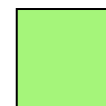


**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE:**  
**Lowland Mosaic Open**



**SIMILAR AND ASSOCIATED TYPES HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT AND BOROUGH LEVEL ASSESSMENTS**

<b>Basingstoke:</b>	<b>Primary association:</b> Open Arable on Clay, Open Farmland and Woodland <b>Secondary association</b> Mixed Farmland and Woodland
<b>East Hampshire</b>	n/a
<b>Eastleigh</b>	<b>Primary association:</b> Open Valley Farmland, Undulating Farmland <b>Secondary association:</b> Woodland Farmland and Parkland
<b>Fareham</b>	n/a
<b>Gosport</b>	n/a
<b>Hart</b>	n/a
<b>Havant</b>	n/a
<b>New Forest</b>	n/a:
<b>Rushmoor</b>	n/a
<b>Test Valley</b>	Mixed Farmland and Woodland Medium Scale
<b>Winchester</b>	n/a

**SIMILAR AND ASSOCIATED TYPES IN NEIGHBOURING AUTHORITY ASSESSMENTS**

<b>Dorset</b>	
<b>West Berkshire</b>	Open Clay Lowlands
<b>West Sussex</b>	
<b>Wiltshire</b>	Open Clay Vale

## KEY IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS AND BOUNDARY DEFINITIONS

- Low lying, relatively flat on clay and alluvial soils and perhaps lighter and richer soils than medium scale and heath associated lowland mosaic landscapes.
- Close proximity to streams.
- Nearly all farmed land - no remnant open land / common.
- Little intensive exploitation pre Saxon period.
- Intensively farmed landscapes post disafforestation resulting in high density dispersed settlement of hamlets and farmsteads particularly in the Loddon valley and lower part of the Test.
- Often found close to settlement – particularly market towns like Romsey and Petersfield.
- Their open nature is attributable to relatively large fields and boundary loss and very low woodland cover and few undulations.
- Relatively little biodiversity interest apart from neutral grassland, remaining woodland and hedges.
- Mid 19<sup>th</sup> century - medium density dispersed settlement pattern

## PHYSICAL

### GEOLOGY, LANDFORM, ELEVATION:

**Bedrock and Superficial Geology:** The dominant formation is London Clay but where the LCT occurs in south Hampshire it has significant associations with the Wittering formation. Here, there is varied coverage of superficial and alluvium deposits.

**Landform and Elevation:** Predominantly flat to gently undulating and low lying. This is a fundamental factor in giving the feeling of openness. The flatness sets it apart from the other lowland mosaic types.

### SOILS TYPES:

**Typical soil type pattern:** Consistently one type of soil; slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loam over clay. Gley soil profiles. Predominantly 711h in north Hampshire and 711g in south Hampshire

### FUNCTIONS:

**Hydrological function:** Not related to high hydrological function indicators, but varied where this type occurs. Generally minor or no groundwater vulnerability zones. Occasionally grade 3 or 4 source protection zones.

**Food and Biomass:** Very varied agricultural land grade from 2 to 4. The higher grade land is much less extensive and occurs in pockets associated with lighter alluvial soils close to watercourses. Biomass potential is very varied.

**Biodiversity potential:** Very low for the habitats where opportunity mapping has been carried out.

**LANDCOVER AND LAND USE PATTERN:** Markedly higher proportion of arable land (frequent/abundant) in comparison with other lowland mosaic landscape types. Low trimmed hedges containing isolated hedgerow trees. Very low woodland cover. Hedge bounded fields are relatively large compared and varied in size with other lowland mosaic landscapes. They average about 7ha but are frequently above 20ha.

**HYDROLOGY:** Associated with watercourses. Drainage ditches along field boundaries are a frequent feature.

## **EXPERIENTIAL**

### **ACCESS AND TRANSPORT ROUTES:**

Generally well developed road and lane network, perhaps because of often close proximity to settlement and or transport corridor. Not particularly dense footpath and bridleway network.

### **TRANQUILLITY:**

Not identified as being particularly tranquil in the 2006 CPRE study. Due to the lack of woodland and substantial hedgerows and proximity to development, in south Hampshire there is little sense of tranquillity and seclusion. In north Hampshire where this type occurs there is less development to influence tranquillity.

## **BIODIVERSITY**

The Lowland Mosaic Open landscape character type is an agricultural landscape comprising improved grassland and arable land, unimproved grassland and limited woodland.

Unimproved grasslands exist within this landscape; these are mainly neutral, although there are some acid grasslands. Unimproved grassland provides an important habitat resource, particularly when most of the surrounding grassland resource has been improved for agriculture, reducing its habitat potential.

Woodland is limited in the Lowland Mosaic Open landscape character type: it is less wooded than other Lowland Mosaic landscape character types. There is some broadleaved woodland and some parkland which may represent old pasture landscapes and are often species rich. There is also some active coppicing without standards. Hazel coppice woodlands can support rich flora and butterfly populations but this potential is reduced when there are no standards and if coppicing is no longer carried out.

The Loddon Catchment BOA exists within this landscape character type and identifies opportunities for lowland heath, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, lowland dry acid grassland, wet woodland and lowland meadow habitat creation and enhancement.

## **HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT**

### **ARCHAEOLOGY**

There is light evidence of exploitation during the Mesolithic and Neolithic. In the Bronze Age there is little evidence and no suggestion that this is a farmed or settled landscape, and there are few Bronze Age burial mounds except along the fringes of the Avon valley (and a noticeable concentration on Petersfield Heath). Likewise in Iron Age there is little evidence of settlement, although there is some on the fringes of the Avon valley. However, where the river valleys cut through the bands of lowland mosaic there are several examples where the valley is marked by an Iron Age hill fort, such as Bulls Down Copse (Loddon). In the Roman period there are some Villa sites on the margins of these areas suggesting that exploitation, such as for woodland, hunting and quasi industrial activity such as pottery or tile production is making them slightly less marginal. There is a close correlation between lowland mosaic landscapes and pottery/tile production which may well reflect the availability of clay and fuel. In the medieval period assart landscapes, moats and deer parks, speak eloquently of the release of forest land to farming at this late stage in the evolution of the landscape.

### **HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**

Parts of the Loddon and Whitewater valleys are associated with large wavy fields which suggest areas that the land was enclosed by informal agreement and areas have seen significant boundary/woodland loss. In the south Hampshire lowlands the previous historic field pattern appears to have been predominantly more regular enclosures and these have suffered significant boundary loss to produce an open feeling to the landscape.

### **HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

**Settlement types by form:** typically, historically medium density dispersed small settlement and farmsteads and areas surrounding modern expanded settlements in south Hampshire.

**Building materials and type;**

Typically associated with older material distributions of clay brick and tiles and timber framed buildings especially in the north Hampshire lowlands of the Loddon valley.

### **VISIBILITY**

**Prominency:** Locally low lying above the lower reaches of river valley floor.

**Enclosure:** Distant views to wooded horizons and development. Low woodland cover, low hedges, and very gently undulating landform makes this landscape makes this the most intervisible lowland mosaic landscapes.

**Public perceptions:** This LCT is not associated with popular visitor areas. However it is close and visible to urban populations in south Hampshire.