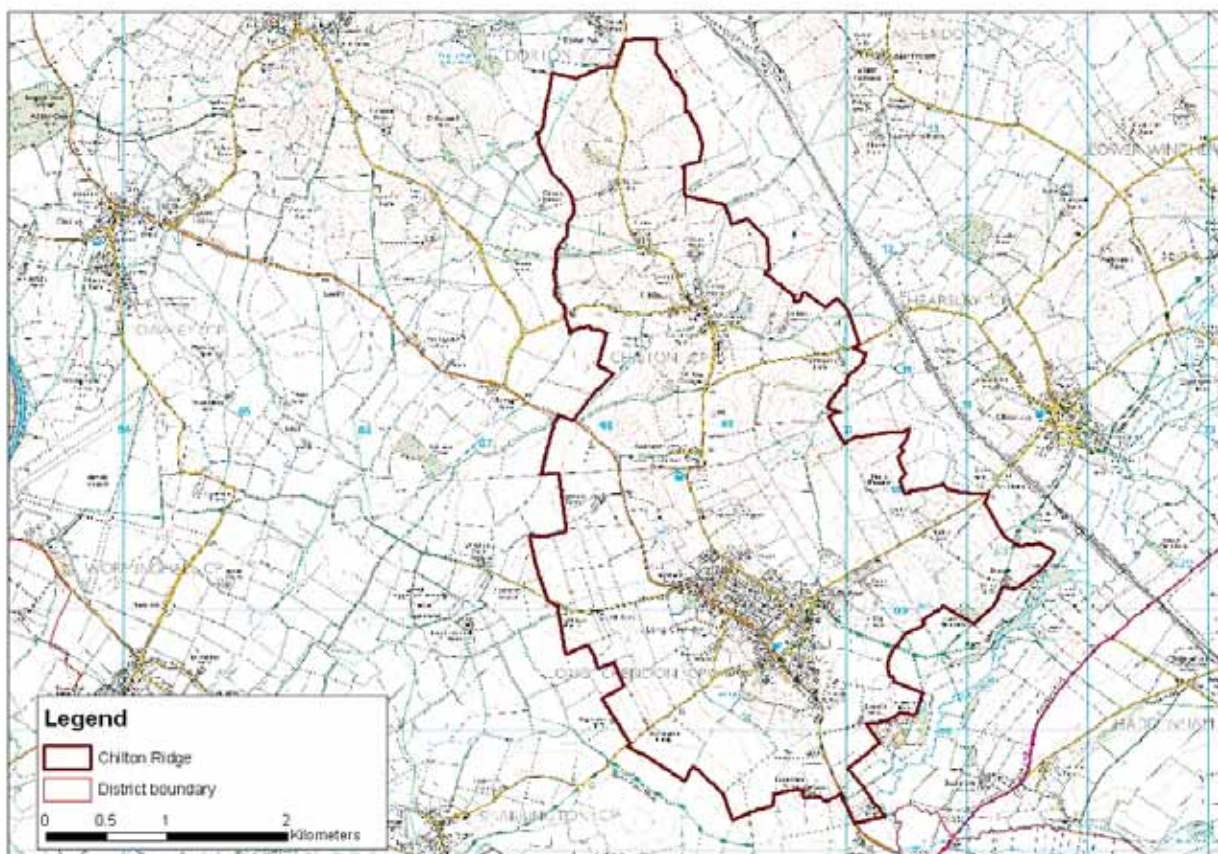
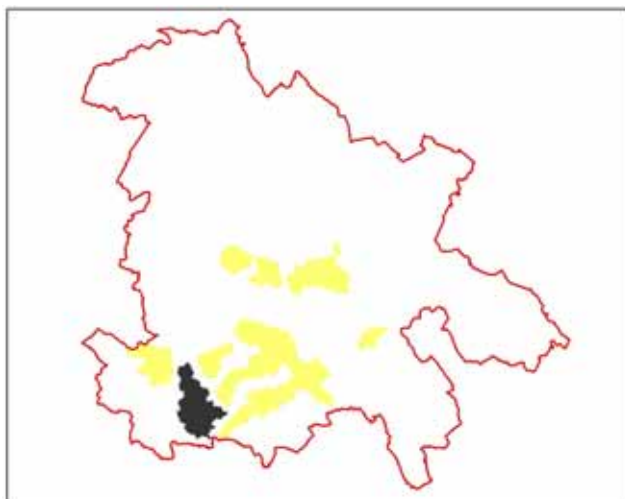


LCA 9.8 Chilton Ridge

Landscape Character Type: LCT 9 Low Hills and Ridges



LCA 9.8 Chilton Ridge (LCT 9)

Key Characteristics

- Small well defined ridge
- Steep ridge sides
- Good views in all directions
- Villages of Long Crendon and Chilton
- Predominantly pastoral
- Low level of woodland cover
- Settlement along ridge top
- Large areas of early enclosure
- Open character

Distinctive Features

- Chilton House
- Timber framed and cruck buildings
- Prominent Trig point
- Views of Brill hill
- Farms along ridge sides
- Ridge and furrow north of Chilton

Intrusive Elements

- Prairie fields
- Small industrial estate south of Long Crendon
- Traffic on the B4011
- Views of roundabout junction of B4011 and A418
- Sewage works

Location A small ridge on the southwest side of the district immediately north of Thame and the A418.

Landscape character The landscape character in this area is unified by the well-defined landform of the small ridge. Like the other ridges in this area it is characterised by having settlements and roads running along the ridge top and dramatic and panoramic views out in all directions. The landscape character varies from historic settlements and pastoral areas with good hedgerows and tree cover to large open prairie fields, particularly in the north where the original enclosure pattern has been lost. The only intrusive elements are located at the southern end of the ridge where views of the industry and the junction of the B4011 just within LCA 5.11 Thame Valley have an impact.

Geology Extensive area of Kimmeridge clay overlain by deposits of Purbeck and Portland limestone, further overlain by a layer of Whitchurch sand and capped over the highest parts with a deposit of Gault clays.

Topography A small well-defined ridge. The ridge runs from north to south. In the north the ridge is narrower with steeper slopes, whilst in the south it widens out and the ground slopes more gently towards the River Thame. The top undulates being highest in the north at up to 150m AOD, it then drops down slightly around the village of Chilton then rises up again to a 142m trig. Point before sloping down to Long Crendon at about 100m AOD. The elevation range between the highest and lowest areas is from about 70m at the bottom of the ridge to 150m AOD at the top.

Hydrology The ridge has little in the way of watercourses although several streamlines do cut into the ridge sides. The most notable of which is on the western side of Long Crendon and partly fed by a spring.

Land use and settlement This is a predominantly pastoral landscape although there are visually prominent areas of arable farming. Settlement is concentrated along the ridge top with the large village of Long Crendon on the wider southern part of the ridge and the small settlement of Chilton spread along the narrow ridge in the north. The ridge generally feels quite well settled with farms and the hamlet of Eastington also occupying high ground along its length.

Tree cover The area has a low level of woodland cover in small-scattered blocks. The number of trees in hedgerows varies across the area being notably strongest close to settlements and lacking in areas of prairie farming.

Biodiversity The area is a mix of grassland and arable habitats throughout, although grassland is the more prevalent. Most of the grassland is improved however a significant amount of unimproved pasture is scattered throughout, and two blocks of neutral pasture are present one centrally and the other in the south which extends into LCA 5.11 Thame Valley. Both are subject of a BNS.

Within this matrix there are the hedgerow habitats and a scattering of very small fragments of broadleaved woodland. There are few streams and ponds within the LCA but one pond is located within a small woodland.

Historic environment This landscape was part of Bernwood Forest in the early 13th century. Bernwood had been a hunting ground from the time of Edward the Confessor. Although today forests are synonymous with

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woodland, this part of Bernwood has historically been an open landscape of arable or pasture. Broadly the landscape can be divided into two to the north around Chilton the landscape is made up of pre 18th century enclosures while to the south around the Long Crendon the fields have a rectilinear pattern indicative of the parliamentary enclosure act of 1827. There are some early irregular shaped fields that abut the northern end of Long Crendon village. About a fifth of the area is new enclosure or prairie farming as well as small new areas of settlement and industry.

The settlement pattern is dominated by the picturesque villages of Long Crendon and Chilton, both of which have conservation area status. These villages, like many in the vale of Aylesbury have had some modern growth, but they contain a high proportion of historic buildings giving the settlements a distinctive historical character, of particular note are grade I listed building of St Mary's church, the 16th century Grade II* buildings/ gardens of Chilton Park and the 17th century gate house. The village of Long Crendon also contains a large number of late medieval cruck buildings and thatched houses as well as a grade II* court house.

There are a number of archaeological sites including evidence for prehistoric and Roman occupation, and the well preserved earthworks of ridge and furrow to the north of Chilton village. Chilton Park Farm is the location of a 16th century deer park. Part of the site of Notley Abbey is also within the area. The Roman road from Dorchester-on-Thames passes through Long Crendon on its way to Fleet Marston, Akeman Street (the A41) and beyond

The landscape is of great amenity value being on several, the historic village of Long Crendon is a popular location for television filming.

Designations

Conservation Areas at Chilton, Long Crendon
Archaeological Notification Areas – 21 No.
BNS – 4 No.

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The distinct landform is a key characteristic of the area which is also predominantly pastoral.



In some arable areas hedgerow loss has created very open slightly bleak landscapes which rely on views out for their landscape quality.

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Summary of Condition/Sensitivity Analysis

Condition	Good
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Visual detractors:	Few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Good
Ecological integrity:	Weak
Functional integrity:	Coherent

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

Guidelines	Conserve and Reinforce
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Condition

Generally the landscape is in good condition. The pattern of elements is generally considered to be coherent this represents the generally unified landscape which loses its cohesion where hedgerows are lost creating areas with few landscape features. The few visual detractors tend to be localised in the area to the south of Long Crendon where the road junction and industrial area detract from the intrinsically rural character of the rest of the landscape. Overall the area is considered to be visually unified. The cultural integrity is considered to be good being strongest around the attractive historic settlement and in areas which retain a historic field pattern, although weaker where the field pattern has been lost to prairie farming. Ecological integrity is weak despite good connectivity of habitats, because the areas of designated sites and habitats of District

significance are low. The combination of good cultural integrity and weak ecological integrity are assessed to combine to give a coherent functional integrity.

Sensitivity

This is a landscape with a distinct character and good quality in a comparatively settled agricultural area. Overall the sense of place is considered to be moderate with a good sense of historic continuity. The landform is apparent and strong in places. There is little in the way of woodland but a couple of shelterbelt style plantings of trees close to the ridge top are key characteristics of the area. Tree cover within hedgerows is variable. The visibility generally is considered to be moderate but this is very dependant on location. Overall the moderate sense of place and moderate visibility gives the landscape a moderate degree of sensitivity.



Vernacular buildings with limestone and redbrick and tile are a distinctive feature of the area. Walls are found only in relation to settlement and not as field boundaries.

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Landscape Guidelines Conserve and Reinforce

The landscape guidelines for Chilton Ridge are as follows:

- Encourage the retention and strengthening of the historic hedgerow pattern with replanting of hedgerows where they have been lost.
- Encourage the restoration of hedgerows where they have become weak or gappy with new planting of shrubs and trees of indigenous species. Promote management of hedgerows by traditional cutting regimes.
- Maintain the condition and extent of neutral, unimproved and semi-improved grassland. Encourage good management practices.
- Maintain connectivity of these habitats.
- Maintain and improve the connectivity of woodland fragments.
- Conserve the distinctive historic character and form of the villages and their settings, especially the pre 18th century irregular fields associated with Long Crendon.
- Promote traditional woodland management techniques to maintain a wide diversity of habitats.
- Conserve and enhance the distinctive character of settlements and individual buildings.
- New housing and alterations to existing housing should be designed to reflect the traditional character of the area and be consistent in the use of locally occurring traditional materials.
- Retain the rural character of minor roads by minimising signage and kerbing.
- Encourage the conservation and management of small, traditional agricultural buildings scattered in the landscape.
- Encourage landowners to improve ecological diversity by and maintaining varied land maintenance regimes to benefit landscape and habitats.
- Identify key views from publicly accessible locations and promote the management and enhancement of these viewpoints.
- Encourage the preservation of historic earthworks and ridge and furrow by maintaining a continuous grass sward.



The south-western side of the ridge has gentler slopes and in places a more enclosed character.