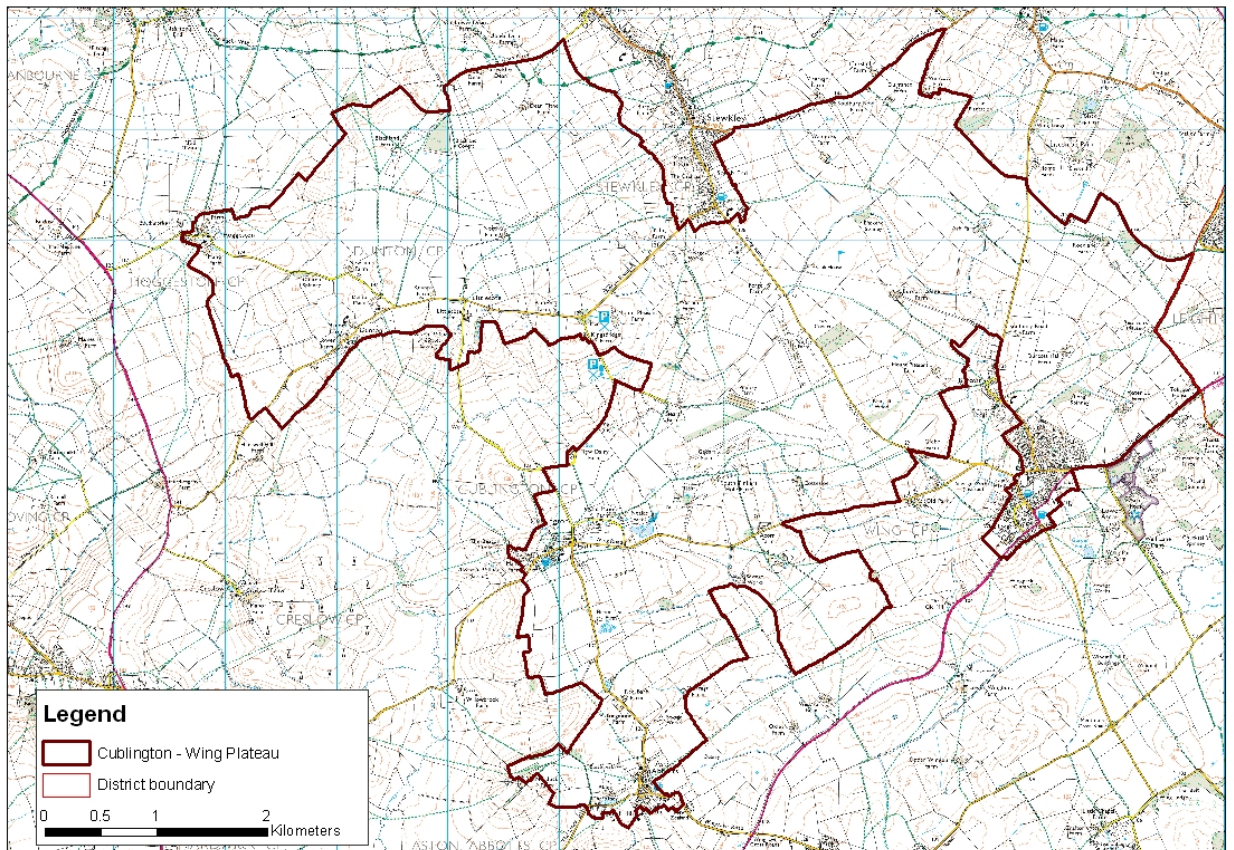
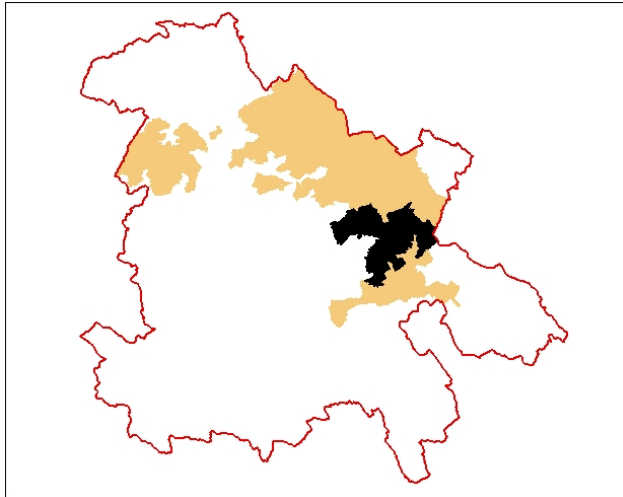


**LCA 4.13 Cublington - Wing Plateau**

**Landscape Character Type: LCT 4 Undulating Clay Plateau**



## LCA 4.13 Cublington -Wing Plateau (LCT 4)

### Key Characteristics

- Elevated clay plateau
- Extensive parliamentary and earlier fields between settlements
- Pastureland and small scale paddocks around settlements
- Areas of remote landscape
- Open arable plateau landscape

### Distinctive Features

- Small nucleated settlements
- Dispersed farmsteads
- Small woodland coverts
- Ponds and fishing lakes
- Saxon church at Wing
- Historic earthworks
- Neutral grassland
- Neutral lowland meadow
- Fen

### Intrusive Elements

- Disused airfield
- Industrial scale battery farming units
- Pylons
- Golf course landscape

**Location** Extending from the southern edge of Stewkley in the north, Hoggeston in the west and towards the south Bedfordshire border at Linslade in the east. Aston Abbots marks the southern edge.

**Landscape character** Clay plateau landscape with a gently undulating landform eroded by local streams. The core of the area consists of large arable fields with degraded or well trimmed hedgerows with few hedgerow trees. Paddocks and smaller parcels of grazing land are located around the settlements. There is mixed farming use and concentrations of smaller fields on the western fringes of the LCA. The extensive former WWII airfield is now used as a poultry farm with some remnant runways and MOD buildings and more recent woodland planting. There is a golf course southeast of Stewkley. Generally sparse woodland cover across the area and long straight roads connecting settlements. The settlement of Wing sits on a small promontory of land overlooking the valley to the south.

**Geology** Predominantly glacial till overlain by pockets of undifferentiated glacial deposits and head within the incised valleys. Large exposures of Kimmeridge clays mixed with glacial deposits in the west.

**Topography** The plateau within this area lies at a level of some 130 – 140m AOD. The drainage pattern has incised a network of valleys into the clay resulting in an undulating landform of local valleys and broad intervening ridges which often retain their plateau characteristics.

**Hydrology** The area drains to the south. However, part of this drainage west of a line between Cublington – Aston Abbots drains southwest into the Thames catchment, whilst to the east of this watershed the streams drain to the Ouzel catchment.

**Land use and settlement** An area of mixed farmland use. Arable areas are concentrated mainly in the open countryside between settlements with paddocks and grassland dispersed around settlements. There is an extensive area of disused airfield and Golf Course development south of Stewkley. Nucleated settlements are concentrated at Wing, Aston Abbots, Cublington and Hoggeston.

**Tree cover** There is a dispersed pattern of woodland of varying size and type. These are predominantly broadleaved cover of oak and ash. There is a recent plantation on the former airfield site. Areas of wet woodland occur along streams and contain species of willow and ash.

**Biodiversity** The area is an uneven mix of arable and grassland habitat interspersed with areas of woodland throughout and a few fragments of fen in the north east. The grassland is mostly improved, but some more interesting grassland habitat also occurs in the form of neutral pasture, neutral lowland meadow and unimproved grassland areas found predominantly in the north.

Ponds and other areas of standing water are a common feature throughout and together with the broadleaved deciduous woodland add further habitat interest and potential.

**Historic environment** There is evidence for pre-medieval occupation in the form of cropmarks, Roman finds and an Iron Age settlement on the Stoke Hammond - Linslade Bypass. The village of Wing is designated as a conservation area, notable for its unique Middle Saxon church, one of the

## LCA 4.13 Cublington -Wing Plateau (LCT 4)

finest early churches in England which probably originated as a relic chapel and minster serving an area much larger than the parish. Archaeological excavations have found a large early medieval burial ground extending beyond the existing churchyard. Wing also has a Norman motte castle, some historic buildings and just to the southeast, the earthwork remains of Ascott House and Gardens. Archaeological remains of deserted and shrunken medieval settlements are well represented, most notably at Littlecote and Aston Abbots. There are also post-medieval tile and brickworks southwest of Stewkley. The other conservation areas are at Cublington, where there are timber-framed and brick vernacular buildings, and at Aston Abbots, where the neoclassical Abbey sits on the site of a grange of St.Alban's Abbey. The majority of the LCA is parliamentary enclosure land particularly concentrated around the southern end of Stewkley and to the north of Wing and Burcott. There is a concentration of pre 18<sup>th</sup> century enclosure land in the west around the settlements of Hoggeston and Dinton and southwest towards Aston Abbots. The construction of Wing Airfield as a training base in 1940 removed the earlier landscape in this central area; some of the wartime structures may be of historical interest. Aston Abbots was notable as the wartime seat of the Czech Government in exile.

### **Designations**

Conservation Areas at Cublington (4), Aston Abbots (2) and Wing  
Scheduled Ancient Monuments: Deserted Village, Ascott House Mansion & Formal Gardens

Archaeological Notification Areas – 40 No.

SSSI – 1No

CWS – 4 No.

BNS – 15 No.

**LCA 4.13 Cublington -Wing Plateau (LCT 4)**



Mott & Bailey site Wing



Disused airfield south of Stewkley

**LCA 4.13 Cublington -Wing Plateau (LCT 4)**

<b>Summary of Condition/Sensitivity Analysis</b>	
<b>Condition</b>	<b>Very good</b>
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Visual detractors:	Few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Good
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Strong
<b>Sensitivity</b>	<b>Moderate</b>
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Weak
Landform:	Apparent
Tree cover:	Open
Visibility:	High
<b>Guidelines</b>	<b>Conserve and Reinforce</b>

**Condition**

Overall the condition of the landscape is considered to be very good. The area covers an undulating clay plateau eroded by a network of small streams which create a series of shallow valley particularly notable around the fringes of the area. The pattern of elements remains coherent. There are few visual detractors other than the poultry sheds on the old airfield site south of Stewkley. Some erosion of field pattern has occurred over the areas of arable intensification concentrated mainly over the core of the plateau. Cultural integrity is good due to the concentration of archaeological interest, historic buildings and extensive survival of a variety of historic field patterns. Ecological integrity is moderate due to the levels of connectivity and areas of designated sites and habitats of District significance. Overall the

functional integrity of the area is strong.

**Sensitivity**

The area has a distinctive character, however, continuity is disrupted. Sense of place is considered to be weak as locally it has been eroded by the airfield and its associated development as well as by loss of pattern where arable intensification is dominant. The degree of visibility is high due to long distance views over the plateau landscape and loss of tree cover. Overall the degree of sensitivity is considered to be moderate.



Pastureland with spring at Blackend Spinney which feeds into the Burcott valley.

## LCA 4.13 Cublington -Wing Plateau (LCT 4)

### Landscape Guidelines Conserve and Reinforce

The landscape guidelines for Cublington-Wing Plateau are as follows:

- Encourage the management of hedgerows through traditional cutting regimes.
- Encourage the establishment of new hedgerow trees.
- Maintain the condition and extent of woodland using traditional techniques to create and manage a wide diversity of habitats.
- Maintain the condition and extent of unimproved and semi-improved grassland wherever possible. Encourage good management practices.
- Encourage landowners to improve ecological diversity by establishing and maintaining varied land maintenance regimes to benefit landscape and habitats.
- Promote connectivity of habitats.
- Maintain the existing extent and condition of ponds.
- Maintain the existing extent and condition of neutral grassland and lowland meadow.
- Encourage the conservation and interpretation of the areas rich historic environment.
- New housing and alterations to existing housing should be designed to reflect the traditional character of the area and use locally traditional materials.
- Promote the retention of the character of minor roads by the management of hedgerows and verges and limiting urbanising elements such as signage and kerbing.
- Consider encouraging the planting of new woodland following historic landscape pattern to reduce visual impact of intrusive elements.
- Encourage golf course management to promote a wide diversity of habitats and good interconnectivity with adjacent semi-natural habitats.
- Ensure the preservation of archaeological earthworks by maintaining grassland.



Access drive to Burcott Lodge Farm.