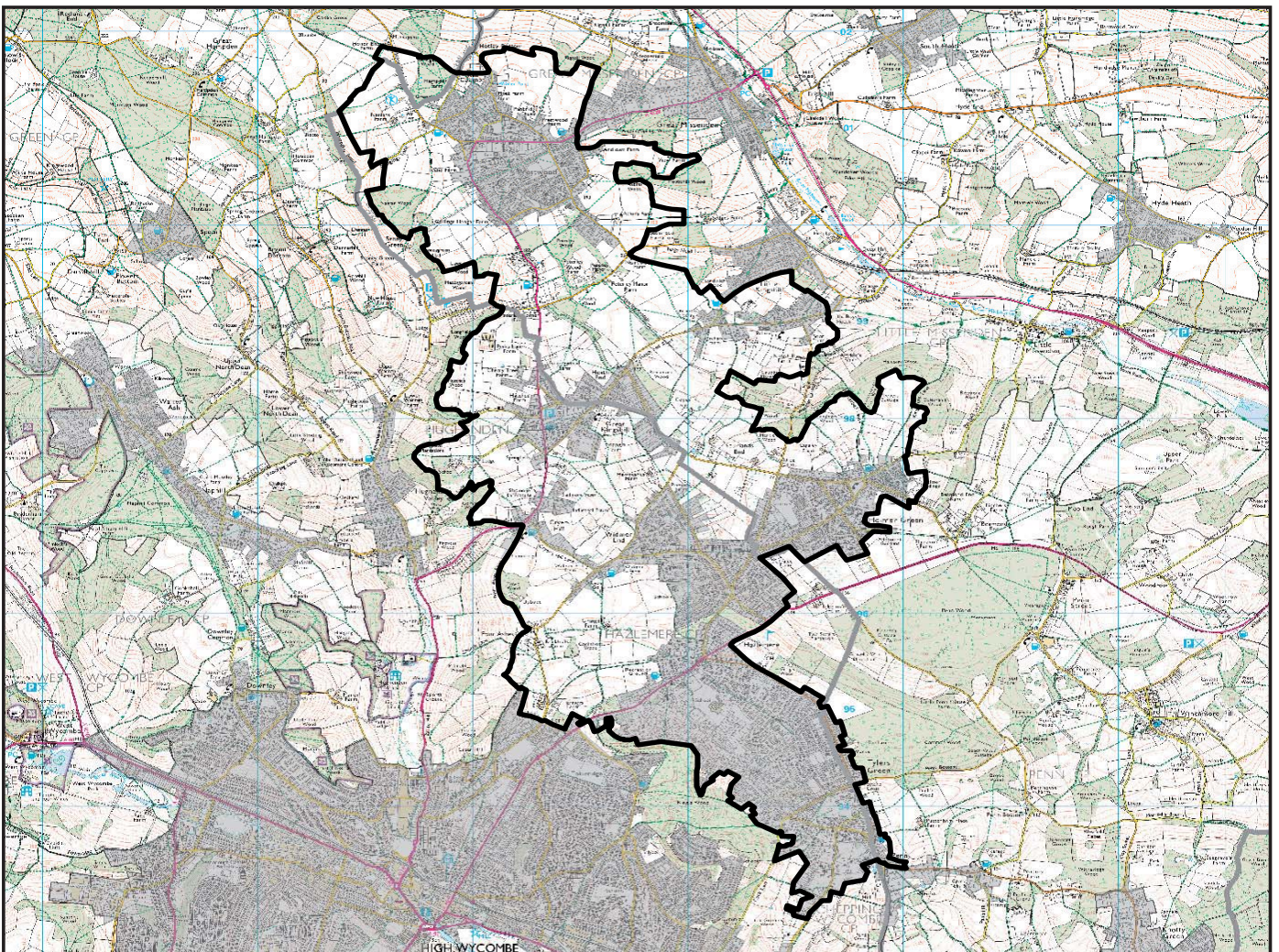
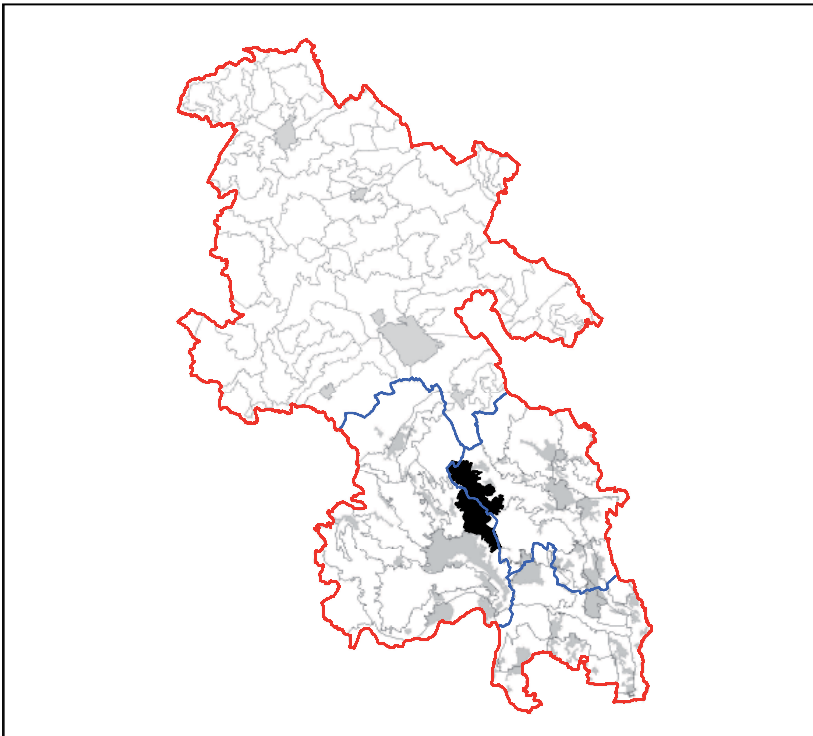


# LCA 16.3 GREAT KINGSHILL SETTLED PLATEAU



## LCA 16.3 GREAT KINGSHILL SETTLED PLATEAU

### KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Elevated, gently undulating plateau, of chalk overlain by clay with flints, which gives rise to loamy/clayey soils with impeded drainage.
- A mosaic of arable fields, rough grazing and paddocks are defined by hedgerows, with trees, and rural fencing, and occasionally interspersed with small clumps of woodland which create a landscape of both openness and enclosure.
- Small pockets of woodland are occasionally spread linearly along the plateau edge, transitional with the steeper valley slopes, and between fields. Many of which are ancient woodland. Woodland areas primarily concentrated in the north of the area.
- High density of dispersed settlement, comprising small nucleated villages and hamlets, which occasionally spread out along roads. Individual properties and farmsteads are dispersed across the area.
- Modern development dominates, with some traditional buildings interspersed. Close proximity to High Wycombe generates an urban character in places.
- A combination of relatively small field systems, comprising pre 18<sup>th</sup> century irregular and regular enclosures, 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosures, and frequent areas of enclosures with extended field boundary loss. Early assart enclosures are located along the western edge, transitional with the Hughenden Valley.
- Rural roads cut through the landscape, connecting settlement. The busy A4128 cuts through the landscape in the west and north. Roads radiate into adjacent valleys.
- A good local rights of way network. A small section of the long distance footpath, the South Bucks Way, weaves into Little Kingshill in the east.
- Long views across open fields to a wooded or open skyline, with some important views across the Hughenden Valley and Upper Misbourne Valley, and south towards High Wycombe. Settlement and development frequently fragments and disrupts views.
- Settlement and roads fragment the landscape, and generate a strong sense of movement. Away from these areas pockets of tranquillity exist.

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### DESCRIPTION

**Location and Boundaries:** The north east of *Great Kingshill Settled Plateau* lies within the Chiltern District and the south west lies within the Wycombe District. The area is dictated largely by the topography and the density of settlement and is elevated above the Misbourne Valley, in the north east, the Hughenden Valley in the west and the Wye Valley in the south. It is distinguished from the large scale, rolling landscape in the north west and south east.

**Landscape Character:** An elevated, gently undulating plateau, on clay with flints overlying the chalk. A mix of arable, rough grazing and paddocks, interspersed by small woodland clumps. Settlement is dense and dominates the landscape, comprising nucleated villages and hamlets, with clusters of properties and individual farmsteads spread along roads in between. A mix of field enclosures, with some early assart systems located in the south west. A good network of hedgerows interconnects agricultural farmland with areas of woodland. Varying degrees of enclosure, with enclosed woodland contrasting with open farmland. Long views are possible across the landscape, with important vistas across the Hughenden Valley, the Misbourne Valley and towards High Wycombe. Settlement and roads often interrupt and fragment the landscape, limiting views and creating an obvious audible and visual impact. Away from these developments, areas of tranquillity exist.

**Geology:** Clay with flint deposits top the chalk and give rise to slightly acidic loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage. Small pockets of Upper Chalk are also evident, which by contrast support freely draining, shallow, lime-rich, loamy soils.

**Topography/Landform:** Elevated plateau landscape, with a slightly undulating landform, frequently varying between 165m and 180m, and reaching up to 200m in the north.

**Hydrology:** Relatively few notable hydrological features. Occasional small ponds are dispersed across the area. The elevated area forms the divide between the main chalk valleys.

**Land use and Settlement:** A mosaic of arable cultivation, rough grazing and paddocks, are delineated by hedgerows with trees and rural wooden fencing, interspersed by small woodland clumps. Settlement dominates this area, and has a strong influence on the character. Nucleated hamlets and villages are distributed throughout, occasionally spreading out along roads. Prominent settlement areas include Prestwood, Great Kingshill, Totteridge and Hazelmere, with the edge of High Wycombe encroaching along the southern boundary. A modern character to these villages prevails, with a dominance of post war housing development. A large network of roads connects settlement and radiates into adjacent valleys. The busy A4128 and A404 cut through the landscape in the north west and south east



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correspondingly. Smaller clusters of properties and individual farmsteads are spread along roads, in between the larger settlement areas. A good public rights of way network runs through the area, with a small section of the long distance footpath, the South Bucks Way, passing through Little Kinghill in the east.

**Tree Cover:** Trees are often scattered along field boundary hedgerows, and small woodland clumps are interspersed between fields, more commonly concentrated within the northern part of the area. Woodland is often spread linearly along the edges of the area, transitional with the higher slopes of adjacent valleys. Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodlands are typical, with beech and yew commonly found along the western edge. Many of the woodlands are ancient semi natural woodland areas.

**Perceptual/Experiential Landscape:** Varying degrees of enclosure across the landscape, with woodland and hedgerows providing a sense of enclosure and texture, contrasting to the smooth, open, arable fields. A sense of tranquillity is often disrupted by settlement, pylons and roads. The busy A4128 and A404 cut through this area, with a visible and audible influence. A strong sense of movement is evident close to settlement. Views are constantly changing, from long panoramas at the edges of the area, across the Hughenden Valley, the Misbourne Valley and south across High Wycombe, to enclosed views along roads and settlement. Although land use and cover is relatively simple, the density and frequency of settlement, disrupts the landscape, and fragment its legibility.

**Biodiversity:** Small dispersed blocks of woodland provide valuable ecological value throughout this area. Local wildlife sites are found at Nanfan Wood and Lodge Wood, both lowland beech and yew woodland. Broadleaved Biological Notification Sites are found at, Crook's Wood, Peterley Wood and Birchmore Wood. Hedgerows provide important wildlife habitats, connecting agricultural areas, with woodland.

**Historic Environment:** The landscape of this area is made up of a variety of field enclosures, the most abundant being pre 18<sup>th</sup> century irregular and regular enclosures; significant blocks of assarted fields are also prevalent and are mainly located along the south western edge, transitional with the Hughenden Valley. Enclosures dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> century (parliamentary fields) are found at Great Kinghill and Holmer Green. There are also extended enclosures due to significant field boundary loss.

The historic settlement character of this area is predominantly made up of common edge settlements, Prestwood, Holmer Green and Great Kinghill and small dispersed hamlets and farmsteads. However these settlements have been transformed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by a process of enclosure and urban development so they now appear more nucleated and suburbanised.

There a number of archaeological sites and monuments within this area, including Peterley manor and farm, Brand's House, medieval moat and Roman finds.

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### **Designations:**

- The Chilterns AONB
- Archaeological Notification Areas: 12 No.
- Conservation Areas: Four Ashes, Terriers High Wycombe, Tylers Green
- Priority BAP Habitats: 3 types
- Biological Notification Sites: 24 No.
- Local Wildlife Sites: 13 No.
- SSSI: 1 No. Millfield Wood.

### EVALUATION

#### Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

Potential landscape and visual sensitivities are as follows:

- Woodland areas (particularly ancient woodland) which provides landscape structure and biodiversity value.
- The open character contrasted with enclosed and intimate areas (particularly woodland)
- The early assart enclosures.
- Elements of tranquillity, which could be affected by further development.
- Inter visibility – Long views out across the Hughenden Valley, the Misbourne Valley and south across High Wycombe.
- Network of hedgerows which create enclosure and visual unity, as well as providing an ecological benefit, and could be lost by poor management.
- The undeveloped green space between settlements, which are vulnerable to settlement expansion.

**Strength of Character/Intactness:** The strength of character and intactness of the *Great Kingshill Settled Plateau* is **moderate**. Prominent and relatively continuous development, dominate the landscape and reduce the distinctiveness of character.

**Strategy/Vision:** To conserve and enhance the mosaic of farmland and woodland, and to maintain the pockets of tranquillity away from overt human influence, and the rural character of areas in between settlement.

#### Landscape Guidelines:

- Conserve areas of woodland, which provide enclosure in the landscape and form an important landscape pattern and feature, and invaluable biodiversity benefit.
- Promote appropriate management of arable farmland, rough grazing and paddocks, to help generate a wildlife rich habitat, and visually attractive landscape.
- Safeguard early enclosures, which are remnants of assart field systems.
- Conserve views across the landscape, particularly towards the adjacent valleys, in relation to any new development.
- Conserve and manage the network of hedgerows which characterise the landscape, infilling of gaps and appropriate pruning and cutting regimes.
- Maintain existing green space between settlements to retain individual identity prevent coalescence.

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Plateau landscape, open views across fields, which are delineated by hedgerows and scattered trees.



Settlement edge of Great Kingshill, vernacular brick and flint buildings.