

## LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

### AN INTEGRATED LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY APPROACH TO SETTLEMENT EXPANSION WITHIN WEST BERKSHIRE

#### SUMMARY REPORT: WEST READING

##### Introduction

This report summarises the integrated landscape sensitivity of the local landscape character areas which form the LDF study area. Appendix 1 to the report explains the methodology and we would recommend that this be read first.

The key landscape sensitivity factors are set out under the 'key elements' and 'other interests' all of which should be taken into account in considering any settlement expansion. Full details can be found in the database and spreadsheets held at West Berkshire Council.

The report does not identify any landscape mitigation or the new landscape features which would be a prerequisite of any settlement expansion within part of an LLCA (such as, re-establishment of hedgerows, new woodland planting, chalk downland).

Figure 1C: Plan of West Reading LLCAs

Figure 2C: Sensitivity mapping for West Reading

##### WEST READING

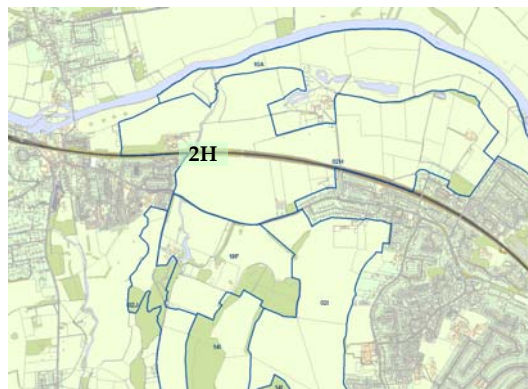
The hinterland of West Reading has been divided into sixteen local landscape character areas (LLCAs).

LLCA2H:	Lower Purley Chalk Lowlands	LLCA14I:	Purley Plateau Edge
LLCA2I:	Upper Sulham Dipslopes	LLCA14J:	Tilehurst Plateau Edge
LLCA2J:	Lower Sulham Dipslopes	LLCA16A:	Englefield Wooded Farmlands
LLCA8F:	Lower Kennet Meadows	LLCA17A:	Englefield Open Farmland
LLCA8G:	Lower Kennet Wetlands	LLCA18E:	Englefield Park
LLCA9A:	Lower Kennet Lakes	LLCA18F:	Purley Hall
LLCA10A:	Purley River Valley	LLCA20E:	Theale - Calcot Gap
LLCA13E:	Little Heath Gravel Plateau	LLCA20F:	West Theale

The sensitivity of the local landscape character areas around West Reading to urban expansion is summarised below. It should be noted that the AONB which covers some of these LLCAs has not been factored in at this stage.

**LLCA2H: Lower Purley Chalk Lowlands**

View east from Westbury Lane to the Chilterns



Home Farm from Mapledurham Drive



Towards Whitchurch from Westbury Lane

*Lower Purley Chalk Lowlands* is characterised by open fields and the remnants of former valley floor landscape features. It sits in the river Thames floodplain enclosed and overlooked by the two AONBs. It includes a sewage works but generally is not affected by degrading urban fringe uses.

***Overall sensitivity: Medium to low***

*Key elements of landscape sensitivity*

- Believed to be part of the inspiration for Kenneth Graham's *Wind in the Willows*
- Extensive views to and from the wider landscape
- 60% of area in the floodplain

*Other landscape sensitivity interests*

- Part of the river valley floor

- Remnants of valley floor landscape features (willow pollards, hedgerows, small copses)
- Sparse settlement
- Covered by both Pangbourne and Purley Village Plans

#### *Wider landscape*

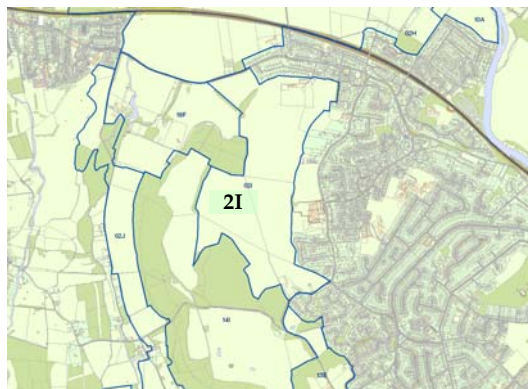
*LLCA2H Lower Purley Chalk Lowlands* do not have strong character links with the adjacent character areas, although it does act as a transitional landscape between the riparian 10A and the escarpment 2I. There is however some visual continuity with 10A, 18F and 2I and the Chilterns.

#### **Setting to the urban form**

*LLCA2H: Lower Purley Chalk Lowlands* abuts both Pangbourne and Purley. The relationship with Pangbourne is much weaker and the urban form less intrusive. Purley sits on rising land with little screening to 2H, making it much more exposed to the urban form. 2H forms an important 800m wide open gap between these two settlements.

**LLCA2I: Upper Sulham Dipslopes**

View north across the area to the Chiltern Hills



View to Vicarage Wood and Stoneham Farm



View across open fields to Pangbourne

*Upper Sulham Dipslopes* is characterised by large open fields, enclosed by the woodlands of 18F and 14I and the tree belt along the edge of Purley. As it sits on an elevated plateau, there are long views, over the woodlands to both the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs AONBs. A strong sense of tranquillity is a key feature.

***Overall sensitivity: Medium***

*Key elements of landscape sensitivity*

- Located on an elevated plateau
- Long views to, and potentially from, the surrounding landscape
- Good sense of tranquillity despite proximity of Purley
- Good quality agricultural land
- Little built form
- Very open landscape
- Strong sense of enclosure within woodlands

*Other landscape sensitivity interests*

- Few landscape boundary or other features
- North part included in Purley Village Plan
- Little historic interest
- Some public access across the area

*Wider landscape*

*LLCA2I Upper Sulham Dipslopes* share similar characteristics with the open farmed landscape within 14I, giving a strong sense of continuity. The link with 2H is more tenuous and there is a strong contrast with 18F. 2I however has strong visual links with the North Wessex Downs to the west, beyond Pangbourne and the Chilterns AONB to the north.

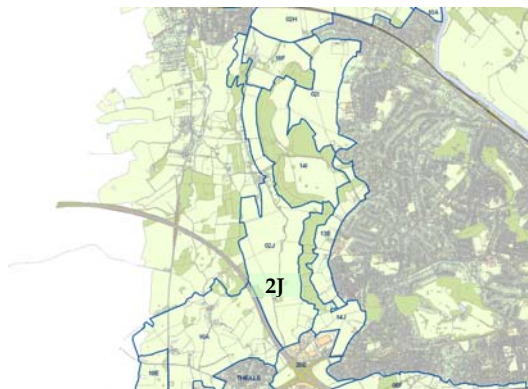
**Setting to the urban form**

*LLCA2I: Upper Sulham Dipslopes* abut Purley but is visually separated by a robust belt of trees along the urban edge. This screens the built form and creates a much stronger sense of local rural tranquillity than you would expect so close to Purley.



**LLCA2J: Lower Sulham Dipslopes**

View along the lower Sulham slopes



Sulham village



Towards dovecot at Nunhide Farm

*Lower Sulham Dipslopes* is characterised by its strong sense of seclusion and tranquillity, despite the proximity of Reading in the south, and by the extensive views to the wider AONB landscapes across rolling fields and the Pang valley. Its built form is sparse but is of an intimate scale and of historic interest. The LLCA lacks boundary features and contrasts with the intricate landscape pattern of the Pang valley.

**Overall sensitivity: Medium to high**

*Key elements of landscape sensitivity*

- Good quality agricultural land
- Open landscape but good sense of seclusion
- Predominantly tranquil with some intrusion in the south from the M4 and Calcot
- Sparse settlement with narrow winding roads
- A number of small but distinctive local landmark features

- Extensive areas of medium to high historically sensitive landscapes
- Designed landscape at Sulham and medieval farm buildings
- Good public rights of way provision

#### *Other landscape sensitivity interests*

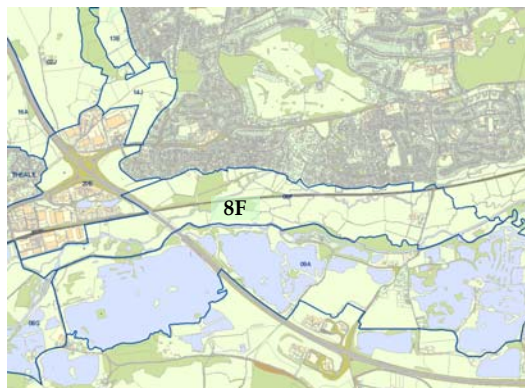
- Topographical transition from the escarpment edge to the Pang valley floor
- Lack of field boundaries
- Woodland copses
- Part of Sulham gap WWII defences
- Small amount of BAP and SSSI wet woodland
- Some localised cultural interest

#### *Wider landscape*

*LLCA2J Lower Sulham Dipslopes* has a close affinity with the other LLCAs which make up the landscape of the escarpment – 18F, 2I, 13E, 14I and 14J. It also forms the setting to the Pang valley landscape to the west and the village of Sulham. It is visually contained, with views to the edge of the adjoining landscapes except for in the south where long views extend north and west as far as the Chilterns and the Englefield escarpment.

#### **Setting to the urban form**

*LLCA2J: Lower Sulham Dipslopes* is separated from the edge of Reading by the escarpment itself and its wooded landscapes. A small section abuts Pincents Lane in the south but some separation is created through the local topography and a belt of hedgerow and trees. The landscape quality of this short section is vulnerable to erosion through inappropriate development in the Pincents Lane area.

**LLCA8F: Lower Kennet Meadows****Across the meadows from Burghfield Road****Kennet and Avon Canal east of Burghfield****Beansheaf recreation ground**

*Lower Kennet Meadows* is characterised by its stretch of wetland meadows, broken into a matrix of small fields by scrub, tree lined watercourses and hedgerows. It centres on the canal which forms the boundary with LLCA9A and forms an important rural landscape setting to the south of Reading.

***Overall sensitivity: Medium to high***

*Key elements of landscape sensitivity*

- Flat floodplain
- Complex pastoral landscape fragmented into a matrix by riparian vegetation, streams, small woodland blocks, and hedgerows
- Number of wet landscape features
- Secluded and enclosed in many places
- Historic communications links and features such as the canal locks
- Good access along towpath and some recreational provision at Beansheaf
- Important area for BAP wetland and woodland habitats



- Important habitat links with remainder of Kennet valley floodplain
- Good level of community interest

*Other landscape sensitivity interests*

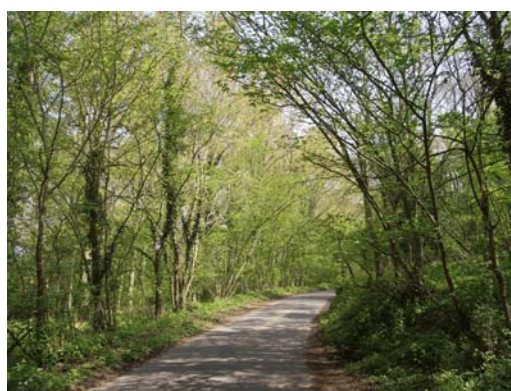
- Scattered and uncohesive elements of built form
- Inherent sense of tranquillity eroded by Reading and the railway line
- Varied historic landscape sensitivity across the area
- Poor public access across farmland

*Wider landscape*

*LLCA8F Lower Kennet Meadows* has a distinctive pastoral wetland landscape but has strong landscape links with the wetlands of *LLCA9A* and *8G*. It also is part of an extensive wetland area which continues eastwards into Reading Borough. The area forms part of the valley floor views from higher ground to the west but has reduced intervisibility with *9A* and *8G* due to the flat topography and woodland and tree cover.

**Setting to the urban form**

*LLCA8F: Lower Kennet Meadows* closely abuts a long stretch of the edge of Reading, with a fringe of vegetation which partly separates and screens the built form. The landscape provides an important and extensive rural landscape setting to Reading.

**LLCA8G: Lower Kennet Wetlands****The Kennet and Avon lock at Sheffield Bottom****The lake at Woolwichgreen Farm****Woodlands on Bottom Lane**

*Lower Kennet Wetlands* is characterised by extensive lakes formed from older gravel workings, enclosed by a strong matrix of woodlands, tree and scrub belts and some hedgerows. The western section is dominated by wet meadows flanking the river Kennet and the canal.

**Overall sensitivity: Medium**

*Key elements of landscape sensitivity*

- Broad flat valley floodplain, narrowing to the west
- Varied landscape of water bodies, water courses, pasture and woodland
- Extensive vegetation cover framing the water features
- Strong sense of seclusion away from Theale
- Canal settlement and built elements
- Archaeological interest
- Canal towpath
- Significant BAP habitats

*Other landscape sensitivity interests*

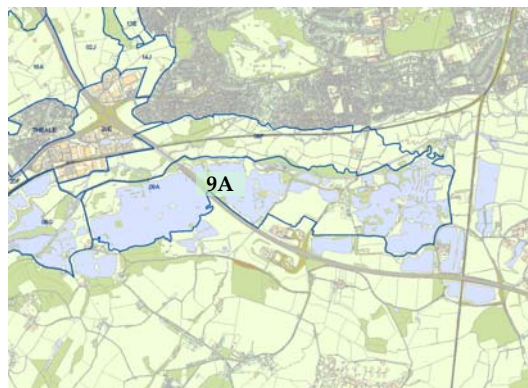
- Landscape modified by gravel extraction
- Settlement at Sheffield Bottom
- Good sense of tranquillity within wooded enclosed areas
- Number of small scale local landmarks

*Wider landscape*

*LLCA8G Lower Kennet Wetlands* forms the eastern end of the narrower Kennet valley landscape corridor and as it widens to embrace the lakes around Sheffield Bottom. It has strong landscape connections with both the wider Kennet valley corridor extending eastwards and the wetland landscapes of 8F and 9A. It also forms an important valley setting to the Sulhampstead escarpment. Views are limited by the vegetation but there are key views through the area down the river Kennet and the canal to the west and up to the Sulhampstead escarpment.

**Setting to the urban form**

*LLCA8G: Lower Kennet Wetlands* abut the southern and commercial edge of Theale, separated by the railway line and its scattered vegetation. It strongly contrasts with the urban form and is visually divorced from Theale.

**LLCA9A: Lower Kennet Lakes****Kennet and Avon Canal at the Cunning Man PH****Burghfield Mill****Burghfield Lake**

*Lower Kennet Lakes* is characterised by its sequence of medium to large open lakes enclosed by naturally regenerated and planted vegetation, on former gravel pits. This sequence is broken up by the M4 and the village of Burghfield Bridge which retains a mix of residential and commercial built form and significant elements of the waste industry, which are very slowly being restored. Parts of the area have an urban fringe character but the LLCA has a strong structure which provides an important open and varied recreational predominantly rural landscape.

***Overall sensitivity: Medium***

*Key elements of landscape sensitivity*

- Extensive flat valley floodplain
- Extensive areas of open water, wet woodland, carr, reedbeds, tree and scrub belts
- Pockets of seclusion, particularly around the canal but otherwise open landscape created by large water bodies
- Water bodies and Burghfield Mill are landmark features

- Archaeological interest
- Canal and canal built form
- Good level of public access and provision for recreation
- Variety of ecological habitats, including a number of BAP habitats (water and woodland)
- Local cultural interest and good level of community interest

*Other landscape sensitivity interests*

- Natural topography modified by gravel extraction and landfill
- Central part still disturbed by landfill and incremental commercial activity
- Non cohesive built form with variety of land uses
- Winding roads

*Wider landscape*

*LLCA9A Lower Kennet Lakes* shares common characteristics with the eastern landscape of 8G. It has strong links with the more riparian landscape of 8F through its vegetation cover and predominance of wetland landscapes – the two areas complementing each other. The area contrasts strongly with the farmed landscape south of the M4 and the degraded landscape east of the area extending into Reading Borough. Visibility with these adjacent areas is limited by vegetation but there is a good degree of intervisibility with the higher ground of the escarpments.

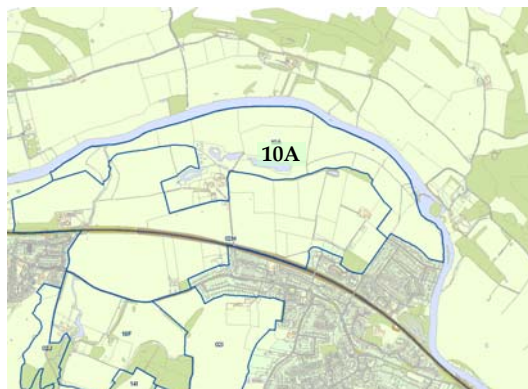
**Setting to the urban form**

*LLCA9A: Lower Kennet Lakes* is separated from the urban edge of Reading and Theale by 8F. However together with that area it forms an important open landscape setting to these towns. From the M4, the area forms the ‘front garden’ to Reading.



**LLCA10A: Purley River Valley**

**Towards Mapledurham Weir and the Thames**



**View westwards from Mapledurham Lock**

*Lower Purley Valley* is characterised by its flat meadows, with stands of willow and small waterways which run into the river Thames. The Thames forms the northern boundary and the locally important historic, landscape, visual, cultural, recreational, ecological characteristics of the Thames and its banks are an important feature of LLCA10A.

***Overall sensitivity: Medium***

*Key elements of landscape sensitivity*

- Flat valley floor contained by rising chalk slopes of the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs
- Adjacent to the river Thames
- Riparian landscape features
- Open landscape
- In the Thames floodplain
- Built form of the lock and its setting

- Exposed to views from the Chilterns escarpment and the river
- High to medium historic landscape sensitivity
- Two ancient manors
- Mapledurham Mill dates to the 15th century, the only surviving working water mill on the Thames
- Thames Path - a national route

*Other landscape sensitivity interests*

- Exposed views of Purley at the eastern end
- Medium biodiversity sensitivity, mainly associated with the Thames
- Covered by Purley and Pangbourne Village plans

*Wider landscape*

*LLCA10A Lower Purley Valley* has strong links with the wider river Thames landscape corridor which continues westwards and eastwards, characterised by the river banks and flat meadows flanked by the escarpments to the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs.

**Setting to the urban form**

*LLCA10A: Lower Purley Valley* forms an important part of the riparian setting to Pangbourne and Purley and together with *LLCA2H* separates these two settlements. The *LLCA* is generally separated from the urban form by *LLCA2H* but a small section in the east abuts Purley. This part, together with the river, is an important open gap between Purley and Mapledurham and the Chilterns.

**LLCA13E: Little Heath Gravel Plateau****Pasture off Long Lane****Recreation ground****Horse paddocks at Kiln Lane**

*Little Heath Gravel Plateau* is characterised by its pattern of small pasture fields, copses and mixed types of development in the plateau top.

***Overall sensitivity: Medium to low***

*Key elements of landscape sensitivity*

- Pattern of small fields of pasture with copses
- Hedgerows and lines of trees
- Listed Late 16th century farmhouse at Hall Place, and 17th century Kiln Cottage
- Good public access
- Value of woodland habitat links with adjacent woodlands in LLCA14I and 14J

*Other landscape sensitivity interests*

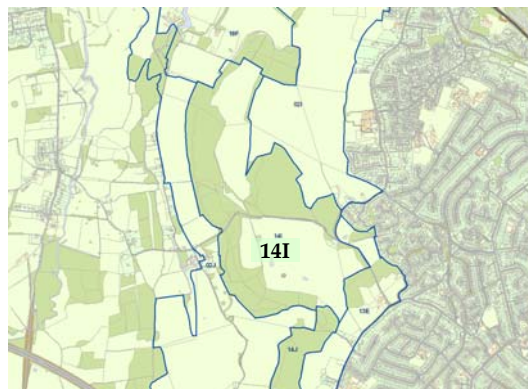
- Plateau top to escarpment
- Scattered mixed development broken up by small open areas
- Good level of visual enclosure
- Mostly low to medium historic landscape sensitivity
- Recreational provision
- Medium to low biodiversity

*Wider landscape*

LLCA13E *Little Heath Gravel Plateau* has a distinct landscape pattern which differs from the wider plateau and escarpment landscape of large fields and woodland blocks. Views are generally contained by the adjacent woodland in LLCA 14I and J.

**Setting to the urban form**

LLCA13E: *Little Heath Gravel Plateau* is influenced by its close proximity to Little Heath, resulting in fragmentation and domestic land uses. A thin belt of trees and hedgerows separates the settlement from the LLCA.

**LLCA14I: Purley Plateau Edge****The Sulham wooded escarpment****Entrance to Vicarage Copse****Fields above Sulham Wood**

*Purley Plateau Edge* is characterised by its linear belts of woodland on the scarp slopes. Enclosed medium sized fields sit within this belt of woodland. Due to the woodland cover the LLCA has a greater sense of isolation from the urban area than would be expected in view of its proximity to Purley and Tilehurst.

***Overall sensitivity: Medium***

*Key elements of landscape sensitivity*

- Escarpment topography
- Some grade 2 agricultural land
- Extensive woodland
- Separation from urban influences and lack of built form
- Views from Pang valley and Sulham Hill
- Sense of tranquillity despite proximity of Reading
- Medium to high historic sensitivity



*Other landscape sensitivity interests*

- Simple land use and landscape pattern
- Some public access
- Medium to low biodiversity but links with adjacent woodland

*Wider landscape*

*LLCA14I Purley Plateau Edge* is an important part of the extensive pattern of woodland and medium sized fields stretched along to the west of Reading.

**Setting to the urban form**

*LLCA14I Purley Plateau Edge* is separated from the settlement by LLCAs 2I and 13E but its woodland cover plays an important part in screening the edge of Reading from views to the west.

**LLCA14J: Tilehurst Plateau Edge**

View from Pincent's Lane to the east



View across the area to Calcot



Calcot Recreation Ground from the A4

*Tilehurst Plateau Edge* is characterised by its sloping topography and pattern of woodland and open fields with little settlement except for a farmhouse. Panoramic views from the open slopes.

**Overall sensitivity: Medium**

*Key elements of landscape sensitivity*

- Escarpment topography
- Extensive scarp woodlands connecting into adjacent woodland cover
- Extensive areas of open grassland with public access
- Scattered mature trees on open slopes
- Panoramic views from open slopes
- Areas of medium to high historic landscape sensitivity in the south
- Good public access and recreational provision
- Medium biodiversity with significant area of Woodland BAP habitats

*Other landscape sensitivity interests*

- Little settlement
- Area visible from valley floor and western Reading

*Wider landscape*

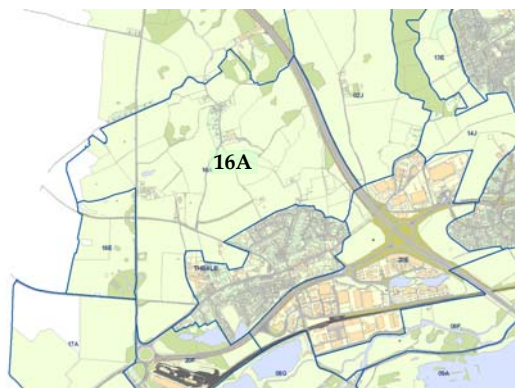
*LLCA14J Tilehurst Plateau Edge* is an important part of the escarpment landscape to the west of Reading, above the Pang Valley. Where it wraps around to the south above Calcot, there are visual and physical links with both the open areas of *LLCA20E* and open fields of *2J*.

**Setting to the urban form**

*LLCA14J Tilehurst Plateau Edge* is separated from Tilehurst by *LLCA13E* but in the south it abuts Calcot. The rising slopes form an important setting to Calcot where the urban edge is particularly exposed. Strong contrast with the adjacent urban form.

**LLCA16A: Englefield Wooded Farmlands**

School playing fields below Englefield House



North Street



Across the fields to Malpas Farm

*Englefield Wooded Farmlands* is characterised by its mixed agricultural and recreational land use. The area is well vegetated with a complex vegetation pattern in the north, typical, but naturalistic, golf course planting in the centre and little internal boundary treatment and neat roadside hedges in the south. The landscape structure in the south has been weakened and the character eroded through urban fringe elements.

**Overall sensitivity: Medium**

*Key elements of landscape sensitivity*

- Part of the flat valley floor between the river Kennet and river Pang
- Extensive areas of woodland, pasture and amenity grassland
- Small to medium scale field pattern well defined by hedgerows and tree belts
- Good sense of seclusion in north
- Narrow winding rural road network
- Contained linear village at North Street

- Scattered farmsteads and other built form clusters
- Visually exposed to views from the escarpments, in particular Englefield
- Significant individual historic buildings and settlement at North Street
- Good level of recreational provision and public rights of way
- BAP woodlands and significant lengths of hedgerow
- Important approach to the model estate at Englefield

*Other landscape sensitivity interests*

- Past inappropriate man made landform on golf course and highway infrastructure
- Weakened landscape structure in the south west
- Some urban fringe elements such as pylons, sewage plant, lighting to school playing fields
- Tranquillity compromised by urban fringe elements and M4

*Wider landscape*

*LLCA16A Englefield Wooded Farmlands* has strong landscape links with land to the north and north west at the foot of the Englefield escarpment beyond the study area. It is a visually enclosed area but visible from the higher ground of the rural escarpments.

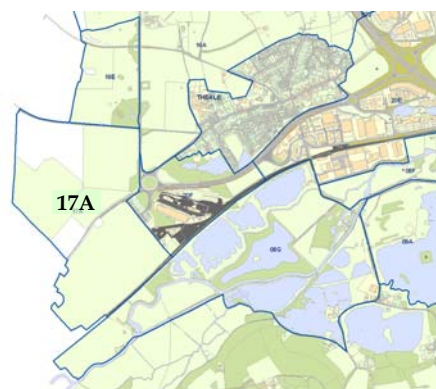
**Setting to the urban form**

*LLCA16A Englefield Wooded Farmlands* abuts Theale village and 20E on its southern boundary. The built form of Theale is visually exposed but 16A provides a strong contrast and rural landscape setting to the village.



**LLCA17A: Englefield Open Farmland**

Across to Bostock Lane from the A4



A4 approach to Theale



From Wigmore Lane across to the railway line

*Englefield Open Farmland* is characterised by its flat arable landscape, subdivided by low neat hedges, on the Kennet valley floor at the foot of the wooded escarpment to the north.

***Overall sensitivity: Medium to low***

*Key elements of landscape sensitivity*

- Extensive grade 3 agricultural land
- Small area in the south within the floodplain
- Local copses and woodland
- Visually exposed, particularly in views from the Kennet Valley and the escarpment

*Other landscape sensitivity interests*

- Pattern of low neat hedges subdividing the fields and along roadsides

- Several individual features of archaeological interest

#### *Wider landscape*

*LLCA17A Englefield Open Farmland* has strong links with landscape to the west and forms an important setting to the escarpment to the north. Its flat landscape and large arable fields contrast with the wooded escarpment and the riparian landscape of LLCA8G.

#### **Setting to the urban form**

*LLCA17A Englefield Open Farmland* abuts an industrial area of Theale and housing at Wigmore Lane and lies close to approved residential site at Lakeside. The boundary is defined by well managed hedgerows and the A340; and by woodland planting on the A4 roundabout.

**LLCA18E: Englefield Park****Gates to Englefield House****Englefield Park****Woodland and walls to Englefield Park**

*Englefield Park* is characterised by its open parkland grassland with parkland trees and woodland close to the A340. Key historic walls and gate lodges are landmarks on the A340 and mark the main approach to the house. This part of the park is important to the landscape integrity of the registered historic park and garden.

***Overall sensitivity: Medium to high***

*Key elements of landscape sensitivity*

- Parkland landscape with important landscape features
- Woodland and open grassland
- Prominent historic built form on A340
- Park gate is a landmark feature
- Sweeping topography visible under tree cover
- Brick and flint walls
- Model estate approach road

- Open in views from wider parkland and model village outside of the study area
- Nationally registered historic park and garden
- Medium to high historic landscape sensitivity
- Permitted access over park
- Strong cultural associations

*Other landscape sensitivity interests*

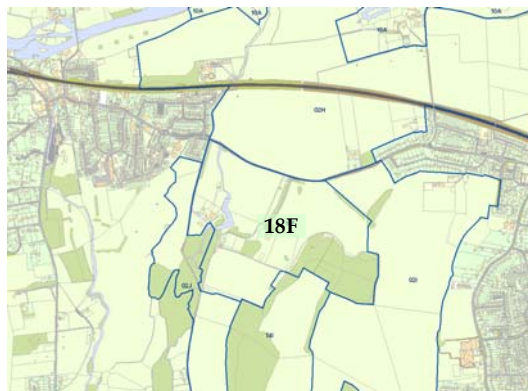
- Not much sense of seclusion
- Busy A340

*Wider landscape*

The landscape character of *LLCA18E Englefield Park* continues westwards into the remainder of Englefield Park and the model village of Englefield. It has a high level of intervisibility with the wider parkland and with the north west area of 16A, although not with the eastern part of 16A.

**Setting to the urban form**

*LLCA18E: Englefield Park* is separated from Theale by 16A. Theale is screened to some extent by vegetation in both 16A and 18E but views open up from higher ground in the west.

**LLCA18F: Purley Hall****The Canal****View to Home Farm from Sulham Lane****The Gatehouse**

*Purley Hall* is characterised by its high level of extant historic informally laid out landscape and built form features. It forms an area of transition from the riparian landscape of Sulham Brook and the wooded hillside of the escarpment.

***Overall sensitivity: Medium to high***

*Key elements of landscape sensitivity*

- Flat valley plain with steeply rising land of the chalk escarpment in the east
- Mainly grade 2 agricultural land
- Pasture, wooded slopes and parkland planting and lawns
- Wetland landscapes including a lake, wet meadows, wet woodland and willow plantation
- Western part lies in Sulham Brook floodplain
- Elegant brick and stone country house; brick walls to kitchen gardens
- Landmark buildings



- Secluded and enclosed
- Registered Historic Park and Garden, Grade II\* listed Purley Hall and its associated buildings
- Medium up to high historic landscape sensitivity

*Other landscape sensitivity interests*

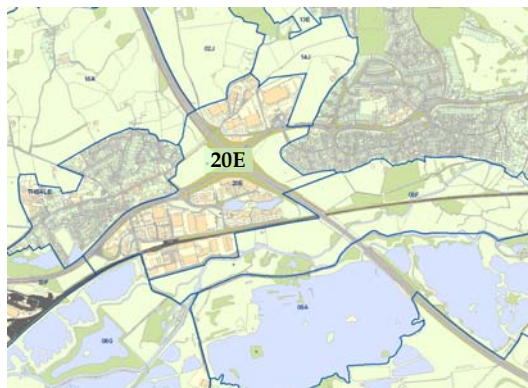
- Cottages on the estate, and group of farm buildings at Home Farm
- Good sense of tranquillity despite proximity of settlement and roads
- Several features of significant historic interest
- Little biodiversity interest but part of Sulham Brook corridor
- Cultural connections and Parish Plan

*Wider landscape*

*LLCA18F Purley Hall* is an important part of the lowland landscape from the river Thames floodplain to the north and the Pang valley to the south. It shares similar characteristics with *LLCA2J* and is a transition between the valley landscape and the wooded escarpments of *LLCAs 2I* and *14I*.

**Setting to the urban form**

*LLCA18F Purley Hall* lies in open area between Pangbourne and Purley and is separated from West Reading by an open landscape of wooded slopes and agricultural plateau in *LLCAs 2I* and *2J*.

**LLCA20E: Theale – Calcot Gap****The A4 Bath Road at Calcot****Open land south of Theale High Street****The lake at Arlington Park**

*Theale – Calcot Gap* is divided into 4 unequal quarters, two of which comprise open land and two of which are covered by commercial development.

***Overall sensitivity: Low***

*Key elements of landscape sensitivity*

- Recent new landscapes (such as Arlington Park) have created a more positive, ornamental landscape setting
- Remnant fields and tree cover
- Several local landmarks, set within uncohesive built form
- Visually exposed to views from higher ground and settlement edge
- Geological SSSI

*Other landscape sensitivity interests*

- Undulating topography falling to the valley floor which has been significantly altered by highway infrastructure
- Distinctive modern commercial built form
- Dominance of highway infrastructure
- Generally poor landscape structure

*Wider landscape*

The open landscape quarters of *LLCA20E Theale – Calcot Gap* link through to the Kennet Valley landscape of 8F in the east and the farmed landscape of 16A to the north west. There is a strong landscape and visual link between 16A and the north west quarter. The south east quarter has more in common with south 14J from which it is separated by the A4 infrastructure but it has good visual links with 8F.

**Setting to the urban form**

*LLCA20E: Theale – Calcot Gap* separates Theale from Reading but includes substantial areas of commercial development straddling the M4 junction. This differs in character from the residential townscape of both Theale and Calcot and together with the open space defines the gap. The open land retains the perception of separation between the two settlements.

**LLCA20F: West Theale****Foster Yeoman****Theale Lakeside****Houses on Wigmore Lane**

*West Theale* is characterised by a mix of intense commercial activity at Foster Yeoman and derelict land at Theale Lakeside. Set within this, are the woodlands and a lake, which have either resulted from former older gravel pits or highway planting. These make an important contribution to the area and the western approach to Theale. The Foster Yeoman building is a landmark feature.

**Overall sensitivity: Low**

*Key elements of landscape sensitivity*

- Theale lake and its surrounding woodland
- Some historic interest
- Medium to low biodiversity including BAP habitats

*Other landscape sensitivity interests*

- Flat valley floor significantly modified by man made landform
- Mix of commercial and derelict land with some important tree screening
- Major large scale commercial buildings abut low rise residential development
- Major communication routes
- Low historic landscape sensitivity
- Informal public access
- Little cultural interest

*Wider landscape*

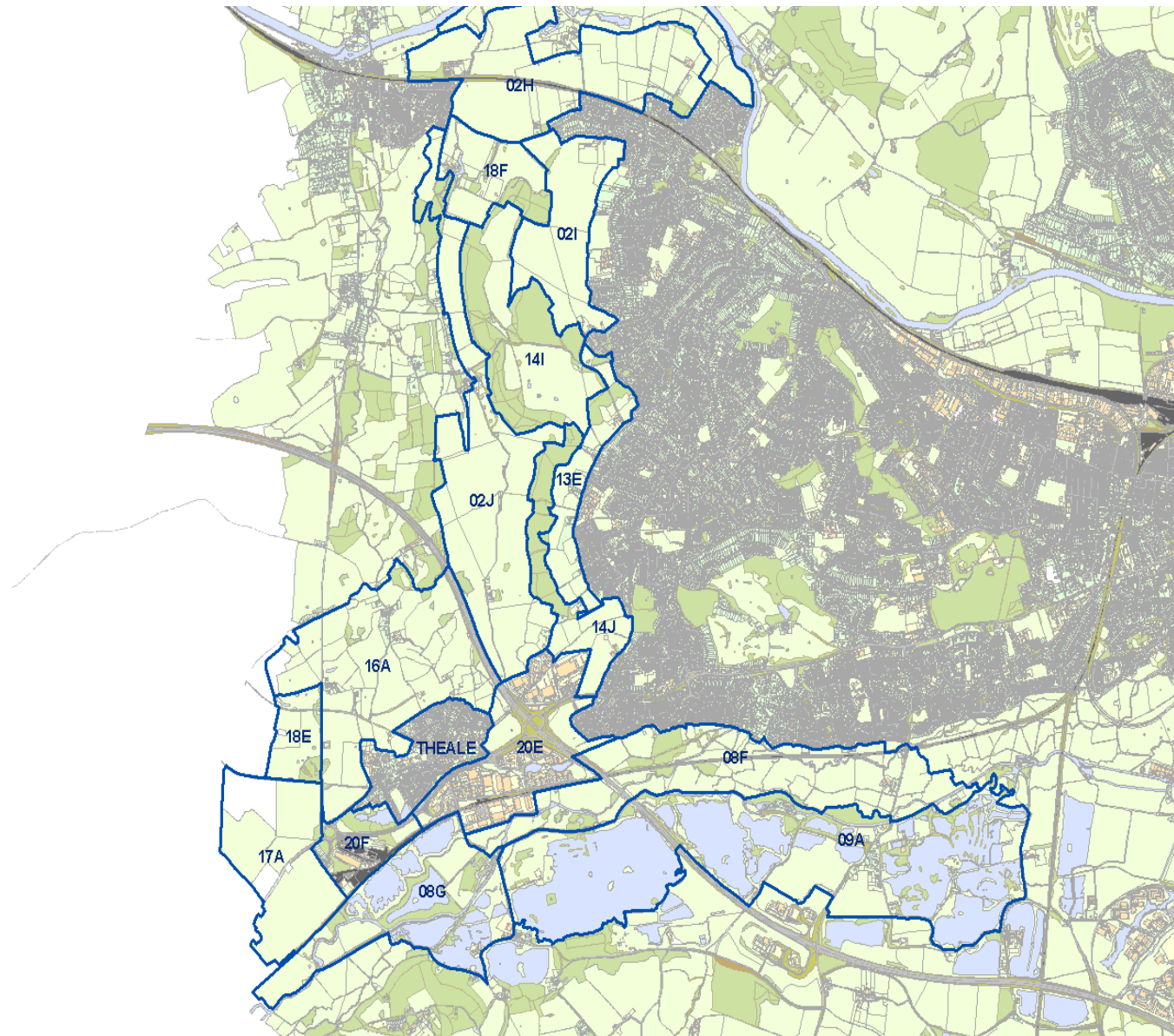
*LLCA20F West Theale* is a self contained area which contrasts considerably with the adjacent Kennet valley landscape of 8G and the farmed landscapes of 16A and 17A. It is visually enclosed except for along its western and northern boundaries.

**Setting to the urban form**

*LLCA20F: West Theale* forms the western edge of Theale but its built form characteristics are very different. It forms an important transition zone between the AONB to the west and the village and setting and approach to Theale.



FIGURE 1C: WEST READING LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

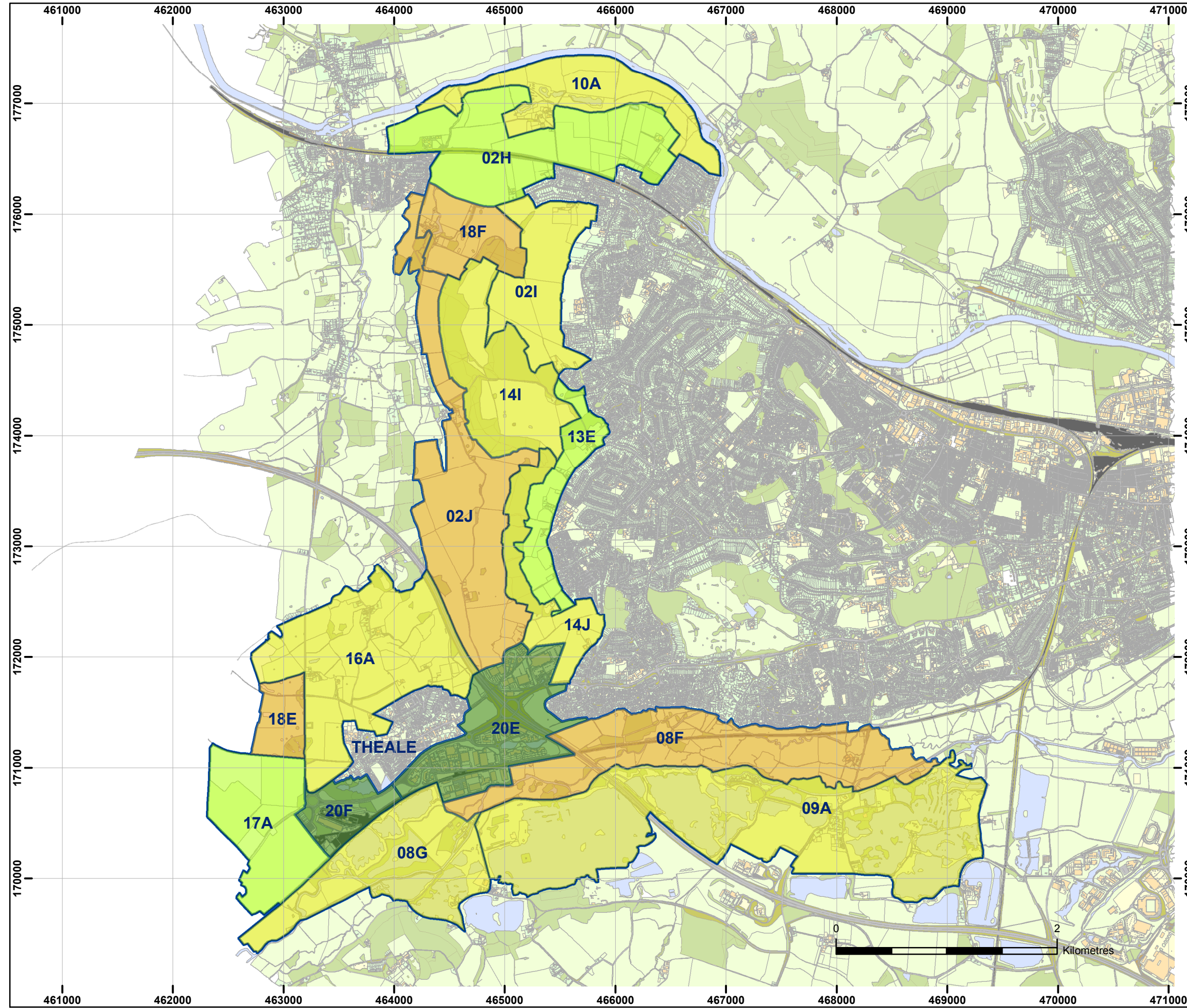


- 2H: Lower Purley Chalk Lowlands
- 2I: Upper Sulham Dipslopes
- 2J: Lower Sulham Dipslopes
- 8F: lower Kennet Meadows
- 8G: Lower Kennet Wetlands
- 9A: Lower Kennet Lakes
- 10A: Purley River Valley
- 13E: Little Heath Gravel Plateau
- 14I: Purley Plateau Edge
- 14J: Tilehurst Plateau Edge
- 16A: Englefield Wooded Farmlands
- 17A: Englefield Open Farmland
- 18E: Englefield Park
- 18F: Purley Hall
- 20E: Theale - Calcot Gap
- 20F: West Theale



### West Berkshire Landscape Sensitivity Study

- low sensitivity
- low to medium sensitivity
- medium sensitivity
- medium to high sensitivity
- high sensitivity



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