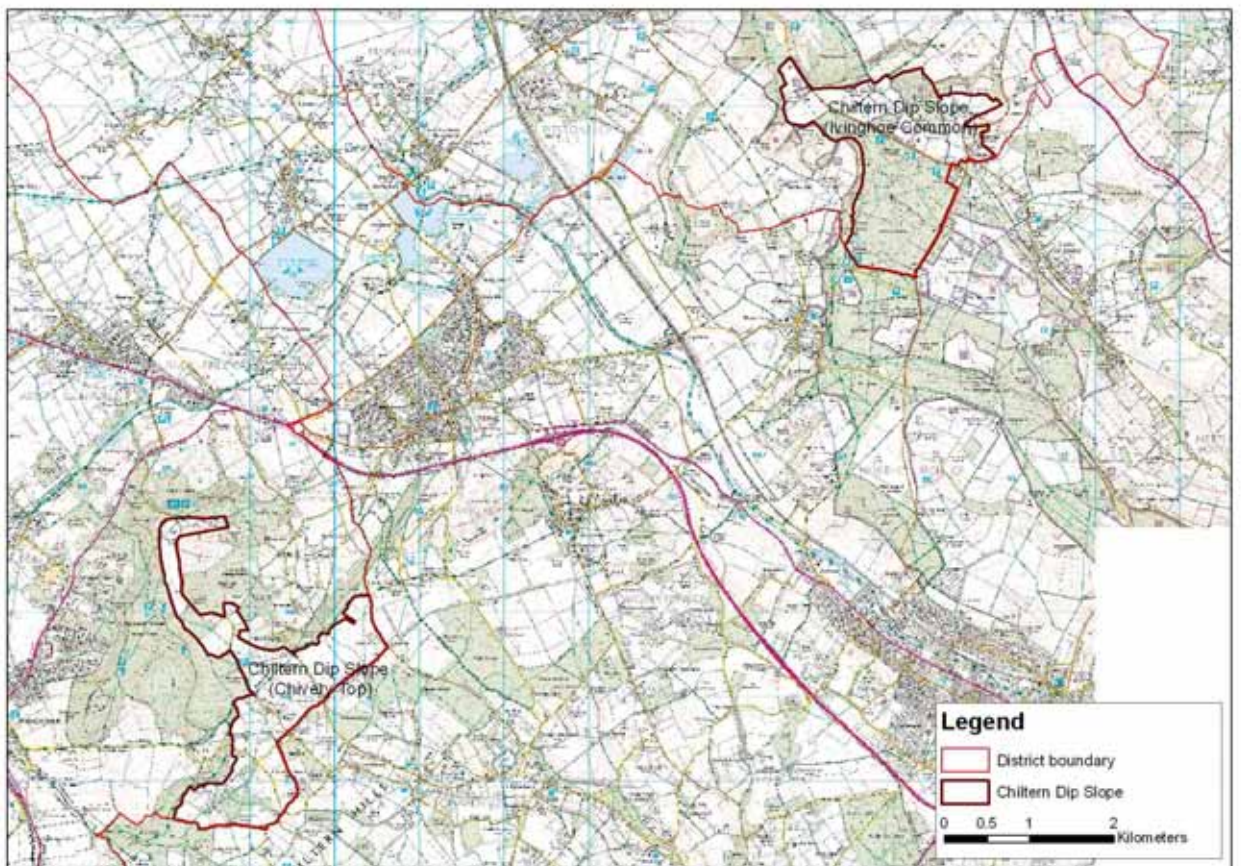
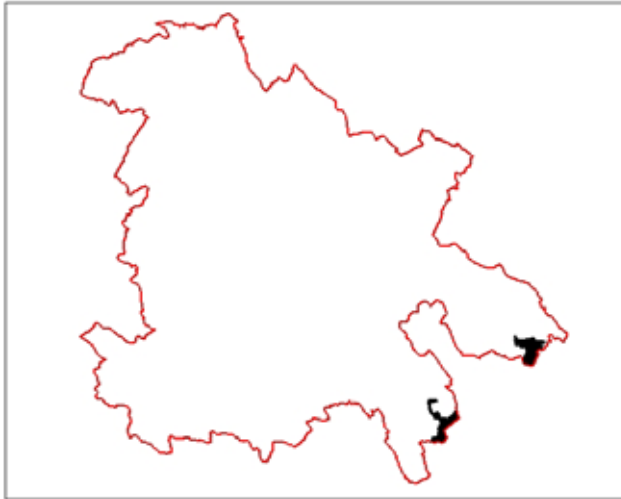


## LCA 12.1 Chiltern Dip Slope

### Landscape Character Type: LCT 12 Chalk Dip Slope



## LCA 12.1 Chiltern Dip Slope (LCT 12)

### Key Characteristics

- Greatly undulating landform with shallow dry valleys
- Chalk downland
- Woodland with pasture
- Irregular field pattern at Chivery
- Geometric early enclosure pattern at Ivinghoe Common

### Distinctive Features

- Extensive mixed woodland at Ivinghoe Common
- Ancient semi-natural woodland within large areas of broadleaved woodland
- Arable prairie fields east of Chivery
- Historic earthworks
- Groups of residential properties
- Grim's Ditch
- Ridgeway long distance footpath

### Intrusive Elements

- Public car parking areas

**Location** The LCA is divided into two parts by the Tring Gap which cuts through the Chilterns. Ivinghoe Common is on the eastern side of the Gap. The LCA is sharply defined by the escarpment to the north and west and the county boundary to the south. The LCA includes a short promontory of land to the northwest which extends in the direction of Ivinghoe Beacon.

Chivery Top is on the western side of this Gap, east of Wendover. The LCA is sharply defined by the escarpment slope of the Chilterns to north and the district boundary to the south. The LCA includes a narrow promontory of land that extends northwards to include Aston Hill.

**Landscape character** Gently sloping chalk downland enclosed by extensive mature woodland. Small farmsteads, regular sized fields set out in geometric pattern predominantly used for grazing. At Ivinghoe Common woodland in National Trust ownership is managed for public access and provides car parking, recreational facilities and interpretation.

At Chivery larger mature woodland occurs to the north and more fragmented woodland to the south. Small farmsteads and dispersed houses. Winding lanes between smaller sized irregular shaped field parcels and some large arable fields to the east. There is a higher proportion of woodland cover in the west with mixed deciduous/coniferous woodland. Archaeologically important earthworks (Grim's Ditch) cross the area.

**Geology** Both areas consist of upper chalk deposits overlain by Clay with Flints. Where streams have eroded the clay capping beds of upper chalk have been exposed.

**Topography** Crawley Wood at the northern tip Ivinghoe Common lies at a level of 249m AOD (Triangulation point). The area dips gently to the southeast falling to a level of 200m AOD at a number of locations on the eastern boundary. A number of dry valleys have been eroded into the chalk slope on the eastern boundary of the area generating a more rolling landform.

Aston Hill to the north of Chivery sits at a level of 260m AOD (Triangulation point). The area dips gently towards the southeast dropping to a level of approximately 225m AOD on its southern boundary. A number of dry valleys have been eroded into the chalk slope generating a gently rolling landform to the south.

**Hydrology** There are no discernable watercourses however, there is a notable distribution of ponds and wells over both areas. There are also some underground water distribution facilities. The area contains a number of dry valleys which fall towards the southeast.

**Land use and settlement** The LCA is predominantly woodland cover and grass pasture. Ivinghoe Common fits within this pattern. At Chivery Top the grassland areas follow the narrow promontory of land that is surrounded by the scarp LCA. However, further south where the LCA extends beyond the District boundary there are arable fields of varying sizes. Settlement is restricted to a few dispersed dwellings and farmsteads which follow the network of local lanes and which occasionally produce a small scale fragmented ribbon development pattern.

**Tree cover** Pockets of ancient semi-natural woodland are present at Sallow Coppice, Ringshall Coppice, Levi Spring and Baldwins Wood. Woodland is mixed. Deciduous species include oak, ash, cherry, beech and

## LCA 12.1 Chiltern Dip Slope (LCT 12)

sweet chestnut.

**Biodiversity** Section A of the LCA is dominated by the broad habitat type broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland occurring to the south west, although grassland is present in the north east. Most of the grassland is improved but one patch of unimproved grassland is present on the eastern boundary of the LCA. Much of the woodland is included within the Ashridge Common & Woods SSSI which is also within the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation the only designation of its type occurring in the District. Further details are given in the LCT description.

Section B of the LCA is a mix of arable fields, the broad habitat type of broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland, and improved grassland.

The aquatic habitat of standing water is very limited in both areas.

**Historic environment** The landscape of each of the areas contrast in their composition, to the east the landscape is dominated by woodland cover; ancient woodland at Sallow copse and Ringshill Coppice, although half of the woodland is secondary woodland which has grown over the last 150 years, this has colonised much of Ivinghoe and Pitstone commons. The surrounding landscape is made up pre 18<sup>th</sup> century fields. Small pockets of 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure at Chivery with more recent 20<sup>th</sup> century enclosure around Meadow farm. In comparison, the landscape of the western area is mixed, with different types of enclosure, and woodland. There are well preserved examples of pre 18<sup>th</sup> century enclosures around Chivery and Leylands farm but the largest proportion of fields date to the twentieth century, including paddocks around Chivery Hall farm and prairie fields to the south of Northhill Wood.

The historic settlement pattern of these areas is dispersed, comprising a number of isolated farmsteads of local interest. There are no known historic buildings of note in this area.

The area contains some important archaeological monuments, perhaps the most visible and extensive is the scheduled ancient monument of Grim's ditch. This is a linear bank and ditch system that divides the landscape into territorial boundaries and probably dates to the Iron Age, It runs across the western section of the LCA. Other notable sites found in the east are the prehistoric bowl barrow and Roman site on Pitstone common. The archaeology in this area has been shown to be extensive as a survey by the National Trust of Ivinghoe common revealed the area to contain preserved banks of former fields systems which could date as early as the Bronze Age.

This landscape has a high amenity value, being within the Chiltern AONB. The landscape contains the Ridgeway long distance track and a number of other rights of way which are actively promoted.

### **Designations**

Chilterns AONB

Scheduled Ancient Monuments: Roman Site, Grims Ditch between Lane End & Botton End, Grim's Ditch between Leylands Farm & Shire Lane, Grim's Ditch between Oaken Grove & Lanes End

Archaeological Notification Areas – 3 No.

Special Area of Conservation: Chiltern Beechwoods

SSSI: Ashridge Common & Woods (2)

CWS – 1 No.

BNS – 6 No.

**LCA 12.1 Chiltern Dip Slope (LCT 12)**



Woodland paddocks at Ringshall.



Beacon Road (Ivinghoe Common to the left).

## LCA 12.1 Chiltern Dip Slope (LCT 12)

### Summary of Condition/Sensitivity Analysis

**Condition** **Very Good**

|                       |          |
|-----------------------|----------|
| Pattern of elements:  | Unified  |
| Visual detractors:    | Few      |
| Visual unity:         | Unified  |
| Cultural integrity:   | Variable |
| Ecological integrity: | Strong   |
| Functional integrity: | Strong   |

**Sensitivity** **Low**

|                  |          |
|------------------|----------|
| Distinctiveness: | Distinct |
| Continuity:      | Historic |
| Sense of place:  | Moderate |
| Landform:        | Apparent |
| Tree cover:      | Enclosed |
| Visibility:      | Low      |

**Guidelines** **Reinforce**

### Condition

Overall the condition of the landscape is considered to be very good. The existing woodland cover which is a distinctive feature of the area provides a strongly unifying feature. Ashridge Woods are designated as a SSSI and Ringshall Coppice is the largest of the numerous ancient semi-natural woodlands on the Dip slope. This supports the fact that the ecological integrity has been identified as being strong. The general pattern of elements is considered as being unified and there are few detracting features. Cultural integrity is variable, as the area contains areas of ancient woodland, common land and some nationally important archaeological monuments. However, there is some fragmentation of historic field patterns. Ecological integrity is strong due to good connectivity and large areas of designated sites and habitats of District significance compared to other areas. Overall the functional integrity is considered to be strong

### Sensitivity

The sense of place is distinctive combined with the historic continuity provides a rating score of moderate. The landform although apparent is not a dominant feature except where local steep sided valleys have been eroded within the chalk. Overall the degree of sensitivity is low.



Mature beech trees at Ivinghoe Common.

## LCA 12.1 Chiltern Dip Slope (LCT 12)

### Landscape Guidelines Reinforce

The landscape guidelines for the Chiltern Dip Slope are as follows:

- Conserve and reinforce the extensive woodland cover.
- Encourage the replacement of coniferous woodland with deciduous cover.
- Encourage the development of small grazing plots to reinforce the importance of species rich grassland.
- Conserve the status of all the SSSI sites.
- Manage the areas of public access to contain excessive 'wear and tear' at popular vantage points.
- Conserve and enhance the distinctive character of settlements and individual buildings.
- Encourage landowners to improve ecological diversity by maintaining varied land maintenance regimes to benefit landscape and habitats.
- Promote survey and management plans for ancient monuments in woodland.
- Maintain extent and condition of calcareous grassland.
- Maintain connectivity of habitats.