



**Blewbury  
Neighbourhood  
Development  
Plan**

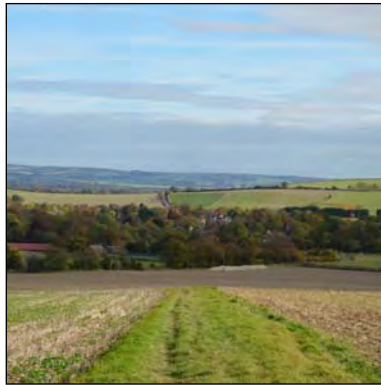
## **Appendix C: Landscape Character Assessment**

This appendix presents the full text of the Landscape Character Assessment carried out for the Parish Council. The main body of the report is followed by an appendix with more details of the landscape capacity analysis, a set of relevant maps and then a set of photographs of the parish. A very long appendix to the report, “Oxfordshire Wildlife & Landscape Study” by Oxfordshire County Council has been omitted.



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# **Blewbury Neighbourhood Plan Landscape Assessment for Blewbury Parish Council**



## **Issue 7 January 2016**

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## **Photographs**

**Appendix 1 – Oxfordshire Wildlife & Landscape Study – Landscape character types and Local landscape character areas within Blewbury Parish. OMITTED.**

**Appendix 2 – Analysis of Landscape Capacity**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This Landscape Character Assessment has been commissioned by Blewbury Parish Council to inform the preparation of the Blewbury Neighbourhood Plan. The Brief for the assessment seeks to assess the landscape character of Blewbury Parish landscape and to determine its local landscape character, identifying key characteristics and sensitivities, both in terms of character and visibility. The report also seeks to set out landscape capacity and development guidelines, should development sites come forward in the future.
- 1.2 This Landscape Character Assessment is based on current good practice and recognised methodology. It identifies character areas within the Parish, which have been assessed so as to define the character of the Parish and setting to the village and determine its sensitivity to, and capacity for, development.
- 1.3 Natural England describes landscape character as the landscape features which make an area unique. It is defined as "a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements, be it natural (soil, landform) and/or human (for example settlement and development) in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another "(Ref 1).
- 1.4 The report divides the landscape into areas of common landscape character, listing the key landscape characteristics and landscape and visual sensitivities of each area. This analysis will highlight areas of the Parish which are sensitive and of low landscape capacity where future development would be inappropriate. Landscape sensitivity and value may not be completely uniform across an entire character area and therefore the capacity across a character area may vary slightly. This is commented on in Section 5 where particularly relevant.

## **2. Background**

### **2.1 Desk study**

2.1.1 A comprehensive desk-top assessment of the local area was undertaken to form the basis of the assessment and assist in identifying the Parish landscape character areas. Desk study data considered includes:

- Geology and soils;
- Topography;
- Land use (based on aerial photography);
- Regional landscape character areas;
- District landscape character and capacity assessments;
- Historic landscape characterisation;
- Development Plan designations including local landscape, nature conservation, and heritage designation;
- Key public rights of way (e.g. long distance footpaths) and notable view points;
- Areas at risk of flooding.

2.1.2 The data was analysed and set out in working plans, tables, figures and text, and used to review the existing landscape character assessments and provisionally subdivide the County/District character areas into draft landscape character areas appropriate to the Parish scale. The outer boundary of these character areas in turn formed a draft study area boundary.

### **2.2 Field Assessment**

2.2.1 The assessment is underpinned by field assessments carried out during October and November 2014 by an experienced Senior Landscape Architect, overseen and reviewed by the Project Director.

2.2.2 Field assessment involved travelling extensively throughout Blewbury Parish and the immediate surroundings, with extra focus on the relationship between the village and the surrounding AONB landscape including the influences of the downs escarpment and Blewburton Hill. This involved recording variations in landscape character including (list is not exhaustive): local topography, existing land uses and vegetation structure, condition of landscape elements (trees, hedges etc.), streams/ditches, character of the built edge of settlements, intervisibility between settlements, local landmarks and visual detractors, relationship with the AONB and key views. A working photographic record was produced to support the survey work.

### **3 Blewbury Parish Landscape Structure Analysis**

3.1 The aim of landscape structure analysis is to identify the main elements which contribute to the character, structure and setting of the settlement and the AONB. This section includes an evaluation of the existing Landscape Character Context (section 3.2, Plan HDA1 and Appendix 1) and the local landscape context of the Parish, (section 3.3) which looks at the settlement of Blewbury in detail and sets out our initial analysis of the area (Plans HDA 2 – 4).

### **3.2 Landscape Character Context**

There are national, regional and district scale landscape character assessments that cover the landscape within and around Blewbury Parish. The national scale assessment has not been analysed for this assessment, as more detailed data is available.

#### **3.2.1 The North Wessex Downs AONB**

The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers the whole of Blewbury Parish (see plan HDA 3). This is an important consideration when assessing the landscape character of the area, along with the landscape sensitivity and subsequent capacity of the Parish. The North Wessex Downs AONB integrated landscape character assessment (Ref 2) identifies two character areas which cover Blewbury Parish. These are: Character Area 1D: Blewbury Downs, which lies to the south of the village but includes Blewburton Hill to the east, and Character Area 5D: Moreton Plain, which includes the majority of the village and lower lying land to the north of the A417 London Road. Key characteristics of each character area are listed below.

#### **Character Area 1D: Blewbury Downs**

- Middle and Upper Chalk with overlying drift deposits of Clay-with-Flint.
- Elevated rolling downland with round or flat-topped hills intersected by dry valleys.
- Northern edge formed by a steep, deeply convoluted scarp, allowing long views out to the north.
- Large scale, open landscape dominated by arable farmland with sparse woodland cover on the tops. There are numerous equestrian centres and gallops.
- Settlement includes large villages set within dry valleys.
- Heritage features include Bronze Age barrows located on the scarp edge, along with an Iron Age hillfort at Blewburton Hill and a folly on Churn Hill.
- Numerous rights of way run through the character area including The Ridgeway national trail.

### **Character Area 5D: Moreton Plain**

- A transitional landscape between the high downs and the Thames Floodplain, with a geology of Lower Chalk and Upper Greensand within Blewbury Parish.
- A large, open, expansive landscape with views of the strong ridges and skylines of the downs and downland outliers. The chimneys of Didcot power station are also present in many views.
- Dominated by large arable fields with a weak or absent hedgerow structure.
- Large spring line villages including Blewbury and Aston Tirrold are located at the base of the scarp to the south of the character area.
- There are many attractive vernacular buildings, with materials including red brick, thatch and weatherboard.

### **3.2.2**

### **Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)**

OWLS is the current landscape character assessment for Oxfordshire (2004 – Ref 3). The following landscape character types are found within Blewbury Parish: Alluvial Lowlands, Terrace Farmland, Rolling Farmland, Chalk Downland and Slopes and Wooded Downlands. The areas for these character types are shown on plan HDA 1 and the full descriptions are appended to this report within Appendix 1. Each landscape type is broken down into local character areas. Key characteristics of each type and subsequent local character area are listed below:

#### **Alluvial Lowlands – character area WH/5 Brightwell-cum-Sotwell**

- Medium sized arable fields with some semi-improved pasture adjacent to Mill Brook.
- Fields enclosed by ditches and Hawthorn hedges with mature hedgerow trees, although many hedges are gappy and fragmented.
- Tree lined watercourses with species including Willow, Ash and Poplar.
- Flat landscape of lowland river valleys.
- Alluvial soils.
- Sparsely settled.
- Landscape strategy: *'maintain the tranquil nature of the landscape and promote the restoration and enhancement of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and tree lined watercourses'*

#### **Terrace Farmlands – character area WH/30 Poultry Farm**

- Large, open arable fields.
- Fields generally lack enclosure, although there are some Hawthorn hedgerows – particularly along roads – and some fields are divided by shelterbelts of Poplar.
- Clumps of Lime, Beech and Sycamore located along roads and around farms.
- Associated with deposits of terrace sand gravels.

- Landscape strategy: *'strengthen and enhance the pattern of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and tree lined watercourses'*

#### **Rolling Farmland – character area WD/6 Blewbury**

- Large-sized arable fields, with a few surviving areas of unimproved and semi-improved grassland.
- Prominent rolling landform and distant views from hillsides and the surrounding low-lying vale.
- Fields enclosed by Hawthorn and Elm hedges, often fragmented, with occasional Ash and Elm trees.
- Linear tree plantations with a mix of tree sizes and species.
- Watercourses lined with Willow Ash, Poplar and linear strips of semi-natural woodland.
- Geology is a mix of Gault Clay and Upper Greensand
- Landscape strategy: *'conserve and enhance the surviving pattern of woodlands, hedgerows, hedgerow trees and tree-lined watercourses. Minimise the impact of built development through appropriate location, choice of building materials, and the use of locally characteristic tree and shrub species.'*

#### **Chalk Downland and Slopes – character area WD/9 Upton Downland**

- Large scale and intensively farmed arable landscape with a rolling topography.
- General absence of woodland features, which gives a very open character.
- Only landscape features are trees around farm buildings and fragmented Hawthorn hedges along tracks and roads
- Geology of Lower and Middle chalk.
- Sparsely settled, with isolated farmsteads
- Landscape strategy: *'Conserve overall pattern of open downland and beech plantations and encourage arable reversion to grassland particularly along the escarpment and in association with features of archaeological importance.'*

#### **Wooded Downlands– character area WD/10 Blewbury Downs**

- Downland landscape with rounded hills, steep slopes and narrow valleys.
- Wooded landscape with a range of small mixed and broadleaf plantations with larger blocks of ancient woodland on the steeper slopes.
- Arable farming dominates with frequent horse gallops consisting of semi-improved grassland and some sheep grazed pastureland. There are some areas of unimproved chalk grassland interspersed with scrub on steep valley sides, generally to the east of the character area.
- Geology of dominated by Middle chalk.
- Sparsely settled, with scattered farms, barns and stables.

- Landscape strategy: *'Conserve the mosaic of open downland, woodland and sparse settlement.'*

### **3.3 Blewbury village and the local landscape context (see plans HDA 2 - 5)**

- 3.3.1 Blewbury Parish is located in the Vale of White Horse District in Oxfordshire, approximately 12 miles south of Oxford and approximately 16 miles north-west of Reading. The Parish is centred around the settlement of Blewbury, a springline village, located at the foot of the Berkshire Downs, on the A417 London Road. The Parish boundary extends north to Mill Brook, east to the top of Blewburton Hill, south to the Berkshire Circular Route at the top of the downs and extending along the top of the south-facing slope at the top of the Compton Downs. The Parish extends west to the edge of Upton village (See plans HDA 2 and 4). The nearest villages are Upton, to the west, East Hagbourne to the north-west, South Moreton to the north-east and Aston Tirrold to the east. The high ground of the downs to the south are devoid of settlement – other than occasional farmsteads. Didcot is the nearest town, located approximately 4 miles to the north of Blewbury and accessed via the B4016, a road which runs north up the eastern boundary of the village.
- 3.3.2 The topography of the Parish is split between the open, flat lowland to the north and the dramatic north-facing escarpment, which lies to the immediate south of the village. Blewburton Hill lies to the east of the village and is a continuation of the steep chalk slopes that extend out from the downs escarpment (see plan HDA 2). With the exception of the centre of the village and the more contained landscape to the north of the village adjacent to Mill Stream, the entire Parish is visually dominated by the downs and Blewburton Hill. The dramatic changes in topography allow panoramic views, both of and from the elevated landform. Springs occur within the village and drain north in small streams and ditches, to Mill Brook. The landform and drainage of the Parish are an integral part of the local landscape character and provide a unique sense of place.
- 3.3.3 The North Wessex Downs AONB covers the entire Parish (see plan HDA 3). This is a national designation with policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework that protects the landscape within the AONB for its landscape and scenic beauty. Any development within the Parish would need to demonstrate that it is in the public interest and would not harm the character or appearance of the AONB.
- 3.3.4 Blewbury Parish has a number of heritage assets including two scheduled monuments and the historic core of the village itself, much of which is designated as a conservation area. The remnants of the Iron Age hillfort is clearly visible at Blewburton Hill, which is designated as a Scheduled Monument and is a prominent local landmark. The folly on Churn Hill is also a Scheduled Monument. The Conservation Area covers the majority of

the village and contains 59 listed buildings, which showcase a range of styles and reflect different time periods. Only two listed buildings are located outside the Conservation Area and both of these are located adjacent to the Conservation Area, within the village envelope. The Church of St Michael dates back to Norman times and the pattern of roads and paths through the village date back to the Saxon period. In addition to the buildings, the cob walls and waterways within the village have historic value and are locally distinctive.

- 3.3.5 The village has a number of local amenities including a doctor's surgery, primary school, church, village hall, playgroup, post office, convenience store, greengrocers, hairdressers, pubs and a plant nursery and greengrocer with an on-site café. The recreation ground and allotments also provide outdoor facilities for village residents.
- 3.3.6 The land use within the Parish is predominantly arable agriculture, with some grazed pasture to the immediate north and south-east of the village. These fields in pasture are generally horse paddocks and are smaller scale than the arable fields, which are large, open and expansive (plan HDA 4). Horse riding and livery and the horse racing industry are significant contributors to the established character and land use of the area. The arable agriculture is intensive, which has led to the large field sizes with few boundaries. Where boundaries do exist these are generally hawthorn hedgerows. Tree cover is limited to the watercourses and hedgerows (particularly to the north), shelterbelts around farmstead and blocks of woodland on the downs. Within the village and its immediate surroundings there are some traditional orchards, which are a BAP (Biodiversity Action Plan) priority habitat. There are no rivers within the Parish, but there are numerous minor watercourses including streams, field drains and ponds, originating with the springs in the village itself. Water is a significant feature within the village and has shaped the settlement pattern, routes and open spaces within the village. To the south-west of the village there is a cemetery and a recreation ground, which includes pitches, tennis courts, an equipped play area and Tickers Folly – an informal recreation space. To the north-east of the village there is an area of allotments, to the north of Winterbrook Farm.
- 3.3.7 Numerous public rights of way cross the Parish allowing public access and enjoyment of the AONB landscape. The St Birinus Pilgrimage walk is a historic route that runs from Churn Hill in the south, through the village and east to South Moreton. The footpaths to the east, west and south-west of the village are open and afford long views. The footpaths to the south, which lead up the escarpment are often sunken and enclosed by hedgerows, however at the summit of the slopes, there are gaps in the vegetation that allow panoramic views to the north, which extend as far as The Chilterns and include views of Didcot and Wittenham Clumps. Some of the most significant views are possible from the chalk pit, located on the escarpment adjacent to footpath 14, which is a local landmark. Seating has

been installed to the south of the chalk pits to allow residents and visitors to enjoy the views from this location. Key views have been shown on plan HDA 4. The rights of way within the village and to the south of the village are associated with the vegetated watercourses and are much more intimate and enclosed in character.

### **3.4 Blewbury Parish– Key Elements**

- **Water:** Blewbury is a spring-line village. The water source is the reason why it became settled. The pattern of the village is set by the network of waterbodies that wind through it.
- **Heritage:** There is a considerable amount of historic interest, both within the village as part of the built form and present in the surrounding landscape, as identified in the two scheduled monuments designated on Churn Hill and Blewburton Hill. The built heritage is reflected in the local vernacular and the materials used in construction including brick, thatch and plain clay tiles.
- **Location and character:** The village is nestled at the foot of the Berkshire Downs, which form an impressive setting to the south of the village. The open landscapes to the east and west of the village allow an appreciation of the downs escarpment and of the historic Blewburton Hill, which reflect the AONB designation that sweeps over the whole Parish. The character of the landscape within the village itself is a key contributor to the 'sense of place' of the village.
- **Views:** Due to the open nature of the landscape and the dramatic changes in topography, there are important views from the village out to the surrounding landscape and impressive views from the surrounding landscape, to which the village contributes.
- **Nucleated and compact settlement pattern** largely contained by a mature landscape structure.

#### **4. Parish Landscape Character Areas: analysis, capacity appraisal and photographs**

##### **4.1 Landscape characterization**

4.1.1 Drawing on the initial desk study, landscape structure analysis and the field assessment, the study divides the landscape into Parish scale landscape character areas of specific landscape character. Blewbury Parish has been divided into 11 Local Landscape Character Areas. These have been shown and listed on plan HDA 6.

##### **4.2 Analysis of Parish scale Landscape Character Areas**

4.2.1 The characteristics of each Parish-scale landscape character area is analysed against criteria identified in Topic Paper 6 of the Countryside Agency's Landscape Character Assessment Guidance, along with identification of any designations, and consideration of the historic landscape characterisation of the area. This information forms the basis for the landscape sensitivity and landscape value assessments.

4.2.2 A detailed methodology for the analysis can be found in Appendix 2. The landscape value, sensitivity and capacity assessments of each Parish scale character area are found in Appendix 2 and are summarised below.

4.2.3 The following is a list of the Parish landscape character areas identified within Blewbury Parish.

- 1 Blewbury Escarpment**
- 2 Blewbury and Upton Escarpment**
- 3 Blewbury and Upton Plain**
- 4 Blewbury and Upton Alluvial Pasture**
- 5 Blewburton Farmland Slopes**
- 6 Mill Stream Pasture**
- 7 Winterbrook Farmstead**
- 8 Eastfield Farmstead**
- 9 Blewbury Southern Pasture**
- 10 Churn Hill Downland**
- 11 Blewburton and Riddle Hill Downland**

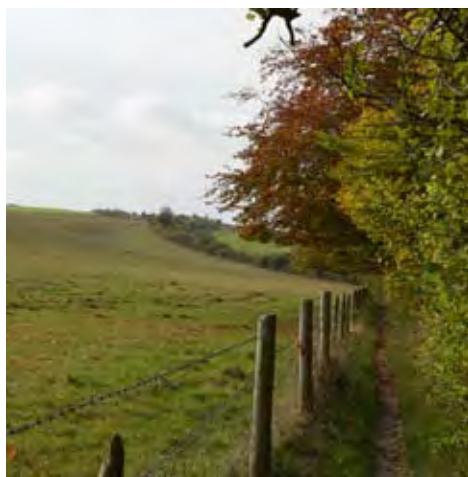
For each character area there will be a description of landscape character, the key issues facing the character area, a breakdown of landscape and visual sensitivity, the landscape value of the area and the resulting landscape capacity.

Character Area	Designations and policy	Landscape analysis	Key issues and management prescriptions	Capacity Summary (see Appendix 2 for analysis)
<b>1</b>  <b>Blewbury Escarpment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Part of the North Wessex Downs AONB</li> <li>- Area of Open Access Land within character area</li> <li>- Public Rights of Way run across character area including St Birinus pilgrimage walk</li> <li>- BAP priority habitat: Deciduous woodland</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Located to the south of Blewbury Village.</li> <li>• Convoluted and complex north-facing scarp face of Blewbury Downs.</li> <li>• A mixture of medium and large scale arable and pasture fields, which are open and exposed. Some have boundary hedges.</li> <li>• Numerous rights of way, often located between field boundaries and are generally enclosed by vegetation. Many are sunken lanes marking historic routes. Rights of way are well used by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders and are an important recreational resource.</li> <li>• Gaps in the vegetation along the rights of way allow extensive panoramic views over Blewbury, extending as far as the Chilterns to the north and east.</li> <li>• Geology of middle and upper chalk.</li> <li>• Two roads are located along the eastern and western boundaries of the character area. These are rural lanes and are enclosed by vegetation.</li> <li>• There is no settlement within the character area.</li> <li>• The Character Area includes the Chalk Pit, a locally important landmark.</li> <li>• A rural landscape that is attractive, tranquil and has key viewpoints which overlook the AONB landscape.</li> <li>• Detached from settlement. The northern boundary is adjacent to Tickers Folly, part of the recreation ground, and a wooded paddock.</li> <li>• The escarpment forms the southern setting to Blewbury and shapes the skyline that is visible from the settlement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural intensification resulting in a loss of chalk grassland and hedgerow cover. Retain and protect existing areas of pasture, particularly chalk grassland habitat.</li> <li>• Vulnerability to large scale development. Tall structures would be visually intrusive and would disrupt the existing skyline.</li> <li>• Conservation of existing views</li> <li>• Retain strong skylines and clear ridges</li> <li>• Maintain the tranquil character of the landscape</li> <li>• Improve management of existing woodland and plant new woodland blocks using characteristic species.</li> <li>• Improve management of hedgerows and vegetation lining roads / paths.</li> <li>• Protect the Chalk Pit as a feature of local importance.</li> </ul>	Sensitivity = Major  Landscape Value = Major  Capacity = Negligible

Parish character area



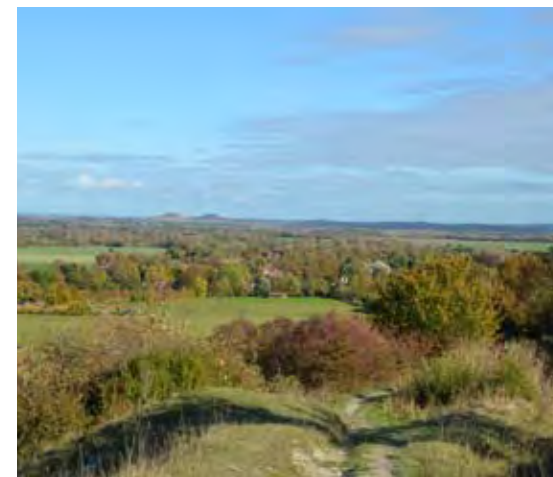
Photograph/s showing key characteristics



Scarp face.



Enclosed and sunken right of way.



Panoramic views.

Character Area	Designations and policy	Landscape analysis	Key issues and management prescriptions	Capacity Summary (see Appendix 2 for analysis)
<b>2</b>  <b>Blewbury and Upton Escarpment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Part of the North Wessex Downs AONB</li> <li>- Public Right of Way runs across character area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Located to the south-west of Blewbury Village, between Blewbury and Upton.</li> <li>• North-facing scarp face of Blewbury Downs located on middle and lower Chalk.</li> <li>• A large scale open and exposed arable landscape with few boundary features or vegetation.</li> <li>• A public right of way allows access up the scarp face, which has panoramic views to the north and east.</li> <li>• There is no settlement within the character area, although New Buildings is visible to the immediate south-west of the area.</li> <li>• A simple and dramatic rural landscape that is open and expansive, with high intervisibility with the wider AONB landscape. The openness of the landscape draws attention to the rounded scarp face, which is the defining feature of the character area.</li> <li>• Detached from settlement but lies adjacent to recreation ground and cemetery.</li> <li>• The rounded hilltop of the character area makes up part of the setting to Blewbury and shapes the skyline that is visible from the settlement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural intensification resulting in further loss of hedgerow cover.</li> <li>• Poor quality / fragmented hedgerows with loss of hedgerow trees. Opportunity to enhance hedgerows and improve hedgerow management.</li> <li>• Vulnerability to large scale development. Tall structures would be visually intrusive and would disrupt the existing skyline.</li> <li>• Conservation of existing views</li> <li>• Retain strong skylines and clear ridges</li> <li>• Maintain the tranquil character of the landscape</li> </ul>	Sensitivity = Major  Landscape Value = Substantial  Capacity = Negligible

Parish character area



Photograph/s showing key characteristics



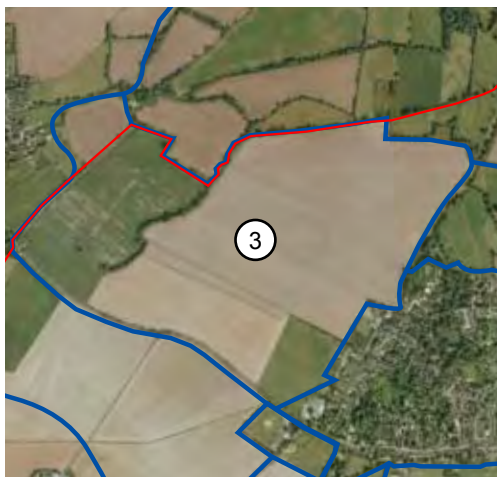
Escarpment forms skyline.



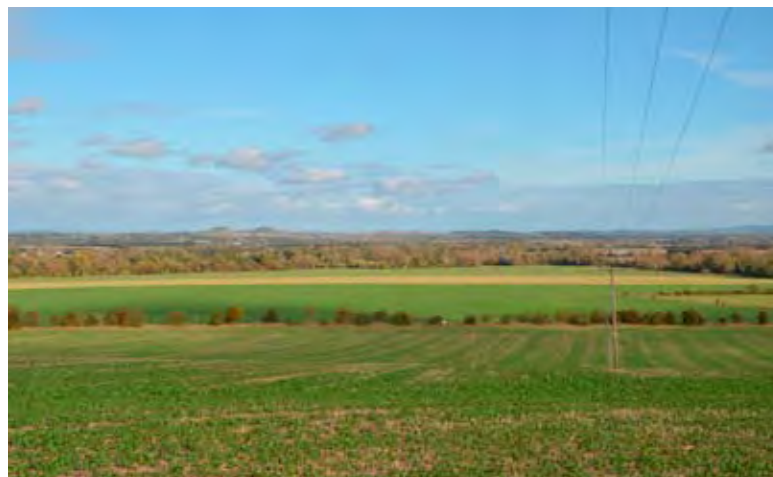
Panoramic views across Blewbury to Blewburton Hill.

Character Area	Designations and policy	Landscape analysis	Key issues and management prescriptions	Capacity Summary (see Appendix 2 for analysis)
<b>3</b>  <b>Blewbury and Upton Plain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Part of the North Wessex Downs AONB</li> <li>- Public Rights of Way run across character area, including Coffin Way, between Blewbury and Upton.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Located to the west of Blewbury Village, between Blewbury and Upton.</li> <li>• An almost flat landscape with a gentle north-facing slope. The topography is in direct contrast to the escarpment to the south.</li> <li>• A large scale open and exposed arable landscape with few boundary features or vegetation.</li> <li>• Two public rights of way cross the character area, one of which is Coffin Way, which links Blewbury and Upton.</li> <li>• There are panoramic views contained by the rising ground of the Downs to the south and east, including Blewburton Hill to the east. Wittenham Clumps can be seen in the distance to the north. The Downs form an impressive sweeping skyline to the character area.</li> <li>• There is no settlement within the character area, although the western edge of Blewbury is visible, along with distant views of Didcot.</li> <li>• An open and expansive rural landscape, with panoramic views contained at the edges by landform.</li> <li>• The character area abuts the western edge of Blewbury and provides a stark and open contrast to the intimate character of the settlement. The settlement edge is softened by vegetation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural intensification resulting in a loss of hedgerow cover.</li> <li>• Poor quality / fragmented hedgerows with loss of hedgerow trees. Opportunity to enhance hedgerows and improve hedgerow management.</li> <li>• Pressure for new village expansion. Potential associated impact on adjacent landscape character, village character and local vernacular.</li> <li>• Conservation of existing views</li> </ul>	Sensitivity = Substantial  Landscape Value = Substantial  Capacity = Negligible / Low

Parish character area



Photograph/s showing key characteristics



Flat and open landscape.



The Downs form Skyline. Soft edge to Blewbury.

Character Area	Designations and policy	Landscape analysis	Key issues and management prescriptions	Capacity Summary (see Appendix 2 for analysis)
<b>4</b> <b>Blewbury and Upton Alluvial Pasture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The land within the Parish is part of the North Wessex Downs AONB</li> <li>- Public Rights of Way run across character area</li> <li>- Pocket of ancient woodland to north of Blewbury Mill</li> <li>- BAP priority habitat: Deciduous woodland</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Located to the north-west of Blewbury Village.</li> <li>• A flat and rural alluvial landscape, laced with water courses including streams and ditches.</li> <li>• A much more contained landscape than the land to the south, with hedgerows, copses of trees and tree lined waterways.</li> <li>• Small - medium scale arable and pasture fields. Fields are generally regular, however the pattern is often disrupted by the more sinuous nature of the streams that flow through the landscape.</li> <li>• Two public rights of way cross the character area and Blewbury Road forms the north-eastern boundary of the character area.</li> <li>• Settlement is restricted to Frogalley Farm and Blewbury Mill.</li> <li>• A rural and much more intimate landscape than character areas to the south of Blewbury.</li> <li>• Distant from settlement of Blewbury, with a strong rural context and no relationship with the settlement edge.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor quality / fragmented hedgerows with loss of hedgerow trees. Opportunity to enhance hedgerows and improve hedgerow management.</li> <li>• Retain and enhance tree lined watercourses with new planting and improved maintenance</li> <li>• Retain existing pasture and promote conversion of arable to pasture along watercourses</li> <li>• Maintain the tranquil character of the landscape</li> <li>• Improve management of existing woodland and plant new woodland blocks using characteristic species</li> </ul>	<p>Sensitivity = Major</p> <p>Landscape Value = Substantial</p> <p>Capacity = Negligible</p>

Parish character area



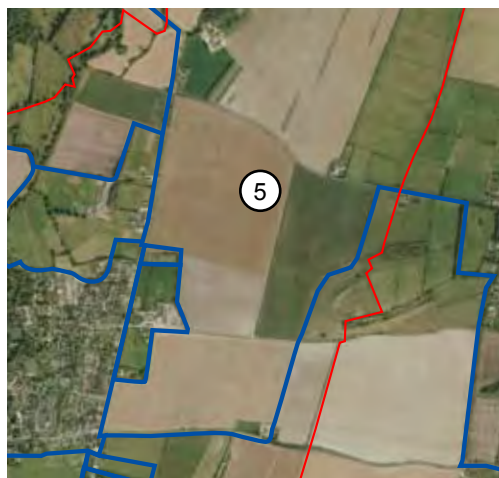
Photograph/s showing key characteristics



Well treed landscape. Hedgerow boundaries are characteristic.

Character Area	Designations and policy	Landscape analysis	Key issues and management prescriptions	Capacity Summary (see Appendix 2 for analysis)
<b>5</b> <b>Blewburton Farmland Slopes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Part of the North Wessex Downs AONB</li> <li>- Part of setting to Scheduled Monument</li> <li>- Public Rights of Way run across character area, including part of St Birinus Walk</li> <li>- BAP priority habitat: Deciduous woodland at Sheencroft Farm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Located to the east of Blewbury Village on the footslopes of Blewburton Hill.</li> <li>• The land is located on a west facing slope adjacent to the village, changing to a north facing slope to the north of Hagbourne Road.</li> <li>• An open, large scale and largely arable landscape with few boundary features or vegetation.</li> <li>• High intervisibility with local roads, including the B4016 Bessels Way and Hagbourne Road. Properties to either side of Winterbrook farm have intervisibility with the character area.</li> <li>• A number public rights of way cross the character area, one of which is part of St Birinus Walk.</li> <li>• Views are dominated by Blewburton Hill, a hill fort and Scheduled Monument located to the east of the character area. Blewburton Hill is a distinctive local landmark.</li> <li>• Isolated farmsteads form the only settlement within the character area, although the western boundary of the character area runs along the eastern edge of Blewbury Village. Where the character area abuts the settlement of Blewbury, it forms the foreground to views of Blewburton Hill from the village.</li> <li>• The character area has a contrasting character to the intimate character of the settlement. There is a strong settlement edge following the line of Bessels Way, to the immediate west of the character area.</li> <li>• A transitional landscape between the low lying village and the high ground of Blewburton Hill.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural intensification resulting in a loss of hedgerow cover.</li> <li>• Poor quality / fragmented hedgerows with loss of hedgerow trees. Opportunity to enhance hedgerows and improve hedgerow management.</li> <li>• Vulnerable to development. Tall structures would be visually intrusive and would disrupt the existing skyline.</li> <li>• Preserve and protect setting to Blewburton Hill.</li> <li>• Conservation of existing views from Blewbury village to Blewburton Hill, by preserving the open nature of the landscape.</li> </ul>	<p>Sensitivity = Substantial</p> <p>Landscape Value = Substantial</p> <p>Capacity = Negligible / Low</p>

Parish character area



Photograph/s showing key characteristics



Open and expansive landscape.



Transitional landscape between village and Blewburton Hill.

Character Area	Designations and policy	Landscape analysis	Key issues and management prescriptions	Capacity Summary (see Appendix 2 for analysis)
<b>6</b>  <b>Mill Stream Pasture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Part of the North Wessex Downs AONB</li> <li>- Public Rights of Way run across character area</li> <li>- BAP priority habitat: Deciduous woodland at The Old Mill</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Located to the immediate north of Blewbury Village.</li> <li>• A flat and rural alluvial landscape, divided by streams and ditches. Mill Stream forms the western edge of the character area.</li> <li>• A small scale and intimate landscape, with hedgerows and tree lined waterways.</li> <li>• Small - medium scale pasture fields. The fields to the north-east are regular, whereas the fields to the south-west have more sinuous boundaries and a higher degree of enclosure. Land uses include an equestrian centre (a common and characteristic land use in the local area) and a kennels.</li> <li>• There is intervisibility between the character area and the northern edge of Blewbury. The character area is also visible from the B4016 Bessels Way and Blewburton Hill.</li> <li>• The settlement edge is more convoluted than the edges to the east and north and is softened by intervening vegetation, although some properties are clearly visible. Parts of the character provide a pastoral setting to the village, however the buildings of the kennels and equestrian centre are visible to the north, which disrupt the rural context of the character area.</li> <li>• An outline planning permission exists on one of the fields to the north of the village, but this has yet to be constructed.</li> <li>• Two public rights of way cross the character area, which have varying degrees of enclosure.</li> <li>• A rural and intimate landscape, with some influences from the edge of the village settlement.</li> <li>• Abuts north-western edge of Conservation Area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor quality / fragmented hedgerows with loss of hedgerow trees. Opportunity to enhance hedgerows and improve hedgerow management.</li> <li>• Pressure for new housing development. Potential associated impact on adjacent landscape character, village character and local vernacular.</li> <li>• Retain and enhance tree lined watercourses with new planting and improved maintenance</li> <li>• Retain existing pasture and promote conversion of arable to pasture along watercourses</li> <li>• Maintain the tranquil character of the landscape</li> </ul>	<p>Sensitivity = Moderate</p> <p>Landscape Value = Substantial</p> <p>Capacity = Low</p>

Parish character area



Photograph/s showing key characteristics



Vegetation provides enclosure.



Used as horse pasture.

Character Area	Designations and policy	Landscape analysis	Key issues and management prescriptions	Capacity Summary (see Appendix 2 for analysis)
<b>7</b>  <b>Winterbrook Farmstead</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Part of the North Wessex Downs AONB</li> <li>- Public Right of Way runs across character area</li> <li>- BAP priority habitat: Traditional orchards within Farmstead</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A farmstead located to the east of Blewbury Village on the footslopes of Blewburton Hill.</li> <li>• The character area comprises farm cottages, a single dwelling and farmhouse along with agricultural buildings including some large barns. The farmstead is associated with small, regular pasture fields, used for rearing sheep and orchards.</li> <li>• Linear shelterbelts of trees have been planted around the farmstead, which provide shelter and enclosure. The landscape is more enclosed than the arable land to the east and more associated with the village than the wider landscape.</li> <li>• High intervisibility with the B4016 Bessels Way.</li> <li>• A public right of way crosses the character area, which is part of St Birinus Walk.</li> <li>• A transitional landscape between the settlement edge and the open and exposed landscape to the east.</li> <li>• The farmstead is a complex, small scale and relatively contained landscape, with views of the large outbuildings contained by shelterbelts. These shelterbelts also provide a soft edge to the eastern edge of Blewbury when viewed from Blewburton Hill Scheduled Monument.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain integrity of Farmstead and avoid fragmentation.</li> <li>• Retain and maintain shelterbelts that screen views of large agricultural buildings and / machinery.</li> <li>• Retain, protect and enhance priority Orchard BAP habitats.</li> <li>• Pressure for new housing development. Potential associated impact on adjacent landscape character, village character and local vernacular.</li> <li>• Retain existing pasture and avoid intensification of farmstead and conversion to arable crops.</li> <li>• Encourage diversity of crops and habitat within the farmstead.</li> </ul>	<p>Sensitivity = Substantial</p> <p>Landscape Value = Moderate</p> <p>Capacity = Low</p>

Parish character area



Photograph/s showing key characteristics



Approach to farmstead.



Farmstead seen from Blewburton Hill.

Character Area	Designations and policy	Landscape analysis	Key issues and management prescriptions	Capacity Summary (see Appendix 2 for analysis)
<b>8</b>  <b>Eastfield Farmstead</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Part of the North Wessex Downs AONB</li> <li>- BAP priority habitat: Traditional orchard within Farmstead</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A farmstead enclosed by tall evergreen hedges, located to the south-east of Blewbury.</li> <li>• The character area comprises outbuildings and tracks, an orchard and four small rectilinear pasture fields.</li> <li>• High leylandii hedges have been planted around the farmstead, which provide shelter and enclosure. The landscape is flatter and much more enclosed than the downland landscape to the south and east.</li> <li>• The leylandii are inconsistent with the wider landscape and do not contribute to the downland character of the area.</li> <li>• The farmstead is disconnected from the village and forms no part of the settlement edge. The farmstead is a discrete character type within the wider downland character area.</li> <li>• The farm contributes to the mosaic of land-uses within the downland landscape and is strongly related to Downland Farm, within character area 9.</li> <li>• Orchards are BAP priority habitat.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential to replace leylandii hedges over time, with shelterbelts / hedges that are native and characteristic of the local area.</li> <li>• Maintain integrity of Farmstead and avoid fragmentation.</li> <li>• Retain and maintain vegetation that screens views of agricultural buildings and / machinery.</li> <li>• Retain, protect and enhance priority Orchard BAP habitats.</li> <li>• Retain existing pasture and avoid intensification of farmstead and conversion to arable crops.</li> <li>• Encourage diversity of crops and habitat within the farmstead.</li> </ul>	<p>Sensitivity = Substantial</p> <p>Landscape Value = Moderate</p> <p>Capacity = Low</p>

Parish character area



Photograph/s showing key characteristics



High hedges screen views into farmstead.



Orchard visible within farmstead.

Character Area	Designations and policy	Landscape analysis	Key issues and management prescriptions	Capacity Summary (see Appendix 2 for analysis)
<b>9</b>  <b>Blewbury Southern Pasture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Part of the North Wessex Downs AONB</li> <li>- Part of setting to Conservation Area</li> <li>- A Public Right of Way runs across character area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Located to the south of Blewbury Village on the footslopes of the Downs northern escarpment.</li> <li>• The landform is gently sloping, with slopes orientated towards the convoluted edge of the northern escarpment of Blewbury Downs. The slopes are more prominent to the western side of the character area.</li> <li>• The character area comprises numerous horse paddocks with one arable field. The landscape is open with little boundary vegetation or landscape features. The large scale fields are intersected with paddock fencing and while these fences change the size of the fields, the intervisibility between paddocks and lack of features, retains the feeling of a large scale landscape.</li> <li>• The character area abuts the well defined northern edge of settlement and contrasts with the intimate character of the settlement. The settlement edge is softened by vegetation to the west, but is more open to view in the east.</li> <li>• There is a degree of intervisibility with the southern extent of the Conservation Area of Blewbury Village. The character area is also prominent in the views from the top of the escarpment to the south, east and west.</li> <li>• Views are dominated by the northern escarpment of Blewbury Downs, which surround the character area on three sides.</li> <li>• One property and Downside Farm are the only settlement within the character area, although the village edge is visible to the immediate north.</li> <li>• A transitional landscape between the low lying village and the high ground of Blewbury Downs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural intensification resulting in a loss of chalk grassland and hedgerow cover. Retain and protect existing areas of pasture, particularly chalk grassland habitat.</li> <li>• Poor quality / fragmented hedgerows with loss of hedgerow trees. Opportunity to enhance hedgerows and improve hedgerow management.</li> <li>• Pressure for new housing development. Potential associated impact on adjacent landscape character, village character and local vernacular.</li> <li>• Conservation of existing views from Blewbury village to the Downs Escarpment, by preserving the open nature of the landscape.</li> <li>• Protect the setting to Blewbury Conservation Area.</li> </ul>	<p>Sensitivity = Substantial</p> <p>Landscape Value = Substantial</p> <p>Capacity = Negligible / Low</p>

Parish character area



Photograph/s showing key characteristics



Looking across the character area from high ground



Landscape has a strong association with horses.

Character Area	Designations and policy	Landscape analysis	Key issues and management prescriptions	Capacity Summary (see Appendix 2 for analysis)
<b>10</b>  <b>Churn Hill Downland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Part of the North Wessex Downs AONB</li> <li>- Scheduled Monument at Churn Knob</li> <li>- Public Rights of Way run across character area</li> <li>- BAP priority habitat: Deciduous woodland at Churn Hill</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural downland landscape at the southern edge of the parish, typified by the rounded hilltops of the downs, including Churn Hill.</li> <li>• Consists of large scale arable fields, broken up by blocks of woodland and horse gallops.</li> <li>• Some panoramic views from the top of the hills, although views are generally less dramatic than those available on the escarpment.</li> <li>• Geology of middle and upper chalk</li> <li>• Settlement consists of isolated farmsteads accessed by enclosed rural lanes. Roads and rights of way are enclosed by hedgerows and vegetation.</li> <li>• Footpaths and bridleways are common. Many are sunken lanes marking historic routes. Rights of way are well used by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders and are an important recreational resource.</li> <li>• The Character Area includes Churn Knob, a folly designated as a Scheduled Monument.</li> <li>• Distant from settlement of Blewbury, with a strong rural context and no relationship with the settlement edge.</li> <li>• A rural landscape that is attractive, tranquil and typifies the downland character of this part of the AONB.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural intensification resulting in a loss of chalk grassland and hedgerow cover. Retain and protect existing areas of pasture, particularly chalk grassland habitat.</li> <li>• Vulnerability to large scale development. Tall structures would be visually intrusive and would disrupt the existing skyline.</li> <li>• Conservation of existing views</li> <li>• Retain strong skylines and clear ridges</li> <li>• Maintain the tranquil character of the landscape</li> <li>• Improve management of existing woodland and plant new woodland blocks using characteristic species</li> <li>• Preserve and protect existing archaeological sites including the Scheduled Monument at Churn Hill</li> </ul>	<p>Sensitivity = Major</p> <p>Landscape Value = Major</p> <p>Capacity = Negligible</p>

Parish character area



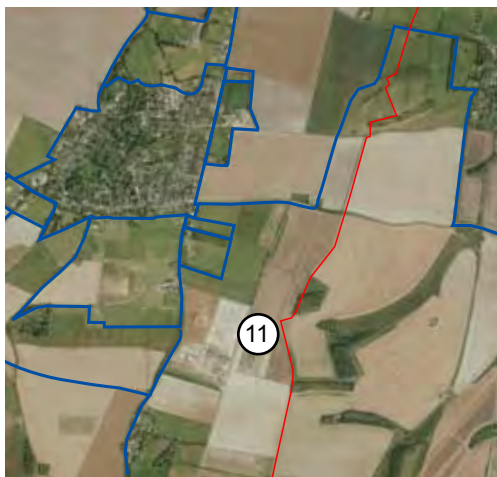
Photograph/s showing key characteristics



Rounded hilltops and large open fields.

Character Area	Designations and policy	Landscape analysis	Key issues and management prescriptions	Capacity Summary (see Appendix 2 for analysis)
<b>11</b> <b>Blewburton and Riddle Hill Downland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Part of the North Wessex Downs AONB</li> <li>- Blewburton Hill Scheduled monument</li> <li>- Areas of open Access Land at Blewburton Hill and Lid's Down</li> <li>- Public Rights of Way run across character area</li> <li>- BAP priority habitat: Deciduous woodland. Numerous small copses are located across the character area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downland landscape, with a geology of middle and upper chalk, to the to the south-east of Blewbury Parish.</li> <li>• Consists of the north facing escarpment of the Blewbury Downs, rounded hilltops (including Baldon Hill and Riddle Hill) and a steep-sided, narrow valley (Lid's Down), caught between two convoluted slopes of the escarpment.</li> <li>• A large, open arable landscape, broken up by blocks of trees, pasture valleys and occasional hedgerow boundaries</li> <li>• Blewburton Hill, a hill fort and Scheduled Monument, is located within the character area. Blewburton Hill is a distinctive local landmark and has an area of Open Access, which has panoramic views from the summit.</li> <li>• Isolated farmsteads form the only settlement within the character area and the only major road is the A417, which crosses the character area on the shoulder of Baldon Hill, providing a impressive entrance into the parish from the east.</li> <li>• Distant from settlement of Blewbury, with a strong rural context and no relationship with the settlement edge.</li> <li>• Blewburton Hill and the south-eastern escarpment form an impressive setting to the eastern edge of Blewbury and shapes the skyline that is visible from the settlement.</li> <li>• An attractive rural landscape, characterised by its dramatic changes in landform.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural intensification resulting in a loss of chalk grassland and hedgerow cover. Retain and protect existing areas of pasture, particularly chalk grassland habitat.</li> <li>• Vulnerability to large scale development. Tall structures would be visually intrusive and would disrupt the existing skyline.</li> <li>• Conservation of existing views</li> <li>• Retain strong skylines and clear ridges</li> <li>• Maintain the tranquil character of the landscape</li> <li>• Improve management of existing woodland and plant new woodland blocks using characteristic species</li> <li>• Preserve and protect existing archaeological sites, particularly Blewburton Hill Scheduled Monument.</li> </ul>	<p>Sensitivity = Major</p> <p>Landscape Value = Major</p> <p>Capacity = Negligible</p>

Parish character area



Photograph/s showing key characteristics



## **5. Summary**

- 5.1 Landscape capacity is defined as the extent to which the landscape is able to accommodate change without significant effects on landscape character, reflecting the inherent sensitivity and value of the landscape. A landscape of high sensitivity or value therefore has a low landscape capacity.
- 5.2 In order to assess the sensitivity of the Blewbury Parish character areas to development, assumptions have been made as to the likely built form of any new development areas. It has been assumed that buildings would generally be a maximum of 2 storeys in height. There would be open space provision and a landscape framework with tree planting of appropriate scale, building on an existing landscape framework which could achieve a good fit in the landscape and form a logical extension to the village, in keeping with the existing settlement pattern.
- 5.3 Sensitivity and value ratings range from Major, Substantial, Moderate, Slight to Negligible. Areas judged to have Major or Substantial sensitivity or value indicates that development would have significant detrimental effect on the character of the landscape. Development in these character areas should only be on a very small scale and proposals would need to demonstrate no adverse impacts on the setting to settlement or the wider landscape, and be consistent with Local Plan policy. The landscape sensitivity and landscape value tables, along with assessment criteria and scoring for each character area are shown in Appendix 2.
- 5.4 The landscape sensitivity of the Parish is generally very high, which accords with the AONB designation that covers the Parish. Of the 11 Parish character areas assessed, 5 have Major sensitivity (areas 1, 2, 4, 10 and 11), 5 have Substantial sensitivity (areas 3, 5, 7, 8 and 9) and area 6 has been assessed as having a moderate sensitivity. There are no character areas with Slight or Negligible landscape sensitivity.
- 5.5 The landscape value of the Parish is also high, with 3 areas (1, 10 and 11) being assessed as having Major landscape value, 6 areas (2-6 and 9) having Substantial landscape value and 2 areas (7 and 8) having Moderate landscape value.
- 5.6 The resultant landscape capacity is also listed in Appendix 2. Landscape capacity ratings range from Very High, High, Medium, Low and Negligible. A capacity rating of Medium or above identifies a landscape character area with the capacity for limited development, having regard for the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and sensitivity of adjacent local landscape character areas.

- 5.7 There are no Parish character areas with Very high, High or Medium landscape capacity, which means that there are no character areas with the capacity to accept large scale residential development, without significant harm to local landscape character and the AONB. There may be capacity within the village and around the settlement edge of the village for small scale residential additions, which would have significantly lower impacts on the character and appearance of the AONB than a large village extension. There is an existing planning permission for a large development of 30 dwellings to the north of the village, adjacent to Area 6 (Mill Stream Pasture). This existing permission should be developed before there is a commitment to further housing proposals or allocations.
- 5.8 Of the 11 Parish character areas assessed, 5 have a Negligible capacity for development (areas 1, 2, 4, 10 and 11), 3 have a Negligible / Low capacity (areas 3, 5, and 9) and the remaining three have Low capacity (areas 6-8). The areas with Negligible landscape capacity are divorced from settlement, are wholly rural and display many of the key characteristics of the AONB designation. There should be no development within these character areas, other than for the necessary requirements of agriculture (as set out in AONB policy).
- 5.9 The areas with Negligible / Low capacity (3, 5, and 9) are the open and expansive landscapes to the east, west and south of the village, which allow long views towards the downs. Development within these character areas should be avoided as development within these areas would be out of character with the openness of the landscape and the well-defined settlement edges to the village.
- 5.10 The three areas with Low landscape capacity have been identified which may indicate a limited capacity for small amounts of new development. These are:
- Area 6 – Mill Stream Pasture
  - Area 7 – Winterbrook Farmstead
  - Area 8 – Eastfield Farmstead
- 5.11 Area 6 (Mill Stream Pasture) is adjacent to the settlement edge of the village, has a high level of enclosure and a landscape character influenced by the buildings within the equestrian centre and kennels, which lie to the north. New development has in the recent past been permitted at Whites Orchard and off Bessels Way, to the south-east of the character area. The extant planning permission for 30 houses is located within the settlement boundary to the south of this character area.
- 5.12 The sensitivity and subsequent capacity of the Mill Stream Pasture character area is not consistent across the character area. A public right of way runs through the centre of the character area and the landscape to the west of the footpath is more sensitive to

development than the land to the east, by virtue of its proximity to the conservation area and Blewbury Manor and its curtilage (as a listed building).

- 5.12 Area 7, Winterbrook Farmstead, has is an intact and well managed farmstead landscape with a strong relationship to the village. The enclosed nature of the character area is in marked contrast to the surrounding open and expansive landscapes of Blewburton Hill and its lower slopes.
- 5.13 Area 8, Eastfields Farmstead, has been separated from the surrounding landscape by the dense leylandii hedge surrounding the farmstead on three sides which currently diminishes its landscape value. The leylandii hedge is an incongruous feature within the local landscape, but in all other respects the landscape character of the farm is consistent with Area 11 (Blewburton and Riddle Hill Downland). Should the Leylandii hedge be removed or replaced with native hedgerows, the resultant change in character would be consistent with the landscape character of area 11, which would result in a higher sensitivity and negligible landscape capacity.
- 5.14 Eastfield farmstead is located at the foot of the downs detached distance from the settlement edge of the village. New development in this area would be inconsistent with the existing settlement pattern and would not result in a logical extension to the village.
- 5.15 The study has identified that the majority of the landscape surrounding Blewbury has substantial landscape sensitivity and high landscape value, consistent with its AONB status. It follows therefore that the landscapes have negligible or negligible to low landscape capacity for future development. The landscape surrounding the village is largely open, rural in character and exhibits many of the key characteristics of the wider AONB. Development in many of the adjacent landscape character areas would be inconsistent with the exiting settlement pattern of the village and would breach well defined settlement edges. There is the potential for some small scale development on the periphery of the settlement along the northern edge of the village where new development could be consistent with the existing settlement pattern and could form a logical extension to the village.

## **6. Village internal space assessment**

### **6.1 Blewbury Village character**

*(see plan HDA 7)*

- 6.1.1 This section focusses on the evaluation of the local landscape context of the village, which looks at the open spaces within the village settlement boundary in order to assess which spaces contribute highly to the open space character of the village and which spaces could be improved. For the most part, private gardens have not been included as part of the assessment. While it is recognised that many properties within the village have extensive gardens, which contribute to the character of the village, this document focusses on the key public and private spaces / gardens which define the internal character of the village. Plan HDA 7 identifies the open spaces that have been assessed within the village, shows which areas are public and private and gives an indication which open spaces are visible from publicly accessible viewpoints. Open spaces that are accessible to the public, or are visible from public rights of way are likely to have a higher contribution to the perceived open space character of the village.
- 6.1.2 The village is a compact and nucleated settlement located on the springline at the foot of the Berkshire Downs. Blewbury Conservation Area covers the majority of the village and contains 59 listed buildings, including St Michael's Church. In addition to the buildings, the cob walls (some of which are listed) and waterways within the village have historic value.
- 6.1.3 The public rights of way within the village are generally enclosed by walls, vegetation or fenced boundaries, opening out at 'The Cleve' (one of the waterways), the 'Playclose' public open space, the churchyard and along Watts Lane and Church End, where there is privately owned open space visible adjacent to the footpath.
- 6.1.4 The character of the landscape within the village settlement boundary is markedly different from the surrounding landscape as it is small scale, intimate and has close associations with the waterways that run through the village. Water is a significant feature within the village and has shaped the settlement pattern, routes and open spaces within the village. The village also has significant tree cover with areas of woodland and orchard, along with tree belts lining watercourses and hedgerow boundaries. Both the vegetation and the frequent stone or cob walls (another key feature of the village) provide the intimacy and feeling of enclosure that pervades the village. The large gardens and frequency of open space, within the conservation area in particular, reinforces the rural character of the village. The eastern edge of the village is higher density development with smaller gardens and fewer areas of open space.
- 6.1.5 For the purposes of this assessment, the open space within the village has been subdivided into categories. These reflect the land use of the open space and the land ownership, both of which are important factors to consider when assessing the contribution

that the open space makes to the village landscape as a whole. The list of categories includes:

- Recreation areas - the recreation ground to the south-west of the village, along with the school playing fields and play area have been categorised as recreation areas.
- Allotments – located to the north-east of the village.
- Public open space used by the village - Three areas have been identified as public open space used by the village. These include the 'Playclose' an area of informal open space within the heart of the village, the churchyard and a triangle of open space (The Pound) on the corner of South Street, which contains trees, pathways and seating. This area provides a pedestrian gateway to the village and links to the 'Playclose' and 'The Cleve', one of the village water features.
- Incidental open space with public access – These include remaining areas of informal public open space within the village, including areas of amenity space associated with some of the newer housing developments, which are important to adjacent residents but are less accessible to the rest of the village. The category also includes some of the significant roadside verges, which enhance the rural character of the village.
- Public open space with potential for improvement – One area of public open space has been identified that is under-utilised or has the potential to be improved in landscape terms. This is a small pocket of open space at the end of 'Eastfields'.
- Private open space / gardens used on occasion by the village – Which includes the amphitheatre within one of the private residences and the gardens of Ashbrook House. These garden spaces are within Conservation Area, and so are subject to the constraints of these, and in the case of Ashbrook House, listed buildings policies. The garden spaces have been enjoyed by the village residents with the permission of the landowner.
- Private open land / gardens with open views from publicly accessible viewpoints that contribute to the character of the village – These constitute small fields, areas of woodland or areas of private open space or gardens. They include the field and gardens to the north of 'The Cleve', four areas adjacent to the 'Playclose', an area of woodland adjacent to the church, a tract of land opposite the church on Church End, Fields and woodland lining Watts Lane, the large open garden space of Lowmans off South Street and a walled area on the corner of Church Road and South Street. Only areas of private open space, that have been assessed as visible from publicly accessible viewpoints (e.g. footpaths, roads or open space) have been included. HDA have also identified spaces that are currently unmanaged (the tract of land opposite the church on Church End and a square of land to the south-west of the school playing fields).

6.1.6 Important walls within the village have also been identified, as these are a distinctive feature within the village. These include the listed cob walls and stone walls that have been identified within Blewbury Parish Plan 2004 (Ref 4).

## **6.2 Landscape guidelines for future development**

6.2.1 Should any of the internal spaces within the village come forward for development, due consideration should be given to the effect that development would have on the overall character of the village.

6.2.2 The majority of open spaces within the village lie within the Conservation Area, which is protected through local planning policy. Any proposed development would need to preserve or enhance the special character or appearance of the Conservation Area. As discussed earlier in the report, the waterways, incidental open spaces and feature walls are an intrinsic part of the special character of the Conservation Area. As a result, the primary open spaces and routes are particularly sensitive to new development, and should be preserved. Any new development within the village should consider their relationship to the open spaces, waterways and routes within the village, should maintain the green and leafy character of the village and should respect the context of their location within the village. Consideration should also be given to the scale, form and massing of built development, along with the materials to be used.

6.2.3 Development proposed within the village but outside the conservation area would still need to consider the setting to the Conservation Area and the contribution that the proposals could make to the overall character of the village.

## 7        **References**

- Ref 1 -        Countryside Agency (now Natural England)/SNH (April 2002), '*Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland*'
- Ref 2 -        North Wessex Downs AONB Board (2002); '*North Wessex Downs AONB: Integrated Landscape Character Assessment*'
- Ref 3 -        Oxfordshire County Council (2004), '*Oxfordshire Wildlife & Landscape Study*'.
- Ref 4 -        Blewbury Parish Council (2004); '*Blewbury Parish Plan*'

## Appendix 2 – Analysis of Landscape Capacity

### Analysis of Parish scale Landscape Character Areas

The characteristics of each Parish scale landscape character area is analysed against criteria identified in Topic Paper 6 of the Countryside Agency's landscape Character Assessment Guidance, along with identification of any designations, gap policy, and consideration of the historic landscape characterisation of the area. This information is then fed into the landscape sensitivity and landscape value assessments.

#### Landscape Sensitivity

LCA	Inherent Landscape Qualities (intactness and condition)	Visual contribution to the distinctive setting to settlement	Inconsistency with existing village / settlement form / pattern	Contribution to rurality of surrounding landscape	Sensitivity	Final Assessment Landscape Sensitivity
	low high				1-4 Negligible 5-8 Slight 9-12 Moderate 13-16 Substantial 17-20 Major	
	4 8 12 16 20					

#### Landscape Value

LCA	Landscape Designation	Other Designation (nature conservation, heritage, flooding, amenity, including flood zone)	Contribution to setting of village / settlement	Special cultural/ historic associations	Perceptual aspects (eg. scenic beauty, views, tranquillity, wildness)	Landscape Value	Final Assessment Landscape Value
	low high					1-5 Negligible 6-10 Slight 11-15 Moderate 16-20 Substantial 21-25 Major	
	5 10 15 20 25						

In order to assess the sensitivity of the landscape to development, assumptions have been made as to the likely built form of any new development areas. It has been assumed that buildings would be 2 storeys in height. There would be open space provision and a landscape framework with tree planting of appropriate scale, area and design to ensure that the development achieves a good fit in the landscape.

Sensitivity and value ratings range from Major, Substantial, Moderate, Slight and Negligible. Areas judged to have Major or Substantial sensitivity or value indicates that development would have significant detrimental effect on the character of the landscape. Development in these character areas should only be on a very small scale and proposals would need to demonstrate no adverse impacts on the setting to settlement or the wider landscape.

# Table 1 Landscape Sensitivity

No	Landscape Character Area	Inherent Landscape Qualities (intactness <sup>1</sup> and condition) low                  high					Visual contribution to the distinctive setting to settlement					Inconsistency with existing village / settlement form / pattern					Contribution to rurality of surrounding landscape					Sensitivity 1-4 Negligible 5-8 Slight 9-12 Moderate 13-16 Substantial 17-20 Major 4   8   12   16   20					Final Assessment Landscape Sensitivity
1	Blewbury Escarpment	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X	19 Major
2	Blewbury and Upton Escarpment	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X	18 Major
3	Blewbury and Upton Plain	X	X				X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X					X		14 Substantial
4	Blewbury and Upton Alluvial Pasture	X	X	X	X		X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	17 Major
5	Blewburton Farmland Slopes	X	X				X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X				X		15 Substantial
6	Mill Stream Pasture	X	X	X			X	X	X	X		X	X				X	X	X					X			12 Moderate
7	Winterbrook Farmstead	X	X	X	X		X	X	X			X	X	X			X	X	X						X		13 Substantial
8	Eastfield Farmstead	X	X	X			X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						X		13 Substantial
9	Blewbury Southern Pasture	X	X	X			X	X	X			X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X					X		14 Substantial
10	Churn Hill Downland	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	19 Major
11	Blewburton and Riddle Hill Downland	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	20 Major

<sup>1</sup> “ from visual, functional and ecological perspectives” p53 The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage ‘Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland, 2002

## Table 2 Landscape Value

No	Landscape Character Area	Landscape Designation					Other Designation (open access land, nature conservation, BAP, heritage, flooding, amenity, Conservation area)	Contribution to setting of village / settlement / outstanding assets					Special cultural/historic associations	Perceptual aspects (eg. scenic beauty, views, tranquillity, wildness)					Landscape Value 1-5 Negligible 6-10 Slight 11-15 Moderate 16-20 Substantial 21-25 Major 5 10 15 20 25					Final Assessment Landscape Value
		low			high																			
1	Blewbury Escarpment	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X						23 Major
2	Blewbury and Upton Escarpment	X	X	X	X	X	X						X	X	X								X	17 Substantial
3	Blewbury and Upton Plain	X	X	X	X	X	X						X	X	X				X	X	X	X		16 Substantial
4	Blewbury and Upton Alluvial Pasture	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X					X	X	X	X		15 Substantial
5	Blewburton Farmland Slopes	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X	X				X	X	X	X		20 Substantial
6	Mill Stream Pasture	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X	X				X	X	X			18 Substantial
7	Winterbrook Farmstead	X	X	X	X	X	X						X						X	X				12 Moderate
8	Eastfield Farmstead	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X						X	X				13 Moderate
9	Blewbury Southern Pasture	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X	X				X	X	X			18 Substantial
10	Churn Hill Downland	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		23 Major
11	Blewburton and Riddle Hill Downland	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	25 Major

### Combining Landscape Sensitivity and Landscape Value to give Landscape Capacity

The landscape sensitivity and landscape value ratings are combined to give an overall assessment relating to landscape capacity. Landscape capacity is defined as the extent to which the landscape is able to accommodate change without significant effects on landscape character, reflecting the inherent sensitivity and value of the landscape. A landscape of high sensitivity or value therefore has a low landscape capacity:

		<b><i>Landscape Value</i></b>				
		<b>Major</b>	<b>Substantial</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Slight</b>	<b>Negligible</b>
<b><i>Landscape Sensitivity</i></b>	<b>Major</b>	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible / low	Low	Low / medium
	<b>Substantial</b>	Negligible	Negligible / low	Low	Low / Medium	Medium
	<b>Moderate</b>	Negligible / Low	Low	Medium	Medium / high	High / medium
	<b>Slight</b>	Low	Low / medium	Medium /high	High	High / Very high/
	<b>Negligible</b>	Low / medium	Medium	High / medium	High / Very high/	Very high

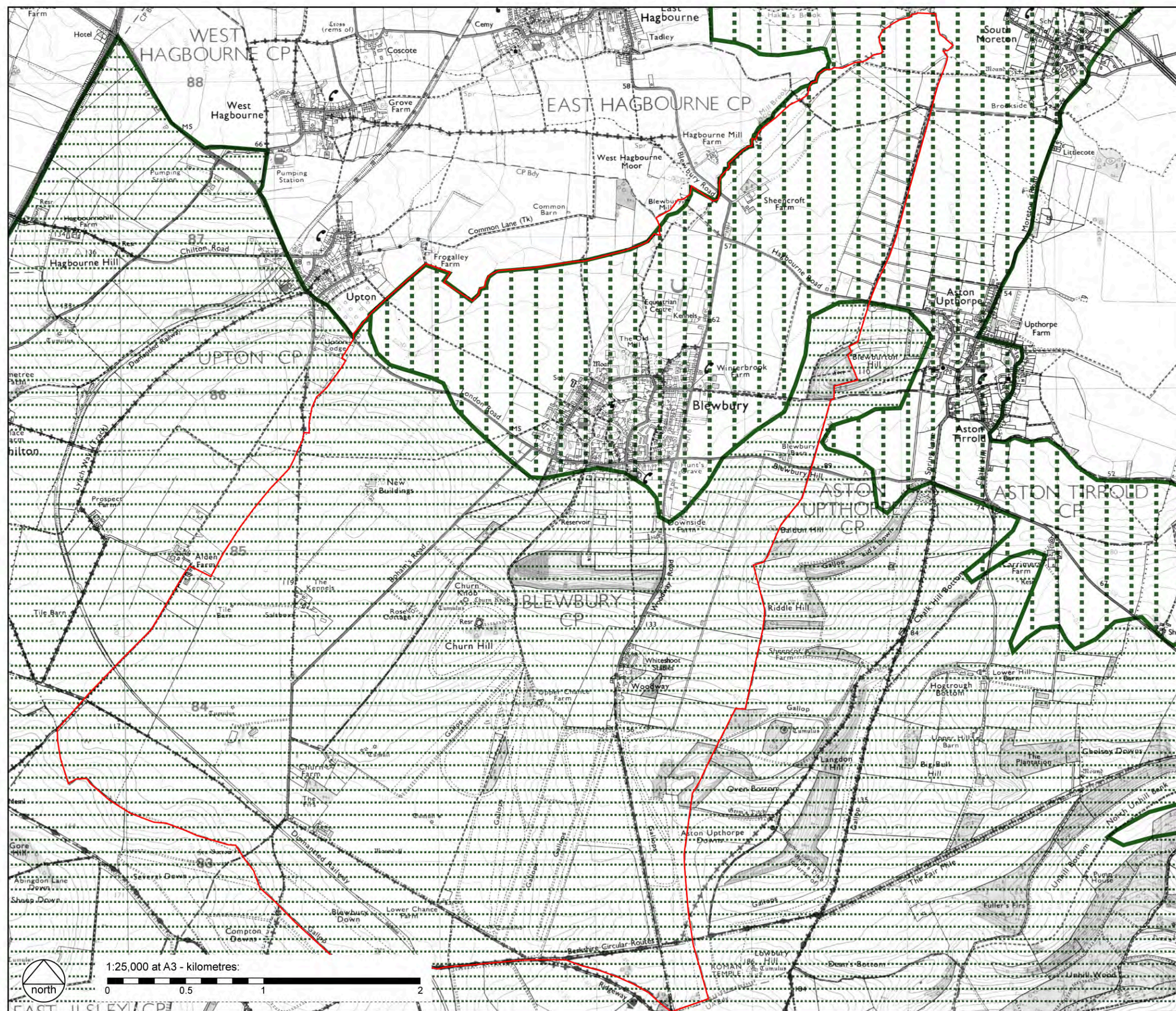
Landscape capacity ratings range from Very High, High, Medium, Low and Negligible. A capacity rating of Medium, in relation to a village settlement, identifies a landscape character area with the capacity for limited development, of up to 30 dwellings, having regard for the setting and form of existing settlement and the character and sensitivity of adjacent local landscape character areas. A capacity rating of Low identifies a landscape character area with a very limited capacity for development, with a potential for up to 10 dwellings, where the setting and form of the existing settlement would be maintained. Negligible capacity would not accommodate new development and re-use of existing buildings would need to be compatible with the character of the surrounding landscape and land use.

The landscape value, sensitivity and capacity assessments of each Parish scale character area are summarised in tabulated form in Table 3 below. Landscape sensitivity and value may not be completely uniform across an entire character area and therefore the capacity across a character area may vary slightly. This is commented on in Section 5 of the report, where particularly relevant.

A final assessment of each character area is then undertaken to assess the landscape capacity in relation to the overall settlement pattern and morphology of the village to ascertain whether development would form a logical extension to the village, consistent with the existing settlement pattern.

### Table 3 Landscape Capacity

No	Landscape Character Area	Landscape Sensitivity	Landscape Value	Landscape Capacity
01	Blewbury Escarpment	Major	Major	Negligible
02	Blewbury and Upton Escarpment	Major	Substantial	Negligible
03	Blewbury and Upton Plain	Substantial	Substantial	Negligible / Low
04	Blewbury and Upton Alluvial Pasture	Major	Substantial	Negligible
05	Blewburton Farmland Slopes	Substantial	Substantial	Negligible / Low
06	Mill Stream Pasture	Moderate	Substantial	Low
07	Winterbrook Farmstead	Substantial	Moderate	Low
08	Eastfield Farmstead	Substantial	Moderate	Low
09	Blewbury Southern Pasture	Substantial	Substantial	Negligible / Low
10	Churn Hill Downland	Major	Major	Negligible
11	Blewburton and Riddle Hill Downland	Major	Major	Negligible



# KEY

Parish boundary

North Wessex Downs AONB Character Areas  
(March 2002)

Character Area 1D: Blewbury Downs

Character Area 5D: Moreton Plain

CLIENT:  
Blewbury Parish Council  
PROJECT:  
Blewbury Neighbourhood Plan  
TITLE:  
North Wessex Downs AONB Character Areas  
SCALE AT A3:  
1:25,000  
DATE:  
November 2014

737.1 / 03

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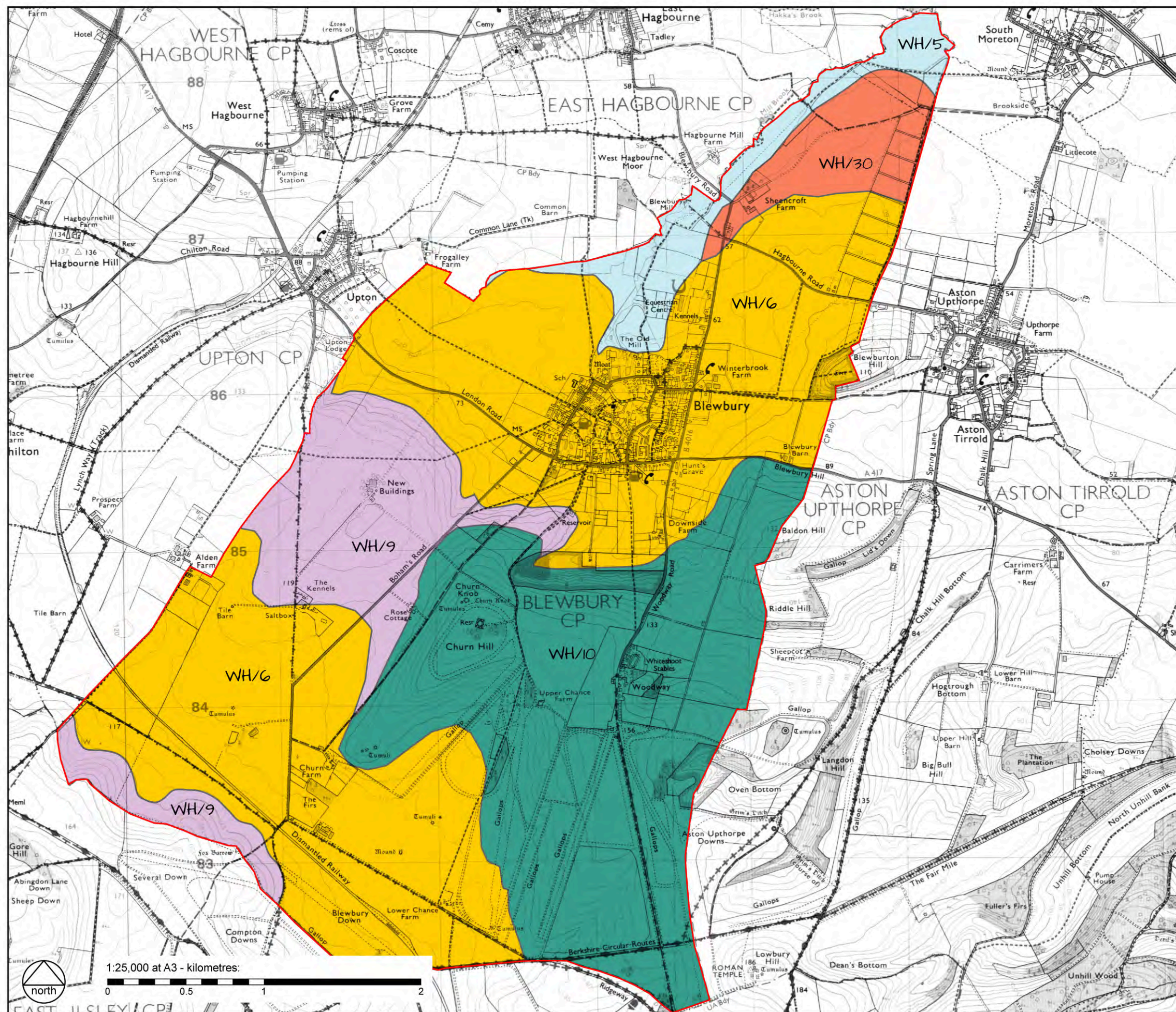
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1:25,000 at A3 - kilometres:





## KEY

Parish boundary

OWLS (2004) Character types and Local Character Areas for Blewbury Parish

- Alluvial Lowlands:  
WH/5 Brightwell-cum-Sotwell
- Terrace Farmland:  
WH/30 Poultry
- Rolling farmland:  
WH/6 Blewbury
- Chalk Downland and Slopes:  
WD/9 Upton Downland
- Wooded Downlands:  
WD/10 Blewbury Downs

CLIENT:  
Blewbury Parish Council  
PROJECT:  
Blewbury Neighbourhood Plan  
TITLE:  
OWLS Character types and Character Areas  
SCALE AT A3:  
1:25,000  
DATE:  
November 2014

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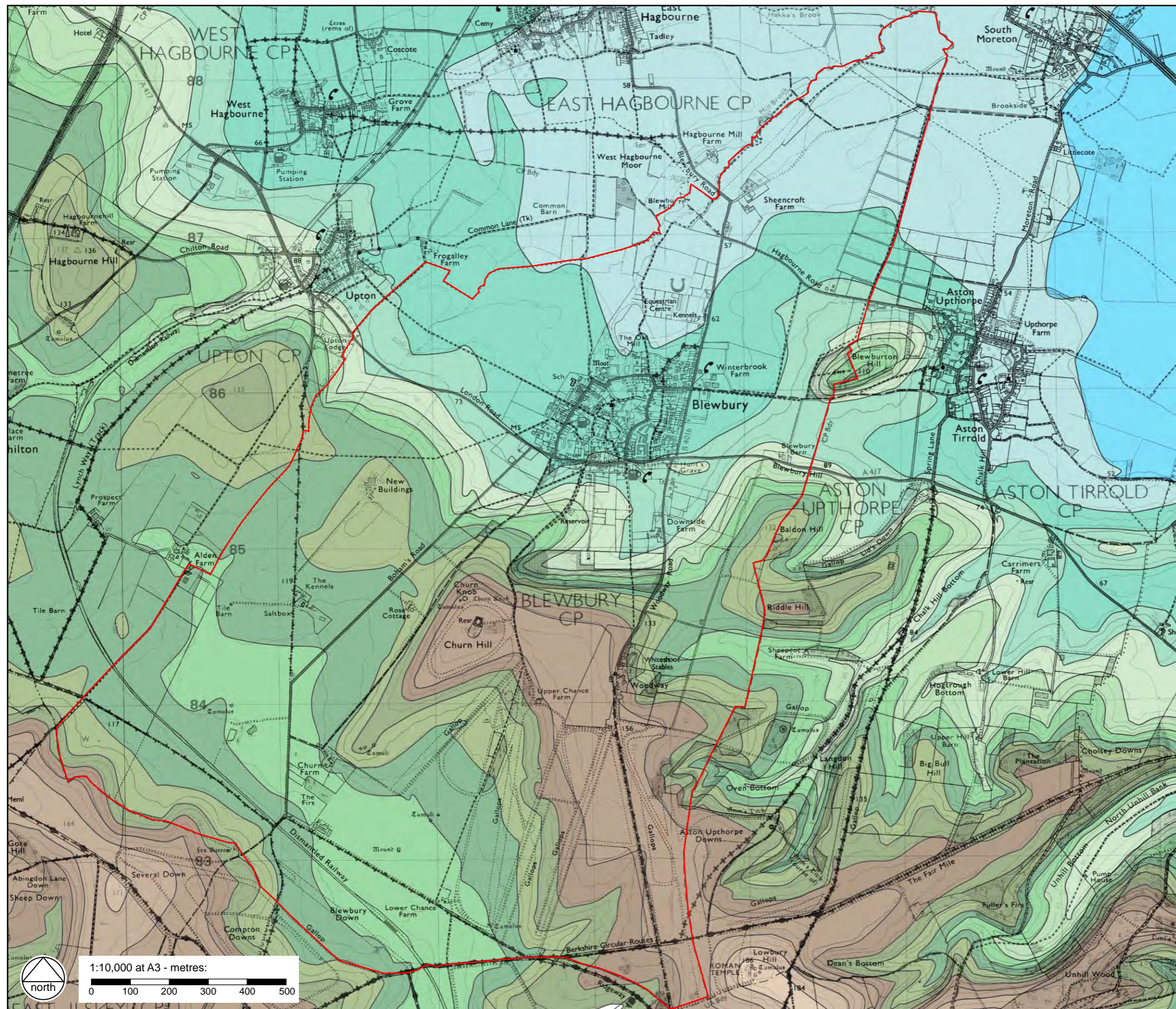
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## KEY

 Parish boundary

### Contour levels



CLIENT:  
Blewbury Parish Council  
PROJECT:  
Blewbury Neighbourhood Plan  
TITLE:  
Topography  
SCALE AT A3:  
1:25,000

DATE:  
October 2014

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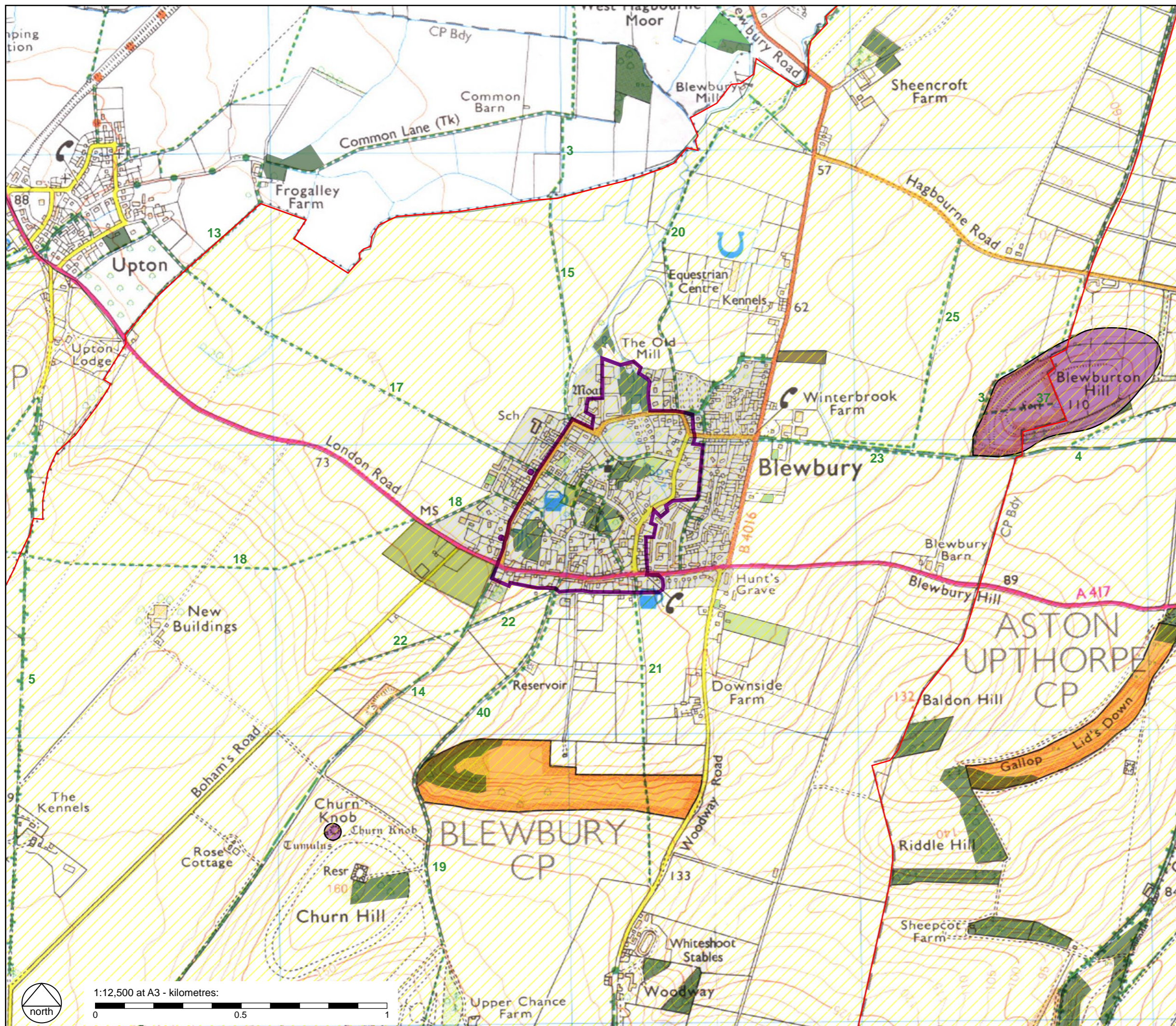
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## KEY

Parish boundary

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

### Local Heritage

Conservation Area (includes listed buildings)

Scheduled Monument

Listed building outside of conservation area

### Nature designations

Ancient semi natural woodland

Traditional orchard BAP Priority habitat

Deciduous woodland BAP Priority habitat

Public rights of way

Recreation areas

Allotments

Open access land

CLIENT:  
Blewbury Parish Council  
PROJECT:  
Blewbury Neighbourhood plan  
TITLE:  
Local designations

SCALE AT A3:  
1:12,500

DATE:  
November 2014

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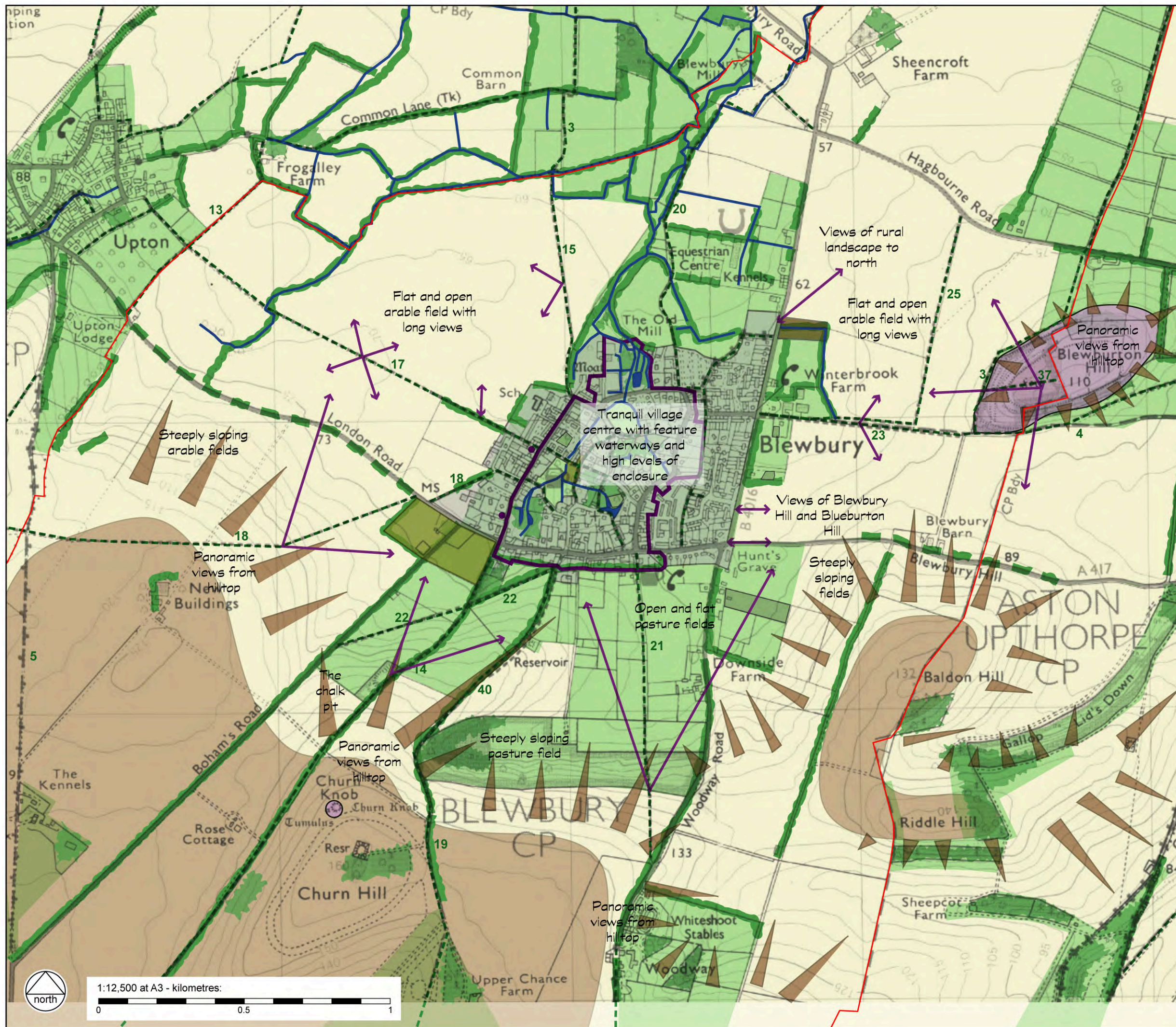
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# KEY

- Parish boundary
- Conservation Area (includes listed buildings)
- Scheduled Monument
- ↔ Publicly accessible and locally important views
- 25 Public rights of way
- Watercourses
- Slopes
- Rounded downland hilltops

## Land use

- Recreation areas
- Allotments
- Traditional orchard BAP Priority habitat
- Areas of woodland and tree lines
- Arable field
- Pasture field

CLIENT:  
Blewbury Parish Council

PROJECT:  
Blewbury Neighbourhood plan

TITLE:  
Parish landscape assessment

SCALE AT A3:  
1:12,500

DATE:  
November 2014

737.1/ 04

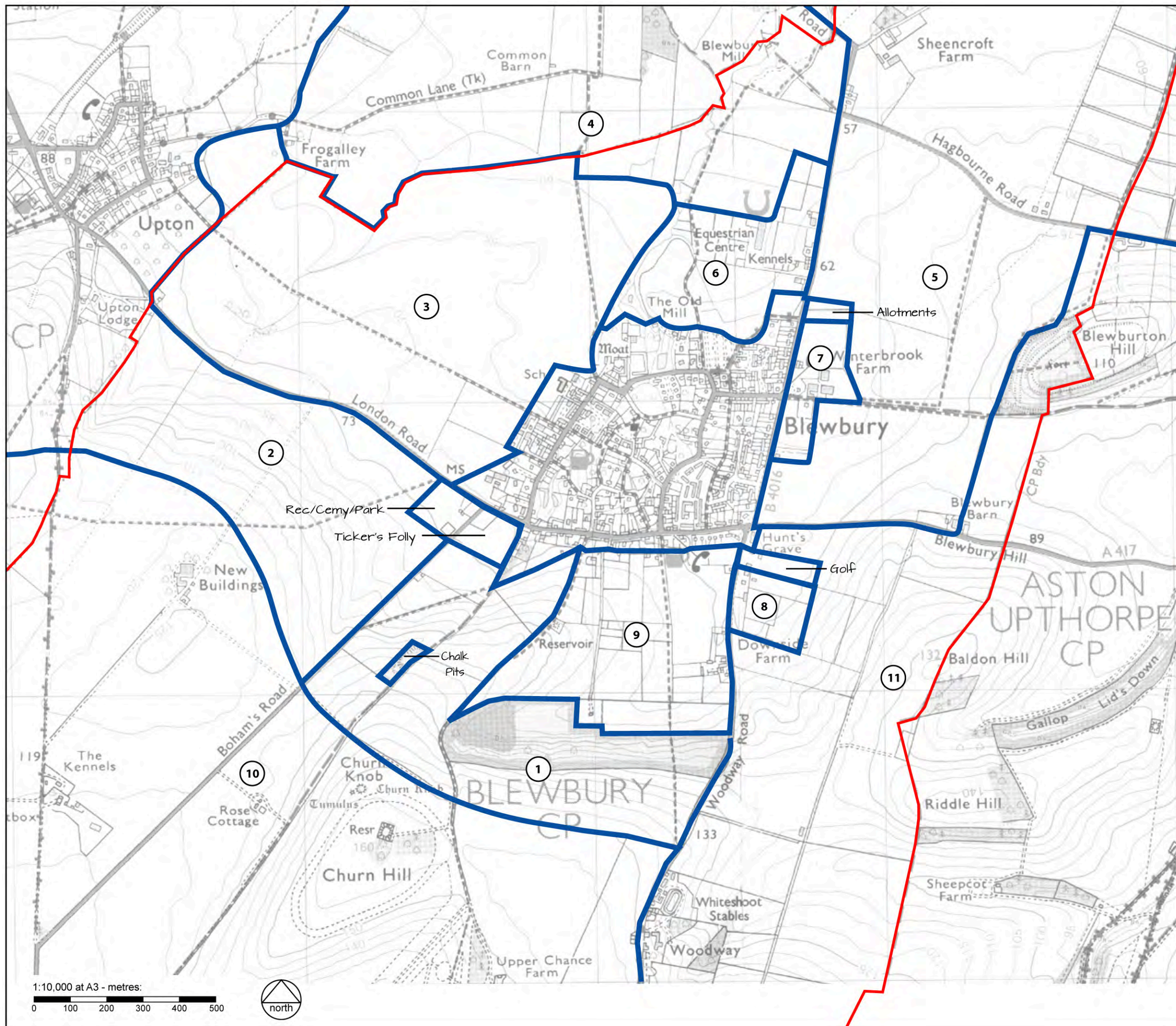
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# KEY

- Parish boundary
- Character area boundary

## Character areas:

- 1 - Blewbury Escarpment
- 2 - Blewbury and Upton Escarpment
- 3 - Blewbury and Upton Plain
- 4 - Blewbury and Upton Alluvial Pasture
- 5 - Blewburton Farmland Slopes
- 6 - Mill Stream Pasture
- 7 - Winterbrook Farmstead
- 8 - Eastfield Farmstead
- 9 - Blewbury Southern Pasture
- 10 - Churn Hill Downland
- 11 - Blewburton and Riddle Hill Downland

CLIENT:  
Blewbury Parish Council

PROJECT:  
Blewbury Neighbourhood plan

TITLE:  
Parish Character Areas

SCALE AT A3:  
1:12,500

DATE:  
November 2014

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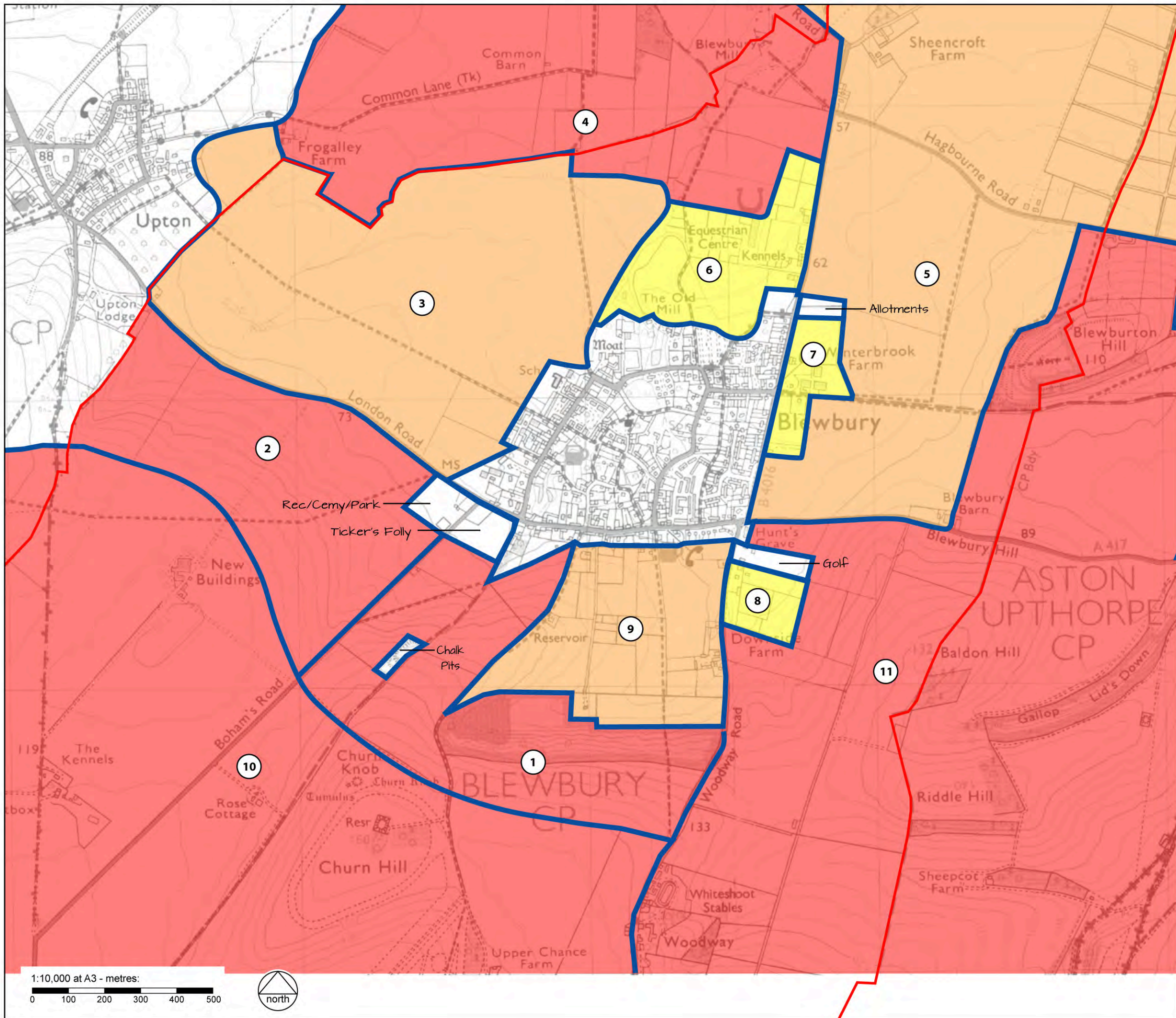
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**KEY**

- Parish boundary
- Character area boundary

**Character areas:**

- 1 - Blewbury Escarpment
- 2 - Blewbury and Upton Escarpment
- 3 - Blewbury and Upton Plain
- 4 - Blewbury and Upton Alluvial Pasture
- 5 - Blewburton Farmland Slopes
- 6 - Mill Stream Pasture
- 7 - Winterbrook Farmstead
- 8 - Eastfield Farmstead
- 9 - Blewbury Southern Pasture
- 10 - Churn Hill Downland
- 11 - Blewburton and Riddle Hill Downland

**Landscape Capacity**

- Medium / High
- Medium
- Low / Medium
- Low
- Negligible / Low
- Negligible

CLIENT:  
Blewbury Parish Council  
PROJECT:  
Blewbury Neighbourhood plan  
TITLE:  
Parish Character Areas - Landscape capacity  
SCALE AT A3:  
1:12,500  
DATE:  
January 2015

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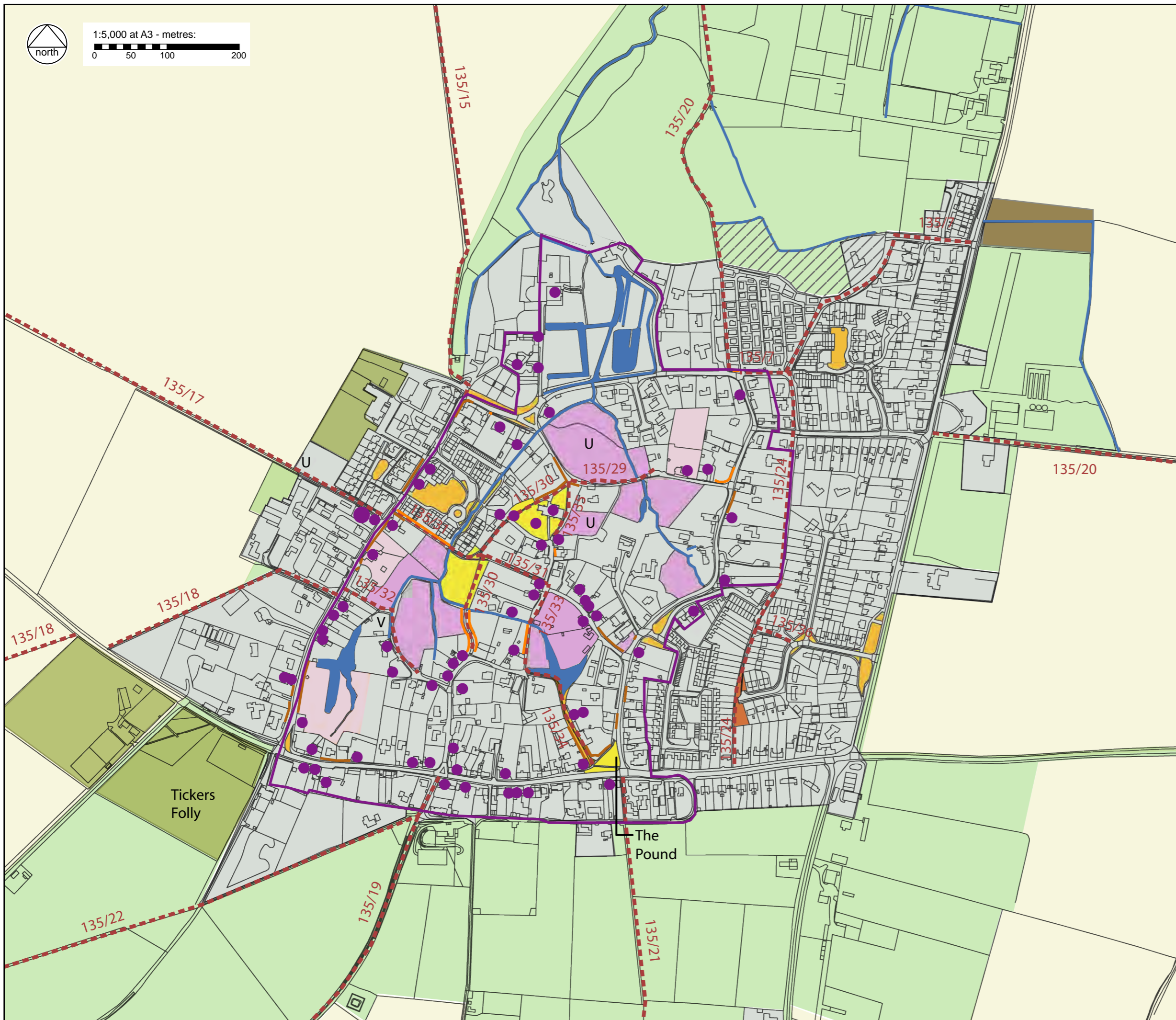
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# KEY

- Conservation Area (includes listed buildings)
- Listed building
- Public rights of way
- Watercourses
- Important walls - cob walls or stone walls
- Important walls - brick walls
- Outline planning permission granted for new housing
- Public open space used by village
- Incidental open space with public access
- Public open space with potential for improvement
- Private open space / gardens on occasion used by the village
- Private open land / gardens with open views from publicly accessible viewpoints that contribute to the landscape character of the village
- Recreation areas
- Allotments
- Arable field
- Pasture field
- U Unmanaged

NOTE: Many private gardens contribute to the character of the village, however this plan focusses on the key public and private spaces / gardens which define the internal character of the village.

CLIENT:	Blewbury Parish Council
PROJECT:	Blewbury Neighbourhood plan
TITLE:	Village internal space assessment
SCALE AT A3:	1:5000
DATE:	January 2016
737.1/ 10C	HDA 7

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Masterplanning  
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***Blewbury Neighbourhood Plan***

Parish Character Areas - Supporting Photographs

For

*Blewbury Parish Council*

By

Hankinson Duckett Associates

PARISH CHARACTER AREA 1



View from seating area to the south of the Chalk Pit



View from the northern edge of the Chalk Pit

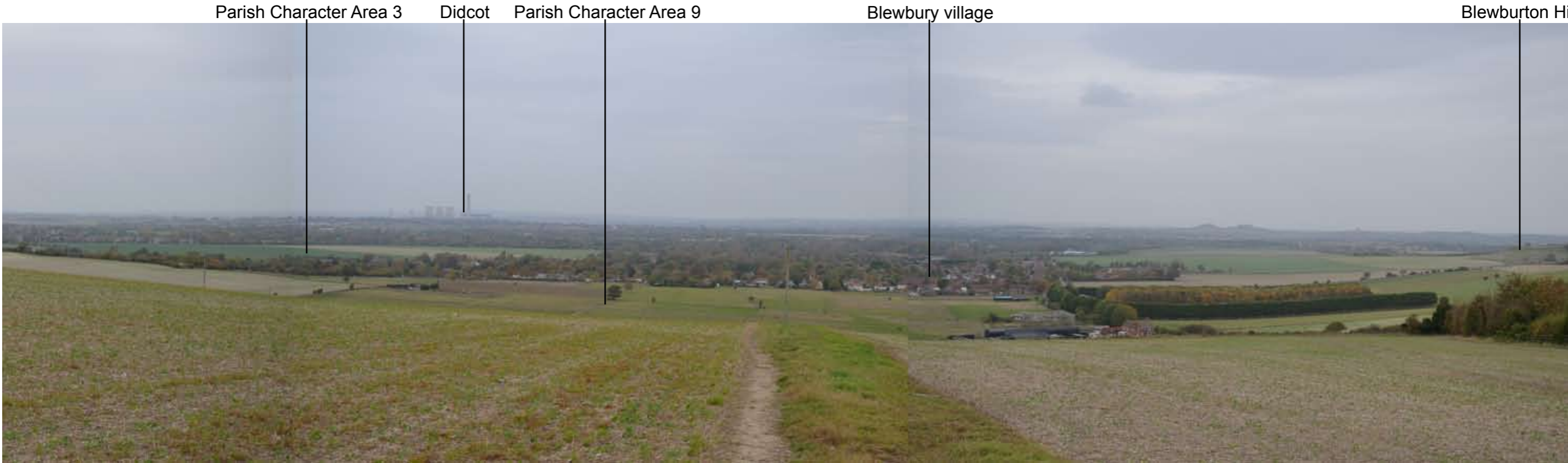
Blewburton Hill



Chilterns



PARISH CHARACTER AREA 1



Looking north from the top of the escarpment on footpath 21

PARISH CHARACTER AREA 2



Panoramic views from the top of footpath 18

PARISH CHARACTER AREA 1



Looking south up the scarp face from footpath 22

PARISH CHARACTER AREA 2 - continued



PARISH CHARACTER AREA 3



Looking north from the western edge of the village, on footpath 17

Parish Character Area 1

Parish Character Area 2



Looking south and west from the middle of footpath 17 - the Downs form the skyline to the south

Western edge of village

School



Footpath 17

Upton



PARISH CHARACTER AREA 3



Looking south and west from the south-western edge of the village

PARISH CHARACTER AREA 5



View east from the south-eastern corner of the village, on Bessels Way

## PARISH CHARACTER AREA 4



Looking south and east from Blewbury Road, to the north of the village

## PARISH CHARACTER AREA 5 continued

Parish Character Area 11



Parish Character Area 8



PARISH CHARACTER AREA 5



View south-west from Bessels Way at the south-western edge of the village

PARISH CHARACTER AREA 5



View north-west from Bessels Way at the north-western edge of the village



Allotments



## PARISH CHARACTER AREA 6



Looking north through a gap in the vegetation on footpath 7, a public byway

## PARISH CHARACTER AREA 6



Looking north-west from footpath 20, to the north of the village



Footpath 20



**PARISH CHARACTER AREA 9**



View north-east from footpath 40, to the south of the village

**PARISH CHARACTER AREA 9**



Looking north at the Blewbury village from footpath 21, to the north of the village

PARISH CHARACTER AREA 9



Looking south at the Downs escarpment from footpath 21, to the north of the village



PARISH CHARACTER AREA 10



Looking north-east from the southern end of Boham's Road

PARISH CHARACTER AREA 11



View from the top of Blewburton Hill



Parish Character Area 6

Parish Character Area 5

Parish Character Area 4

Didcot

