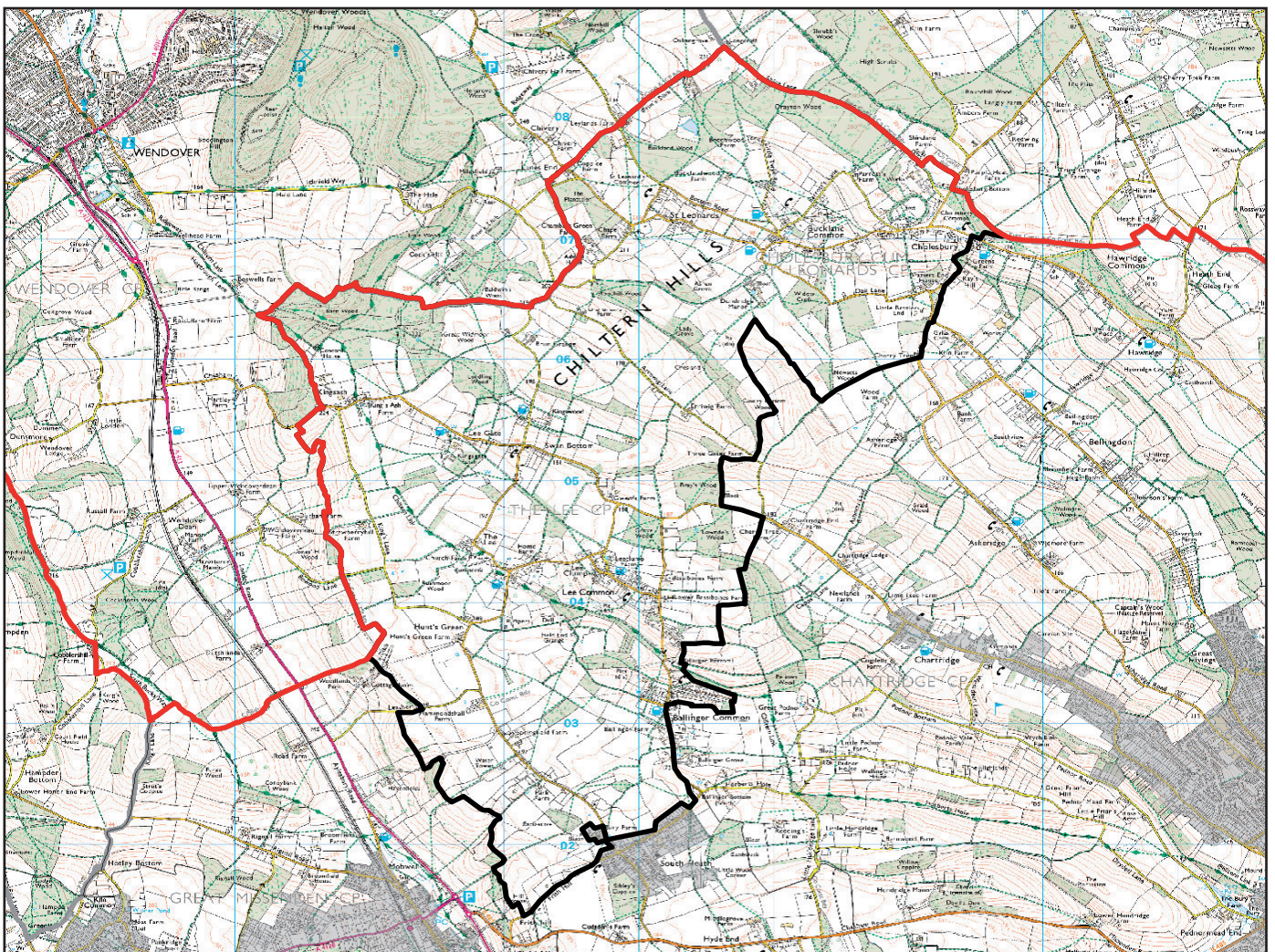
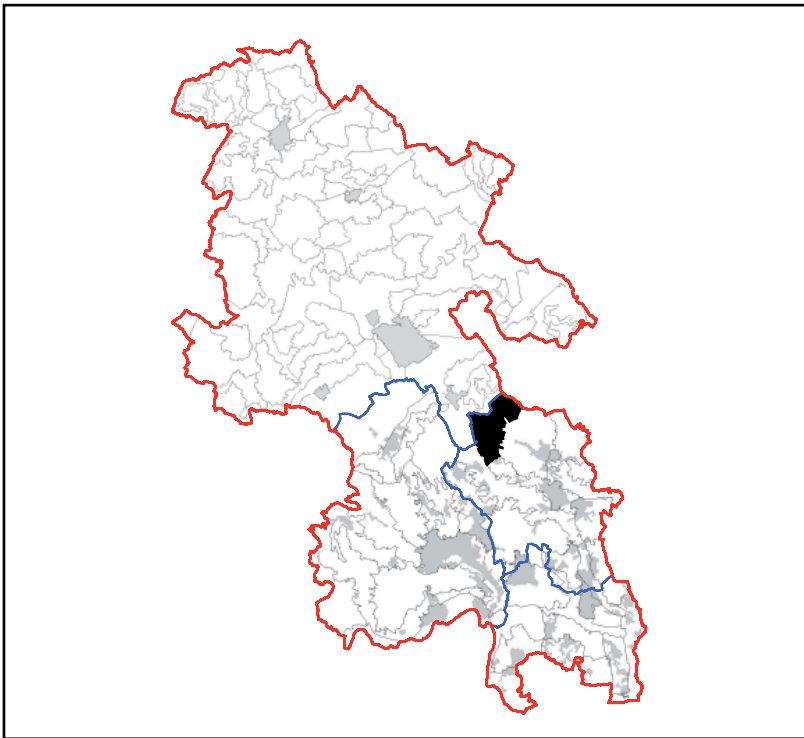


LCA 15.1 LEE AND BUCKLAND COMMON UNDULATING PLATEAU



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KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Upper chalk plateau overlain with clay and flints. Cut to the east by dry chalk valley heads which create undulations in the landform and represent the transition to the adjacent landscape.
- Fields are a mixture of arable, pasture and some paddock interspersed with woodland. The field pattern is predominantly pre 18th century regular/ irregular fields with some areas of prairie and parliamentary enclosure.
- Woodland occurs in small blocks across the plateau with larger areas on the highest ground along the northern boundary (which incorporates a small area of wooded scarp). There is some hanging woodland along the dry valley sides. Ancient woodland is scattered through the area with large areas at Buckland Wood and Drayton Wood.
- Clay and flints gives rise to a heathy character in places with scrub notable on road verges and bracken in hedgerows. A small area of acid grassland and heath occurs on Cholesbury Common.
- Network of woodland, hedgerows and green lanes important for biodiversity. Mixed deciduous woodland and lowland beech and yew woodland are BAP priority habitats.
- Linear settlement stretches along roads and around historic commons (Lee Common and Cholesbury). Farmsteads are also scattered through the area.
- Distinctive vernacular building types include black weatherboard barns and flint and brick buildings as well as modern development.
- Cholesbury Camp Hill Fort and Grim's Ditch are prehistoric monuments. Other notable archaeological features include medieval moats and a shrunken village which lie to the west of Lee Common. A medieval pottery industry was based at Potter Row.
- Winding, narrow rural lanes and ancient sunken lanes or holloways.
- Historic lanes are enclosed by hedge banks containing hazel, holly and bracken. Out-grown beech hedges are also features along some rural lanes.
- Views are short range across open across fields to wooded horizons or enclosed along hedged lanes. There are occasional longer views out – west across the valley in Aylesbury Vale and east to the adjacent ridge and valley landscape.
- An accessible landscape, in close proximity to the station at Great Missenden and crossed by a network of local and long distance footpaths (the Chiltern Link and Chiltern Way).
- A rural and peaceful landscape.

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DESCRIPTION

Location and Boundaries: *Lee and Buckland Common Undulating Plateau* lies wholly within Chiltern District. This area is defined by high plateau land to the north east of the Misbourne Valley and is a continuation of the Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Area 12.1 *Chiltern Dip Slope*. It is transitional with the ridge and valley landscape to the east and incorporates the heads of the dry valleys which create undulations in the landform.

Landscape Character: This area is part of the upper chalk plateau cut by the heads of dry valleys which create an undulating landform. The landscape is a mosaic of small and medium arable and pastoral fields and woodland with occasional paddock. Settlement consists of linear villages stretching out along rural roads or around commons with farmsteads scattered through the area. This is an enclosed landscape with tall hedgerows and hedge banks containing rural winding lanes and woodland forming a backdrop to most views. There are however some views out to Aylesbury Vale and east to the adjacent ridge and valley landscape. The network of woodland which is scattered through the area and connects to hedgerows is important for biodiversity and notable archaeological features are Grim's Ditch and Cholesbury Camp Hill Fort. A rural and peaceful landscape which is also accessible with a network of local and long distance footpaths (the Chiltern Link and Chiltern Way).

Geology: The geology of the area is upland chalk overlain with clay and flints cut by dry valley heads of upper and middle chalk. Soils are slightly acid loamy and clayey with impeded drainage.

Topography/ Landform: The plateau landform slopes gently from west to east and is cut by the heads of dry valleys associated with the ridge and valley landscape to the east. The heads of the dry valleys have eroded into the chalk plateau creating an undulating landform.

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

Land Use and Settlement: Land use is a mosaic of arable and pastoral fields and woodland with occasional paddock. Fields are medium sized with some smaller fields on the edge of settlements. Hedgerows with hedgerow trees and woodland edges form the boundaries of fields. The clay with flints geology gives rise to a heathy character in places with bracken in hedgerows and scrub evident on road side verges. Cholesbury Common is predominantly woodland with a small portion of open land with acid grassland and bracken. Hedge banks and tall hedgerows (including holly and hazel) enclose rural lanes and out grown beech hedges are features in places.

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Settlements are frequent but small and rural in character. The historic settlement takes the form of common edge settlements (Lee Common, Ballinger Common, Buckland Common) and linear rows (St Leonards) and scattered farmsteads. Villages stretch out along the rural lanes with only small undeveloped gaps between some settlements (e.g. between Ballinger Common and Lee Common). Distinctive vernacular building types are evident in this landscape with black weatherboard barns and brick and flint buildings.

An accessible landscape for walkers, in close proximity to Great Missenden and Wendover train stations, and crossed by a network of local and long distance footpaths. The Chiltern Link, Chiltern Way and a very short section of The Ridgeway National Trail pass through this area. There is limited scope for open access, short of a small section of Cholesbury Common and in The Plantation, which is a Forestry Commission owned woodland.

Tree Cover: Small blocks of woodland occur across the area interspersed with farmland. Drayton and Buckland Woods form a large area of ancient semi natural woodland. Small pockets of ancient woodland semi natural woodland occur throughout the area (Tomlins Wood, Ashen Grove, Widow Croft, Newssets Wood, Lady Grove/ Chesland, Lordlings Wood, Grove Wood, Rushmoor Wood, Hawthorn Wood, Jenkins Wood, Brays Wood and Barn Wood) Ancient replanted woodland occurs at Mercers Wood and also Barn Wood and Bray Wood. Hanging woodland occurs on some of the dry valley sides (e.g. Ballinger Dell Wood and Stonehill Wood and Lady Grove). A small area of wooded escarpment (Barn Wood) is included in this area.

Perceptual/ Experiential Landscape: This a predominantly enclosed landscape due to the presence of woodland, which forms the backdrop to views across fields, and hegebanks and tall hedgerows which contain narrow rural lanes. Occasional long views out are afforded westwards across the Misbourne Valley (e.g. from The Lee), towards Aylesbury Vale and eastwards into the ridge and valley landscape. Views to the western edge of this landscape which forms the Misbourne Valley top are experienced from within and across the Misbourne Valley.

The area is intimate in scale and with an intricate character brought about by the undulating landform, winding hedged roads, mosaic pattern of paddock, pastoral and arable fields, common land and linear villages.

Settlement stretches out along roads/lanes but these are rural in character and there is little traffic. A pylon line dips into the western edge of the area but there are no other intrusive elements. Overall the area has a rural and peaceful character.

Biodiversity: Broadleaved, lowland mixed deciduous and lowland beech and yew woodland and some coniferous woodland occurs on the northern and western edge of the character area. Pockets of broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland and some beech and yew woodland are scattered through the area. A number of woodlands

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are local wildlife sites including Buckland Wood, Great Widmoor and Barn Woods Complex, Drayton Wood, Hale Wood Stocking's Wood and Hightree and Bottom Woods.

Grassland is predominantly improved with one patch of unimproved grassland occurring at Chase Acres (a local wildlife site). Cholesbury Common, also a local wildlife site, is a deciduous woodland and grassland mosaic with remnants of once extensive heathland and acid grassland.

Green lane local wildlife sites include a bridleway off Arrewig Lane, Hunts Green Lane and Ballinger Green Lane. BAP priority habitats in this area are lowland mixed deciduous woodland and lowland beech and yew woodland.

Historic Environment: The landscape is dominated by pre 18th century regular and irregular fields interspersed with pockets of woodland and ancient woodland which occur across the area. There are some areas of modern large scale fields and pony paddocks occurring in proximity to the villages of Buckland Common, Lee Common and Ballinger Common. An area of parliamentary enclosure occurs at Lee Gate, west of Lee Common. Areas of common land occur at Cholesbury and Lee Common.

The historic settlement takes the form of common edge settlements and linear rows and farmsteads. The area contains some nationally important archaeological monuments including Cholesbury Camp Hill Fort which is multivallate hill-fort (defined as a fortified enclosure located on a hill and with two or more lines of concentric earthworks set at intervals dating from the Iron Age). Grim's Ditch, a linear bank and ditch system probably dating to the Iron Age enters this area on the northern and western edge. This feature runs south east to north west across Buckinghamshire and may have been a territorial boundary rather than a defence. Other notable sites include earthwork enclosures and a moat in Brays Wood and a medieval earthwork and shrunken village west of Lee Common. A medieval pottery industry was based at Potter Row which is an archaeological notification site.

Designations

- Chilterns AONB
- Archaeological Notification Sites: 16 No.
- Conservation Areas: The Lee, Cholesbury and Hawridge
- Priority BAP Habitats: 2 types
- Biological Notification Sites: 20 No.
- Local Wildlife Sites: 11 No.
- Scheduled Monuments: Cholesbury Camp Hillfort, Earthwork enclosures in Brays Wood, Grim's Ditch 350m NE from Cottage Farm, Grim's Ditch from Great Widmoor Wood to Oaken Grove

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EVALUATION

Landscape and Visual Sensitivities:

Potential landscape and visual sensitivities are:

- The extensive woodland cover which includes hanging woodland and provides enclosure and backdrop to views as well as biodiversity interest.
- The narrow lanes enclosed by hedge banks and tall hedgerows including outgrown beech hedgerows which contribute to the rural character (green lanes).
- The historic commons at Lee Common and Cholesbury with remnants of acid grassland and heath.
- Pre 18th century regular and irregular fields interspersed with pockets of woodland and ancient woodland which are visible reminders of the historic use of land and parliamentary enclosures.
- The transition with the Misbourne Valley landscape – with these upper slopes forming the enclosing viewline from the valley.
- The intimate scale and enclosed character with occasional long views into the Misbourne Valley.
- The rural and peaceful character.
- The loose linear structure of settlements along roads and around commons with open gaps between groups of buildings.
- The variety of archaeological features which add time depth.

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

Strategy/ Vision: Conserve and enhance the rural and peaceful character of the Lee and Buckland Common Undulating Plateau formed by the enclosed mosaic of farmland, woodland, linear 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.
- Maintain hedge banks and beech hedges which are distinctive features of the

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landscape (green lanes).

- Conserve and maintain historic common settlements.
- Appropriately manage grassland and woodland habitats on historic commons including management of scrub/ bracken encroachment. Appropriately manage areas of acid grassland and heathland and seek to extend and link these habitats.
- Conserve and restore early field systems.
- Ensure view from the Misbourne Valley is considered in relation to new development in this landscape.
- Maintain open views out to the Misbourne Valley.
- Maintain the rural character of roads and lanes; avoid road improvements which would alter their character. Maintain grass and heathy verges.
- Maintain greens pace between settlements to prevent them joining one another.
- Conserve archaeological sites and monuments and their setting, which provide evidence of past use of the land.

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Views are across open fields to wooded horizons. Fields are bound by hedgerows with hedgerow trees.



Brick and flint is a vernacular building type.



Lee Village and Green.



Cholesbury Camp Hill Fort is enclosed by woodland to the north of Cholesbury Village.



Enclosed winding rural lanes.



Varying degrees of enclosure. Long views across open farmland, often enclosed by woodland which forms a backdrop to views.