

## LCT 4 Undulating Clay Plateau



### Constituent LCAs

- LCA 4.1 Tingewick Plateau
- LCA 4.2 Preston Bissett Plateau Edge
- LCA 4.3 Gawcott Ridge
- LCA 4.4 Thornborough-Beachampton Great Ouse Tributaries
- LCA 4.5 Grove Farm Shallow Valley
- LCA 4.6 A421 Ridge
- LCA 4.7 Whaddon Chase
- LCA 4.8 Horwood Claylands
- LCA 4.9 Newton Longville-Stoke Hammond Claylands
- LCA 4.10 Greenway Open Farmland
- LCA 4.11 Mursley-Soulbury Claylands
- LCA 4.12 Winslow Ridge
- LCA 4.13 Cublington - Wing Plateau
- LCA 4.14 Wingrave - Mentmore Ridge
- LCA 4.15 Weedon Ridge



East of Winslow looking north. Undulating ground with strong hedgerow pattern and scattered small woods.

## LCT 4 Undulating Clay Plateau

### Key Characteristics

- Clay plateau
- Incised streams create rolling landform
- Elevation range 90M to 150m AOD
- Mixed land use or arable, pasture and woodland
- Strong hedgerow pattern
- Remnants of medieval royal hunting forest
- Settled agricultural landscape
- Hedgerow pattern shows early enclosure
- Tranquil settled, agricultural landscape

### Distinctive Features

- Views contained by rolling landform
- Strong clipped hedges
- Vernacular buildings in villages
- Urban edge of Milton Keynes, Buckingham and Bletchley
- Ridge and furrow
- Oak and ash dominant hedgerow trees
- Ancient woodland
- Stoke Hammond Bypass
- Mainline rail track and cabling
- Disused airfields
- Stone churches with towers and short spires
- House and parkland at Mentmore

### General Description

Accords generally with CA 88 Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands identified by the Character of England Map and with LCT RCA identified by the National Landscape Typology.

The Undulating Clay Plateau is located to the south of Buckingham and the Great Ouse and to the south west of Milton Keynes and the Ouzel Valley. The plateau surface is bisected by small shallow ridges and valleys, which create the undulating landform. In geological terms the area consists of boulder clay deposits in the east merging into Oxford clay to the west and Kimmeridge clay to the south. The lower ground to the north is LCT 3 Valley Bottom, to the west LCT 5 Shallow Valleys, whilst to the south the type is bounded by LCT 8 Vale.

The clay plateau supports many of the north Buckinghamshire fen sites, from Tingewick Fen in the west to a cluster of fens to the east of Winslow, extending as far as Valley Farm Fen, immediately to the east of Linslade. The fen sites generally occur where valleys have been eroded into the clay plateau exposing springs and marsh areas. In the north a number of woodlands are remnants of the ancient woodlands of Whaddon Chase. Of these Thrift Wood, Hogpound Wood, Coddimoorhill Wood, Thickbare Wood, Salden Wood, College Wood, Norbury Coppice, Beachampton Grove, and others have been designated as County Wildlife Sites, whilst Middle Salden Wood and some smaller woodlands have been identified as ancient but have no other designation. South of Tingewick in the west of the area two further woodlands, West Wood and Round Wood, are of County Wildlife Site status.

The County Wildlife Site fen area to the north of College Wood also has elements of dry grassland with a good variety of grass and herb species. Immediately adjacent to the north lies Barnhill Farm Fields, a County Wildlife Site supporting a series of unimproved and semi-improved fields.

Tingewick Meadows SSSI lies to the south of Tingewick Wood. The field system contains both ridge and furrow together with spring-fed marshy areas which support a wide range of plant species on calcareous grassland and fen vegetation in the wetter areas.

The type retains a strong historic landscape with the majority being of moderate or high sensitivity. Areas of highest sensitivity are associated with ancient woodlands, assarts, the historic core of settlements and small areas of parkland. The most extensive woodland interest is around Whaddon and the royal medieval hunting forest of Whaddon Chase. The landscape pattern contains significant areas of pre 18<sup>th</sup> century enclosure and Parliamentary enclosure. This is well retained in most areas with strong hedgerows forming a significant element of the landscape character. There is a scattering of Scheduled Monuments over the area. These are often associated with sites of Deserted Medieval villages and the former Priory site at Whaddon. Mentmore House at the southern end of the area sits within Registered Gardens and Parkland.

The landform and strong hedgerow pattern create an attractive landscape structure which is enhanced by villages with many vernacular buildings, and by a lack of visual intrusion. Views are often contained by

**Aylesbury Vale District Council & Buckinghamshire County Council**  
**Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment**

landform with strong, often clipped, hedgerows and small pockets of woodland being the prominent features. Access is by winding lanes bounded by clipped hedges with mature oak and ash trees. The adjoining urban edges have a localised visual impact. Landscape quality diminishes where the hedgerow pattern has been lost through arable intensification and development of airfields.

A harmonious landscape in which the number and distribution of historic villages is an important element. Building materials vary but there are notable numbers of timber frame and brick, vernacular buildings some with thatched roofs. Although views within the plateau are generally contained by landform the edges of the plateau afford long distance views across adjacent lower ground. The eastern edge has views across the Ouzel Valley to LCT 6 Greensand Ridge, whilst in the west around Swanbourne and Winslow there are views across the Claydon Valley. The Stoke Hammond Bypass is the largest road crossing the area; its visual impact is reduced by much of the route being in cutting.