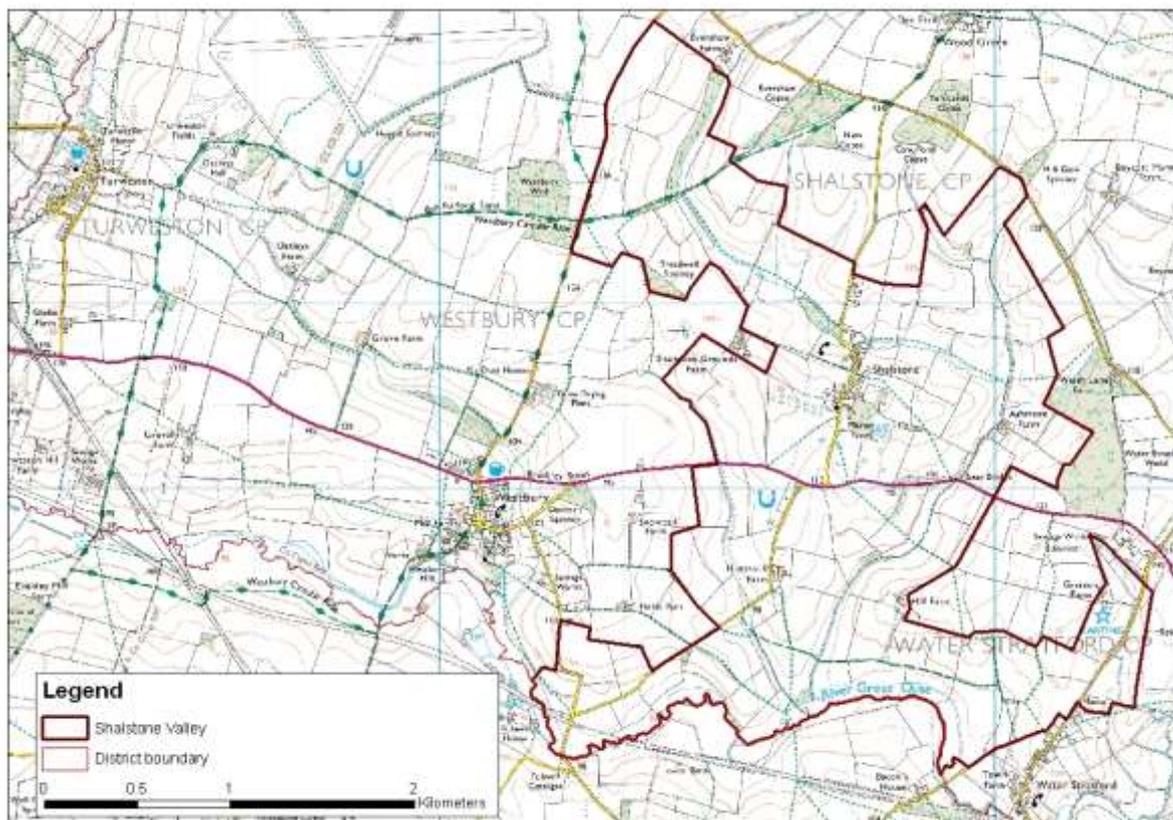
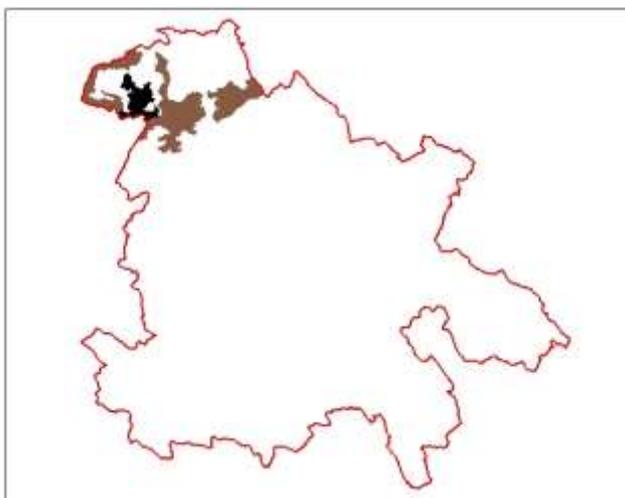


## LCA 2.2 Shalstone Valley

### Landscape Character Type: LCT 2 Incised Valleys



## LCA 2.2 Shalstone Valley (LCT 2)

### Key Characteristics

- Part of the Great Ouse valley and tributary around Shalstone.
- Small valley
- Undulating valley sides
- Meandering streams
- Predominantly arable
- Small and medium sized fields
- Very small woodland blocks
- Low density of settlement
- Retains predominantly pre 18<sup>th</sup> century historic landscape pattern
- Tranquil character

### Distinctive Features

- Shalstone Manor and parkland
- Avenue and parkland trees
- Pre 18<sup>th</sup> century meadows adjacent to river and streams
- Views enclosed by landform
- Shalstone historic settlement at the centre of the area

### Intrusive Elements

- Prairie farming
- A422 Brackley Road

**Location** Centred on a forked tributary valley to the north of the Great Ouse west of Buckingham and includes the south facing left valley side of the Great Ouse valley. The river forms the southern and county boundary, elsewhere most boundaries are with the higher ground of LCAs 1.3 Wooded Farmland and 1.6 Oatleys Plateau. The A422 crosses the area from east to west.

**Landscape character** The bulk of this area is predominantly in arable farming but unusually has retained strong hedgerow pattern in general reflecting the pre 18<sup>th</sup> century enclosure. The steeply sloping valley sides and small woodlands, strong hedgerows with trees create an enclosed landscape character with short distance views. In contrast the valley sides of the Great Ouse are marked by significant areas of prairie farming, which have disrupted the normally enclosed nature of this landscape. A further area of prairie farming occurs on the north western edge.

Shalstone Park is a significant landscape feature - the parkland and the house being visible from the A422. The Great Ouse meanders through a narrow valley bottom with areas of pre 18<sup>th</sup> century meadow. Several footpaths run along the river valley sides with a footbridge giving access across the Great Ouse to Finmere.

**Geology** Glacial till overlain by scattered undifferentiated glacial deposits with exposed limestone formations and alluvium deposits in valley bottom.

**Topography** The landform of both the Great Ouse valley side and the tributary valleys is fairly steeply sloping undulating ground creating a predominantly enclosed landscape. An area of slightly higher ground stands above the valleys at the centre of the area around Shalstone. The elevation range within the area is in the range 90-130m AOD.

**Hydrology** The whole of this area drains towards the meandering Great Ouse. From the higher ground to the north the tributary streams feed into the area down narrow valleys with steep sides. There is a small lake at Shalstone Manor.

**Land use and settlement** Land use is predominantly arable with small areas of grassland mainly adjacent to the Great Ouse and the village of Shalstone. The grassland is generally in small fields with notable linear meadows adjacent to the river and streams. A notable feature of the area is that although it is predominantly arable most of the hedgerow pattern remains intact. There are however exceptions where the loss of hedgerows has created prairie fields, mainly in the southeast and northwest of the area.

The area has a low level of settlement represented mainly by the village of Shalstone and a few scattered farms. However, the small village of Shalstone is strung out along the road imparting an impression of greater density locally. The village is predominantly unexpanded and retains strong characteristics of its historic development.

**Tree cover** About 5% of the area is woodland found in very small woodland blocks. None is identified as being ancient in origin. The tree cover within hedgerows is generally good. The parkland trees to the south of Shalstone Manor are a distinctive feature and visible from the A 422.

**Biodiversity** An area of parkland – the only priority habitat type in the area is present in the central part around Shalstone Manor. Elsewhere the arable

## LCA 2.2 Shalstone Valley (LCT 2)

habitat predominates and due to the large field sizes the potential for biodiversity and habitat connectivity is reduced in some areas. Throughout this dominance there are however small areas of broad habitat types; small fragments of broadleaved woodland are scattered throughout; and a few small areas of open standing water occur mainly in the centre.

Grassland is limited in area and is entirely improved with the exception of small areas of unimproved pasture centrally and in the west. Other non agricultural habitats present are small patches of scrub and coniferous woodland.

There are no biodiversity designations.

**Historic environment** An important Iron Age find has been made near the river and a Roman Road runs along the eastern boundary of the area from Stowe; otherwise there are few early archaeological records. This area was within the medieval royal hunting forest of Whittlewood, but disafforested before 1286. The landscape features of the greatest historic interest are meadows adjacent to the river and streams and the Shalstone Manor parkland, house and settlement. Much of the remainder of the area reflects early enclosure, the majority being pre 18<sup>th</sup> century. The historic character is therefore generally strong however, there are significant areas amounting to about 20% where the historic landscape pattern has been lost and replaced by prairie farming. Shalstone village is a conservation area based around a 19<sup>th</sup> century estate village with medieval settlement remains around it.

### **Designations**

Conservation Area at Shalstone  
Archaeological Notification Areas – 5 No.

## LCA 2.2 Shalstone Valley (LCT 2)



Arable farming within a strong pattern of hedgerows and woodland.



Looking east over open landscape at the top of the valley. The view is bounded by woodland within LCA 1.3 Wood Green Wooded Farmland.

## LCA 2.2 Shalstone Valley (LCT 2)

### Summary of Condition/Sensitivity Analysis

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Good</b>
Pattern of elements:	Unified
Visual detractors:	Few
Visual unity:	Strongly unified
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Coherent

<b>Sensitivity</b>	<b>Moderate</b>
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

<b>Guidelines</b>	<b>Conserve and Reinforce</b>
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### Condition

The landscape is considered to be in a good condition it is unified by a strong hedgerow pattern most of which represents pre 18<sup>th</sup> century enclosure over most of the area however, some areas of prairie farming have been created resulting in loss of cohesion. There are few intrusive elements; the A422 passes through the area and although the traffic is intrusive the road itself has retained its historic route and character. The unified landscape with few visual detractors creates a strongly unified landscape. The cultural integrity is variable being strongest around the well preserved historic settlement of Shalstone and weakest where the historic hedgerow pattern has been removed. Ecological integrity is moderate due to good connectivity in some areas and relatively large areas of priority habitat types. The variable cultural integrity and the moderate

ecological integrity combine to give the area a coherent functional integrity.

### Sensitivity

The landscape has a distinct character with a strong sense of historic continuity especially around Shalstone. This gives the area a moderate sense of place. The landform is apparent and the tree cover considered to be intermittent this reflects the variation between areas with strong tree lined hedgerows and the open treeless areas where hedgerows and trees have been lost. The visibility is considered to be moderate. The moderate sense of place and moderate visibility combine to give a moderate level of sensitivity to the area.

## LCA 2.2 Shalstone Valley (LCT 2)

### Landscape Guidelines Conserve and Reinforce

The landscape guidelines for the Shalstone Valley are as follows:

- Encourage the restoration of the historic hedgerow pattern where it has been lost. To enhance the landscape character and strengthen the ecological diversity. Where necessary use historic maps to identify where hedgerows have been lost.
- Maintain and improve the condition of existing hedgerows through traditional cutting regimes.
- Maintain the extent and condition of woodland using traditional techniques to create and manage a wide diversity of habitats.
- Maintain the extent and condition of unimproved and semi-improved grassland wherever possible. Encourage good management practices.
- Improve the management of historic meadows and pastures.
- Close to watercourses promote the use of permanent pasture, with low stocking density and flooding regimes to promote biodiversity and landscape enhancement.
- Maintain the existing extent and condition of the parkland.
- New housing and alterations to existing housing should be designed to reflect the traditional character of the area and use locally traditional materials.
- Promote the survey, retention and restoration of historic parkland around Shalstone.
- Promote the retention of the character of minor roads by the management of hedgerows and verges and limiting urbanising elements such as signage and kerbing.



Shalstone Manor with parkland to the south.