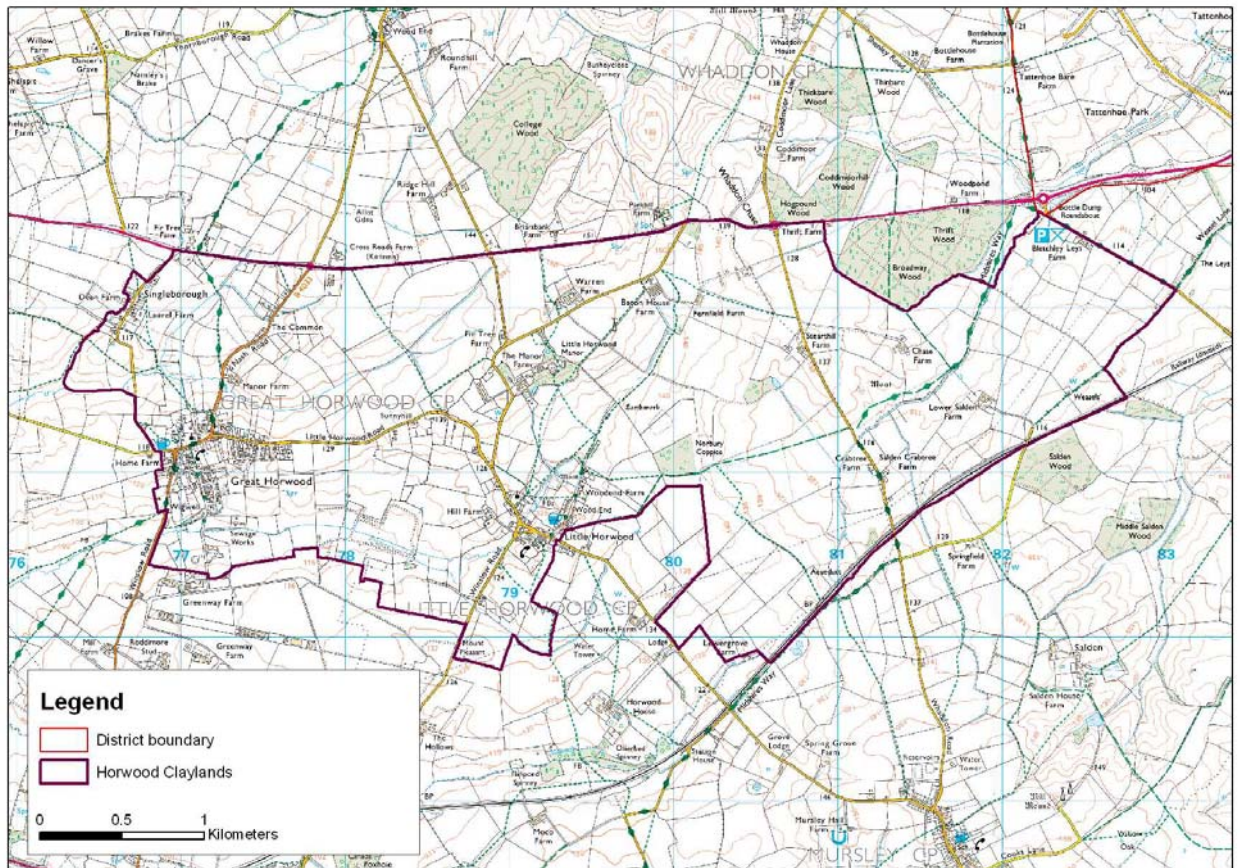
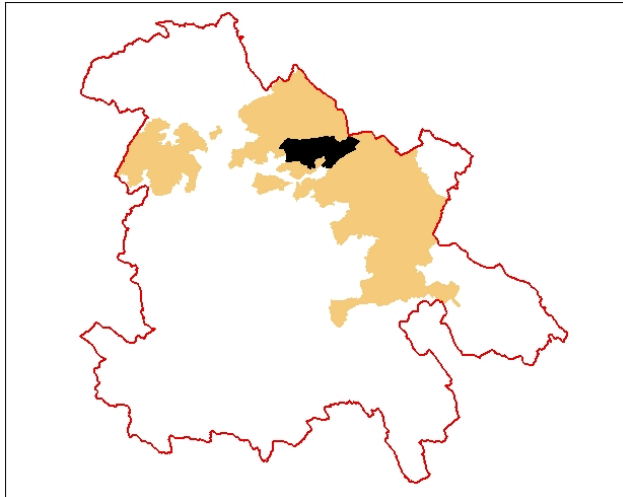


LCA 4.8 Horwood Claylands

Landscape Character Type: LCT 4 Undulating Clay Plateau



LCA 4.8 Horwood Claylands (LCT 4)

Key Characteristics

- Rolling clay landform
- Shallow valley and ridges
- Two distinctive water courses draining to the Claydon Brook
- Mixed farmland
- Irregular field pattern around settlements
- Loss of field pattern structure to east of the area

Distinctive Features

- Fragment of Whaddon Chase Woodland
- Arable intensification to the east of the area
- Winding roads in the west
- Long straight road in the east
- Disused railway corridor
- Parkland at Little Horwood Manor
- Wetlands/marsh area north of Great Horwood
- Historic villages
- Neutral and acidic grassland
- Lowland neutral meadow

Intrusive Elements

- Pylons
- Small scale industrial units

Location Horwood Claylands covers the villages of Great Horwood and Little Horwood situated southwest of Milton Keynes, and south of the A421.

Landscape character An undulating landform with mixed agricultural use. The area is drained by a number of local streams draining towards the southwest. Two major settlements Great Horwood and Little Horwood are connected by a network of local narrow roads and lanes. There are varying field sizes particularly in the east with smaller paddocks adjacent to settlements in the west. There are also some larger fields covering the arable area between the two settlements. Small copses and fragments of woodland located to the northeast boundary of the area relate to the original Whaddon Chase (Hunting Forest).

Geology Glacial till overlain by a mixture of undifferentiated glacial and head deposits. Exposure of calcareous mudstone (West Walton Formation) in the east and in the incised valley to the southwest (Stewartby and West Walton Formations).

Topography The A421 (Roman Road) follows the high ground, running at a level of 150m AOD north of Little Horwood. The ground falls away gently towards the southwest dropping to a level of 100m AOD to the west of Great Horwood. The natural drainage of the area has eroded the clay into a network of shallow valleys and gently rounded ridges.

Hydrology Both Great Horwood and Little Horwood drain westwards into the Claydon Brook and the Great Ouse catchment. A small part of the area on the eastern boundary, east of Stearhill Farm runs into the Ouzel catchment in Milton Keynes.

Land use and settlement Predominantly grassland but with larger areas of arable land to the north and east of Little Horwood. Two main settlements at Great Horwood and Little Horwood. Also includes smaller hamlet of Singleborough to the north of Great Horwood.

Tree cover There is ancient semi-natural woodland at Stearhill Wood and at Norbury Coppice the latter comprising oak, ash and field maple with hazel coppice. Elsewhere woodland cover is predominantly of oak and ash. Hedgerow trees, willow scrub and some poplar along streams and ditches add further interest.

Biodiversity The dominant habitats are arable and grassland. Amongst the improved grassland in the west and south areas of neutral pasture are present along with lowland meadow and some acidic grassland which is uncommon in the surrounding area. These areas of priority and broad habitat types increase the biodiversity interest of the area.

Non agricultural habitats include small areas of standing water scattered throughout and small areas of broadleaved woodland mainly in the centre. The woodland includes the CWS at Norbury Coppice near Little Horwood

Historic environment An Iron Age enclosure and important finds are recorded in the centre of this area. The A421 follows the line of a Roman road. The central and northern parts were part of Whaddon Chase until its enclosure in the mid-19th century, although some relict elements survive they are less prominent than to the north of the A421. Today the field patterns are predominantly 18-19th century parliamentary enclosures with concentration of possible assarts and pre 18th century enclosure north of Great Horwood. There are concentrations of listed timber-framed and brick

LCA 4.8 Horwood Claylands (LCT 4)

buildings associated with conservation areas at Great and Little Horwood and Singleborough. There is also a scheduled medieval moat in Little Horwood and a Lutyens-style 20th century mansion at Little Horwood Manor. Great Horwood has a fine medieval parish church and is focussed around a distinct market place, although it never developed into a proper town.

Designations

Conservation Areas at Singleborough, Great Horwood, Little Horwood (3)
Scheduled Ancient Monuments: Moated site NE of St Nicolas Church Little Horwood

Archaeological Notification Areas – 15 No.

CWS – 2 No.

BNS – 3 No.

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View from the Little Horwood Road. Little Horwood village is hidden behind mature hedgerow trees.



Shallow pastoral valley north of Little Horwood.

LCA 4.8 Horwood Claylands (LCT 4)

Summary of Condition/Sensitivity Analysis	
Condition	Good
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Visual detractors:	Few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Coherent
Sensitivity	Moderate
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate
Guidelines	Conserve and Reinforce

Condition

Overall the condition of the landscape is considered to be good. The area covers an undulating clay plateau eroded by a network of local streams into a series of shallow valleys and broad flat ridges. The pattern of elements remains coherent albeit that there has been some erosion of field pattern in the east of the area. There are few visual detractors and overall the functional integrity remains coherent. Cultural integrity is variable and is mainly represented in the well preserved historic village cores and the well preserved field network around the settlements. Ecological integrity is moderate due to the levels of connectivity and areas of designated sites and habitats of District significance. Functional integrity is coherent.

Sensitivity

The area maintains its distinctiveness due to its intrinsic rural characteristics and the historic continuity of the area. Sense of place is considered to be moderate. The degree of visibility is moderate as this varies with the undulating landform and intermittent nature of the tree cover. Overall the degree of sensitivity remains moderate.



The Village Green at Great Horwood.

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Landscape Guidelines Conserve and Reinforce

The landscape guidelines for Horwood Claylands are as follows:

- Promote management of hedgerows by traditional cutting regimes and the establishment of new hedgerow trees.
- Maintain the condition and extent of neutral and acidic grassland wherever possible. Encourage good management practices.
- Promote traditional woodland management techniques to maintain a wide diversity of habitats.
- Encourage the establishment of buffer zones of semi-natural vegetation along watercourses in arable areas to enhance biodiversity, interconnectivity and landscape quality.
- 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 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 conservation and interpretation of the areas rich historic environment, especially the historic villages.
- Encourage restoration of the Chase landscape.



Shallow valley between the Little Horwood roundabout and the A421.