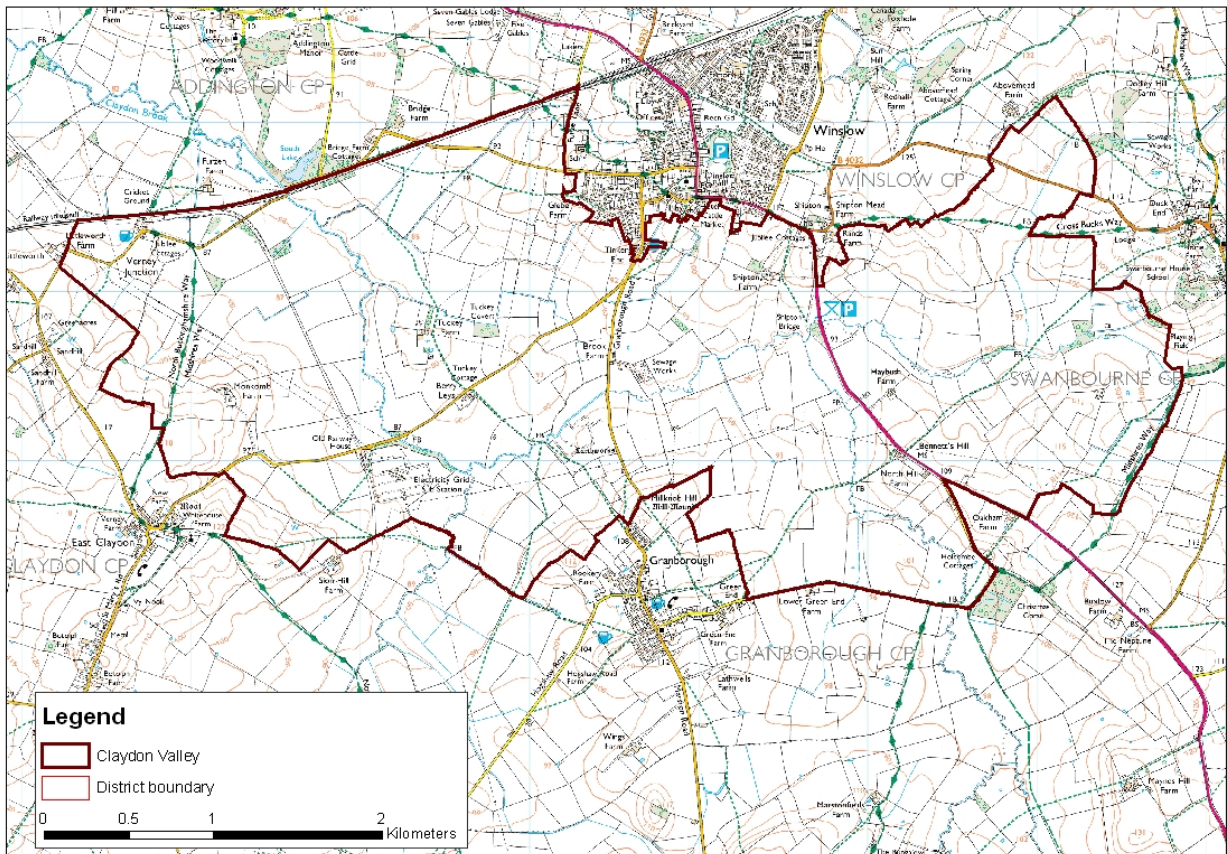
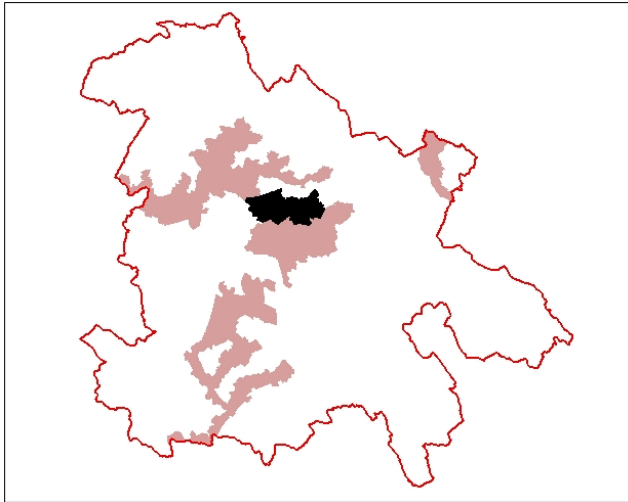


LCA 5.6 Claydon Valley

Landscape Character Type: LCT 5 Shallow Valleys



LCA 5.6 Claydon Valley (LCT 5)

Key Characteristics

- Shallow valley
- Meandering brook on flat valley bottom
- Lack of settlement apart from isolated farms on slightly higher ground above flood plain
- Strong irregular field pattern
- Predominantly small and medium fields
- Mixed farming - greater area of pasture but large arable fields are visually dominant

Distinctive Features

- Biggin Grange archaeological earthworks
- Good mix of tree and shrub vegetation adjacent to brook
- Narrow bridge and ford crossing brook to north of Granborough
- Disused railway line with trees and shrubs
- Tuckey Covert
- Unimproved grassland

Intrusive Elements

- Pylon lines radiating from sub-station northwest of Granborough
- Traffic on A413
- Small sewage works

Location The shallow valley lies immediately to the south of Winslow. The northern boundary is defined by the southern edge of the town and the ridge of higher ground either side. The southern extent is marked by the higher ground of East Claydon, Granborough and Bennett's Hill. To the east the valley dissipates into a more undulating low clayland and to the west the confluences of the Claydon and Padbury Brooks.

Landscape character The shallow valley has a strong agricultural character notable for its lack of settlement and locally strong field pattern. The area has very small blocks of woodland and variable tree cover in hedgerows. There are good views across the valley from the upper valley sides.

Geology Mudstones of the Middle (Stewartby) and Upper (Weymouth) Formations of the Oxford Clay and of the West Walton Formation, overlain occasionally by alluvium and river terrace deposits.

Topography The top of the valley sides to the north and south are approximately 110 – 120m AOD. These slope down fairly steeply at first and then flatten out giving a wide, very gently sloping area either side of the brook. There are several tributary streams coming into the valley.

Hydrology The Claydon Brook and its tributaries drain a wide area to the north and south of Winslow. LCA 5.6 is distinguished from the rest of the catchment by having the main section of the brook in a distinct valley, which is defined by higher ground to the north and south. To the south several tributaries breach the high ground.

The majority of the streams and the brook retain their meandering courses although some sections appear to have been artificially straightened. Straight ditches follow the field boundaries and there are a few scattered ponds, most notably near Tuckey Farm.

Land use and settlement Agriculture predominates and is mixed varying from very small fields of pasture to large arable fields where hedgerows have been removed. Elsewhere the hedgerow pattern is strong with well established mature hedgerows.

The area is notable for its lack of settlement. There are no villages within the valley; the only settlements are isolated farms on slightly higher ground close to the valley floor and a few cottages.

Five pylon lines radiate from the electricity sub-station to the west of Granborough beyond the boundary. Some cross the LCA, others are visible from it and in combination have a significant negative visual impact.

LCA 5.6 Claydon Valley (LCT 5)

Tree cover There are no major woodlands but small dispersed pockets or coverts occur on the valley sides. The banks of the brook and tributary have a higher level of tree cover including many unmanaged willows in places forming small linear areas of wet woodland. There is also good tree and scrub cover along the disused railway line. Trees within hedgerows are variable tending to be most evident on the higher valley sides. Patches of significant young elm regeneration suggest this was once a significant tree locally.

Biodiversity The area contains a high proportion of arable habitat although large areas of grassland are also present throughout. Most of the grassland is improved but unimproved areas can be found largely in the southern half. A block of neutral grassland – a broad habitat type, and of unimproved grassland can also be found in the northwest.

Fragments of woodland are generally small and do not form a significant area of habitat within this area. Woodland is largely restricted to the northern half of the area and is broadleaved in nature – a broad habitat type.

Another broad habitat type is found in the aquatic habitats provided by brook and streams, which thread through the agricultural habitats and in conjunction with the hedgerows and woodlands provide good habitat connectivity. Small areas of standing water habitat are also present as ponds.

Historic environment The landscape of the area is mostly comprises early parliamentary enclosure fields dating to 1767. There is a cluster of regular and irregular pre 18th century enclosures on the western fringe concentrated mainly close to the boundary with East Claydon. Small pockets of flood meadow land are dispersed along the bottom of the Claydon valley and its southern tributary. The area is predominantly parliamentary enclosure land and dispersed areas of other 19th century enclosure. There are four parcels of prairie landscape spread over the area and notably a large electricity grid sub-station located on the southern boundary of the LCA.

The area contains no historic buildings of note although the landscape does form a part of the setting for Winslow Hall, it's south facing aspect commands views across this landscape. The archaeology of the area comprises some surviving ridge and furrow which is found in patches across the area. The most significant site is the earthworks of what is believed to be Biggin Moated Grange, a medieval manorial site dating to the medieval/post medieval period.

The landscape has a good amenity value with several promoted rights of way running through the area.

Designations

Conservation Area at Winslow
Archaeological Notification Areas – 6 No.
BNS – 2 No.

LCA 5.6 Claydon Valley (LCT 5)



Claydon Valley seen from the edge of Granborough.



The western end of the valley includes pylons converging on the electricity sub-station visible to the left.

LCA 5.6 Claydon Valley (LCT 5)

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

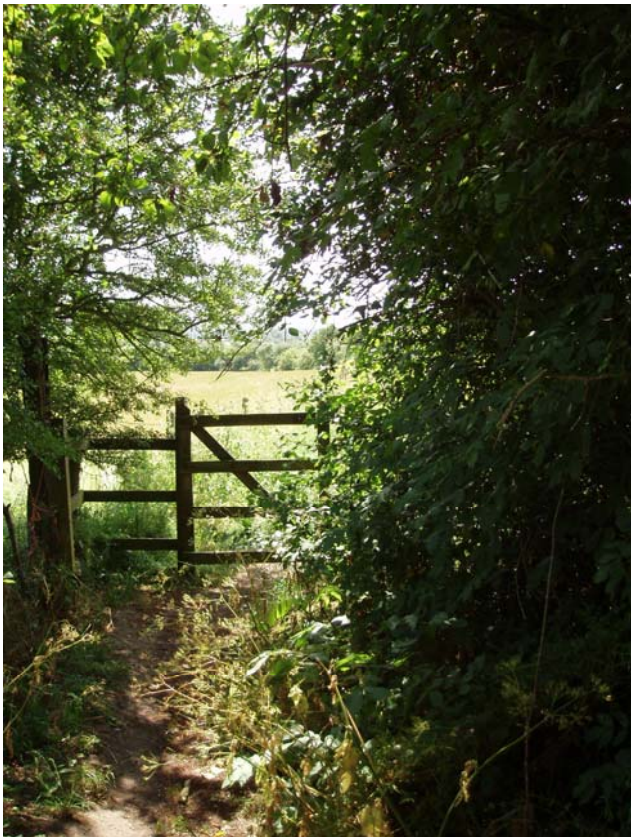
Guidelines **Conserve and Reinforce**

Condition

Generally the condition of the landscape is considered to be good. The hedgerow pattern remains largely intact although in places hedges have been removed to create large arable fields. Good strong high hedgerows are particularly evident on the slopes below Winslow. The general pattern is considered to be coherent. Five pylon lines radiating out of the electricity sub-station northwest of Granborough are the most significant detracting feature of the area. As the most significant impact of the pylons is localised, there are generally considered to be few detracting features. The cultural integrity is considered to be variable containing early parliamentary enclosure and a few sensitive locations. Ecological integrity is moderate due to good connectivity and the areas of designated sites and habitats of District significance. Overall the functional integrity is coherent.

Sensitivity

The area has a distinctive character stemming from the landform and strong hedgerow pattern, with detailed interest focused on the vegetation beside the watercourse and narrow bridge crossings. Overall the sense of place is moderate. The landform is apparent but not dominant. The tree cover is variable in hedgerows. Interest is focused on the trees either side of watercourses and the associated small wet woodlands. Visibility is variable depending on location and is rated as moderate. Overall the moderate sense of character combined with the moderate visibility give the landscape a moderate sensitivity.



Footpath close to the southern edge of Winslow.

LCA 5.6 Claydon Valley (LCT 5)

Landscape Guidelines Conserve and Reinforce

Guidelines for the Claydon Valley are as follows:

- Conserve the pattern of smaller field and woodland parcels.
- Conserve agricultural land use on suburban fringes and discourage inappropriate use.
- Encourage the retention and strengthening of the historic hedgerow pattern by infilling gaps and establishing new hedgerow trees.
- Encourage the management of hedgerows through traditional cutting regimes.
- Promote the management and conservation of vegetation adjacent to the meandering watercourses including the pollarding of willow.
- Encourage the management of existing woodland and consider promoting the establishment of new woodland particularly where it will reduce the visual impact of pylon lines.
- Maintain the condition and extent of unimproved and semi-improved grassland wherever possible. Encourage good management practices.
- Close to watercourses promote the use of permanent pasture, with low stocking density and flooding regimes to promote biodiversity and landscape enhancement.
- Maintain and enhance connectivity.
- Encourage the restoration and management of ponds and the area around them to provide a succession of habitats from open water through to mature trees.
- Identify key views to surrounding higher ground from publicly accessible land and promote the preservation and enhancement of these views.
- Encourage the preservation of historic earthworks and ridge and furrow by maintaining a continuous grass sward.



The narrow bridge over the Claydon Brook on the Granborough Road midway between Granborough and Winslow.