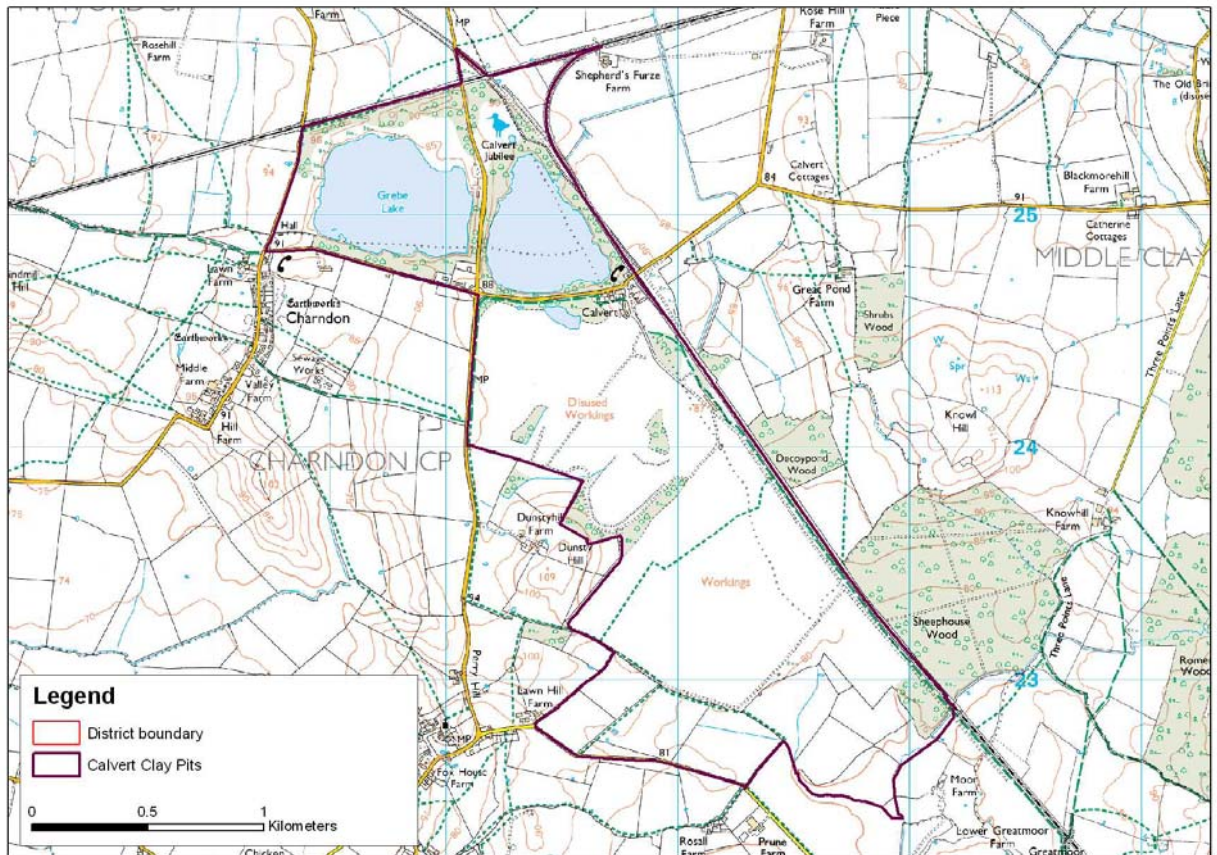
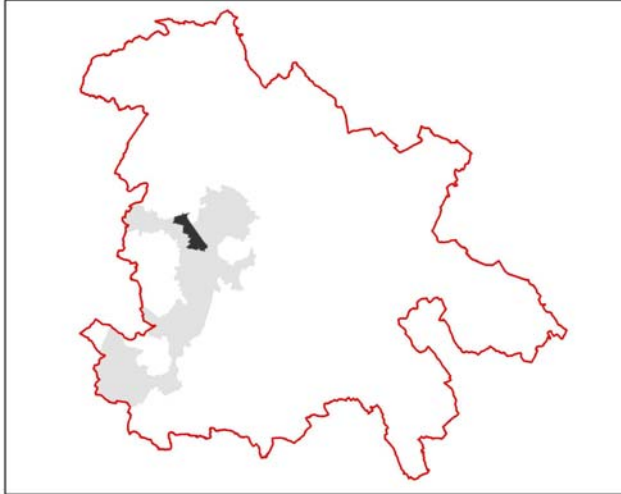


LCA 7.2 Calvert Clay Pits

Landscape Character Type: LCT 7 Wooded Rolling Lowlands



LCA 7.2 Calvert Clay Pits (LCT 7)

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

Key Characteristics

- Disturbed ground of former brickworks and pits
- New landform created by landfill, including areas in progress

Distinctive Features

- Two large lakes forming part of Calvert Jubilee Nature Reserve surrounded by narrow belts of woodland
- Neutral grassland
- Large new housing area on flat ground

Intrusive Elements

- Landfill site
- Small power generating plant

Location On the western side of the district south west of Steeple Claydon.

Landscape character This area has a disturbed character in several distinctly different parts. In the north two former clay pits have been flooded to create lakes surrounded by woodland; these are for recreation and wildlife benefit. The central area, which was the former brickworks is now a new residential area, whilst the brick pits to the south are being used for landfill. The currently active landfill areas have formed a low hill with a small electricity generating plant. There are further pits to the south with permission for land filling. The character of the active landfill is visually intrusive with pipes laid over the landform and vehicular movements close to the top of the hill.

Geology The Oxford clay at Calvert, traditionally dug for brick making, is overlain by deposits of calcareous mudstone (Stewartby) and bituminous mudstone (Peterborough).

Topography The natural landform in this area has been lost. The area was formerly a brickworks and series of large brickpits. Two have been flooded to create large lakes in the north of the area. Pits to the south are being filled with landfill and capped. The area is still active and has not reached its pre-settlement height and there are other pits, which have not been filled. The elevation range cannot be determined as the current height of the top of the landfill operation is not known but the lowest level is approximately 80m AOD.

Hydrology There are two large lakes, Grebe Lake and Jubilee Lake in the north of the area which are flooded claypits. There are no major watercourses but a small stream drains from the southern edge of the area.

Land use and settlement The area is used for recreation, housing and landfill operations. The settlement is predominantly very recent with new housing on the former brickworks site. There is however a small area of older housing at Calvert and one farm. The landfill area will return to agriculture and woodland when complete. Grebe Lake is used for sailing.

Tree cover Only a small part of this area is currently woodland - this is largely distributed around the lakes in the northern part.

Biodiversity The recent history of the site for brick extraction has led to the creation of two large areas of deep open standing water a rare habitat in this part of the District and a broad habitat type. Each lake is a CWS and each is associated with areas of scrub and grassland. The perimeters of the western lake include a patchwork of scrub and glades including some calcareous grassland supporting an interesting flora and butterflies. The western lake which is important for over-wintering wildfowl is included within the Calvert Jubilee Nature Reserve and the habitats here include broadleaved woodland and neutral grassland – both broad habitat types. The reserve is likely to be the feature of highest ecological value within the area and has importance for butterflies and dragonflies. The Twyford railway embankment extends from the northern boundary of the LCA where the reserve is situated, into the Twyford Vale LCA to the north providing connectivity to adjacent areas.

In contrast the majority of the remaining area is currently managed as landfill or residential uses and is of lower ecological interest.

Historic environment Formerly an area of ancient woodland to the south and fields to the north, the brickworks and excavation of the area to create large brick pits has left few features of the early historic landscape. There is one field, which is likely to be early enclosure on the southern side.

Designations

CWS – 2 No.

BNS – 1 No.

LCA 7.2 Calvert Clay Pits (LCT 7)



Calvert landfill seen from higher ground of Finemere Hill in LCA 9.1 to the northeast.



Jubilee Lake Nature Reserve seen from the Crispin Fisher Bird Hide.

LCA 7.2 Calvert Clay Pits (LCT 7)

Summary of Condition/Sensitivity Analysis

Condition	Poor
Pattern of elements:	Incoherent
Visual detractors:	Some
Visual unity:	Interrupted
Cultural integrity:	Poor
Ecological integrity:	Moderate
Functional integrity:	Weak

Sensitivity	Low
Distinctiveness:	Distinct
Continuity:	Recent
Sense of place:	Weak
Landform:	Apparent
Tree cover:	Intermittent
Visibility:	Moderate

Guidelines	Create
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Condition

The condition of this landscape is considered to be poor. This relates to the fact that the pattern of elements, which originally united the landscape has been lost due to the former brickworks. The area has some visual detractors primarily associated with the landfill site where the operations have created a disturbed landscape. The area around the lakes has a generally good visual quality. So it is an area with a very varied visual quality and is assessed as having an interrupted visual unity. The cultural integrity is considered to be poor despite small areas having retained the historic field pattern and some historic associations as the majority is a modern landscape. Ecological integrity is classed overall as moderate because of the value within the northern half of the area. The functional integrity of the area as a whole is considered to be weak.

Sensitivity

The landscape has a distinct character but a lack of historic continuity with many of the landscape features being recent. This gives the area a generally weak sense of place. The landform is considered to be apparent although this primarily reflects the new hill from the landfill operations. The tree cover is intermittent being strong around the lakes but weak in the south of the area. The visibility overall is moderate. The area as a whole is given a low sensitivity rating.



The raised landform of the Calvert landfill.

LCA 7.2 Calvert Clay Pits (LCT 7)

Landscape Guidelines Create

The landscape guidelines for the Calvert Clay Pits are as follows:

- Promote the retention and management of the remaining historic field pattern.
- Encourage restoration proposals for the landfill site that link hedgerows and woodland to surrounding vegetation to promote connectivity for biodiversity.
- Encourage the traditional management of grassland by grazing.
- Encourage management of lake areas to promote a range of sustainable ecological habitats.
- Encourage recreational use of the area and links from housing to the countryside.
- Encourage the restoration of landfill areas and brick pits to landscape, which reflects historic woodland character of the area.
- Encourage new planting around the active landfill to minimise the visual impact of the works and new landform.
- Encourage the enhancement of views from publicly accessible land.
- Maintain the existing extent of the nature reserve.