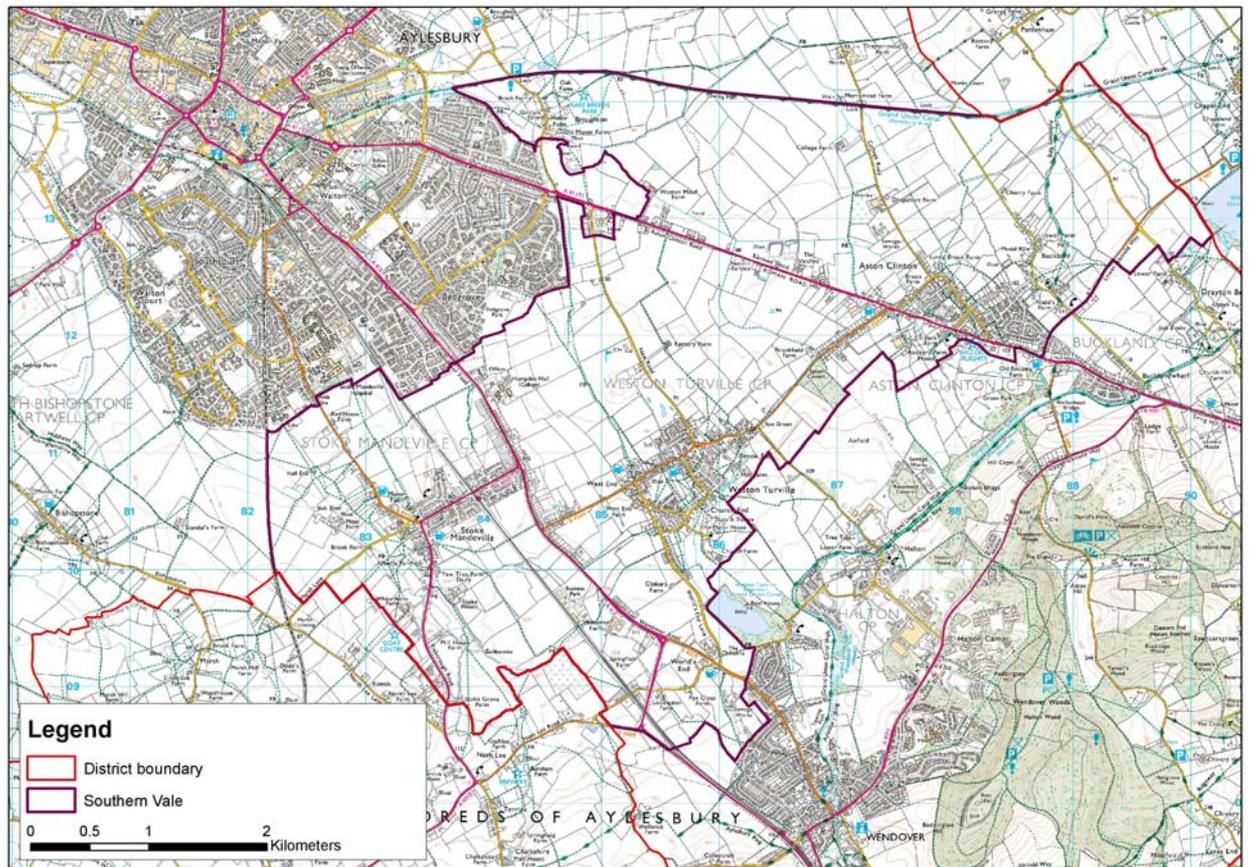
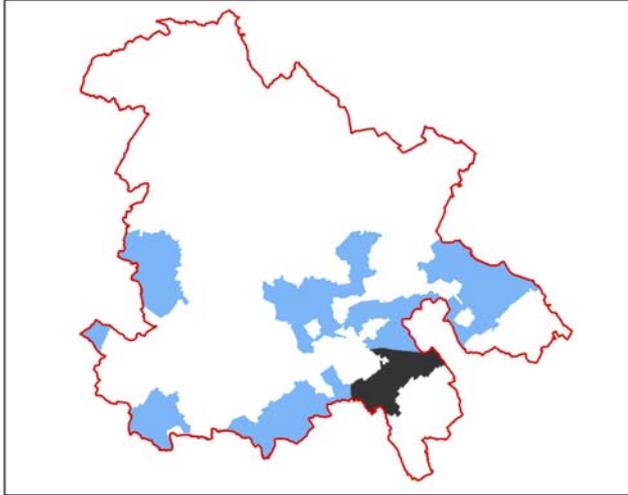


LCA 8.10 Southern Vale

Landscape Character Type: LCT 8 Vale



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Key Characteristics

- Flat landscape in the north rising gently to a rolling land form on the southern edge
- Parliamentary enclosure
- Streams and ditches draining off the chalk scarp to the south marked by belts of mature black poplar
- Landscape continuity interrupted by development and communication corridors
- Predominance of large open arable fields
- Pockets of grazing land and smaller field parcels associated with settlements

Distinctive Features

- Mature black poplar
- Historic moated sites and former fish ponds
- Aylesbury Arm of the Grand Union Canal on the northern boundary
- Vernacular buildings in Weston Turville
- Manor House, Motte and Bailey Site and Church at Weston Turville
- Moated Sites at Aston Clinton, Buckland and Broughton
- Ancient co-axial trackways
- Neutral grassland

Intrusive Elements

- Aston Clinton Bypass and associated infrastructure
- Traffic on A41 and A413
- Aylesbury to Marylebone Railway
- Ribbon development and associated commercial development along main highway corridors

Location The Southern Vale lies to the southeast of Aylesbury extending from the suburban fringe of the town to the Chiltern foothills. The northern boundary is the Aylesbury Arm of the Grand Union Canal whilst to the southwest the area extends to the Aylesbury to Princes Risborough railway line.

Landscape character Large area of low lying vale landscape with limited topographic variation and containing transport corridors and large villages that due to the open nature and the urban edge of Aylesbury break down the rural character. This is least apparent between the A41 and the Grand Union Canal. The Chilterns to the south are the backdrop to many views.

Geology Upper Greensand and Gault overlain with a lens of valley gravel between Weston Turville and the A41.

Topography Generally flat vale landscape which in this vicinity lies at a level between 80-85m AOD. Towards the south the land undulates gently where a number of chalk streams running off the Chilterns scarp to the south have eroded shallow valleys in the rising ground. The southern fringe lies at a level approximately 100m AOD whilst the suburban edge to Aylesbury lies at approximately 90m AOD.

Hydrology Series of ditches and small streams draining northwards to the Bear Brook and ultimately the river Thames. Scattered ponds. The Aylesbury Arm of the Grand Union Canal forms the northern boundary.

Land use and settlement The predominant agricultural use is arable with paddocks and small grazing parcels on the fringes of settlements. There are distinctive clusters of smaller fields with well-established and mature hedgerows around the farmstead at Moat Farm, west of Stoke Mandeville and at Broughton, east of Aylesbury. Fields are generally large, open with well-trimmed hedges. Some hedges have been removed entirely. Northwest of Weston Turville lies a golf course, an artificially created landscape of more recent vintage. Within the footprint of the golf course the existing field pattern has been eliminated with remnant hedgerow trees incorporated into the layout.

East of Broughton there is a commercial Rare Breeds Park where fields are sub-divided by fencing. Just to the north of the park there is a public car park providing parking for access to the Grand Union Canal towpath.

Compared with other areas adjoining Aylesbury, this area is densely settled. There are two large villages – Stoke Mandeville and Weston Turville. There is also a smaller cluster of houses at Broughton and extensive ribbon development along the A41 Aston Clinton Road and the A413 Wendover Road.

The Aston Clinton Bypass, a substantial dual carriageway, runs to the north of Aston Clinton village. At its crossing of College Road there is a large junction. The area is also crossed by Akeman Street (the A41 Aston Clinton Road) an historically important Roman Road. The wetter areas of the Vale often contain evidence of former moated properties and associated fish ponds.

Tree cover There is no significant woodland other than Splash Covert on the southern fringe. Hedgerow trees are infrequent except along streams and wet ditches where mature black poplar is common. A number of streams converge in the Broughton area where black poplar is a distinctive

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feature. Recent planting at the golf course and the bypass is currently immature. The former being characterised by ribbon development and close to Aylesbury and the latter having a more rural setting and compact, although with an undeveloped central area.

Biodiversity There is a mix of arable and grassland habitat throughout which is subdivided by the hedgerow network which provides habitat continuity. The grassland is mostly improved however there are some large areas of neutral grassland in the north some of which adjoin the canal which separates it from similar areas to the north. There are also and a few small patches of neutral lowland meadow in the north and south.

Woodland is not a major feature and limited to a small central scattering of broadleaved woodland, neither are aquatic habitats which are restricted to a few small watercourses and ponds, however the considerable interest associated with the canal is found along the north boundary.

Just off the A41 near Aston Clinton the CWS at Moat Farm, The Vatches comprises a wet grassland pasture and includes a moat and various earthworks. The rest of the field is marked by ridge-and-furrow denoting a probable lack of cultivation since the middle ages. This field is one of the very few surviving unimproved, flower-rich pastures which were once typical around Aston Clinton.

A further CWS at World's End on the LCA boundary with Wendover supports an area of fen crossed by a chalk stream. This is a scarce habitat within Buckinghamshire and it supports several plants which are considered very unusual in the county.

Historic environment The Southern Vale has four concentrations of pre 18th century enclosure land, these are at Broughton, Stoke Mandeville, Weston Turville and to the north of Aston Clinton/Buckland. These areas also encapsulate fossilised strips on the fringes of the settlements. The majority of the area is composed of Parliamentary enclosure fields created circa 1800 dispersed fairly evenly over the area. To the north of Weston Turville lies the local golf course. There is a single large prairie field south of Stoke Mandeville adjacent to the A4010 Risborough Road. South of Aston Clinton there are small parcels of 20th century enclosure.

The historic built environment is dominated by the settlements of Aston Clinton, Buckland, Stoke Mandeville and Weston Turville. The pattern of these settlements seems to conform to 'nucleated' types but the underlying pattern of these villages are polyfocal types, where villages have developed from more than one place. It can be difficult to define where the centre of the village is, usually because it has shifted over time. Subsequent growth in the 20th century has infilled land to give contiguous settlements. The villages of Buckland and Weston Turville possess some fine buildings and consequently selected areas of these villages have been designated conservation areas. Buckland's All Saints church is a fine 14th century Grade II* church, while Weston Turville contains a fine 14th century Grade I listed church of St Mary and nearby a Grade II* manor house.

The rich heritage of Weston Turville also extends to its archaeology, the grounds of the manor house contains a Motte and Bailey castle which is believed to be the fortification constructed by Geoffrey de Turville in the 12th century. The village also includes a series of earthworks including possible building platforms and ridge and furrow. The juxtaposition of

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castle, manor, village and open fields form an important heritage group worthy of conservation and enhancement. Other notable monuments in this area include moated sites at Broughton and Vatches Farm, Aston Clinton. At Broughton there is also a grade II* listed medieval aisled barn. There is also evidence for prehistoric, Roman and Saxon buried archaeology especially in proximity to the Roman road of Akeman Street, now the current A41. Running on a southeast-northwest alignment are several co-axial (parallel) roads such as Worlds End/Broughton Lane which may be part of a wider system of such ancient trackways linking the Chilterns to the vale.

The landscape is also bisected by other historic communication routes including, the Aylesbury Arm of the Grand Union canal, and the Aylesbury to London railway line constructed in the late 19th century.

The area has some amenity value, with a number of promoted access routes including the Aylesbury Ring and the Aylesbury Grand Union footpath crossing the area.

Designations

Chilterns AONB

Conservation Areas at Buckland, Weston Turville (6)

Scheduled Ancient Monuments: Moated Site & Fishponds 200m NW of Vatches Farm, Moated Site NW of Moat Farm, Motte & Bailey

Archaeological Notification Areas – 25 No.

CWS – 2 No.

BNS – 8 No.

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Typical views from the north and southwest part of the LCA showing the underlying character of much of the LCA of flat arable land, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.



Adjoining the Grand Union Canal near College Road.



South of Stoke Mandeville.

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Summary of Condition/Sensitivity Analysis	
Condition	Poor
Pattern of elements:	Incoherent
Visual detractors:	Some
Visual unity:	Interrupted
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Strong
Functional integrity:	Coherent
Sensitivity	Moderate
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate
Guidelines	Restore and Enhance

Condition

Generally the landscape is in poor condition but with localised pockets of higher quality landscape management. The pattern of hedgerows has been eroded or hedgerows are well trimmed, particularly around arable areas. The general pattern of elements has been interrupted by ribbon development, general settlement, the railway and by a new road infrastructure. There are consequently some detracting features in the landscape. The cultural integrity of the landscape is variable. Ecological integrity is strong due to the good connectivity, and relatively large areas of designated sites and habitats of District significance. Functional integrity remains coherent, supported by the network of streams and ditches crossing the area.

Sensitivity

The area retains its distinctive characteristics but relies strongly on its wider setting in the landscape. Sense of place is considered to be moderate with localised evidence of historic continuity. The landform is an apparent feature on the southern boundary, relating in strong visual terms to the foothills and scarp edge outside the area. Tree cover is sparse but with intermittent tree belts following watercourses. Overall the moderate sense of place and moderate degree of visibility combine to give the landscape a moderate degree of sensitivity.



View from public footpath north of Stoke Mandeville towards Stoke Mandeville Hospital.

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Landscape Guidelines Restore and Enhance

Landscape guidelines for the Southern Vale are as follows:

- Conserve the distinctive historic character and form of the villages and their settings, especially the fossilised strips associated with Weston Turville.
- Restore and enhance the original field pattern, where practical, including support for initiatives for management and replanting of hedgerows and infilling of gaps.
- Maintain and improve the condition and existing hedgerows through traditional cutting regimes.
- Encourage the planting of new woodland coverts and hedgerow trees, to enhance the landscape structure and screen suburban edges and road corridors.
- Maintain the condition and extent of woodland using traditional management techniques.
- Encourage the development of native vegetation in particular black poplar along streams and other watercourses.
- Maintain the condition and extent of neutral grassland.
- Maintain and improve connectivity, particularly of areas of neutral grassland.
- Encourage the conservation and interpretation of the areas rich historic environment, including the Aylesbury Arm of the Grand Union Canal.
- Encourage car-free access to the countryside from Aylesbury and settlements within the LCA through the creation of safe routes accessible to the less mobile and cyclists.
- Encourage the preservation of historic earthworks and ridge and furrow by maintaining a continuous grass sward.
- Restore the “at risk” listed aisled barn at Broughton Manor Farm.



South of Weston Turville a narrow field seen beyond the footpath gate separates the village (to the left) from the church, manor house and Motte and Bailey site.