

County map showing location of
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA



LOCATION

Rectangular area between Cuffley and Goff's Oak, south to boundary with Theobald's Estate

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Open arable farmland squeezed between two urban areas and linking two area of former parkland - Ponsbourne to the north and the Theobald's Estate to the south. The local topography is very noticeable, swooping down from the north and made the more obvious by the lack of woodland, hedges and settlements.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- strongly undulating open arable farmland
- only one farm
- Cuffley Brook runs north-south, rather than east-west like most watercourses in this area
- the railway extends the urban edge of Cuffley to north and south, providing a very strong western boundary to this area

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

- the monoculture and lack of incident reinforce the drama of the landform

Cheshunt Common •
from Cuffley Hill
(HCC Landscape Unit)



PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology and soils. Slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged clay soils, mostly with brown subsoils, over Tertiary clay (Windsor series)

Degree of slope. 1 in 12 to 1 in 24

Altitude range. 55m to 100m

Hydrology. Cuffley Brook flows southwards through most of this area and eventually joins the river Lea

Land cover and land use. This area is almost exclusively arable farmland, with a few scattered blocks of woodland.

Vegetation and wildlife. In the northern part of this area there is one block of woodland plus a few associated fragments and one area on the north-western edge of Goff's Oak. There are very few field boundaries.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Formerly common land.

Field pattern. Where a field pattern is visible, it is regular to geometric and medium scale, with some irregular fields on the south-western edge of Goff's Oak.

Transport pattern. The only road in this area is the B156 which links Cuffley and Goff's Oak and from which extensive views of the area can be gained both north and south. There is only one footpath in the area, linking the eastern edge of Cuffley with Brook Farm.

Settlements and built form. There are no settlements within this area and very few dwellings - two farms and a cottage. However, it serves as a buffer between the two urban settlements of Goff's Oak and Cuffley.

VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

This is quite a dramatic landscape, particularly when viewed from the swooping B156 between Cuffley and Goff's Oak, when the open, undulating arable farmland can be clearly seen. It is a unified, simple landscape with strongly defined boundaries to east and west, a breath of rural fresh air between the dense urban settlements.

Rarity and distinctiveness. This is a most unusual area in this part of Hertfordshire, much more open and unwooded than any areas nearby.

VISUAL IMPACT

The urban settlements to east and west hem in the area and give it a confined character, reinforced by the only road in the area cutting across at a narrow point, so that the full extent of the area cannot be seen.

ACCESSIBILITY

There is only one public footpath in this area, linking the B156 to the northern boundary of the Theobald's Estate.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

This is a valued landscape (C).

CONDITION

<i>Land cover change:</i>	localised
<i>Age structure of tree cover:</i>	N/A
<i>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival:</i>	relic
<i>Management of semi-natural habitat:</i>	poor
<i>Survival of cultural pattern:</i>	declining
<i>Impact of built development:</i>	high
<i>Impact of land-use change:</i>	high

ROBUSTNESS

<i>Impact of landform:</i>	prominent
<i>Impact of land cover:</i>	insignificant
<i>Impact of historic pattern:</i>	relic
<i>Visibility from outside:</i>	widely visible
<i>Sense of enclosure:</i>	open
<i>Visual unity:</i>	unified
<i>Distinctiveness/rarity:</i>	unusual

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

STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING**CHANGE: IMPROVE AND RESTORE**

- discourage the planting of new hedgerows or woodland within the open farmland, which would conflict with its distinctive landscape character
- encourage the extension of existing woodlands to retain the simplicity and scale of this character area
- encourage the establishment and management of conservation headlands around field boundaries, beetle banks and other low-key means of improving biodiversity
- seek to create more public access to this valued landscape, especially from the adjoining urban settlements
- seek reversion from arable to grassland where appropriate and possible, to restore its historic character, but to cattle or sheep grazing rather than horse pasture, which is of low ecological potential
- should the re-establishment of grassland prove possible, ensure that it is managed to maximise its ecological potential