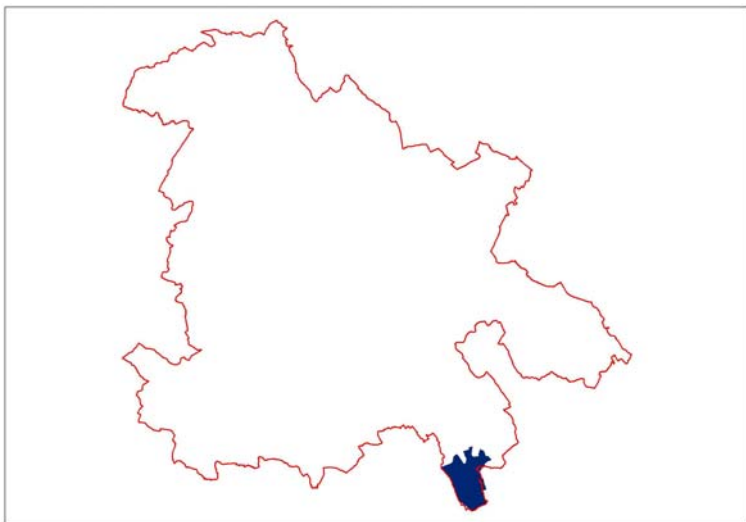


LCT 13 Chalk Valleys



Constituent LCAs

LCA 13.1 Wendover Gap



The Wendover Gap in the Chilterns defined by the extensive tree cover in the valley bottom
Looking east from the direction of Bacombe.

LCT 13 Chalk Valleys

Key Characteristics

- Steep sided chalk valley
- Principal communication gap cutting through the Chilterns scarp
- Dry valley
- Arable land use on valley floor
- Pastureland on steeper upper slopes

Distinctive Features

- Extensive woodland cover on upper valley slopes
- Small irregular shaped fields on the upper slopes enclose by woodland
- Winding sunken lanes climbing up the valley sides
- Localised ribbon development follows main road corridors
- Long distance views across valley from vantage points
- Larger arable fields in the valley bottom with well trimmed hedges
- Smaller woodland copses and woodland belts dispersed over lower slopes

General Description

Accords with CA 110 Chilterns, identified by the Character of England Map and with LCT –ULA, ULN and UCA identified by the National Landscape Typology. To the north the natural limit of the area is the Chilterns Scarp and the settlement of Wendover which sits in the gap between the eastern and western section of the scarp. The chalk valley continues southwards beyond the District boundary. A small tributary, locally known as the Hale valley feeds into the Wendover Gap from the east and joins the main valley south of Wendover. Hale lane climbs up the valley side reaching the edge of the scarp at a location called the Hale.

The high quality landscape is reflected in its status as lying within the designated Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. A number of ancient woodlands lie to the west of the area. Within the LCT much of Cockshoots Wood, parts of which are a County Wildlife Site to the north-east of Great Missenden, has been replanted, but it remains an excellent example of calcareous beechwood with a wide diversity of plant species. The southern half of Low Scrubs ancient woodland, owned by the National Trust, lies on the northern area boundary.

The chalk valley cuts through the Chilterns escarpment lying within a steep sided dry valley that extends southwards into the dip slope. The valley contains the main communication links between Aylesbury and London. This includes the A413 and the Aylesbury to Marylebone railway. There is also a substantial line of pylons carrying high voltage cables running through the gap .

The Valley bottoms are primarily utilised for arable land use, whilst the steeper upper slopes support smaller irregular shaped paddocks enclosed by woodland. The arable fields tend to be larger open fields with well trimmed hedges and occasional mature trees. A distinctive characteristic of the valley are the narrow winding lanes often incised into the chalk slopes, which link the main roads with smaller settlements and farmsteads on the valley sides.

Woodland is traditionally beech, where growing on the steeper slopes referred to as ‘beech hangers’. Smaller grass paddocks sit on the upper slopes often enclosed by narrow woodland belts. The broadleaved woodlands are valuable wildlife sites. Smaller blocks of woodland are also dispersed over the valley sides. Linear belts of trees are a feature of the valley bottom, they follow driveways, enclose properties and are also a distinctive feature of the railway corridor.

The valley is well served by footpaths which climb the valley sides and provide panoramic views across the valley from local vantage points.

There are dispersed farmsteads extending along the valley sides, accessed by narrow winding lanes and trackways. The main concentrations of settlement occur as ribbon development along the A413 London Road. The Icknield Way and Ridgeway cross the north east of the area. Historic interest in the south includes large area of Assarts and Mayortorne Manor.