LCT 13 CHALK RIVER VALLEY

Constituent LCAs

LCA 13.2	Hambleden
LCA 13.3	Hughenden
LCA 13.4	Wye
LCA 13.5	Misbourne Upper
LCA 13.6	Chess

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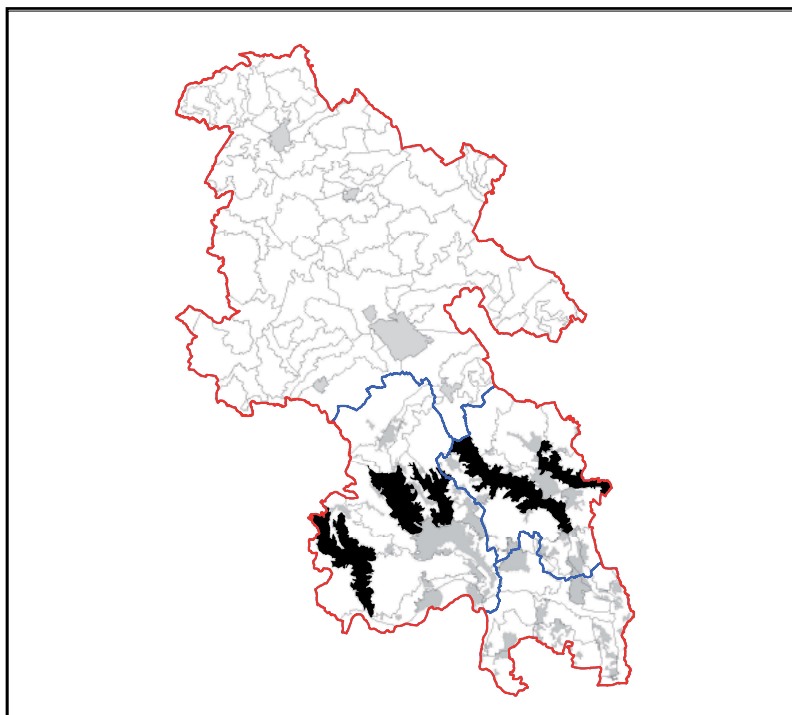
KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Broad valleys incising the chalk dipslope with gently sloping lower valley slopes, becoming steeper towards the valley tops.

- Chalk rivers and streams meander gently through the valleys, sometimes flowing inconspicuously, many of which have 'winterbourne' sections, particularly in upper reaches.

- Smooth, rolling valley sides are incised by small tributary valleys. Underlying chalk, and free draining lime-rich soils on the valley sides are predominately arable cultivation and pasture.

- Upper slopes and valley tops are wooded, with occasional pockets of calcareous grassland.

- Ancient and semi-natural woodland associated with higher slopes and dry valleys, include mixed, broadleaved and provide a habitat for wildlife.

- Valley floors are characterised by rough grassland, pasture and paddocks, typically divided into smaller scale fields, by low hedges and wooden post and wire fencing.

- Varying patterns of field enclosure, with a mix of regular and irregular field boundaries. Larger scale fields often dominate the valley sides, with smaller scale field divisions along the valley floor.

- Valleys commonly act as transport corridors, with roads and rail routes following the valley floor and sides. Smaller rural roads and sunken lanes cut across the valleys, connecting rural villages and farmsteads, and climbing the valley sides.

- Settlement is largely confined to the valley floor, comprising historic villages, hamlets, and scattered farmsteads, with some more modern ribbon development along roads.

- Occasional large historic houses and associated parkland occur on the valley sides, overlooking the valley.

- Remnant archaeological and historical features are scattered throughout the valley and within areas of settlement, including early coaxial and assart field enclosures.

- Valley landform and wooded valley tops generate a sense of containment. Varying levels of enclosure with open valley sides, contrasting with dense wooded tops. Views are largely contained along the valley and up the valley slopes with some extensive views from upper slopes.

- Simple, uniform and legible landscapes, which retain a strong sense of tranquillity and rural character, despite occasional busy roads.