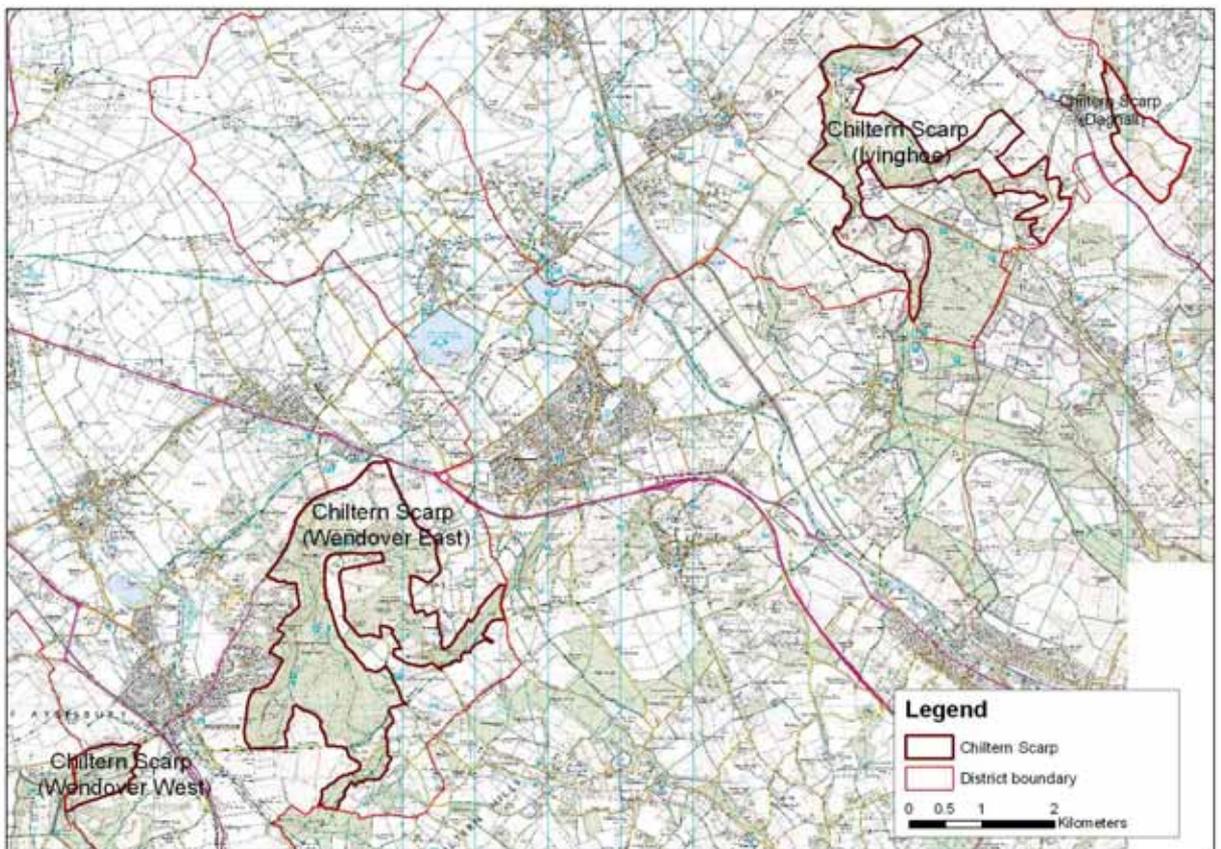
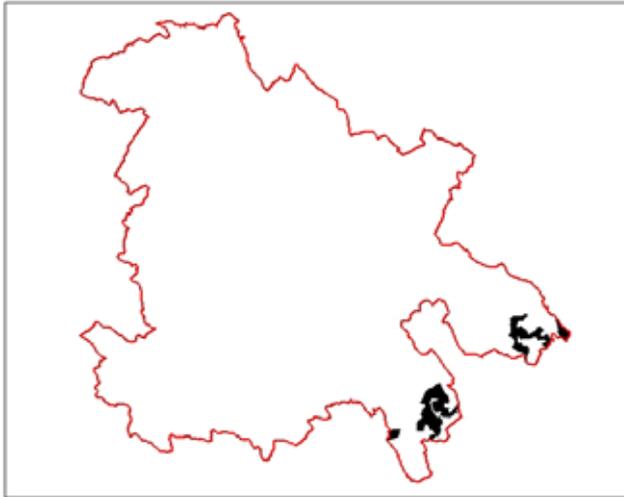


LCA 11.1 Chiltern Scarp

Landscape Character Type: LCT 11 Chalk Escarpment



LCA 11.1 Chilterns Scarp (LCT 11)

Key Characteristics

- Steeply sloping chalk scarp (downland)
- Boddington and Ivinghoe Beacon hillforts
- Extensive woodland cover
- Species rich chalk grassland
- Long distance views over the Aylesbury Vale landscape
- Occasional smaller parcels of grazing land within woodland setting

Distinctive Features

- Ridgeway long distance footpath
- Extensive public access including car parking, picnic sites and interpretation facilities
- Large areas of broadleaved woodland
- Calcareous grassland

Intrusive Elements

- Water storage and distribution infrastructure

Location The area is sub-divided into four parcels of land, two to the west of the Tring Gap and two to the east. Two sections lie to the northeast and southwest of Wendover following the steeply sloping chalk face of the Chilterns escarpment, which extends beyond the respective east and west boundaries of the District.

Two further sections lie to the east and west of the smaller Hemel Hempstead Gap in the east of the District.

Landscape character Narrow steeply sloping and heavily wooded chalk scarp. The scarp is a dominant landmark visible over long distances from the lower lying Aylesbury Vale to the north. Narrow, incised winding lanes climb up the scarp.

There is a high proportion of woodland cover with grass pasture downland, with steep sided valleys (coombes) and woodland on steep slopes (hangers). Ivinghoe Beacon is a popular visitor attraction affording long distance views over the Vale landscape to the north and west. Earthworks relating to pre-historic settlement are common. The Ridgeway long distance footpath crosses the area. There are public car parks and interpretation facilities at Wendover Woods, which are managed by the Forestry Commission and where there are extensive public drives which provide access to picnic sites and woodland walks. The northern part of the Wendover scarp is utilised as a golf course.

Open areas of the eastern chalk scarp are used predominantly for grazing. An unusual feature of the area are the fields at the northern end of Dagnall scarp which are utilised as zoological gardens with animal pens. Level ground at top of the Dagnall scarp is occupied by clubhouse and parking areas to the golf course. A large block of deciduous woodland occupies the scarp to the west of the golf clubhouse.

Geology Middle chalk overlain by upper chalk. The highest parts of the scarp are topped with a layer of clay-with-flints.

Topography The face of the escarpment is steeply sloping and has been subject to erosion, resulting over time, in a steeply undulating landform particularly where gaps and valleys have been cut through the chalk. High points on the scarp lie at a level of 250m AOD, dropping to approximately 150m AOD at 'toe' of scarp.

To the south of the scarp beyond the LCA boundary the 'dip slope' drops gently towards the River Thames catchment but with steeper sided slopes where valleys have been incised into the chalk.

Hydrology The scarp is dry. Springs erupt from the chalk lower down the slope in the adjacent foothills area. The scarp, being the highest point in the surrounding landscape, is used for underground water storage reservoirs.

Land use and settlement The steeply sloping land is predominantly given over to woodland with occasional and some extensive pockets of pasture.

Wendover is the largest local settlement but sits in a gap in the scarp outside but abutting the area. Running east from Wendover is the B4009, also called the Upper Icknield Way. Between the road and the escarpment lies Halton Camp, which extends to the foot of the scarp slope. There are also isolated properties on the top of the scarp. West of Wendover, on the

LCA 11.1 Chilterns Scarp (LCT 11)

Ellesborough Road, there are some properties whose gardens extend up the lowest part of the escarpment.

Tree cover Woodland is present in all four parts of the LCA and includes significant areas of ancient woodland in 11.1C. The largest woodland block is Wendover Woods, to the east of Halton, an extensive area of mixed coniferous and broadleaved woodland managed by the Forestry Commission and including some ancient woodland for example at Hale Wood.

The woodland at Bacombe Hill to the west of Wendover is predominantly deciduous with pockets of chalk grassland, hawthorn and juniper scrub and hazel coppice.

Biodiversity Large areas of the Chiltern scarp support the broad habitat type of broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland (particularly sections C and D) or by the priority and broad habitat types for calcareous grassland (particularly section A). Nevertheless coniferous woodland, scrub woodland, improved and unimproved grassland and arable fields are present throughout.

The LCA contains an exceptionally large area of designated sites and broad habitats of district significance compared to the rest of the District. A small area of the internationally important Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation is included in section A of the LCA. Some details of the SSSIs are included in the LCT description.

The extensive CWS at Wendover Woods has a great variety in the age of the woodland blocks, their species composition and canopy height providing considerable habitat diversity. In contrast the more open CWS at Bacombe Warren is a fine example of species rich chalk grassland where habitat diversity is increased by proximity to replanted woodland and pasture. This site supports several plants which are particularly unusual in Buckinghamshire.

Historic environment The dominant characteristic of this landscape is its wooded nature. This includes ancient woodland although half of the woodland is classified as secondary being naturally regenerated over the last one hundred years. Much of this secondary woodland has replaced the chalk downland which is of great sensitivity in the county, the best surviving downland can be found at Ivinghoe and Pitstone. Other key elements of the landscape are pre 18th century enclosures on the dip slope. There have been further changes in the 20th century with the creation of small pony paddocks and prairie fields to the east while at Wendover and Dagnall, the scarp has been developed into golf courses. A small percentage of the landscape at Wendover and Ivinghoe has a small part of the parkland landscapes of Halton and Ashridge.

With the exception of one Grade II* listed building there are no settlements within this area.

This landscape is very rich in prehistoric monuments, the topography of the landscape making it conducive for location of particular sites. The most prominent archaeological monuments are the hillforts at Ivinghoe Beacon and Boddington Camp. The former is a univallate hillfort dating from the Bronze Age; the monument is also associated with round barrows and house platforms located near by. Ivinghoe Beacon, set on the Chiltern scarp, is a fine example of its type, By contrast the hillfort of Boddington Camp extends out from a spur overlooking the town of Wendover however, its location is

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not readily apparent as it is covered by coniferous and beech woodland which was planted in its interior in the 1950s. Other than these two monuments the landscape contains many small but nationally important monuments including Bronze Age round barrows at Bacombe Hill, a Neolithic long barrow above Halton camp and Romano-British burial ground to the south of Ivinghoe Beacon.

Amenity value of this area is very high. The landscape is within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and facilitated by a number of promoted Rights of Way and is popular with walkers. Most of the prominent archaeological monuments in this area are in positive management, Ivinghoe Beacon is in the custodianship of the National Trust and well promoted to visitors, while Boddington camp is under the management of the Forestry Commission although despite being along a recreation trail is not widely publicised.

Designations

Chilterns AONB

EHRHP&G at Halton House

Scheduled Ancient Monuments: Bowl Barrow on Gallows Hill, Hillfort & Bowl Barrow, Bowl Barrow 240m South of Trig Pillar, Bowl Barrow 480m South of Trig Pillar, Earthworks, Boddington Camp, Long Barrow, Roman Site, Bell Barrow, Bacombe Hill

Archaeological Notification Areas – 12 No.

Special Area of Conservation: Chiltern Beechwoods

SSSI: Bacombe & Combe Hills, Dancers End, Tring Woodlands, Dancers End Waterworks, Aston Clinton Ragpits, Ivinghoe Hills, Asheridge Commons and Woods, Pavis & Northill Wood

CWS – 2 No.

BNS – 4 No.

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Distant view of the scarp east of Wendover seen from Bacombe Warren.



Beacon Hill from the Ridgeway.

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Summary of Condition/Sensitivity Analysis

Condition **Very Good**

Pattern of elements:	Unified
Visual detractors:	Few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Good
Ecological integrity:	Strong
Functional integrity:	Very strong

Sensitivity **High**

Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Dominant
Tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	High

Guidelines **Conserve and Reinforce**

Condition

Overall the condition of the landscape is considered to be very good. The extensive woodland cover of the scarp is a distinctive feature of the area emphasising the strong visual unity. There are numerous SSSI sites dispersed over the Scarp landscape emphasising their importance for preserving a wide variety of chalk habitats. The general pattern of elements is considered as being unified and there are few detracting features. Cultural integrity is good as the landscape is made up of historic downland and ancient woodland. It also contains a large concentration of nationally important, archaeological monuments from the prehistoric period. These monuments are situated in prominent places and are a particular attraction for visitors to this part of the Chilterns. Ecological integrity is strong due to large area of designated sites and habitats of District significance, and

strong connectivity of these features. Overall the functional integrity is considered to be very strong.

Sensitivity

The distinctive sense of place combined with historic continuity provides an overall high sensitivity value. The landform, which is a dominant feature of the area, is distinguished by intermittent woodland cover. There are popular vantage points along the Scarp which the public visit specifically to enjoy the views over the Vale landscape. Visibility is therefore rated as being high. Overall the degree of sensitivity is considered to be moderate.



View towards the scarp west of Wendover.

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Landscape Guidelines Conserve and Reinforce

Guidelines for the Chilterns Scarp are as follows:

- Conserve the extensive woodland cover.
- Encourage the replacement of coniferous woodland with deciduous cover.
- Encourage the development of small grazing plots to reinforce the important of species rich grassland.
- Encourage public access to woodland with education and new access agreements.
- Conserve the status of all the SSSI sites.
- Encourage the control of scrub where it is encroaching on chalk grassland.
- Manage the areas of public access to contain excessive 'wear and tear' at popular vantage points.
- Maintain the extent and condition of calcareous, unimproved and semi-improved grassland.
- Maintain connectivity of habitats.
- Identify key viewpoints from publicly accessible locations and promote the management and enhancement of these viewpoints.
- Preserve the low density of dispersed settlement over the area.
- Promote survey and management plans for ancient monuments in woodland and discourage the replanting of woodland on vulnerable archaeological sites.
- Manage access to minimise wear and erosion around the earthwork sites, particularly Ivinghoe Beacon.
- Encourage improved interpretation of the area's rich archaeological heritage.



Scarp from Pitstone Hill.