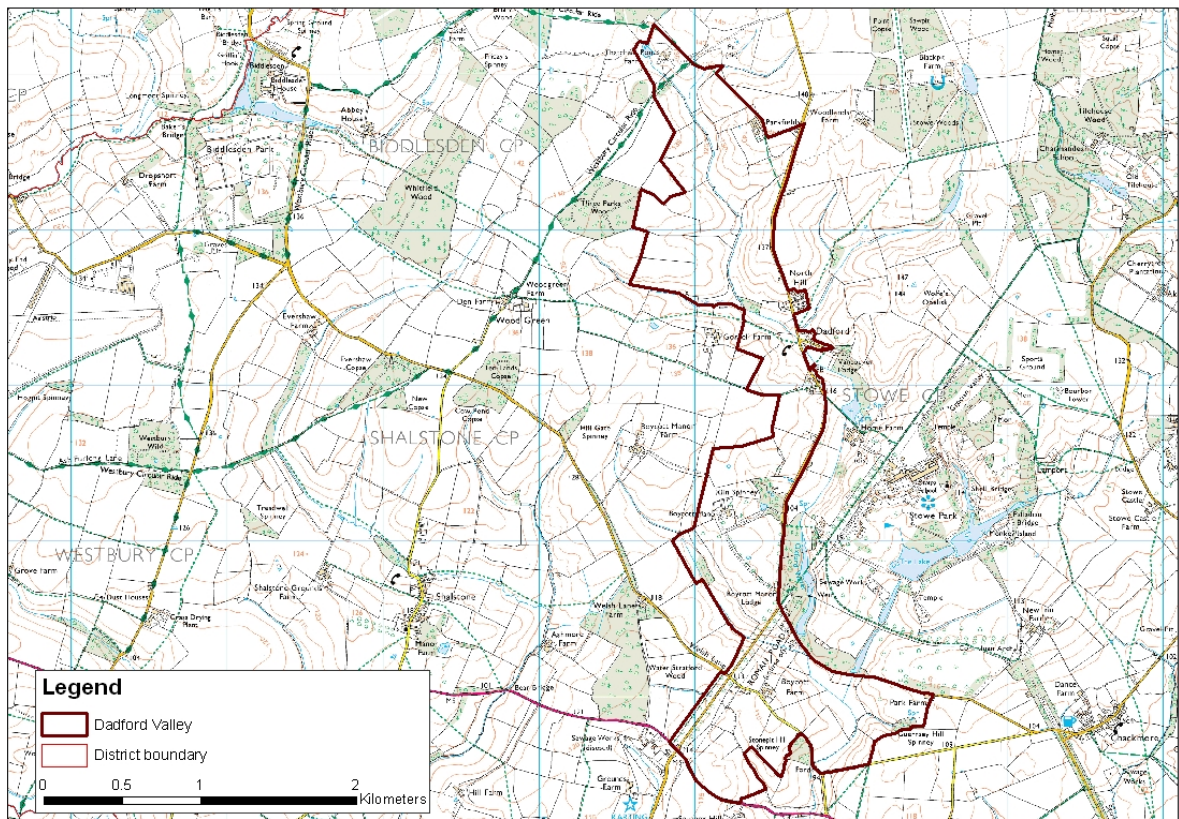
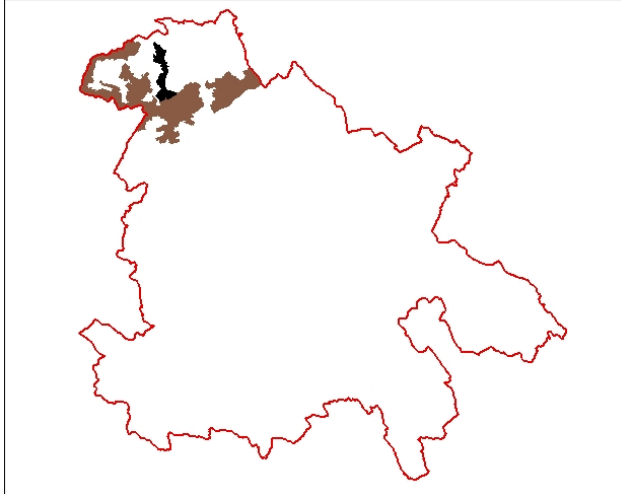


LCA 2.3 Dadford Valley

Landscape Character Type: LCT 2 Incised Valley



## LCA 2.3 Dadford Valley (LCT 2)

### Key Characteristics

- River tributary of Great Ouse
- Undulating valley sides
- Predominantly grassland
- Small woodlands
- Low density of settlement
- Sensitive landscape adjacent to Stowe parkland
- Hidden tranquil character

### Distinctive Features

- Stowe avenue extends through the area
- Views to features of Stowe parkland
- Fast running stream through village
- Vyladd Marsh
- Parkland

### Intrusive Elements

- Views of car park for Stowe

**Location** The western side of a small valley tributary of the Great Ouse. The more wooded and more elevated LCT 1 Wooded Ridge surround it except to the south where the A422 forms the boundary. A minor road forms the eastern boundary east of which lie the historic parklands of Stowe.

**Landscape character** This small, steep and narrow river valley has a distinct identity, but is heavily influenced visually by the close proximity to Stowe parkland particularly in the southwest where the strong avenue extends through the area terminating at the imposing gateway entrances to the park. From the north of the valley there are wider views of Stowe parkland around Wolfe's Obelisk.

The predominantly pastoral nature of the valley with variable hedgerows and small, scattered woodland creates a generally tranquil landscape although it rarely feels remote. The most disruptive visual element is areas of prairie farming, also unscreened views of the visitor's car park at Stowe. The lanes through the area also tend to be quite busy.

**Geology** Glacial till overlain by undifferentiated glacial deposits, small local limestone exposures and alluvium deposits.

**Landform** A tributary valley of the Great Ouse with steep generally undulating sides and very little valley bottom. The valley is divided between two LCAs with most of the eastern side of the valley being part of Stowe Registered parkland LCA 1.4. The elevation ranges from 95-140m AOD.

**Hydrology** The tributary stream is within the area to the north and south but the central section lies within LCA 1.4 where it has been dammed to create an ornamental lake as part of the designed parks and gardens of Stowe. The stream is quite bisected with several branches cutting into the higher ground to the west. The course of the stream appears to be fairly natural. A large pond lies at the head of the valley adjacent to Thatcham Ponds Farm.

**Land use and settlement** The land use is predominantly agricultural grassland interspersed with about 25% arable tending to be in larger fields, and a scattering of small woodlands.

The area as a whole is sparsely settled but the small village of Dadford strung out along the road up the valley gives a feeling of a settled landscape. There is also Boycott Manor and several farms, which are mainly on the higher ground at the edges of the area.

**Tree cover** There is a light sprinkling of small woodlands throughout the area although the wooded character is enhanced by woodland on the boundaries. The tree cover in hedgerows is generally good although many are mature or over mature. The avenue running southwest from Stowe and trees around Boycott Manor are notable features.

**Biodiversity** One block of parkland - a priority habitat type is present within the centre of the valley which is a part of Stowe Park. There is an uneven distribution of the arable and grassland habitats through the remainder of the valley. Grassland in the southern half is entirely improved, whilst some unimproved grassland can be found in the northern half.

## LCA 2.3 Dadford Valley (LCT 2)

The most significant area of interest is the only designated area Vyladd Marsh CWS, a wet sloping field of neutral grassland – a broad habitat type, with spring fed flushes; a very unusual and important habitat within Buckinghamshire.

Small amounts of broadleaved woodland - a broad habitat type are also present throughout which combined with the hedgerows and streams provides good habitat connectivity.

**Historic environment** This area was within the medieval royal hunting forest of Whittlewood, but disafforested before 1286. There are a few remains of medieval settlement and ridge and furrow. The majority of the landscape retains features of the pre 18<sup>th</sup> century historic landscape, principally irregular field patterns. Particular features of note are Stowe Avenue and lodge in the south and meadows and assarts in the north. The avenue follows the line of a Roman road. In almost a third of the area the historic landscape pattern has been removed.

**Designations**

Conservation Area at Stowe

EHRHP&G at Stowe Park

Archaeological Notification Areas – 11 No.

CWS – 1 No.



## LCA 2.3 Dadford Valley (LCT 2)



Typical example of pastoral land on gently sloping valley sides.



The majority of the valley is pastoral with small woodlands however there are areas of more intensive arable farming particularly in the upper part of the valley.

## LCA 2.3 Dadford Valley (LCT 2)

### Summary of Condition/Sensitivity Analysis

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Good</b>
Pattern of elements:	Coherent
Visual detractors:	Few
Visual unity:	Unified
Cultural integrity:	Variable
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Coherent

<b>Sensitivity</b>	<b>Moderate</b>
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Historic
Sense of place:	Moderate
Landform:	Apparent
Tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

**Guidelines**                      **Conserve and Reinforce**

### Condition

The landscape is considered to be in good condition. The hedgerows, woodland and landform combine to produce a coherent landscape. There is little in the way of visual detractors, although parked vehicles are visible in the adjacent LCA at the National Trust car park. This is therefore a unified landscape. The cultural integrity is considered to be variable being strongest where the hedgerow pattern remains intact and along the Stowe Avenue. It is weakest where there are areas of prairie farming. Ecological integrity is moderate due to good connectivity and reasonable areas of habitats of District importance. Overall the functional integrity is considered to be coherent.

### Sensitivity

This landscape has a distinct character reflecting its landform and proximity to Stowe Parkland. There is a good sense of historic continuity in most of the area although this is weaker where the hedgerow pattern has been lost. This gives the area a moderate sense of place. The landform is apparent and the tree cover intermittent producing a landscape of moderate visibility. Overall this landscape is assessed as being of moderate sensitivity.



The dramatic avenue to Stowe crosses the area.



## LCA 2.3 Dadford Valley (LCT 2)

### Landscape Guidelines Conserve and Reinforce

The landscape guidelines for Dadford Valley are as follows:

- Encourage the restoration of the historic hedgerow pattern where it has been lost. To enhance the landscape character and strengthen the ecological diversity. Where necessary use historic maps to identify where hedgerows have been lost.
- Encourage the management of hedgerows through traditional cutting regimes.
- Maintain the extent and condition of woodland using traditional techniques to create and manage a wide diversity of habitats.
- Maintain the extent and condition of unimproved and semi-improved grassland wherever possible. Encourage traditional management by grazing.
- Maintain the existing extent and condition of parkland.
- Maintain the existing extent and condition of neutral grassland, particularly Vyladd marsh.
- Improve the management of historic meadows and pastures.
- Close to watercourses promote the use of permanent pasture, with low stocking density and flooding regimes to promote biodiversity and landscape enhancement.
- New housing and alterations to existing housing should be designed to reflect the traditional character of the area and use locally traditional materials.
- Survey, maintain and restore features of Stowe parkland which extend into the area
- Maintain and enhance views to features of Stowe's designed parkland.
- Promote the retention of the character of minor roads by the management of hedgerows and verges and limiting urbanising elements such as signage and kerbing.
- Maintain archaeological earthworks in grassland.



Stowe parkland on the eastern boundary of this LCA has an impact on the landscape character of the area.