

# Chiltern District Landscape Character Assessment

Prepared for Buckinghamshire County Council  
and Chiltern District Council

by  
Land Use Consultants  
October 2011



**Chiltern**  
District Council



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## **Acknowledgements**

Land Use Consultants (LUC) prepared a Landscape Character Assessment of Chiltern District on behalf of Buckinghamshire County Council and Chiltern District Council, which was guided throughout by David Green (Buckinghamshire County Council). We are grateful for the guidance provided by the Steering Group of:

- David Green & Sandy Kidd (Buckinghamshire County Council)
- Niki Huijer (Wycombe District Council)
- David Waker (Chiltern District Council)
- Simon Gray & Ian Motuel (South Bucks District Council)
- Bettina Kirkham & Neil Jackson (Chilterns Conservation Board)

In addition, consultation was undertaken with a range of local stakeholders through a participatory workshop held on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2011, and their contribution is gratefully acknowledged. We also recognise that to achieve a consistent landscape character assessment for the whole County, the format and structure of the character area and landscape type descriptions reflects that set out by Jacobs for the Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment produced in 2008.

Land Use Consultants team consisted of Kate Ahern (Principal), Kate Milner (Project Manager), Hannah Leach (Landscape Architect) and Graham Savage (GIS Consultant).

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Buckinghamshire County comprises the Districts of Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern, Wycombe and South Bucks. The County has a rich and varied landscape including the expansive flat clay vale in the north, prominent chalk escarpment, undulating dip slope cut by river valleys and the Thames and Colne Valleys in the south. The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), recognised as a landscape of national importance, extends across the middle of the County predominantly in the Districts of Chiltern and Wycombe.
- 1.2 Chiltern District lies in the south east of Buckinghamshire County (refer to **Figure I.1**). It adjoins the Districts of Aylesbury Vale to the north west, Wycombe to the west and South Bucks to the south. To the east it borders Hertfordshire County.
- 1.3 The District lies on chalk strata and ‘dip slope’, which gradually falls south eastwards towards Greater London. It is largely overlain by clay with flints, which typically give rise to acidic soils with calcareous soils on chalk. Steep-sided valleys have eroded the landscape and flow south east, namely the Chess Valley and the Misbourne Valley, with many additional branching tributary valleys. Valleys are typically ephemeral with some ‘winterbourne’ sections. The chalk geology creates a rolling and sweeping landform and often supports arable cultivation and pasture with some pockets of chalk grasslands. The District has a wooded character with woodland occurring on valley tops and interspersed with farmland. There are significant areas of ancient woodland and beech is a dominant species.
- 1.4 Historic country houses, within designed parkland landscapes have a strong influence on the landscape e.g. Latimer Park and Shardeloes Park prominent on valley hill sides and Missenden Abbey on the valley floor. Ancient sunken lanes are an important feature traversing valleys sides and a range of archaeological features including Grim’s Ditch, Roman villas and earthworks contribute to time depth as well as areas of pre 18th century co-axial field enclosure and assarts. Amersham and Chesham are the principal towns within Chiltern District, with other settlements, including, Chalfont St Peter, Chalfont St Giles and Great Missenden. The historic villages of Latimer and Chenies occur in the Chess Valley and settlement around historic heathy commons occurs at Lee Common and Cholesbury. Farmsteads are scattered throughout. Brick and flint are common building materials with black weatherboard also characteristic. Despite its proximity to London the District retains a relatively rural and peaceful character with remote areas of rolling farmland and tranquillity in river valleys. A significant proportion of the Chiltern District lies within the Chilterns AONB recognising the highly scenic quality of the landscape.

## PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.5 The Chiltern District Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) has been prepared on behalf of Buckinghamshire County Council and Chiltern District. This assessment has been carried out in parallel with assessments for South Bucks and Wycombe using a format consistent with the existing Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment produced in May 2008. The aim being to provide an integrated Landscape Character Assessment for the entire County of Buckinghamshire.

- I.6 The character assessment has been carried out to provide a greater understanding of the landscape character of Chiltern District which can be used to influence and inform policy and planning and management actions from the outset.




## **STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT**

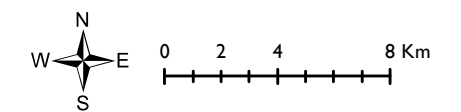
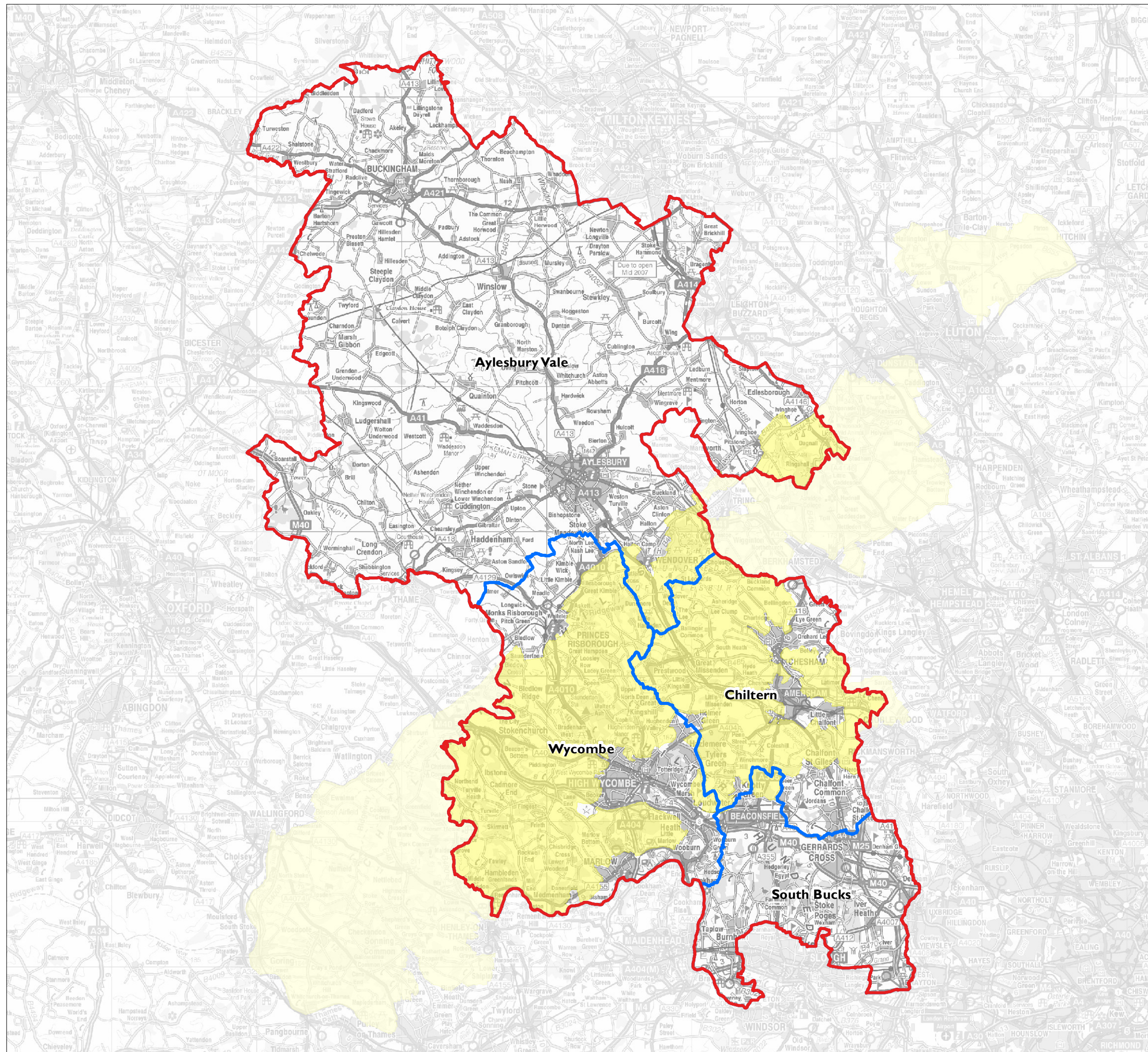
- I.7 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:
- **Chapter 2 Assessment Methodology:** Summarises the approach for undertaking the study.
  - **Chapter 3 The Character of the Chiltern District Landscape:** Provides a summary of each landscape type and a description and evaluation for each character area, following a standard format.
- I.8 In addition to this report, the main outputs have also been prepared as a GIS database.



**Figure I.1: Location Plan**

**Key**

-  Buckinghamshire County boundary
-  District boundaries
-  Chilterns AONB



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