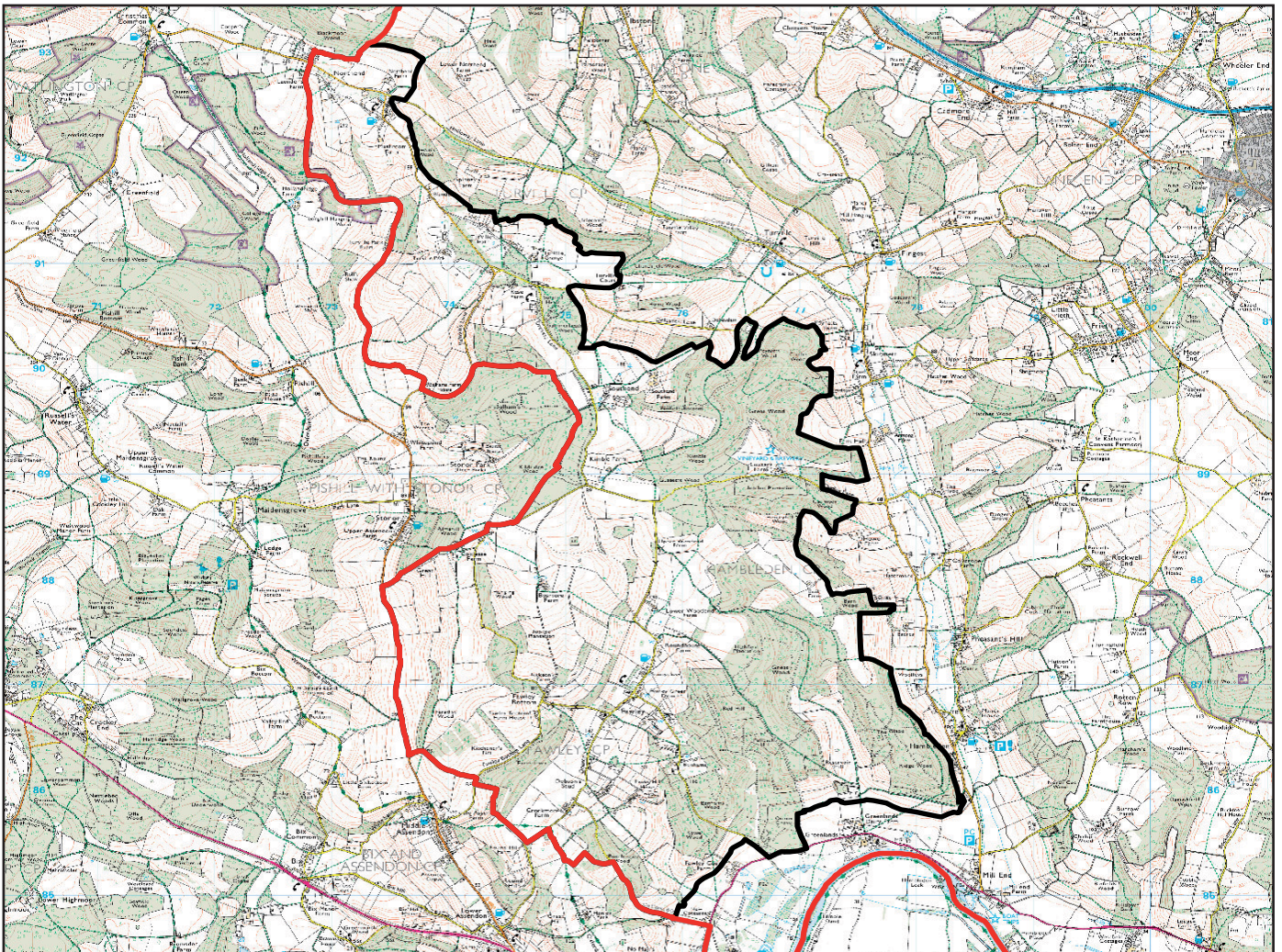
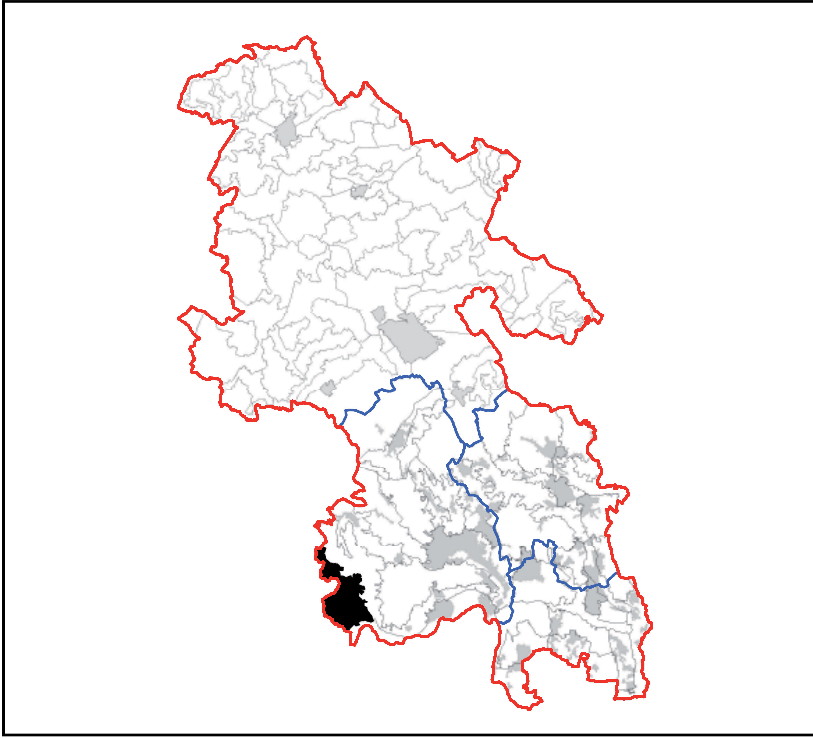


# LCA 15.2 FAWLEY UNDULATING PLATEAU



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### KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Elevated and undulating Upper Chalk plateau comprising Clay with Flints and Lambeth Group geology on higher ground. Also incorporating sloping valley sides to the south and west.
- Large swathes of woodland (much of which is ancient) in the south and east, and smaller blocks interspersed with pasture, rough grazing and arable farming.
- Clay and flints gives rise to a heathy character in places. Heathland commons are frequent in the north, and scrub and bracken are noticeable on road verges and along field boundaries. Some dispersed areas of calcareous grassland in the south.
- A low density of settlement. Small villages/hamlets have grown up around heathy commons (Northend Turville Heath and Southend) and village greens (Fawley).
- Settlements have a well-treed character. Distinctive vernacular building types include brick and flint and red brick buildings.
- Field enclosures are predominantly pre 18<sup>th</sup> century irregular fields and 20<sup>th</sup> century enclosure. Historic parkland and a manor house occur at Turville Park.
- Winding, narrow rural lanes are enclosed by tall hedgerows, with occasional sunken lanes. A lime avenue, through Turville Heath provides a distinctive and contrasting feature.
- Crossed by a network of rights of way and bridleways including the Shakespeare's Way and the Chiltern Way long distance footpaths.
- Varying levels of enclosure, with a strong sense of containment within woodland, along hedged roads and in villages, contrasting with open farmland.
- Views are often short range across open fields to wooded horizons or enclosed along hedged lanes. Woodland limits and contains views within the area. There are occasional longer views west outside the district boundary.
- A small scale and intimate landscape, with a rural and peaceful character.

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### DESCRIPTION

**Location and Boundaries:** *Fawley Undulating Plateau* lies wholly within Wycombe District. This area is defined by undulating plateau land to the west of the Hambleton Valley and north of the Thames floodplain. In the south it incorporates the wooded, undulating valley slopes of the Thames Floodplain. Its western boundary incorporates the valley slopes which continue across the county boundary to South Oxfordshire (character area Chilterns Ridges and Valleys). The southern and eastern boundaries are defined by woodland cover. The western boundary is defined by the district and county boundary.

**Landscape Character:** Elevated and undulating plateau landform which is part of the chalk dipslope, gradually sloping from north to south and also westwards into South Oxfordshire. Large swathes of broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland dominate the south east of the area with open arable slopes to the west and pasture/ rough grazing interspersed on higher ground. Overlying deposits of clay with flint give rise to a heathy character and small villages/hamlets are associated with heathland commons (Southend, Northend and Turville Heath). Scattered areas of calcareous grassland also occur in the south. Woodland, tall hedgerows and tree cover in villages create an enclosed and secluded character. However there are some longer views across farmland to wooded backdrops and occasional views out across South Oxfordshire. Parkland occurs at Turville Heath and the associated lime avenue (a public road) contrasts to the winding nature of rural roads throughout the area. This is a rural and peaceful landscape.

**Geology:** Predominantly Upper Chalk with areas of Clay with Flints and Lambeth Group on highest ground. To the south the chalk has been eroded by the Thames Valley exposing its Middle Chalk and overlain by River Terrace Deposits. Similarly Middle Chalk on the western boundary reflects the transition to the Ridges and Valleys landscape in South Oxfordshire. Shallow lime-rich soils correspond to Upper Chalk with slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage over Clay with Flints. Freely draining slightly acid but base-rich soils occur on the southern edge marking the transition to the Thames Floodplain.

**Topography/ Landform:** Elevated and undulating plateau landform which is part of the chalk dipslope gradually sloping from north to south and also westwards into South Oxfordshire. The southern slopes meet the Thames floodplain and are incised by a series of dry chalk valleys.

**Hydrology:** The area contains the heads of dry valleys but there are no discernable watercourses. There are however small ponds dispersed across the area associated with farms.

**Land Use and Settlement:** Fields are a mixture of arable and rough grazing, interspersed with woodland. Arable farmland dominates the eastern slopes with pasture and rough grazing occurring on higher ground and in proximity to villages. Large areas of broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland dominate the south and east

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with smaller pockets scattered through farmland. The clay with flints geology gives rise to heathland commons around which small villages/hamlets have grown up. Bracken is also evident in hedgerows contributing to the heathy character.

Settlement density is low and dispersed. The string of common or heathland edge villages/hamlets (Northend, Turville Heath, Southend) occur on higher ground dispersed along the spine of the area. Properties occur on the edges of heathy commons, in places hidden by scrub woodland which since grazing ceased has enclosed areas of traditionally open common. Fawley comprises a well treed settlement loosely scattered along rural lanes and has a Village Green. Flint, brick and weatherboarding are common building materials.

Rural roads wind through the area, linking villages, enclosed by tall hedgerows or woodland and sunken in places. The straight road across Turville Heath was planted as a grand avenue of limes trees as part of the parkland setting for Turville Park.

The Chiltern Way and Shakespeare's Way long distance trails cross the area, with some local footpaths crossing through farmland and woodland.

**Tree Cover:** The south east of the area is dominated by large swathes of broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland including ancient woodland (e.g. Great Wood). Smaller blocks of broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland and some coniferous woodland occurs throughout the area with some hanging woodland retained on valley slopes. Pockets of broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland and scrub woodland occurs in relation to heathy commons and tree cover is notable in villages and enclosing along roads.

**Perceptual/ Experiential Landscape:** This is a well wooded and treed landscape which creates a strong sense of enclosure. There are some long views within the area across farmland to wooded backdrops. Occasionally, on open slopes and where woodland permits, there are views to the Hambleton Valley, to the Thames floodplain and into the adjacent South Oxfordshire District.

The area is intimate in scale with a rural and peaceful character brought about by the woodland cover, undulating landform, winding hedged roads, mosaic pattern of farmland and secluded heathland villages.

**Biodiversity:** The large swathes of ancient woodland and smaller blocks dispersed across farmland and connected by hedgerows provide wildlife habitats. A number of woodlands are local wildlife sites (Cadmore Wood, Churchfield Wood, Eversdown Copse, Gussetts Wood, Idlecombe & Gravelly Wood and Moore's Wood). Turville Heath Summer Heath and Southend Common are biological notification sites.

Small areas of calcareous grassland occur interspersed with woodland in the south, with Local wildlife sites at Eversdown Valley and Fawley Bottom Farm Orchard.

BAP priority habitats in this area are lowland beech and yew woodland, lowland calcareous grassland and lowland mixed deciduous woodland.

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**Historic Environment:** This part of Buckinghamshire has evidence of occupation dating from prehistoric times with the discovery of Mesolithic site near Kimble Farm. While a medieval hunting park is believed to have existed at Turville Park. Beyond these few sites there is little known archaeology in this area.

Ancient woodland is abundant to the south and east of the area while the remaining landscape is composed of field enclosures, predominantly pre 18<sup>th</sup> century irregular and sinuous fields (with some co-axial) and 20<sup>th</sup> century enclosure. Historic settlement is dispersed in nature, made up of common edge settlements, linear rows and farmsteads. Turville heath originally belonged to Turville Park until the avenue became a public road and the heath became common land. William Perry, who was the high sheriff for the county in 1742, built the present mansion and planted the lime avenue.

### **Designations:**

- Chilterns AONB
- English Heritage Scheduled Monuments: Roman Villa North of Yewden Lodge.
- Archaeological Notification Sites: 8 No.
- Conservation Area: Fawley, Northend, Southend Common and Turville Heath
- Priority BAP Habitats: 3 types
- Biological Notification Sites: 30 No.
- Local Wildlife Sites: 8No.

### EVALUATION

#### Landscape and Visual Sensitivities:

Potential landscape and visual sensitivities are:

- Extensive woodland cover which includes ancient and hanging woodland and provides enclosure and backdrop to views as well as biodiversity interest.
- Heathland commons at Northend, Turville Heath, Southend, traditionally grazed by livestock, now grassed or scrub.
- Pockets of calcareous grassland which contribute to the diversity of wildlife habitats.
- The low density of settlement and historic hamlets/ villages which have grown up around heathy commons.
- Pre 18<sup>th</sup> century irregular, sinuous and coaxial field enclosures which are visible reminders of the historic use of land.
- Parkland at Turville Park and the lime avenue which is a striking feature in the landscape.
- The intimate scale and enclosed character with some long views across farmland to wooded backdrops and occasional views out to South Oxfordshire, the Hambleton Valley and Thames Floodplain.
- Winding lanes enclosed by tall hedgerows which contribute to the rural character.
- The rural, peaceful and untouched character.

**Strength of Character/Intactness:** The strength of character and intactness of the *Fawley Undulating Plateau* is **strong**. The key characteristics of are strongly conveyed.

**Strategy/ Vision:** Conserve the rural and peaceful character of the Fawley Undulating Plateau formed by the large swathes of woodland, arable and pastoral fields, historic heathland villages and rural lanes.

#### Landscape Guidelines

- Conserve and appropriately manage the woodland (including ancient and hanging woodland) and linking hedgerow network with hedgerow trees which provide enclosure in the landscape and form a strong landscape pattern and important wildlife corridor.
- Appropriately manage and restore heathland habitats on historic commons including management of scrub woodland encroachment.

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- Appropriately manage areas of calcareous grassland and seek to extend and link these habitats.
- Conserve and maintain historic heathland common settlements.
- Conserve the loose, open character of settlement and avoid infilling.
- Conserve and restore early field systems.
- Conserve and appropriately manage parkland. Ensure perpetuity of the lime avenue through appropriate management.
- Conserve historic elements and archaeological features, which provide evidence of past use of the land.
- Maintain open views out to adjacent landscapes (South Oxfordshire, the Hambleton Valley and Thames Floodplain).
- Maintain the rural character of roads and lanes; avoid road improvements which would alter their character.

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Pasture and rough grazing farmland with a wooded backdrop. Bracken is evident in hedgerows contributing to a heathy character.



Swathes of woodland enclosing small winding rural roads.



Brick and flint are common building materials in small villages/ hamlets.



The lime tree avenue through Turville Heath is a distinctive feature, contrasting with winding rural roads.



Villages have grown up around commons or village greens.



Undulating plateau, with low density of scattered settlement, with a small scale and intimate character.