LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA
Character Area extends from boundary of Luton Airport in the north to Kimpton valley in the south.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER
Gently rolling elevated landscape plateau defined by steep sided incised valleys to east, west and south. Many large exposed arable fields with smaller pockets of grazing around settlements. Occasional scattered dwellings. Field pattern degraded with relatively few remaining hedgerows. Remnant mature hedgerow trees. Mixture of woodland types, some mature, well-established, deciduous woodland interspersed with more recent mixed woodland plantations. Character Area truncated by the man-made landscape features associated with Luton Airport.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS
- Elevated plateau
- Predominantly large scale arable use
- Smaller pastoral fields closer to settlements
- Large to medium sized mixed woodland plantations
- Historic houses and associated parkland

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES
- Lawrence End parkland
- Man-made landscape at Luton Airport boundary
- Water-tower at Peters Green
PHYSICAL INFLUENCES

Geology & soils
Soils are free-draining loamy acidic brown soils over glacial drift till.

Topography
The plateau covers a broadly rectangular area extending some 4km from north to south and 3km from east to west. The plateau appears flat to gently sloping to the southeast.

Degree of slope
Minimal, typically 1:200 across the plateau.

Altitude range
125m to 160m.

Hydrology
There are no significant water courses. There are, however, a number of small ponds associated with farms in the north.

Land cover and land use
The predominant land use is arable farming.

Vegetation and wildlife
Scattered woodland in discrete parcels including both ancient deciduous woodlands and more recent mixed plantations. Species include hornbeam coppice, oak and ash. Regenerating elm in hedgerows also some holly is common. Lime is the dominant parkland tree at Lawrence End Park which is largely improved grassland.

This Character Area contains a few ancient semi-natural woodlands, which are typically dominated by oak and coppiced hornbeam. Bluebells are frequently a feature of the groundflora, but other ancient woodland indicators are also present. Withstocks Wood, Bishey Wood and Burnt Wood are examples of ancient semi-natural oak and hornbeam woodland. These woods have been replanted with conifers to varying extents, but their seedbanks of ancient flora are retained, as denoted by the presence of ancient woodland indicator species. Occasional ancient, species-rich hedgerows are another feature of this Character Area.

The Character Area has generally a sparsity of ecologically interesting sites.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

In the west are the remains of a chapel and Someries Castle.

Field pattern
The historic agricultural landscape pattern consists of a mixture of prairie fields with post-1950s boundary loss, pre-18th century irregular enclosure, 18th century and later enclosure and ancient woodland. Today there are predominantly large irregular fields with smaller parcels of grazing land around settlements.

Transport pattern
Winding sunken lanes complement the more direct connecting roads. To the north the pattern of roads and lanes are truncated by the development at Luton Airport.

Settlements and built form
The historic settlement pattern is characterised by farms and villages.
VISUAL AND SENSORY PERCEPTION

The Character Area is only locally visible from the surrounding areas due to its elevated land form. The Character Area is generally peaceful, however, in the north aircraft noise is a particularly notable element. The landscape has been de-valued by extensive arable production and has open and exposed aspects. The parkland to the north is a more discrete landscape with unified features and contained views.

Rarity & distinctiveness
This landscape type is frequent in the county.

VISUAL IMPACT

There are few built detractors.

ACCESSIBILITY

The local network of roads and public rights of way radiates out from the hub, which covers the Character Area between Peters Green to Chiltern Green. The Character Area is well served by footpaths and bridleways.

COMMUNITY VIEWS

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

LANDSCAPE RELATED DESIGNATIONS

LC1 Landscape Conservation Area
### CONDITION

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<thead>
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<th>Feature</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land cover change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age structure of tree cover</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extent of semi-natural habitat survival</td>
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<td>Management of semi-natural habitat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Survival of cultural pattern</td>
<td>Declining/Relic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact of built development</td>
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**Matrix Score:** Good

### ROBUSTNESS

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<td>Impact of land cover</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sense of enclosure</td>
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<td>Visual unity</td>
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<td>Distinctiveness/rarity</td>
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**Matrix Score:** Moderate

### Condition Improvement

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<td>Conserve and strengthen</td>
<td>Safeguard and manage</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Improve and reinforce</td>
<td>Improve and conserve</td>
<td>Conserve and restore</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reconstruct</td>
<td>Improve and restore</td>
<td>Restore condition to maintain character</td>
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<table>
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<table>
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North Hertfordshire and Stevenage Landscape Character Assessment
Babbie Group
## GUIDELINES

### STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CHANGE:

**Conserve and Strengthen**

- Promote management of ancient woodland to encourage a diverse woodland flora
- Promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and areas of semi-natural habitat and the creation of links between habitat areas
- Encourage policies for the safeguarding of existing hedges and the creation of new boundaries at appropriate locations, consistent with agricultural management practices
- Protect and preserve the pattern of narrow winding lanes and associated hedge banks, sunken lanes, verges and hedges
- Promote the diversity of hedgerow species and the planting of standard hedgerow trees
- Maintain and extend the rights of way network
- Encourage the management of hornbeam, oak and ash coppice
- Encourage the preparation and implementation of restoration and management plans for parkland landscapes including Lawrence End