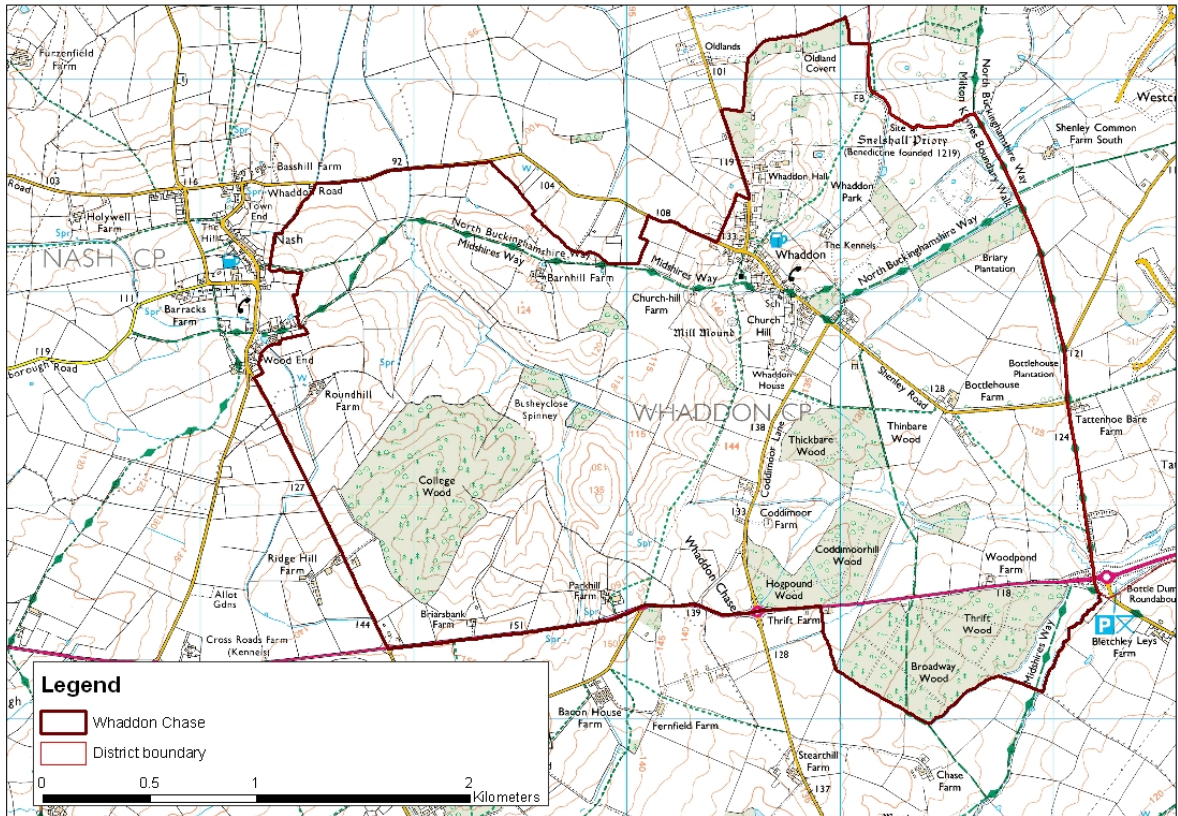
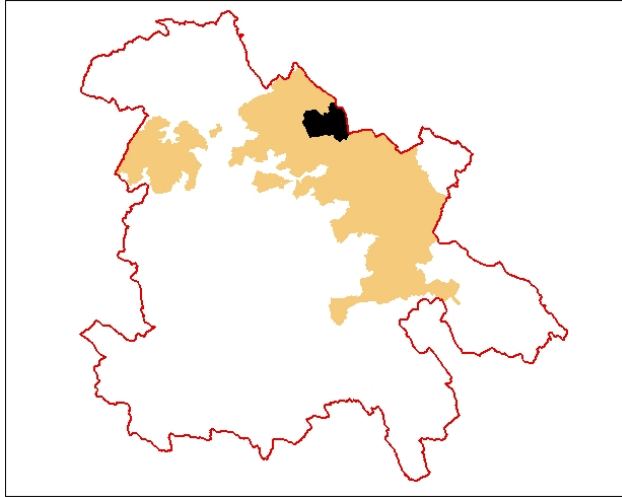


LCA 4.7 Whaddon Chase

Landscape Character Type: LCT 4 Undulating Clay Plateau



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Key Characteristics

- Incised valleys
- Settlement on local promontory
- Extensive woodland cover
- Irregular shaped field pattern
- Heritage of Whaddon Chase

Distinctive Features

- Parkland at Whaddon Hall
- Historic earthworks
- Springs and streams draining off higher ground
- Straight roads
- Mixed deciduous and coniferous plantations
- Extensive area of fenland
- Fox coverts
- Large areas of broadleaved woodland
- Neutral grassland

Intrusive Elements

- Traffic on A421

Location North of the A421 and on the southwest edge of Milton Keynes, the area covers all the lands surrounding Whaddon village.

Landscape character Sloping ground which drains from the A421 ridge towards the Great Ouse catchment. Whaddon village stands on a local promontory of ground that rises above the surrounding valleys. The higher ground is incised by a network of winding streams. The valley to the west of Whaddon is deeply cut into the ridge. The area is heavily wooded with remnants of the historic Chase landscape. Other woodland is mixed conifer/deciduous being managed by the Forestry Commission. The parkland of Whaddon Hall lies to the northeast of the village lies and includes the remnant earthworks at Snelshall Priory.

An area of mixed farming containing small field parcels interspersed by blocks of woodland. The geometric field pattern dissipates where field boundaries are also streams. Long straight roads connect the village with surrounding settlements.

Geology Glacial till with undifferentiated glacial deposits. Local exposure of three varieties of calcareous mudstone (Stewartby, Weymouth and West Walton formation).

Topography Mill mound to the west of the village sits at a level of 140m AOD, the highest point locally. The village sits on short promontory which projects north from the higher ground to the south. The northern edge of the area drops to approximately 100m AOD. The promontory has been eroded into a series of shallow valleys and narrow ridges.

Hydrology The run-off from the village of Whaddon falls in two main directions. It either joins the Ouzel catchment to the east or the Great Ouse to the northwest.

Land use and settlement The area is predominantly used as grassland with a little less than one third of the area under arable production. There are significant blocks of mixed woodland cover and an extensive area of fenland between the villages of Nash and Whaddon. The parkland at Whaddon Hall lies to the north of Whaddon. The village of Whaddon has stretched out along the local road network connecting the historic core of the village with Whaddon Hall. Farmsteads are dispersed over the surrounding areas.

Tree cover An extensive area of ancient woodland (College Wood) lies on the western boundary of the area. Broadway Wood, Thrift Wood and Hogpound Wood have been partially replanted with conifers whilst Thickbare Wood and Coddimoorhill Wood are deciduous. Hedges are predominantly hawthorn with oak and some ash hedgerow trees.

Biodiversity Although Whaddon Chase does contain arable and grassland habitats, it is distinguished from the surrounding area by the presence of a large area of fen and of relatively large blocks of broadleaved woodland. Another feature is the relatively large proportion of neutral grassland present throughout.

The woodland occurs in the parkland and to the south the large woodland blocks comprise a series of ancient woodlands. Thickbare Wood remains as deciduous broadleaved woodland – oak standards over hazel coppice unlike the others that have been replanted with conifers. Nevertheless they retain

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deciduous species and are located in close proximity to fen and adjacent spinneys enhancing habitat and biodiversity values.

Whaddon Chase contains an exceptional large area of priority habitat types and of locally biodiversity designations compared with much of the of the District, and there is strong connectivity between habitats.

Historic environment The A421 follows the line of a minor Roman road and there is evidence for Roman occupation in the area. The area has important historic associations with the 'Whaddon Chase', the area of woodland that King Henry III granted John FitzGeoffrey the right to hunt in 1242. The Chase was an extensive area of open commons and woodland area that extended from Shenley Common in the east, almost to Singleborough in the west. It was finally cleared and enclosed in 1841 but relict features relating to this distinctive heritage are still characteristic of the area. These features include the scheduled ancient monuments of Snelshall Priory, a probable windmill mound, fishpond, earthworks and the site of Coddimoor Hermitage. There are also several surviving ancient woodlands, of which College Wood is the most significant. The parliamentary enclosure field boundaries preserve the lines of former woodlands, woodland rides and, in a great oval to the southwest of Whaddon, the Queen's Park. The village of Whaddon is a conservation area containing historic timber-framed and brick buildings and with a notable fox hunting heritage which led to the construction of kennels and coverts (small plantations such as Oldland covert). St. Mary's medieval parish church is a prominent feature. On the north side, the early 19th century classical mansion of Whaddon Hall lies on the site of an earlier mansion owned by the antiquarian Browne Willis. The Hall overlooks the relicts of Whaddon Park with its planting belts and clumps, now returned to agricultural use. Several isolated farms and Wood End (part of Nash) complete the historic settlement pattern

Designations

Conservation Areas at Whaddon (2)

Scheduled Ancient Monuments: Snelshall Benedictine Priory, Bowl Barrow

Archaeological Notification Areas – 17 No.

CWS – 6 No.

BNS – 3 No.

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Whaddon Hall.



Shelter belt at Whaddon adjacent to the Stratford Road.

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Summary of Condition/Sensitivity Analysis		Condition
Condition	Very Good	Overall the condition of the landscape is considered to be very good. The area is particularly noted for the coherent pattern of elements, namely the relationship of steeper valleys streams and woodland cover. There are few visual detractors and the visual unity of the area is held together by the inter-relationship of winding valleys, woodland cover and small irregular shaped field parcels. Cultural integrity is good, represented by the remnant woodland, landscape features and archaeology over of the historic Chase, the historic village and the parkland east of Whaddon House. Ecological integrity is strong due to good connectivity and large areas of priority habitat types and designations. Functional integrity remains very strong.
Pattern of elements:	Coherent	
Visual detractors:	Few	
Visual unity:	Unified	
Cultural integrity:	Good	
Ecological integrity:	Strong	
Functional integrity:	Very strong	
Sensitivity	High	
Distinctiveness:	Unique/Rare	
Continuity:	Historic	
Sense of place:	Strong	
Landform:	Apparent	
Tree cover:	Intermittent	
Visibility:	Moderate	
Guidelines	Conserve	

Sensitivity

The area is noted as a unique/rare landscape because of the surviving relicts of Whaddon Chase with good associations and sense of continuity. There is a strong sense of place underpinned by the relationship of the landform with the intermittent tree cover. The degree of visibility which is assessed as moderate is determined by the underlying landform and the degree to which woodland cover screens views. Overall the degree of sensitivity is high.



Parkland at Whaddon washes up to the fringe of the village.

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Landscape Guidelines Conserve

The landscape guidelines for Whaddon Chase are as follows:

- Encourage the retention and strengthening of the historic hedgerow pattern with new hedgerow trees.
- Maintain the existing extent and condition of neutral grassland. Encourage good management practices.
- Maintain the existing extent and condition of broadleaved woodland.
- Maintain the existing extent and condition of fen.
- Maintain connectivity of habitats.
- Conserve and enhance the distinctive character of settlements and individual buildings.
- New housing and alterations to existing housing should be designed to reflect the traditional character of the area and be consistent in the use of locally occurring traditional materials.
- Retain the rural character of minor roads by minimising signage and kerbing.
- Encourage landowners to improve ecological diversity through varied land maintenance regimes to benefit landscape and habitats.
- Encourage the conservation and interpretation of the areas rich historic environment.
- Ensure the preservation of archaeological earthworks by maintaining grassland.
- Encourage restoration and interpretation of the historic chase landscape.
- Protect key views of and from Whaddon.



Pasture adjacent to Coddimorehill Wood and Hogpound Wood.