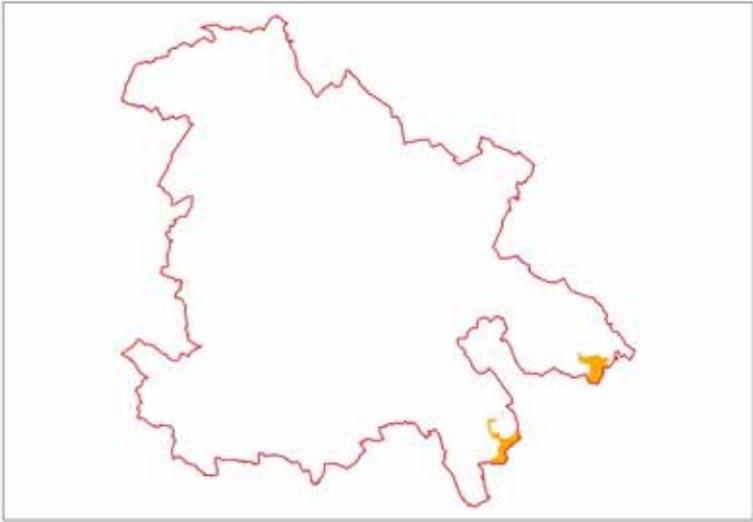


LCT 12 Chalk Dip Slope



Constituent LCAs

LCA 12.1 Chiltern Dip Slope



Arable landscape on the Dip Slope to the south of Ivinghoe Beacon.

LCT 12 Chalk Dip Slope

Key Characteristics

- Chalk dip slope
- Extensive woodland cover
- Vantage points providing long distance views over the vale landscape
- Shallow dry valleys
- Open areas predominantly used for pasture
- Large blocks of ancient semi-natural woodland

Distinctive Features

- Chalk downland noted for its biodiversity
- Extensive public access (car parking)
- Recreation use
- Archaeological earthworks
- Sparse settlement
- Water storage (underground)
- Narrow country lanes
- Ridgeway long distant footpath
- Mixture of large and small irregular shaped field parcels under pastoral land use

General Description

Accords with CA 110 Chilterns, identified by the Character of England Map and with LCT RCA identified by the National Landscape Typology. To the north the natural limit is the adjoining LCT 11 Chalk Escarpment.

The Dip Slope is located above the scarp edge. This runs in a broad line from southwest to northeast across the southern edge of the District – the continuity being interrupted by a promontory of land in neighbouring Hertfordshire. The relationship with the scarp represents the transition between the steeper scarp edge and the gentle dip of the chalk plateau towards the Thames valley. In geological terms the Dip Slope is middle chalk which overlays the lower chalk exposed as the scarp face to the north.

Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI is an extensive area of ancient semi-natural woodland, secondary woodland, plantation and scrub on the Buckinghamshire/Hertfordshire border. Ancient large pollards provide suitable habitat for birds, bats and invertebrates. The woods support an exceptionally rich breeding bird community, including both local and national rarities, due to the varied woodland types. Common land has developed into secondary woodland comprising birch, beech and oak. Additional diversity is provided by invertebrates and amphibians associated with the small ponds that are scattered throughout the site.

The high quality landscape is reflected in its status as lying within a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Dip Slope is often managed for woodland, which is a mixture of ancient semi-natural tree cover and more recent secondary woodland and modern plantations. Clearings within the woodland have been traditionally grazed by sheep and often reflect the historic clearance of the woodland in the irregular pattern of field parcels. Towards the south fields become larger and the intensity of arable production increases, often with fragments of woodland cover remaining. The woodland cover often overlaps with the adjacent Chilterns Scarp LCT. Traditional woodland management included the planting of beech, a non-native tree, and regular cutting to supply the needs of the local furniture manufacturing industries. Grims Ditch a prehistoric linear earthwork runs through 12.1B, it is considered to be one of the defining monuments of the Chilterns.

The area is well provided with footpaths and car parking facilities. The Ridgeway long distance footpath crosses sections of the Dip Slope and this affords long distance views over the Vale landscape to the north. The area is popular with walkers and other recreational users.