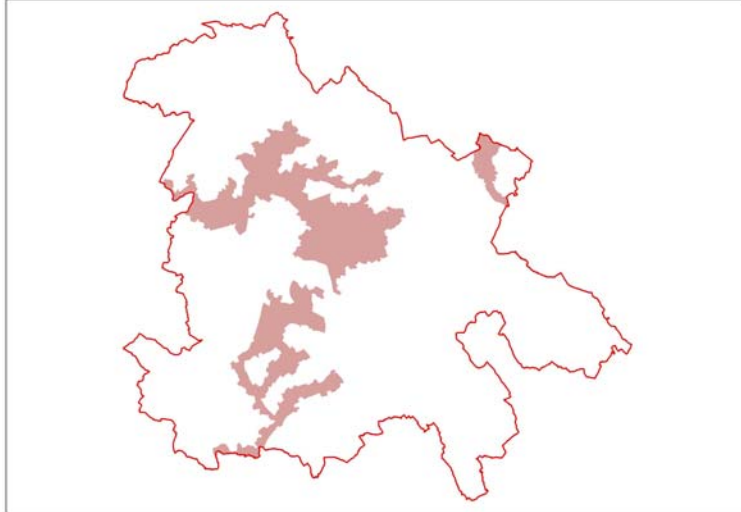


LCT 5 Shallow Valleys



Constituent LCAs

- LCA 5.1 Padbury Valley
- LCA 5.2 Ouzel Valley
- LCA 5.3 Ouzel Valley Lower Slopes
- LCA 5.4 Twyford Vale
- LCA 5.5 Claydon Tributary
- LCA 5.6 Claydon Valley
- LCA 5.7 Hogshaw Claylands
- LCA 5.8 North Marston Undulating Claylands
- LCA 5.9 Westcott Claylands
- LCA 5.10 Crawley Narrow Valley
- LCA 5.11 Thame Valley



Twyford Vale looking north from Kingsbrigde over the course of the Padbury Brook.

LCT 5 Shallow Valleys

Key Characteristics

- Shallow often poorly defined valleys
- Flat or gently sloping landscape
- Elevation range 65M to 105M AOD
- Mixed land use with predominance of pasture in most areas
- Medium sized fields
- Strong hedgerow pattern
- Low level of woodland cover
- Scattered very small woodlands
- Ponds
- Lack of settlement
- Highest historic landscape sensitivity associated with meadow adjacent to streamlines and settlement
- Remote and tranquil away from roads

Distinctive Features

- Small bridges over rivers and streams
- Willows often pollarded adjacent to watercourses
- Limited road access
- Views contained by surrounding higher ground
- Views up to historic settlements and church spires
- Black poplars
- Ridge and furrow
- Nucleated well preserved historic villages
- Disused railway lines
- Grand Union Canal
- Buckinghamshire Railway Centre
- Quainton windmill

General Description

Accords generally with CA 108 Upper Thames Clay Vales identified by the Character of England Map and with LCT RCN identified by the National Landscape Typology.

The Shallow Valleys are located from the south-east of Buckingham to the south-west of Aylesbury. To the north they drain into the Great Ouse and to the south into the river Thame. In the west the Twyford Vale extends into Oxfordshire, as does the Thame valley on the district's southern edge. The valleys are generally shallow with the gradient often imperceptible. In geological terms the type is divided between Oxford Clays and Boulder Clays in the north and Kimmeridge clays in the south, overlain by a layer of Greensand in the Thame valley west of Aylesbury. The Shallow Valleys lie between the higher ground of LCT 4 Undulating Clay Plateau, LCT 7 Wooded Rolling Lowland and LCT 9 Low Hills and Ridges.

Much of the biodiversity interest centres on the river corridors of these shallow valleys, with riparian interest present in the form of riparian mammals including otter and bird species associated with rivers and streams such as kingfisher.

Three fields associated with ROF Westcott are designated as County Wildlife Sites for their botanical interest. The Coombes Meadows complex of unimproved and semi-improved meadows and pastures lies to the south of Thornborough. Wet Stocks Meadow is a County Wildlife Site between North Marston and Hoggaston, designated for its secluded hay meadow rich in plant species.

The historic landscape of greatest sensitivity tends to be focused in areas close to the rivers and streams where there are pre eighteenth century meadows and on the small historic settlements often on slightly higher ground. Locally there is a pre 18th century enclosure pattern but this is generally on the more defined valley sides the majority of the area on gently sloping ground tends to be associated with Parliamentary and later enclosure. The predominance of grassland has resulted in the preservation of ridge and furrow, particularly fine examples of this can be found at Granborough and North Marston. Historic villages are well preserved and have often retained the historic transition between historic settlement and countryside without new development. At Thornborough there remains a medieval bridge over the Padbury Brook, close by there are two rare Roman barrows and the site of a Roman temple. Both the bridge and the barrow site are Scheduled Monuments. Notley Abbey is a grade 1 listed country manor dating from the 13th century.

**Aylesbury Vale District Council & Buckinghamshire County Council
Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment**

Overall the type has a harmonious, predominantly pastoral landscape, which generally retains a good hedgerow pattern. Greatest visual interest tends to be associated with the streams and rivers where the vegetation along the banks is often diverse. Pollarded willows and black poplars are locally a feature. Views often focus on the historic settlements on adjacent, slightly higher, ground. The limited road access and low level of settlement creates, particularly close to the watercourses, a sense of tranquillity and remoteness. The greatest visual detractors are the seven pylons lines, particularly in the Claydon Valley, where they converge. There are other small industrial units and sewage works which disturb the rural character but these are of localised impact. In a few areas, often of sloping ground, the hedgerow pattern has been lost to prairie farming.

There are particularly good views out over the Shallow Valleys from the edges of Winslow, Steeple Claydon and Padbury. The lack of woodland cover means that the scrub woodland that has established on the disused railways is of more significance. As the disused tracks are often on embankment they often also visually divide the low lying landscape.