring villages and parklands each of which has its own listing. They include the Bifrons Park, Bridge, Renville Farm and Bridge Railway Station, Bourne Park, Highland Court, Bishopsbourne, Charlton Park, Patribourne and Bekesbourne Conservation Area. The last two of these lie within the study area.

Patribourne

D.86 The Patribourne Conservation Area is centred upon the village street. The Church of St. Mary, a flint and Caen stone building (Grade I), contains an especially fine Norman south door and a good Norman Priests door. The east wheel window is a rare example and the tower with its ground floor forming a porch has a broached spire. The Old Vicarage (Grade II) is a 15th century timber-framed building with mid-late 19th century additions. An armorial plaque of the Marquess Conyngham is located over a side doorway in the garden wall. Waterfall Cottages and Bifrons Cottage are two of the cottages ornes dated from the 19th century estate of Bifrons, the Marquess Conyngham's seat. Another prominent estate building is the ornate former oasthouse dated 1869 (Grade II).

D.87 Sondes House at the western end of the village is a red brick house with many 17th century features including a shaped Dutch gable and chimney stacks. In Station Road is a house dated 1707 but remodelled in the mid-19th century with fretted bargeboards. Another unusual characteristic of this village is the number of buildings that are built of field flints, reflecting the local geology here.

D.88 The main street is particularly attractive and many of the houses are set back behind brick walls. Although there are some modern properties these are not overpowering. The belt of woodland to the south forms an important backdrop to the village. Several of the properties which were part of the estate village of Bifrons were altered in the cottage orne style in the mid-19th century and were given carved or fretted bargeboards, lean-to porches and other features.

D.89 The small fields to the north of the village form a natural link to Bekesbourne and form part of the setting of Patrixbourne.

Reculver

D.90 Early records indicate an Iron Age settlement at Reculver. In the third century the Roman Fort of Regulbium was built to defend the northern end of the Wantsum Channel. At that time it was located around a mile and half from the sea and extending to around eight acres. In AD 668 Egbert King of Kent granted Reculver for the foundation of a Benedictine monastery and the first Saxon Church was probably built around this time within the walls of the Roman fort, reusing the Roman materials. This early church was enlarged and the two towers, known as 'the Two Sisters', were added in the 12th century.

D.91 By the 17th century it was reported that the fort walls were being rapidly washed away. Much of the stonework was sold to the Margate Pier Company at the beginning of the 19th century and permission was granted by the Bishop to demolish the church and build a new church at Hillborough, using material from the old building. The twin towers, a valuable navigational aid, were retained. The remains of the church encircled by the remains of the Roman fort wall were scheduled as an ancient monument in 1925. In addition to these the conservation area includes the King Ethelbert Public House and Reculver House dating from the 18th and 19th century. Both are locally listed.

Renville Farm and Bridge Railway Station

D.92 This area comprises the former Bridge Station on the old Elham Valley Lane and the course of the railway as far north as the A2. Adjacent to this area is Renville, a good mid-19th century house. There is an oast of the same period at Renville Farm. Renville is set in a miniature parkland and approached from Watling Street along an avenue. The house is not listed but is of local architectural interest. It is constructed of yellow bricks with a slate roof with a wide overhang.

St Martin's Hospital

D.93 The conservation area was designated to protect the historic parkland setting of the hospital (dating from the 18th century) and the hospital buildings (dating from 1903). The

parkland dates from before 1538 when it belonged to St Augustine's Abbey. It then became the Grounds of Stone House and now the grounds of St Martin's Hospital cover almost exactly the original grounds of the Old Park as shown 1600's maps. The present site retains many of the features of the original park that once surrounded Stone House. The park remains a beautiful place with rolling open fields, meadows and areas of woodland and arboreta, with many exotic trees.

D.94 The hospital complex has an historic character, which is attractive in its own right and forms a significant feature of the local landscape, although there have been some unsympathetic alterations and new buildings, with the northern end suffering some damage during the last war. The oldest buildings are located in the west of the site and are constructed from red brick with slate roofs in a Victorian style. These buildings have tall windows and two-storey bay windows with pitched roofs on the frontages. The larger buildings have tall chimneys and copper vents along the roofline.

D.95 The parkland setting of the buildings and the boundary tree lines are one of the key features of the wider area.

Stodmarsh

D.96 The village of Stodmarsh lies in the shallow valley of the Lampen Stream which flows into the Great Stour a mile to the north. Stodmarsh is a place of great antiquity with a recorded documentary history dating back to 678. In Saxon times Stodmarsh was devoted to breeding mares, "Stode" being the Saxon word for mare. There is an ancient pattern of fields, boundaries and shaves about the Lampen Stream Valley and a number of antiquities were unearthed in 1854 in a Saxon barrow. The Parish Church of St. Mary is of 13th century dated and is Listed Grade I. Other listed buildings within the village include Cornerways, Old Post Office Stores, Ivyhouse, Sawkinge Farm Cottage and the 17th century barn at Sawkinge Farm. Poplar Farm House, Poplar Farm barn and stables are Grade II. There are several locally listed buildings within the conservation area. Around the parish church the houses are grouped fairly closely together and the gaps which do exist are of considerable significance, some containing important trees. Around the periphery of the village core and along the valley bottom there is little development.

Sturry and Fordwich

D.97 Sturry and Fordwich are adjoining conservation areas. Sturry Conservation Area includes many parts of the old village, Mill Road and Fordwich Road and the meadows to the south west which form part of the setting of the village. Fordwich Conservation Area includes almost all the built up area of Fordwich and the riverside area beyond the church. To the west there remains the largest example of the Stour valley

meadows east of Canterbury. Preserved deposits in the meadows are potentially of regional or national significance as a paleo-environmental resource.

The Bridge Conservation Area

D.98 Bridge is part of a group of neighbouring conservation areas that encompass villages and parkland along the Nailbourne valley. They include Bifrons Park, Bourne Park, Highland Court, Charlton Park, Bishopsbourne, Renville Farm and Bridge Railway Station, Patribourne and Bekesbourne.

D.99 The village, approximately 3 miles south of Canterbury, is situated on the old Roman road (Watling Street) from Dover to London and almost certainly takes its name from the bridge over the River Nailbourne which traverses the southern end of the High Street.

D.100 Bridge is characterised by its agricultural and parkland setting that encircles the entire village. The historic built form is along the main through-route at the floor of the valley with later development occupying low-lying, former farmland behind.

D.101 Mature trees make a significant contribution to the setting of the conservation area with a large number of individual trees in gardens and along the roadside. Trees also line field boundaries and the route of the Nailbourne. Other important areas of tree planting can be found at Conyngham Lane, St Peter's Church and along Bourne Park Road. Many of the village roads are lined with hedgerows that contribute to the rural character of the conservation area.

Tyler Hill and Allcroft Grange

D.102 Tyler Hill is located on a ridge originally within a clearing in Blean Forest. The Medieval boundaries of this clearing are still well preserved. The area includes a series of small fields and paddocks within the built up area and there are a substantial number of buildings of architectural interest that contribute to the overall character. Oakwell-in-the Blean was originally laid out in 1834 and contains an attractive group of farm buildings. Traditional local building materials are red stock bricks and clay tiles. There are also examples of yellow stock brickwork, slate and weatherboarding.

D.103 The site of the former Canterbury to Whitstable Railway passes through this area with fine mature trees forming a natural boundary to the conservation area. In addition there are a number of interesting structures and engineering features. Tyler Hill Engine House hauled trains up from Canterbury in the early days. There was also a large pond to provide water for the steam engine and a cottage for the man in charge. Later a halt was added.

D.104 Allcroft Grange is sited on the ridge between the Stour Valley and Sarre Penn Valley. Much of Littlehall Wood

adjacent to the house was replanted as a pinetum in the late 19th century. To the south is the site of the park associated with Hales Place. The house is now demolished and most of the park built over. Although the remaining area is mostly pasture the majority of the trees have been lost. The Sarre Penn Valley is archaeologically rich, containing two prehistoric settlements.

D.105 There are some damaging features within the area including unsympathetically altered buildings and some modern properties built in unsympathetic materials and inappropriate styles. However within the conservation area these are outweighed by the good traditional buildings and attractive landscape features.

Under-the-Wood

D.106 This area consists of a small group of buildings located in a dry valley with old pasture and a small wood, Dane Shave, rising behind. Documentary evidence suggests that a lost hamlet called 'Dane' was located north of Dane Shave. At the head of the valley a farm known as Upper Grounds is defined by prominent hedgerows and mature oaks. The field pattern suggests that Upper Grounds and the hamlet of Under-the-Wood were once part of the same farming unit.

Upstreet

D.107 Upstreet is a linear roadside settlement that sits astride the Canterbury to Ramsgate and Richborough Road. The conservation area is characterised by a sequence of buildings of varying sizes and styles together with areas of mature landscape. Vision House, Upstreet Farmhouse, Grove Court and the Nursing Home are all buildings of interest. Grove Court contains several mature trees which form part of the historic 18th century parkland. This landscape setting is particularly important on the eastern edge of the village formed by Grove Ferry Hill.

Westbere

D.108 Westbere Conservation Area lies to the south of the Roman Road (Canterbury - Richborough). The 'bere' probably relates to a "passage for swine", i.e. a wooded Wealden type hinterland rather than an arable area. The conservation area remains very well wooded and has an Arcadian feel. The location of the village means that there is no through traffic and thus creates an air of rural seclusion. This characteristic is reinforced by the narrow country lanes which wind through a rather haphazard arrangement of houses. The village contains a fine group of Medieval hall houses notably Ashby Cottage, the Yew Tree Inn, Yew Tree Cottage and White Cottage. All Saints Church dates from the 14th century. Being part of the manors of Chislet and Rushbourne, Westbere did not grow into a large village and never had a court lodge. Westbere

House was built about 1730 and has been enlarged and altered to become a 'very grand house'. The village contains 19 listed buildings.

Womenswold

D.109 The name Womenswold means Forest of the Wimelingas, or active men, a name which was given to a tribe of warriors who held the forest in this area. The village is located on a slight ridge and is largely surrounded by agricultural land. There are a considerable number of trees in the settlement and Well Wood and part of Willow Wood (a good example of wet woodland), together with the meadowland around Nethersole Farm form part of the setting of the village. Planting within and adjacent to the settlement provide a sense enclosure. The landscaped grounds to Tall Firs and the meadows south of the village are equally important and form a notional link to Denne Hill Park.

D.110 There are numerous listed buildings of interest, including prominently, the flint-built Church of St. Margaret at Womenswold, the tower, chancel and nave of which are probably Norman. Most of the older houses date from the 17th and 18th century. Although there are a few unattractive modern developments, none of these are too obtrusive or damaging.

Woodlands Park

D.111 Woodlands Manor is set on the edge of a small park, complete with perimeter shelterbelts of trees and a selection of specimen trees set within open parkland. The house is set in old walled gardens containing a rockery and rose garden, a lime walk, gardens and woodland walks with good vistas. The park is included on the register of Kent Parks and Gardens.

D.112 Woodlands Cottage is set within well-treed grounds, with a belt ornamental planting and Scot's pines which surround the meadow to the west of the manor. The conservation area extends westwards beyond the water tower as far west as Oxenden Shaw.

Woolage Green

D.113 The name Woolage Green derives from Wolf Heath – heathland where wolves roam. The village has a greater feeling of enclosure than Womenswold, due to trees and woodland in and around the built-up area. There is a scattering of listed and locally buildings within the village, including the Two Sawyers public house (1791), and Woolage Farmhouse and small village green.

D.114 The Woolage Green Conservation Area includes the green, the surrounding properties and gardens as well as land at Woolage Farm and the meadows to the east, that provide a rural setting for the built form.

D.115 Despite the potential attractiveness of the settlement and its setting, there are several inappropriate and unattractive modern developments and some of the earlier buildings have been altered or extended in an unsympathetic way.

Stakeholders and Statutory Consultees



Appendix E

Stakeholders and Statutory Consultees

The final draft version of the Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal was sent to the stakeholders and statutory consultees listed below. All responses were considered and included where relevant.

Organisation
Ashford Borough Council
Canterbury Ramblers Group
East Kent Ramblers Club
Environment Agency
Forestry Commission
The Gardens Trust
Historic England
Kent County Council
Kent Downs AONB Unit
Kent and Medway Biological Record Centre (KMBRC)
Kent Nature Partnership
Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership
Kent Wildlife Trust
Kent Woodland Employment Scheme
MMO
National Farmers Union
National Trust
Natural England
River Stour (Kent) Internal Drainage Board
RSPB
Woodland Trust

Parish Consultation

All 27 parishes within Canterbury District were consulted as part of the Local Plan Consultation.

Appendix F: User Guide



Appendix F

User Guide

F.1 The Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal (2020) can be used by planners, developers and land managers to take account of what is valued in or characteristic of the landscape when considering new development including new land uses. It should also be used to pursue opportunities to enhance and strengthen landscape character wherever possible, and as an important element of the evidence base as policies for Biodiversity Net Gain are developed. The need for the evidence base provided in this report is all the more apparent in the context of continual pressures to accommodate new development, including new land uses, primarily the need for new housing and associated infrastructure.

F.2 The flow chart below aims to help the use of the Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal (2020). It is arranged around a number of key stages, setting out a series of questions as prompts to ensure available information is used to shape proposals and assist in planning decisions.

